



# SINGAPORE AVIFAUNA

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Lesser Kestrel at Changi Cove in March 2010 (Photograph by Jonathan Cheah)



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## Bird Report

### March 2010

By Yong Ding Li and Lim Kim Seng

#### SINGAPORE HIGHLIGHTS

Most Marches are busy periods for the Singapore birdwatcher; thanks to a swell of migrants on their way back to their northern breeding grounds for spring. Couple this with the start of the breeding season for resident birds equal lots of bird activity in our forests, plantations and scrubland. Notable records for the month include two separate records of the brilliant **Black-backed Kingfisher** in the Central Catchment forests, a **Ruddy Kingfisher** at Upper Peirce, four **Brown-backed Needletail** over MacRitchie, two **Watercocks** in Kranji Marsh, and the usual assortment of raptors, waders and migratory passerines. The strongest contender for the highlight of the month however goes to the globally threatened **Lesser Kestrel** photographed at Changi, potentially our second national record, followed closely behind by a pair of mighty **Himalayan Vulture** seen in the aerospace over Sungei Buloh, and which if confirmed, would make it the eighth national record. The declining Lesser Kestrel is a familiar raptor in parts of Europe, central Asia and Africa, but virtually unknown from South-east Asia. In our mangroves and mudflats, the main wader highlight is the **Grey-tailed Tattler**, an endemic Russian breeder and now an increasingly rare migrant to Singapore. An all time high count of four birds were reported from Sungei Buloh, compared to more typical reports of solitary individuals in previous years. Finally, on the passerine front, a **Black-browed Reed-warbler** reported from Kranji marsh is particularly notable.

#### JOHOR HIGHLIGHTS

Most action from Johor came from the Pantii forest reserve, which produced its regular array of rainforest stunners of woodpeckers and broadbills. More interesting records from Pantii included a pair of the scarce **Cinnamon-headed Green Pigeon**, a male **Temminck's Sunbird**, and a small group of what is perhaps Malaysia's least commonly encountered munia species, the scarce **White-bellied Munia**. A visit to Jason's Bay on the east coast produced sandy shore regulars like the near-threatened **Malaysian Plovers** amongst others. A record of the **Great Cormorant**, a genuinely rare migrant to Malaysia from the Danga Bay area may actually refer to a free-flying individual that have strayed from across Singapore.

#### SUMMARY

This report covers noteworthy bird sightings in March 2010 for Singapore and the surrounding region. In general, the report will include but are not limited to the following

categories: rarities, breeding or nesting records, arrival and departure dates for migratory species, new locality records, escapees and unusual behaviour.

In addition, contributors are also advised to be as precise as possible concerning records. Please remember to include details such as how many birds were seen, the plumage, sex and age of the birds, the type of habitat in which they were observed, the food they were eating (if possible, identify the plant or animal), the weather encountered (what was the wind direction, tide conditions, etc.). Although it is not necessary to have such details for all record submissions, it is a good habit to cultivate and is normally required for very rare or unusual species.

Please send all your records of interest to Lim Kim Seng @ [ibisbill@yahoo.com](mailto:ibisbill@yahoo.com) or Lim Kim Chuah @ [pittalover@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:pittalover@yahoo.com.sg) or Yong Ding Li at [zoothera@yahoo.com](mailto:zoothera@yahoo.com). Alternatively you can also post your sightings at the NSS Bird Group website at <http://wildbirdsingapore.nss.org.sg>. Please send your records no later than one week after the end of every month. Your contributions will be greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

Unless stated otherwise, nomenclature and systematic follow K.S. Lim's (2009) "The Avifauna of Singapore", K.S. Lim & K.C. Lim's (1999) "Pocket checklist of the birds of Johor, Peninsular Malaysia" for Johor, and B.L. Monroe Jr. & C.G. Sibley's (1993) "A World Checklist of Birds" for the rest of the region.

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### **ABBREVIATIONS USED:**

BTNR	Bukit Timah Nature Reserve
CCNR	Central Catchment Nature Reserve
DFNP	Dairy Farm Nature Park
KM	Kranji Marsh
NTL2	Neo Tiew Lane 2
SBWR	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve
SBG	Singapore Botanic Gardens
Sev obs	Several observers

## SINGAPORE

### **RED JUNGLEFOWL** *Gallus gallus*

A male was seen wandering in an abandoned durian plantation near the headman's house on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKS). 3 were also seen at Poyan on 21/3 (DL). Another was heard at Pasir Ris park on the 30/3 (HB).

### **WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK** *Dendrocygna arcuata*

At SBG, 6 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 1 on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 4 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

### **LESSER WHISTLING DUCK** *Dendrocygna javanica*

At SBG, 12 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 29 on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 13 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

### **BARRED BUTTONQUAIL** *Turnix suscitator*

A pair seen at Chua Chu Kang cemetery on 1/3 (AC).

### **RUFIOUS WOODPECKER** *Celeus brachyurus*

1 seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

### **BANDED WOODPECKER** *Picus miniaceus*

2 seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), 3 at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 at SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

### **COMMON GOLDENBACK** *Dinopium javanense*

A female was seen at SBG on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

### **LINEATED BARBET** *Megalaima lineata*

At Singapore Quarry, 2 were heard on 3/3 (LKS), 1 seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 seen on 28/3 (LKS/KY). At SBG, 1 was seen and 3 heard on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 3 seen at a fruiting fig at SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY). In addition, 1 was seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 3 seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

### **RED-CROWNED BARBET** *Megalaima rafflesii*

1 was observed feeding at Rifle Range Link, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

### **COPPERSMITH BARBET** *Megalaima haemacephala*

2 seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 1 at Singapore Quarry on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

### **ORIENTAL DOLLARBIRD** *Eurystomus orientalis*

6 were seen at MacRitchie Reservoir and 2 at Sime Trail, CCNR, on 21/3 (GG/LKS).

**ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL** *Anthracoceros albirostris*

2 were seen at Pulau Ubin on 13/3 (DA). Subsequently, 2 were recorded at Ubin Central on 21/3 (SBS) and 3 at Ubin West on 21/3 (WF) during the annual bird census. The only record from the mainland this month was 1 seen at Pasir Ris park on 30/3 (HB).

**COMMON KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

1 at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), 1 at SBG on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 28/3 (LKS/KY) and 1 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**BLUE-EARED KINGFISHER** *Alcedo meninting*

1 seen at Nee Soon on 21/3 (GS).

**BLACK-BACKED KINGFISHER** *Ceyx erithacus*

1 seen at Lower Peirce on 12/3 (BL), another was seen at dawn at Golf Link, CCNR, on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER** *Pelargopsis capensis*

1 was seen at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**RUDDY KINGFISHER** *Halcyon coromanda*

1 at Lower Peirce Reservoir on 21/3 (JH).

**BLACK-CAPPED KINGFISHER** *Halcyon pileata*

1 at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 28/3 (LKS/KY). 1 was also present at Pasir Ris park on 26/3 (HB).

**BLUE-THROATED BEE-EATER** *Merops viridis*

2 seen at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER** *Merops philippinus*

1 seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 3 at Kranji Marsh on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**INDIAN CUCKOO** *Cuculus micropterus*

3 at Ubin West on 21/3 (WF) and 1 at Poyan on 21/3 (DL).

