

Singapore Raptor Report Spring Migration, January 2010

Summary:

Compared with previous years, January 2010 was a good month with 196 raptors from 14 migrant species reported. Amazingly, this number is almost thrice the total number (66) reported last month when 9 migrant species were reported. Black Bazas continued to be the most numerous at 130 birds, with a flock of 50 reported by Mike Tan at Upper Jurong. Oriental Honey Buzzards came in second in terms of numbers with a total of 27. Three migrant species were recorded for the first time this season. January 2010 also marked the month when a good haul of 3 rare sedentary (resident/non-breeding visitor) raptors were reported.



Jerdon's Baza with snake in talons at Singapore Quarry on 090110, by Martti Siponen



Himalayan Vulture, juvenile, in flight at MacRitchie on 150110, by Leslie Fung

Highlights for migrant species:

On the 9th of the month, a rare **Jerdon's Baza** was seen by Peter Jones and Martti Siponen at Singapore Quarry. It was even photographed flying with a green snake (likely an Oriental Whip Snake)! This enigmatic species is distributed disjointedly across India and Southeast Asia. Little is known about the nature of its movements. Following an advisory of 7 Himalayan Vultures for Thailand in December 2009 by Chaiyan of the Thai Raptor Group, a lone **Himalayan Vulture** was finally seen and photographed by Leslie Fung at MacRitchie on the 15th of the month. On the same day at Tuas, 4 huge raptors whose size and wing position recalled vultures in glide were seen but they were gone before Martti Siponen could retrieve his binoculars for a thorough identification. There are only a small number of records

for this rare scavenger and most of the previous sightings have been in the month of January as well. Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng and Tan Kok Hui reported the first sightings, this season, of the uncommon **Black Kite** at Seletar West. Thus, the 3 migrant species recorded for the first time this season are Jerdon's Baza, Himalayan Vulture and Black Kite.

Seletar West seems to be the favoured wintering area for **Booted Eagles**, with a total of 3 reported by Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau and Lau Jia Sheng. Over at Changi Cove, a single female **Common Kestrel** first reported by Alfred Chia & pals and again 12 days later by Lee Tiah Kee & Lim Kim Chuah added to the month's highlights. Alfred Chia & pals also recorded the lone **Pied Harrier** sighting for this month at Changi Cove.

Highlights for sedentary species:

For the sedentary species, it was an exciting month with 3 rare species reported. The first rarity was a **Crested Goshawk** seen and photographed in flight on 23 Jan 2010 by Martti Siponen at Singapore Quarry. It was carrying an avian prey in its talons! Also on 23 Jan 2010, the second rarity, the **Crested Serpent Eagle**, was reported at different locations indicating that 2 individuals were present. One was seen at Springleaf by Danny Lau and Tan Kok Hui while the other was seen at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve by John Spencer. The third rarity was not one but 2 **Blyth's Hawk-eagles** seen at Kent Ridge on 30 Jan 2010 by Horst Flotow while walking his dog! This is only the fifth record for this species in Singapore. They are rare non-breeding visitors and may be dispersants from Johor.

A one-day count of 4 **Grey-headed Fish Eagles** (1 adult, 2 second/third year birds and 1 juvenile) at one location – Singapore Quarry – may represent the highest density at a single location ever reported for this species. With a good count of 18 **Changeable Hawk-eagles**, we hope that this species will continue to thrive in Singapore. However, the population of **Black-winged Kites** seems to have reduced, with only 6 individuals of this formerly very common species reported this month.

Table 1

S/N	Species	No.	S/N	Species	No.
1	Osprey	7			
2	Jerdon's Baza	1		<i>Residents / Sedentary Species</i>	
3	Black Baza	130	15	Black-winged Kite	6
4	Oriental Honey Buzzard	27	16	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	11
5	Black Kite	1	17	Crested Serpent Eagle	2
6	Himalayan Vulture	1	18	Crested Goshawk	1
7	Eastern Marsh Harrier	6	19	Changeable Hawk-eagle	18
8	Pied Harrier	1	20	Blyth's Hawk-eagle	2
9	Chinese Sparrowhawk	3			
10	Japanese Sparrowhawk	6			
11	Common Buzzard	3		<i>Unidentified</i>	
12	Booted Eagle	3	21	Unidentified Raptors	8
13	Common Kestrel	1	22	Unidentified <i>Accipiters</i>	2
14	Peregrine Falcon	6			
Total for Migrants		196	Grand Total		246