**BANDED BAY CUCKOO** *Cacomantis sonnerati*

1 heard at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), 1 heard at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 1 heard at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**RUSTY-BREASTED CUCKOO** *Cacomantis sepulcralis*

2 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 21/3 (GWHD).

**LITTLE BRONZE CUCKOO** *Chrysococcyx minutillus*

1 was seen at Kranji Dam on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 1 at Sungei Serangoon on 21/3 (TKH) and 2 heard at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO). An adult male and a juvenile were also seen at Kranji Dam on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**VIOLET CUCKOO** *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*

1 at Nee Soon on 21/3 (GS).

**ASIAN DRONGO-CUCKOO** *Surniculus lugubris*

2 heard singing in albizia woods at DFNP on 2/3 (LKS), 1 heard at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS) and 1 juvenile seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**RAINBOW LORY** *Trichoglossus haematodus*

At SBG, 1 was seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**BLUE-CROWNED HANGING PARROT** *Loriculus galgulus*

1 seen over Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), 4 at SBG on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 28/3 (LKS/KY), and 2 at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**RED-BREASTED PARAKEET** *Psittacula alexandri*

1 seen in albizia woods at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS).

**LONG-TAILED PARAKEET** *Psittacula longicauda*

5 seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), about 8 seen feeding on simpoh ayer fruits at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 6 eating oil palm fruits at SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**GLOSSY SWIFTLET** *Collocalia esculenta*

About 5 were seen flying over Wallace Education Centre, DFNP, on 4/3 (LKS) and 1 at Jelutong Tower, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL** *Hirundapus giganteus*

4 seen flying over MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**GREY-RUMPED TREESWIFT** *Hemiprocne longipennis*

2 were seen over SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**COLLARED SCOPS-OWL** *Otus lempiji*

At Sime Trail, CCNR, 1 was heard on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 heard on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**BROWN HAWK-OWL** *Ninox scutulata*

At Sime Trail, CCNR, 1 was seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 heard on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**LARGE-TAILED NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus macrurus*

3 were seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 at Kranji Nature Trail on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**COMMON EMERALD DOVE** *Chalcophaps indica*

1 seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS) and 1 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**THICK-BILLED GREEN PIGEON** *Treron curvirostra*

At MacRitchie Reservoir, 2 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 on 22/3 (GG/LKS). Also 1 at Kent Ridge Park on 21/3 (AOY).

**RED-LEGGED CRAKE** *Rallina fasciata*

1 was heard in secondary forest at Singapore Quarry on 28/3 (LKS).

**SLATY-BREASTED RAIL** *Gallirallus striatus*

1 seen at Chua Chu Kang cemetery on 22/3 (AC/GG).

**RUDDY-BREASTED CRAKE** *Porzana fusca*

2 seen along a road at the Chua Chu Kang cemetery on 22/3 (AC/GG).

**WHITE-BROWED CRAKE** *Porzana cinerea*

1 at Kranji Marsh on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**WATERCOCK** *Gallixrex cinera*

At Kranji Marsh, 2 were seen on 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 1 on 28/3 (LKS/KY). All were in winter plumage.

**COMMON SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago*

2 seen at Chua Chu Kang cemetery on 1/3 (AC).

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

At SBWR, 50 were counted on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 165 (at SBWR Route 1) on 21/3 (HB) and 200 on 28/3 (LKS/KY). In addition, 220 were counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

At SBWR, 10 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 12 on 28/3 (LKS/KY). In addition, 31 were counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**MARSH SANDPIPER** *Tringa stagnatilis*

At SBWR, 20 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 5 (partial summer) on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

At SBWR, 20 were seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 50 on 28/3 (LKS/KY). In addition, 90 were counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Tringa hypoleucos*

1 was seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS) and on 20/3 (LKS/GM). 5 were also seen at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 10 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**GREY-TAILED TATTLER** *Tringa brevipes*

4 birds were seen at SBWR on the 6/3 (BL) and represents the highest one-time count of the species in Singapore to date.

**RED-NECKED STINT** *Calidris ruficollis*

5 counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

10 counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** *Limicola falcinellus*

1 was seen at SBWR on 5/3 9 (DaL) while 1 seen at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis fulva*

474 birds were counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO). At SBWR, 223 were counted on 21/3 (HB) and 10 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**LESSER SAND PLOVER** *Charadrius mongolus*

256 were counted at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 2 at SBWR Route 1 on 21/3 (HB).

**GREATER SAND PLOVER** *Charadrius leschenaultii*

1 seen at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**RED-WATTLED LAPWING** *Vanellus indicus*

2 seen at Bukit Batok West on 21/3 (WC) and 2 seen at Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS).

**BLACK-NAPED TERN** *Sterna sumatrana*

5 were seen off Ubin Central on 21/3 (SBS).

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

1 was seen at Pulau Semakau on 20/3 (THC/SY/WC), another was seen at Kranji Nature Trail on the same date (LKS/GM). 1 was present Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS). At Mandai Mudflats, 1 was seen on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLACK BAZA** *Aviceda leuphotes*

1 seen flying at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS), 1 at Pulau Ubin on 13/3 (DA), 15 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 21/3 (CYX/GWHD) and 4 at Bukit Batok West on the same day (PSK/WC).

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

1 juvenile was seen at Pulau Semakau on 20/3 (THC/SY/WC).



**GREY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE** *Ichthyophaga ichhyaetus*

A juvenile was seen perching in a mangrove in pouring rain at Sungei Buloh on 20/3 (LKS/GM). Another bird (an adult) was also seen flying over Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS).

**CRESTED SERPENT EAGLE** *Spilornis cheela*

1 was seen flying over Jalan Jelutong, Pulau Ubin on 13/3 (DA). Birds seen on Ubin are likely to be wanderers originating from nearby Johor.

**HIMALAYAN VULTURE** *Gyps himalayensis*

2 juveniles were observed flying over SBWR on 21/3 (JS). This is potentially the 8<sup>th</sup> record for Singapore in confirmed.

**EASTERN MARSH HARRIER** *Circus spilonotus*

1 seen at Tuas on 21/3 (MS).

**JAPANESE SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter gularis*

1 seen at Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKS).

**CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE** *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

At Dairy Farm Quarry, a pale bird and a dark bird were seen on 3/3 (LKS) and a dark morph on 4/3 (LKS). Another was heard at Pekan Quarry, Pulau Ubin, on 7/3 (LKC/LKS), a dark morph seen drying its wings after rain at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 heard at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** *Falco peregrinus*

1 at the tower at Pulau Ubin on 13/3 (DA), 2 at Tuas on 21/3 (MS), 2 at Lower Seletar Dam on 21/3 (MP) and 1 at Ubin Central on 21/3 (SBS).

**LESSER KESTREL** *Falco naumanni*

A first winter male which was first detected on 6/3 and apparently seen throughout the middle of March (JC/NT) would be the second record for Singapore if confirmed. Please see the raptor report on page 23 for more details.

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

At Singapore Quarry, 8 were seen on 3/3 (LKS) and 5 on 28/3 (LKS/KY). In addition, 4 were seen at Lorong Halus on 21/3 (AC).

**LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

1 seen at Pekan Quarry on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS), 20 at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 62 at SBWR Route 1 on 21/3 (HB), 75 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 1 at Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS).

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

About 20 seen at Pekan Quarry on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS), 2 at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 33 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**PURPLE HERON** *Ardea purpurea*

1 was seen swallowing a long eel with much difficulty at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM). Another was seen at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**GREAT EGRET** *Casmerodius albus*

1 seen at Pekan Quarry on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS) and 6 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**YELLOW-BILLED EGRET** *Mesophoyx intermedia*

1 seen at Pekan Quarry on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS), 2 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 2 at Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS).

**CHINESE POND HERON** *Ardeola bacchus*

At Mandai Mudflats, 4 summer birds were seen on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 2 summer birds on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**JAVAN POND HERON** *Ardeola speciosa*

1 summer bird was seen at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO) and 22/3 (GG/LKS). There was also 1 summer-plumaged bird at Lorong Halus on 15/3 (GF/HB) and 21/3 (AC).

**STRIATED HERON** *Butorides striatus*

1 seen at the pond at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 seen at SBG on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 2 at SBWR Route 2 on 21/3 (JS).

**YELLOW BITTERN** *Ixobrychus sinensis*

At Kranji Marsh, 2 were seen on 22/3 (GG/LKS), and 1 on 27/3 (LKS) and 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**CINNAMON BITTERN** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

1 was seen at Kranji Marsh on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD** *Irena puella*

A pair was seen eating the fruits of a Curry Tree at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS).

**GREATER GREEN LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis sonnerati*

A male was seen at Jelutong Tower, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**LESSER GREEN LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis cyanopogon*

A pair was seen near Jelutong Tower, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**BLUE-WINGED LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*

A male was seen at Rifle Range Link, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**BROWN SHRIKE** *Lanius cristatus*

1 seen at SBG on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL), 5 at Chinese Garden on 21/3 (TKP) and 1 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE** *Lanius schach*

1 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**ASHY MINIVET** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*

20 were counted at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 4 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**CROW-BILLED DRONGO** *Dicrurus annectans*

At MacRitchie Reservoir, 1 was seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS). Also 1 at Sime Road on 21/3 (RC) and 1 at Khatib Bongsu on 21/3 (HHC).

**ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** *Terpsiphone paradisi*

A female was seen at Sime Trail, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa dauurica*

1 was seen at Sime Trail, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 1 at SBWR on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 1 at Kranji Dam on 20/3 (LKS/GM), 22/3 (GG/LKS) and 28/3 (LKS/KY), 1 at SBG on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 1 at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** *Copsychus saularis*

A male was seen at the sensory trail on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKS), 1 heard at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO). At SBG, 1 male was seen on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 7 birds counted on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL).

**WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA** *Copsychus malabaricus*

A male was seen at the sensory trail on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKS). Another was heard at MacRitchie Reservoir on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING** *Aplonis panayensis*

4 adults were seen feeding on the fruits of a curry leaf tree at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM). They flew off after gobbling the fruits.

**COMMON HILL MYNA** *Gracula religiosa*

2 were seen at Jelutong Tower, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 2 at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM). At SBG, 20 birds were counted on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 6 on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** *Hirundo daurica*

1 seen at MacRitchie Reservoir on 22/3 (GG/LKS) sets a new late date for Singapore. The previous early date was 9 March (Lim 2009).

**STRAW-HEADED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*

A pair seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS) and 3 at Dairy Farm Quarry on 3/3 (LKS). 2 was also seen at Pulau Ubin opposite the Pekan quarry on 13/3 (DA).

**YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus goaivier*

1 was seen feeding on the white fruits of a Malayan Mulberry at Singapore Quarry on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**CREAM-VENTED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus simplex*

2 were seen at Sime Trail, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**ASIAN RED-EYED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus brunneus*

4 were seen at Sime Trail, CCNR, on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 1 at Jelutong Tower, CCNR, 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE** *Zosterops palpebrosus*

1 seen at Kranji Nature Trail on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLACK-BROWED REED-WARBLER** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

1 seen in cattail beds at Kranji Marsh on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

**ORIENTAL REED-WARBLER** *Acrocephalus orientalis*

1 heard at Kranji Marsh on 27/3 (LKS).

**ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*

1 seen at SBG at SBG on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL) and 1 at Mandai Mudflats on 21/3 (FHC/LKS/RO).

**WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** *Garrulax leucolophus*

1 seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS).

**HWAMEI** *Garrulax canorus*

1 adult seen at Sentosa on 7/3 (KCT).

**PURPLE-THROATED SUNBIRD** *Nectarinia sperata*

1 male seen at Singapore Quarry on 3/3 (LKS). Birds were also seen and heard in different habitats – scrub, garden and mangrove – on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS).

**CRIMSON SUNBIRD** *Aethopyga siparaja*

A male was seen at SBG on 20/3 (LKS/GM) and 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL). A male was also seen at Mandai Orchid Garden on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER** *Arachnothera longirostris*

4 birds were seen at Mandai Orchid Garden on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

1 at Lower Seletar Dam on 21/3 (MP) and 2 at Lorong Halus on 21/3 (AC).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

1 seen at Nee Soon Swamp forest on the 7/3 (GS).

## NESTING REPORT

**ORIENTAL DOLLARBIRD** *Eurystomus orientalis*

A pair was seen courtship feeding at Singapore Quarry on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

A pair seen with a single chick at SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

1 adult seen carrying a small stick at Singapore on 3/3 (LKS) was apparently nesting in the vicinity.

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

Nesting activity was seen at Pekan Quarry on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKC/LKS). About 10 nests were seen on an albizia tree and another 3 on a dead tree. In addition, a few birds were also sighted carrying sticks to their nests.

**GOLDEN-BELLIED GERYGONE** *Gerygone sulphurea*

A pair was seen attending to a juvenile and offering it a green caterpillar at Kranji Dam on 22/3 (GG/LKS). On 27/3 (LKS), another pair was seen feeding a demanding juvenile Little Bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*, which was heard to give a continuous thin chirp.

**ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING** *Aplonis panayensis*

1 adult was seen feeding 2 juveniles fruits from a fig tree at SBG on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**DARK-NECKED TAILORBIRD** *Orthotomus atrogularis*

A male was seen collecting cotton material from seed pods of a *Wrightia* bush at the sensory trail on Pulau Ubin on 7/3 (LKS). The female was seen in attendance but did not play any part in collecting.

**BROWN-THROATED SUNBIRD** *Anthreptes malacensis*

A pair was seen feeding a juvenile at Kranji Dam on 20/3 (LKS/GM).

**COPPER-THROATED SUNBIRD** *Nectarinia calcostetha*

A female was seen adding material to an incomplete nest 1 m off the ground in an ardisia at SBWR on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD** *Nectarinia jugularis*

A pair was seen attending to a complete nest 8m up a rain tree at Kranji Dam on 28/3 (LKS/KY). Another pair was also adding to a nearly complete nest in a fence 1 m off the ground, with the female bringing nest material, at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 28/3 (LKS).

**LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER** *Arachnothera longirostris*

An adult was seen feeding a juvenile at Mandai Orchid Garden on 28/3 (LKS/KY).

**BAYA WEAVER** *Ploceus philippinus*

2 nests in Acacia trees were seen being tended by males at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/3 (GG/LKS).

## REPORT ON ESCAPEES

**MUTE SWAN** *Cygnus olor*

4 were counted at SBG on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL).

**BLACK SWAN** *Cygnus atratus*

4 were counted at SBG on 21/3 (MB/JM/YPL).

## JOHOR

**GREAT ARGUS** *Argusianus argus*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RUFIOUS WOODPECKER** *Celeus brachyurus*

2 at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BANDED WOODPECKER** *Picus miniaceus*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**CHECKER-THROATED WOODPECKER** *Picus mentalis*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**ORANGE-BACKED WOODPECKER** *Reinwardtipicus validus*

4 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BUFF-RUMPED WOODPECKER** *Meiglyptes tristis*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RED-CROWNED BARBET** *Megalaima rafflesii*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLUE-EARED BARBET** *Megalaima australis*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BROWN BARBET** *Calorhamphus fuliginosus*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RED-BEARDED BEE-EATER** *Nyctyornis amictus*

1 seen and 1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**MALAYSIAN HAWK-CUCKOO** *Hierococcyx fugax*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**INDIAN CUCKOO** *Cuculus micropterus*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**PLAINTIVE CUCKOO** *Cacomantis merulinus*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**VIOLET CUCKOO** *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*

3 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**ASIAN DRONGO-CUCKOO** *Surniculus lugubris*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RAFFLES'S MALKOHA** *Phaenicophaeus chlorophaeus*

4 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RED-BILLED MALKOHA** *Phaenicophaeus javanicus*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLUE-RUMPED PARROT** *Psittinus cyanurus*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**SILVER-RUMPED SPINETAIL** *Rhaphidura leucopygialis*

4 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**CINNAMON-HEADED GREEN PIGEON** *Treron fulvicollis*

A pair seen near the visitor centre at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**MALAYSIAN PLOVER** *Charadrius peronii*

A pair seen at Jason's Bay on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**SWIFT TERN** *Sterna bergii*

About 10 were seen perching on fishing stakes at Jason's Bay on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**JAPANESE SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter gularis*

1 seen flying over Jason's Bay on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**GREAT CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

1 seen flying at Danga Bay, Johor Bahru, on 14/3 (LKS) may have been an escapee.

**DUSKY BROADBILL** *Corydon sumatranus*

4 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BANDED BROADBILL** *Eurylaimus javanicus*

2 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**GREATER GREEN LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis cyanopogon*

A female seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RAIL BABBLER** *Eupetes macrocerus*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**DARK-THROATED ORIOLE** *Oriolus xanthonotus*

1 male seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**SCARLET MINIVET** *Pericrocotus flammeus*

A pair seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE** *Hemipus picatus*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLACK-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE** *Hemipus hirundinaceus*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS). Another was seen in a rhu tree in a degraded rhu stand at Jason's Bay on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**GREEN IORA** *Aegithina viridissima*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RUFIOUS-WINGED PHILENTOMA** *Philentoma pyropterum*

1 seen in a bird wave at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**LARGE WOODSHRIKE** *Tephrodornis gularis*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RUFIOUS-TAILED SHAMA** *Trichixos pyrropyga*

1 shy bird heard singing for a long time at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**SPECTACLED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus erythrophthalmos*

4 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**STREAKED BULBUL** *Ixos malaccensis*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).



**ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**BLACK-CAPPED BABBLER** *Pellorneum capistratum*

5 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**SOOTY-CAPPED BABBLER** *Malacopteron affine*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**GREY-HEADED BABBLER** *Stachyris poliocephala*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**CHESTNUT-RUMPED BABBLER** *Stachyris maculata*

2 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**CHESTNUT-WINGED BABBLER** *Stachyris erythroptera*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**WHITE-BELLIED YUHINA** *Yuhina zantholeuca*

1 seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**PURPLE-NAPED SUNBIRD** *Hypogramma hypogrammicum*

1 heard at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**PURPLE-THROATED SUNBIRD** *Nectarinia sperata*

1 male seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**TEMMINCK'S SUNBIRD** *Aethopyga temmincki*

1 male seen high up a tree at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**RUBY-CHEEKED SUNBIRD** *Anthreptes singalensis*

A male was seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS).

**WHITE-BELLIED MUNIA** *Lonchura leucogastra*

A flock of 4 was seen at Bunker Track on 23/3 (GG/LKS)

## **Report on the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Census**

By Lim Kim Seng

The Nature Society (Singapore)'s Bird Group conducted its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Census (ABC) on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2010 in rather fair and warm conditions. It saw the involvement of a total of 60 people at 26 sites, an improvement from 40 observers and 23 sites in 2009 (Lim 2009). The totals in species and numbers were also a great improvement from the tally of 7,135 birds from 144 species last year (Lim 2009). We recorded for this 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the ABC, 8,665 birds from 161 species.

Of the 26 sites counted, Neo Tiew Lane 2 was the most diverse with 57 species, followed by Ubin Central with 56 species, and Halus and Poyan, both with 53 species. The least diverse sites were Telok Blangah Hill Park with 23 species recorded, followed by Mount Faber with 27 species and Tuas, with 28 species.

The most bird populous site was, as expected, Sungei Mandai. It had 1,335 birds, a significant recovery from the disastrous showing in 2009 of just 665 birds, but still some way from 1,896 birds of 2008. In second place was Neo Tiew Lane 2 with 696 birds, an increase from 590 birds last year and third was Sungei Buloh Route 1 with 648 birds. These top three sites were also coincidentally in the north-west sector of Singapore and highlight the importance of this part of Singapore for bird conservation. The least populous sites were Telok Blangah Hill Park with 100 birds counted, a drop from 180 birds of last year, followed by Sime Road with 104 birds and Nee Soon with 133 birds.

Pulau Ubin and Sungei Buloh were two megabiodiversity protected areas which had two sites each in ABC 2010 but it was Pulau Ubin which had a better overall diversity this round with 70 species compared to Sungei Buloh's 58. However, in terms of numbers, Sungei Buloh was just ahead with 915 birds compared to Ubin's 825.

Because of the lack of observers and other unforeseen circumstances, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Kranji Dam, Pasir Ris Park, Sentosa and Simpang Grassland were not covered in this year's census. A former site, Punggol Grassland, has been lost to housing development and could not be counted. It is hoped that the pool of leaders can be increased in the years ahead, with the involvement of more people from the birding community. On the bright side, we had two new sites in this year's census: Lower Peirce Reservoir and Tuas.

What then was Singapore's most numerous bird? Well, it was none other than our ubiquitous sturnid yet again. The White-vented Myna retained its pole position for the fourth successive year with a score of 1,001 birds. Its total is again below that of the two previous years. Second was Asian Glossy Starling with 884 birds, almost double that of the 481 birds of 2009. Coming in third to fifth positions were Pacific Golden Plover (711), Whimbrel (387) and Pink-necked Green Pigeon (386). Except for the green

pigeon, all the birds in the top five positions scored more when compared with 2009 (Lim 2009).

The remaining top ten birds were Yellow-vented Bulbul, in sixth place with 385 birds, up slightly from 382 in 2009, Lesser Sand Plover (258), Barn Swallow (219), Little Egret (211) and Black-naped Oriole (199).

After missing the top ten positions for 2009, waders made a comeback with three species featuring strongly this round with third, fourth and seventh positions.

The top 21 birds of 2010 are listed below (Table 1) together with comparative numbers and rankings from 2009:

#	SPECIES	ABC 2010	ABC 2009
1	WHITE-VENTED MYNA	1001	1161 (1)
2	ASIAN GLOSSY STARLING	884	481 (2)
3	PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER*	711	136 (13)
4	WHIMBREL*	387	106 (19)
5	PINK-NECKED GREEN PIGEON	386	389 (3)
6	YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL	385	382 (4)
7	LESSER SAND PLOVER*	258	48 (37)
8	BARN SWALLOW*	219	82 (22)
9	LITTLE EGRET*	211	150 (9)
10	BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE	199	190 (5)
11	SPOTTED DOVE	191	188 (7)
12	COMMON PIGEON	179	143 (10)
13	COMMON IORA	159	120 (17)
14	COLLARED KINGFISHER	146	131 (14)
15	PACIFIC SWALLOW	141	190 (6)
16	GREY HERON	132	98 (21)
17	LONG-TAILED PARAKEET	130	72 (25)
18	HOUSE CROW	130	141 (11)
19	COMMON REDSHANK*	124	80 (24)
20	COMMON GREENSHANK*	117	137 (12)
21	OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD	117	124 (15)

**Table 1: Top 20 Most Numerous Birds in ABC 2010**  
(Note: Species marked with an asterisk indicate migrants.)

The total number of migrant species recorded was 42 species or 26% of the total of 161 species counted. 118 species were resident and one, a non-breeding visitor.

Of the 56 nationally threatened species, 24 species or 43% were recorded. The most abundant nationally threatened species was the Grey Heron with a count of 132 birds, up from 98 birds and rising to 16<sup>th</sup> position overall. The only globally threatened species

encountered in this year's census was Straw-headed Bulbul of which 48 birds were recorded, down from 55 in 2009 and putting it in 38<sup>th</sup> position. It was also the second most numerous nationally threatened species recorded this year. Our third most numerous nationally threatened species was the Oriental Magpie Robin, which was placed 49<sup>th</sup> with its nation-wide count of 36 birds, an improvement from 31 birds in 2009.

There were twelve species of raptors recorded. This included the nationally threatened Crested Serpent-eagle (3 birds) and Changeable Hawk Eagle (7 birds). The top three most numerous raptors were the Brahminy Kite, with 32 birds recorded, White-bellied Sea Eagle (28 birds) and Black Baza (27).

The best birds of the day were undoubtedly two Himalayan Vultures seen at Sungei Buloh Route 2. Other exciting birds observed during ABC 2010 were a Ruddy Kingfisher at Lower Peirce Reservoir, Blue-rumped Parrot (Bukit Timah), Broad-billed Sandpiper (Mandai), Javan Pond Heron (Halus and Mandai), Black Bittern (Sungei Buloh), Mangrove Pitta (Pulau Ubin), Mugimaki Flycatcher (Malcolm Park) and Eastern Crowned Warbler (Nee Soon).

The following people led or assisted in ABC 2010 and made it a success:

Ali Jaafar, Doreen Ang, Howard Banwell, Mike Bush, Cai Yixiong, Richard Carden, Chan Kim Cheng, MY Chan, Alfred Chia, Avian Chia, Serene Chng, Geoffrey Davison, Horst Flotow, Willie Foo, Foong Hin Cheong, Gerard Francis, Leslie Fung, Gavin Goodyear, James Heng, Ho Hua Chew, Kenneth Kee, Sue Knight, Dennis Kwan, Maurice Kwan, Danny Lau, Lee Ee Ling, Jimmy Lee, Lee Lay Tin, Lim Kim Chuah, Lim Kim Seng, Jeanne Miller, Mithilesh, Ng Chay Tuan, Randal Ong, Alan Owyong, Phang Seng Khai, Mick Price, Nessie Qiu, Rehan Yusoff, Freda Rickwood, Ian Rickwood, Jane Rogers, Julian Sek, Gloria Seow, Martti Siponen, John Spencer, Liana Knight Spencer, R Subaraj, Sutari Supari, Tan Kok Hui, Tan Soon Im, Kaori Tanaka, Allan Teo, KP Teh, Toh Yuet Hsin, Wee Sau Cheng, Wing Chong, Yang Pah Liang, Cecilia Yip and Yong Yik Shih.

Thanks once again to all who helped ensure the success of this 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the ABC. I hope you had fun and see you again in 2011!

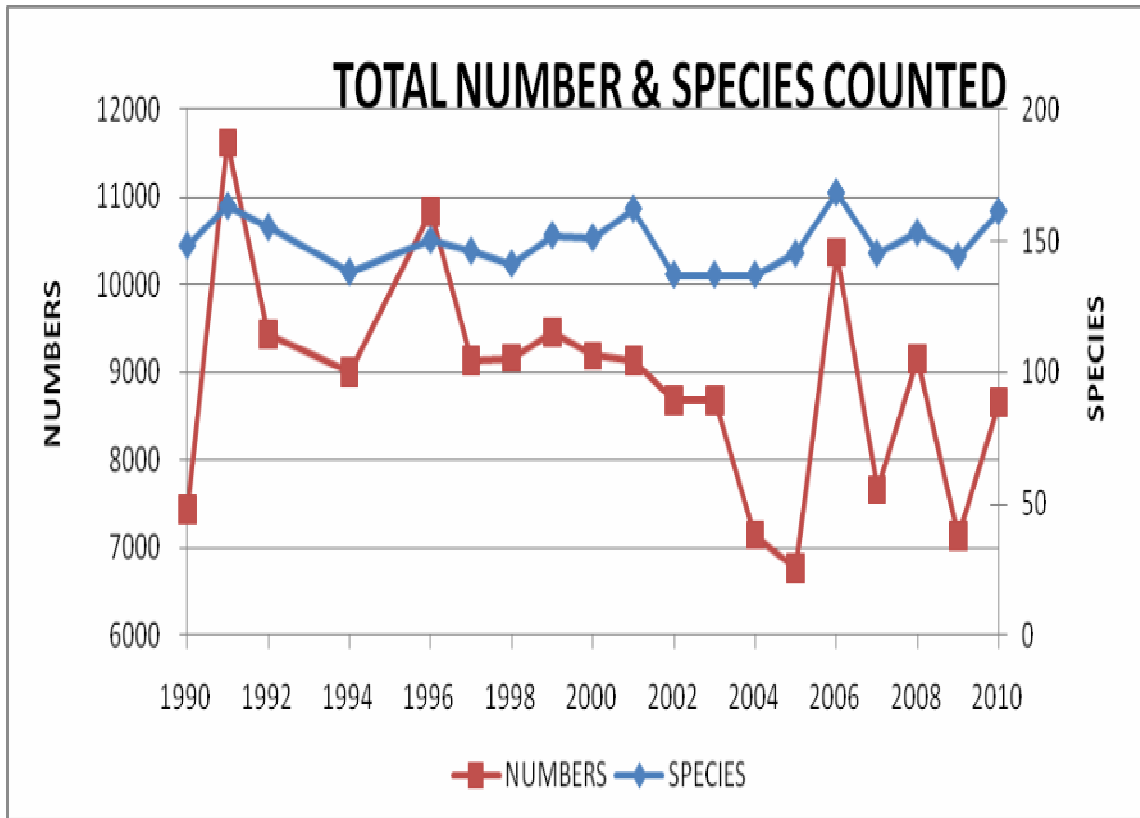


Figure 1: Total bird numbers and species of Annual Bird Census, 1990-2010

### References

Lim, K.C. & Lim, K.S. (2009). *State of Singapore's Wild Birds and Bird Habitats: Results of the Annual Bird Census: 1996-2005*. Nature Society (Singapore) Bird Group, Singapore.

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## Singapore Raptor Report Spring Migration, March 2010

Compiled by Tan Gim Cheong

### SUMMARY

81 raptors from 8 migrant species were reported this month. **Black Bazas** continued to be the most numerous with a total of 41 birds. **Oriental Honey Buzzards** came in second in terms of numbers again with a total of 16 birds. The third most numerous was the **Peregrine Falcon** with 8 birds. Two (very) rare/accidental migrant species was recorded this season and two rare resident species were reported.

Martti Sipponen spent many weekends at Tuas hoping for a repeat of the hundreds seen on spring migration last year but the birds did not show. Ulf Remahl kept up the vigilance concerning the Black Bazas at Singapore Quarry and he found out that the dead tree is a staging post in the morning. After roosting in the surrounding trees, the Black Baza spend up to an hour in the dead tree before taking off for the day.



A (very) rare first winter male Lesser Kestrel at Changi Cove, March 2010. Note the back of the bird which is more plain and less spotted compared to the Common Kestrel. (Photo by Jonathan Cheah)

### Highlights for migrant species:

The most exciting sighting of the month was of a single first winter male **Lesser Kestrel** at Changi Cove. First detected on 6<sup>th</sup> March, Nicholas Tan photographed the bird on 13<sup>th</sup> March and Jonathan Cheah reported seeing and photographing the bird from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March. The observers mistook it as a Common Kestrel until Peter Kennerley identified the bird as a first winter male Lesser Kestrel. Many thanks goes to Peter Kennerley for correcting the identification and David Bakewell for passing the message. This is the second time this species is recorded in Singapore. The only previous record was of 4 birds, with at least one male, from January - March 2001. What makes the sighting of this species all the more significant is the fact that the Lesser Kestrel has not been recorded in Peninsular Malaysia and Thailand. The nearest records are from Laos and Myanmar! (This record is currently being reviewed by the Nature Society (Singapore) Bird Group's Records Committee.). Closely following behind this record in terms of excitement value are two **Himalayan Griffons** recorded over Sungei Buloh on the 21<sup>st</sup> March by Lau Jia Sheng although no photographs were taken. This record, which is also under review would potentially be the eighth national record.

For the uncommon migrant raptors, 2 **Chinese Sparrowhawks** were seen at Pulau Seletar/ Pulau Punggol by Alan Owyong and friends while one was seen during the Sentosa survey by Willie Foo and Ali Jaafar. A total of 3 **Eastern Marsh Harriers** were recorded – 2 seen in flight at Changi (Nicholas Tan and separately - Frankie) and one at Tuas South (Martti Siponen). Small numbers of **Ospreys** and **Japanese Sparrowhawks** were also reported.

### Highlights for sedentary species:

For the sedentary species, it was a good month for the rare **Crested Serpent Eagle** as there were 4 sightings - at Springleaf by Leslie Fung; at Malcolm Road by Jane Rogers and friends during the Census; at MacRitchie by Richard Carden and on Pulau Ubin by Doreen Ang. For our rare **Grey-headed Fish Eagle**, there were 3 sightings – at MacRitchie by Richard Carden; at Kranji bund by Lim Kim Seng and at Chinese Gardens by Peter Jones. Nesting activity was observed for the White-bellied Sea Eagle and Changeable Hawk-eagle.



Table 1

S/N	Species	No.	S/N	Species	No.
1	Osprey	4		<b><i>Residents / Sedentary Species</i></b>	
2	Black Baza	41	9	Black-winged Kite	4
3	Himalayan Griffon	2	10	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	3
4	Oriental Honey Buzzard	16	11	Crested Serpent Eagle	4
5	Eastern Marsh Harrier	3	12	Changeable Hawk-eagle	7
6	Chinese Sparrowhawk	3			
7	Japanese Sparrowhawk	3		<b><i>Unidentified</i></b>	
8	Lesser Kestrel	1	14	Unidentified Raptors	2
9	Peregrine Falcon	8	15	Unidentified <i>Accipiters</i>	1
<b>Total for Migrants</b>			<b>81</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: The total numbers are indicative only with similar species in the same area discounted to prevent duplication.

### 1. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (4)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
18	2	Kranji bund, circling and then flying northeast, 11am	Ian Rickword, Ho Hua Chew & Gerard Francis
18	1	Pulau Tekong	Lau Jia Sheng
20	1	Pulau Semakau, the bird was feeding on a fish, morning	Wing Chong, Tan Hang Chong & Sunny Yeo
21	1	Turut Track, the bird was perched on the wires eating fish	Wei Luen & Richard
27	1	Kranji Bund, bird was fishing unmolested by other raptors in the area, morning	Lim Kim Seng

### 2. Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* (41)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	3	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.21am  <i>"I was at the dead tree access road to Singapore Quarry straight in from Jalan Asas already @ 06:50 to find out if my latest theory was correct. That one is that all the Black Baza roost in some denser trees and then very early in the morning right at dawn flies to the dead tree."</i>	Ulf Remahl



		<i>On my arrival there were no birds at all of any kind. Suddenly @07:21 there were 3 Black Bazas. I didn't see them coming as I at the same time looked at other birds like two very noisy drumming woodpeckers. One of the 3 Black Bazas left a couple of minutes before eight, which I have found out is their normal behavior. Then the very last Black Baza will be gone somewhere between 08:15 -08:20. I was very pleased to have found out that my theory was correct but I am still confounded why these predators always assemble in this very tree. There are many more dead trees in the area. The only differentiating feature I can see is that the assembly tree seems to be slightly taller than the other dead trees in the area."</i>	
3	1	Singapore Quarry, in flight	Lim Kim Seng
4	1	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.55am	Ulf Remahl
5	6	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.50am	Ulf Remahl
5	1	Springside Canal, in flight from direction of Yishun towards SLE, 8.45am	Margaret Yeo
5	2	Bidadari, 1pm	Fang Sher Chyet
6	1	Jurong West, on Pan Island Expressway, 8.30am	Martti Siponen
6	5	Bidadari, 10am	Fang Sher Chyet
6	1	Kent Ridge, circling, late morning	Horst Flotow
6	3	Pasir Ris Farmway 1	Cyril Ng, Ho Hua Chew, Jimmy Lee & uGerard Francis
9	3	Chinese Gardens, 4pm	Nicholas Tan
13	1	Pulau Ubin, perched on a coconut tree	Doreen Ang
14	1	Dairy Farm, perched on a tree on the path to Wallace's House, 8am	Gerard Francis, Lim Poh Bee, Margaret Yeo & Steve Early
14	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, 2pm  <i>"Observed coming from the direction of SBWR look-out point on route 1 and over the pond toward hide 1C in a low glide, perched, and hopped from tree branch to tree branch, and in a low glide right to left across the pond. Followed this manner of movement for about 10 minutes and the last sighting of it was again, the glide-and-hop at a low level from tree to tree</i>	Margaret Yeo

		<i>into the "no entry" section across from the entrance/exit of the pathway to hide IC."</i>	
16	7	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.45am  <i>"Between March 5<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, I checked the site regularly between 07:30 and 08:00 but during this period not even one Black Baza turned up."</i>	Ulf Remahl
18	2	Neo Tiew Lane 2, by the barrier opposite D'Resort, flying westwards, 8am	Ian Rickword,
20	6	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.35am	Ulf Remahl
21	4	Bukit Batok West, morning	Wing Chong & Phang Seng Khai
21	3	Malcolm Road, morning	Jane Rogers, Doreen Ang, Nessie Qui, Ian & Freda Rickword
21	4	Pulau Tekong	Lau Jia Sheng
23	3	Jalan Asas (access road to Singapore Quarry), on the usual dead tree, 7.30am  <i>"Interestingly enough this is the only time I have seen a bird as late as @ 09:00. The only explanation I have for that is a very heavy down pour that morning. I got stuck in it myself at the shelter in Singapore Quarry. It also turned out that this was the very last date in March there were any Black Baza at the site. I checked the site also on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> but there was no sign of any Black Baza. It will be interesting to see if these birds will use this staging point during 2010 again."</i>	Ulf Remahl
27	4	West Coast Beach, circling high, 11.30am	Ian & Freda Rickword

### 3. Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* (16)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
2	1	Pan Island Expressway Tampines exit, 8am	Fang Sher Chyet
6	1	Bidadari, 10am	Fang Sher Chyet
6	2	Kent Ridge, 1 sub-adult and 1 dark phase, zooming over the ridge, late morning	Horst Flotow
7	1	Singapore Botanic Gardens, Eco Lake, 4pm	Fang Sher Chyet

21	1	Bukit Batok West, morning	Wing Chong & Phang Seng Khai
21	3	Sembawang Park, dark morph, 10.30am  <i>“Sunday March 21st, Sembawang Park Bird Census, 10.30 am just at the end, Wee Sau Cheng and I came across a dark morph Oriental Honey Buzzard sitting in a very low tree, almost a bush. After a few minutes it took off and then rose into the sky on the thermals above the Andrews Avenue/Simpang area, to join another two circling above that we had not noticed before. All three just went higher and higher.”</i>  <i>“This was interesting because several years ago, doing the same census, we had seen tiny specks up in the sky on thermals at the end of the census and not been able to identify them. Also we had been at the November Raptor watch at Sembawang Park and seen nothing except a single Black Baza. It is very small evidence, but it fits with the idea that routes in both directions of migration are not always the same.”</i>	Margie Hall & Wee Sau Cheng
21	1	Pulau Ubin, flying very high, 11.45am	Ben Lee
21	3	MacRitchie Reservoir, section adjoining golf course, late morning	Richard Carden
21	1	Aero-green Aeroponics Farm, opposite SBWR entrance.	Ulf Remahl
26	1	Pan Island Expressway Paya Lebar exit, 8am	Fang Sher Chyet
28	1	Portsdown Road, in flight	Alan Owyong

#### 4. Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* (3)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	1	Changi Airshow area, morning	Frankie
13	2	Tanah Merah, male and female, 9am	Nicholas Tan
21	1	Tuas South Fields, male hunting, 9.23am	Martti Siponen

#### 5. Chinese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter soloensis* (3)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
14	2	Seletar West, 1 of them was a male	Alan Owyong, Alfred Chia, Doreen Ang, Peng Ah Huay &

			Yang Pah Liang
27	1	Sentosa, perched near Mt. Imbiah, morning	Willie Foo & Ali Jaafar

**6. Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* (3)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
5	1	Tampines Bike Trail, flying low, 6.15pm	Fang Sher Chyet
6	1	Bah Soon Pah Road, in flight, noon	Alan Owyong
27	1	Sentosa, flying northerly, morning	Alan Owyong, Kenneth Kee & Alfred Chia

**7. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (1)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
6	1	Tanah Merah/Changi Cove, first year male	Wong LH
13	1	Tanah Merah/Changi Cove, first year male	Nicholas Tan
16-18	1	Tanah Merah/Changi Cove, first year male	Jonathan Cheah



*Lesser Kestrel at Tanah Merah/Changi Cove. Note the position of the wing tips relative to tail tip in the left photo, in the Common Kestrel, the wing tips does not reach as far. Photos by Nicholas Tan.*

### 8. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (8)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
6	3	Pasir Ris Farmway 1	Cyril Ng, Ho Hua Chew, Jimmy Lee & Gerard Francis
6	1	Tuas South Fields, 10.55am	Martti Siponen
13	1	Pulau Ubin, at usual haunt on the tower	Doreen Ang
16	1	Changi Cove	Jonathon Cheah
21	2	Tuas South Fields, 2 birds chasing each other, 9.23am	Martti Siponen
31	1	Kranji Marsh, dive bombing a White-bellied Sea Eagle, 5pm	Leslie Fung



Peregrine Falcon at Changi Cove on 160310 (Photo by Jonathan Cheah).

#### **Resident raptors:**

Note: For resident raptors, the counts for the 2 very common resident raptors – Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea Eagle were not tabled.

**9. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (4)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
5	1	Tuas South Fields	Martti Siponen
6	2	Tuas South Fields	Martti Siponen
14	1	Tuas South Fields	Martti Siponen
21	1	Tuas South Fields	Martti Siponen
23	2	Tuas South Fields	Martti Siponen
27	2	Pulau Semakau	Ian & Freda Rickword

**10. Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* (3)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
21	1	MacRitchie Reservoir, section adjoining golf course, circling above reservoir, late morning	Richard Carden
27	1	Kranji Bund, bird flew low over the bund and into a tree in the marsh, morning	Lim Kim Seng
31	1	Chinese Gardens  <i>"A tatty-looking grey-headed fish eagle moulting a few primaries soared over Chinese Garden"</i>	Peter Jones

**11. Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* (4)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
3	1	Springleaf, in flight, 10am	Leslie Fung
13	1	Pulau Ubin, adult seen flying above Jalan Jelutong. Bird was calling in flight.	Doreen Ang
21	1	Malcolm Road, morning	Jane Rogers, Doreen Ang, Nessie Qui, Ian & Freda Rickword
21	1	MacRitchie Reservoir, section adjoining golf course, circling above reservoir, late morning	Richard Carden

**12. Changeable Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* (7)**

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
3	2	Dairy Farm Quarry, 1 pale and 1 dark morph	Lim Kim Seng
4	1	Dairy Farm Quarry, dark morph, late morning	Lim Kim Seng
6	1	Kent Ridge, late morning	Horst Flotow
14	1	Lorong Halus, dark morph	Alan Owyong, Alfred Chia, Doreen Ang, Peng Ah Huay & Yang Pah Liang
16	1	Singapore Quarry, heard and seen.	Ulf Remahl

21	1	Malcolm Road, morning	Jane Rogers, Doreen Ang, Nessie Qui, Ian & Freda Rickword
25	1	Singapore Quarry, heard and seen.	Ulf Remahl
27	1	Pulau Semakau	Ian & Freda Rickword

### **13. Unidentified Raptors (2)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Location and Details</b>	<b>Reported By</b>
18	1	Tai Seng Avenue, 7.50am, big bird mobbed by 2 mynas	JinZhao
18	1	Pulau Tekong  <i>"I suspected Jerdon's Baza/buzzard? sighted on 18/3: broad, longish and oval-shaped wings, brownish underwing"</i>	Lau Jia Sheng

### **14. Unidentified Accipiters (1)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Location and Details</b>	<b>Reported By</b>
6	1	Kent Ridge, late morning  <i>"Small Accipiter (on top of the ridge over the battle tank viewpoint), too fast to get a good look"</i>	Horst Flotow

Note:

The numbers in brackets beside the bird names indicates the total number seen for this month. Different reports of the same raptors from the same area have been discounted to prevent duplication.

Many thanks to those who have sent in their reports and especially to Jonathan Cheah, Leslie Fung and Nicholas Tan for the use of their photos.

## Commentary: Red Junglefowl making a comeback in Singapore?

By Yong Ding Li

Famed as the ancestor of the domestic chicken, the Red junglefowl *Gallus gallus* is without doubt also the most well-known wild member of the phasianidae, occupying one of the largest distributional ranges among pheasants in tropical Asia. Currently, despite hunting pressures and hybridization with domestic fowl, the Red junglefowl remains relatively common in its native range and its adaptability means that it is one of few phasianids that are capable of exploiting disturbed habitats like secondary scrub and agricultural land, both which are increasing throughout its range. In Singapore, the Red junglefowl is not so fortunate. It was considered as extirpated from the mainland and until very recently the only known, truly wild populations occurred only on the offshore island of Pulau Ubin (Lim 2009). While birds that fit the description of Red junglefowl were documented from time to time on the Singapore mainland, many of these were of suspect origin, being potentially escapees and were thus never considered as truly wild.

Recognizing a wild Red junglefowl is relatively straightforward, but when hybrids are involved this becomes complicated by the fact that hybrids may share some (not all) of the morphological features of wild birds, examples being the white ear patch, rump feathers and grey as opposed to yellow legs. In Singapore, attempts have been made to reintroduce populations, for instance at Sungei Buloh (Lim 2009) though how successful these initiatives are have never been published. On the other hand, sight records of Red junglefowls in secondary forest and clearings in the Changi area, directly opposite Pulau Ubin where a resident wild population occurs hints at the likelihood that these birds have indeed colonized mainland Singapore.

In the last two years, sightings of Red junglefowl are increasingly frequent and I have observed individuals and pairs at a number of sites throughout Singapore. These include sites in the west, notably secondary scrubland in the campus of the Nanyang Technological University and secondary forest fringing Sungei Gedong in the western Catchment. Elsewhere, I have also observed birds in the Bukit Batok, Mandai, Eng Neo and Loyang area, the last which is in close proximity of the Changi coast. Other observers have also documented small groups in the Central Catchment Forest (CCNR) (Fam, S.D. *in litt.* 2010). This accumulating body of evidence implies that the Red junglefowl, possibly augmented by previously released individuals is colonizing suitable habitats throughout the Singapore mainland and may in fact been established and breeding. Large areas of secondary scrub in west and central Singapore offers plenty of potential habitat.

Recolonization of the Red Junglefowl from Malaysia is hardly surprising, given two reasons. Firstly, Red Junglefowl are highly adaptable and like the Eurasian wild pig, has invaded secondary forests and plantations, especially oil palm in peninsular Malaysia, where they are more readily found than in closed tall forests. Elsewhere, Red junglefowl are successful invasives that have established itself at a number of places worldwide (Long 1981). Secondly, contrary to popular myth, junglefowls are capable of flight and



can possibly breach the narrower stretches of the Johor straits from coastal Johor, of which many areas are still vegetated and would contain source populations of Red junglefowls.

On mainland Singapore's forest where native phasianids have been extinct for decades, the reappearance of the Red junglefowl has two immediate implications. On a more positive note, the bird reinstates an ecological niche which has been left vacant for years and thus restores a missing ecological element of Singapore's forests. On the other hand, the presence of numerous invasive plant species in Singapore suggests that the junglefowl, being an omnivore may further aid in the spread of these throughout by assisting in seed dispersal. Whatever the case, while the recolonisation of the mainland by Red junglefowl is a welcome event for conservationists, it might be prudent to continue to watch its spread across the island closely.

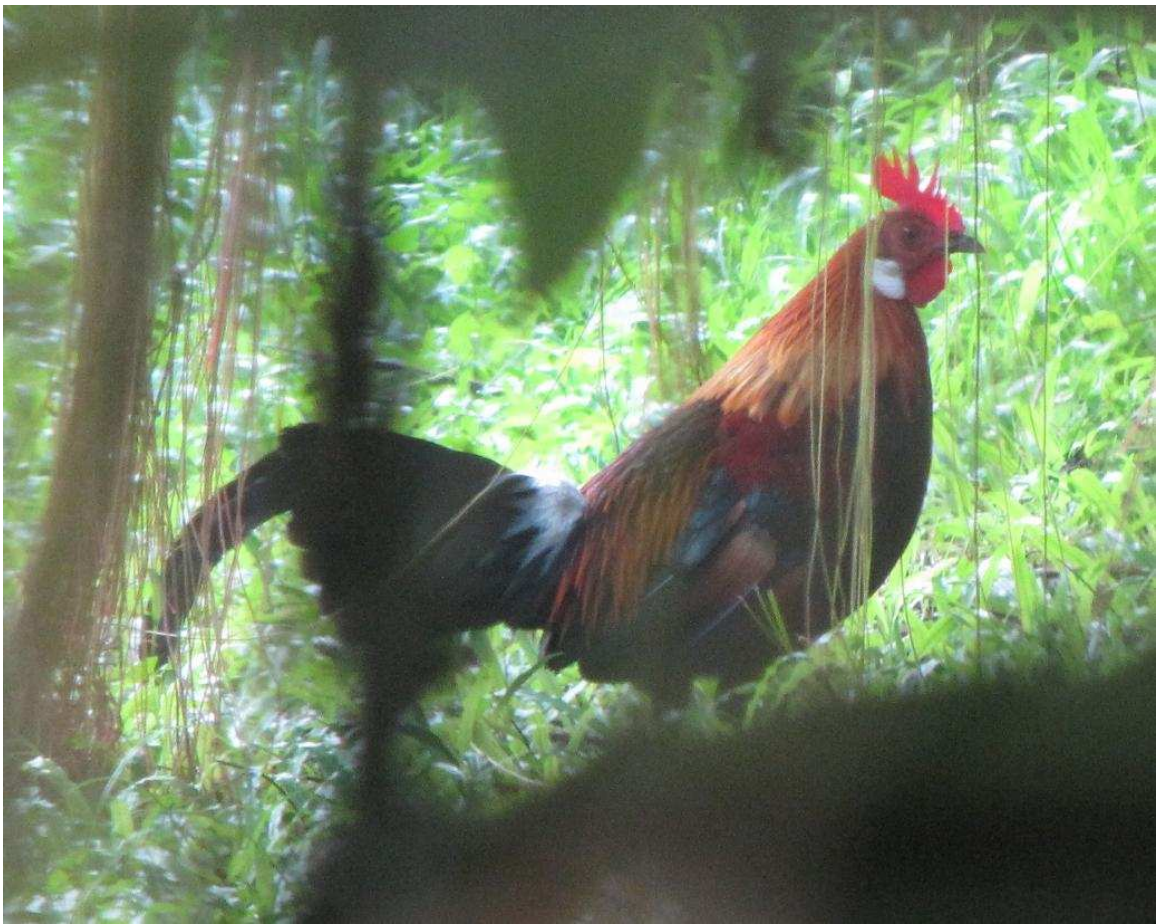


Figure 1. Male Red junglefowl seen in belukar in the Mandai area. (Photo by Yong Ding Li)

## **References**

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