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

1. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (7)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning	Doreen Ang, Ho Fee Hian, Ian & Freda Rickword, Ivy Tan, Eiko & Akihiko Watanabe
1	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, afternoon	Sunny Yeo
2	1	Neo Tiew Lane	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
9	3	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve / Johor Straits	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
16	1	Kranji Bund, 2 sightings probably of the same bird	Wong Chung Cheong
16	1	Mandai	David Li & Lim Kim Keang
16	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Kenneth Kee, Jeremy Lewis & Amanda
20	1	Western Part of Singapore, bird seen fishing in the late evening	Mike Tan
24	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Mick Price & Horst Flotow
27	1	Kranji Reservoir	Lee Tiah Kee
30	2	Seletar West	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
30	1	Kranji Marsh Walk	Sreedharan G.
31	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, morning, mobbed by Large-billed Crows	See Toh

2. Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
9	1	<p>Singapore Quarry, seen flying with a snake in its talons.</p> <p><i>“Today when birding at Singapore Quarry with Pete Jones we noticed a raptor carrying a snake circling above us at 13:30. I got some shots before it was landing to one tree on other side of the quarry. From the photos we got the working identification of Jerdon's Baza. Didn't have any books with us.</i></p> <p><i>After one hour it took back to the wings and I got some more shots. It disappeared to the direction of Bukit Batok.”</i></p>	Martti Siponen & Peter Jones

3. Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* (130)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning	Doreen Ang, Ho Fee Hian, Ian & Freda Rickword, Ivy Tan, Eiko & Akihiko Watanabe
1	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, afternoon	Sunny Yeo
2	7	Changi Cove	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
2	1	Singapore Quarry	Martti Siponen
3	11	Jurong Lake, morning	Sunny Yeo
9	2	Saddle Club, Eng Neo Avenue	Doreen Ang, Nessie Khoo, Peng Ah Huay, Ian & Freda Rickword
9	4	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
9	50	Upper Jurong, the flock was seen flying towards Lim Chu Kang Cemetery	Mike Tan
10	10	Singapore Quarry, leaving the forest at 8.50am heading west	Martti Siponen
11	8	Jalan Bahtera	Alfred Chia
12	1	Kranji Expressway, single bird in flight, 10.15am	Tan Gim Cheong
13	1	West Coast	Low Choon How
15	1	Kent Ridge Park	Lam Hon Pui
15	5	West Coast Park	Henry Koh
16	6	Kranji Bund, afternoon, riding on thermals	Wong Chung Cheong
16	3	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Kenneth Kee, Jeremy Lewis & Amanda
18	6	Bidadari, noontime	Fang Sher Chyet
23	1	Springleaf	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	4	Serapong, Sentosa	Alfred Chia & Willie Foo
23	3	Chinese Garden, 10am	Fang Sher Chyet
23	1	Evolution Garden, Singapore Botanic Gardens	Sreedharan G.
23	1	Singapore Botanic Gardens, morning	Martti Siponen
23	1	Choa Chu Kang Cemetery	Alfred & Avian Chia
24	5	Seletar West	Danny Lau & Lau Jia Sheng
27	1	Kranji Reservoir	Lee Tiah Kee
27	2	Kranji Expressway, overflight at 5.15pm	Martti Siponen
29	11	Choa Chu Kang, 7pm, flying just above trees	Tan Gim Cheong
30	7	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng & Con Foley

30	7	Seletar West	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
30	14	Jalan Asas to Singapore Quarry, early morning, suspected roosting site	Ulf Remahl
31	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, morning	See Toh

4. Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* (27)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	4	Bidadari	Con Foley
2	4	Changi Cove, 1 pale morph adult, 1 pale morph juvenile, 1 dark morph adult and 1 dark morph immature	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
2	1	Singapore Quarry	Martti Siponen
6	1	Ang Mo Kio Avenue 5, pale morph, 2pm	Fang Sher Chyet
9	1	East of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
10	1	Upper Seletar Reservoir, light morph adult, soaring	Tan Gim Cheong
10	2	Simpang	Tan Kok Hui
10	1	Aljunied Park, OHB being chased by a crow at 6.30pm	Lena Chow
15	4	Alexandra Road, 5.45pm	John Spencer
17	1	Chinese Garden, pale morph	Fang Sher Chyet
17	1	Choa Chu Kang Avenue 4	"vbs1979"
23	1	West Coast, dark morph adult, blind on right eye	Chris Lee
23	1	West Coast, pale morph, afternoon	Henry Koh
23	1	Chinese Garden	Low Choon How
30	2	Seletar West, 1 pale morph and 1 dark morph	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
30	2	Kent Ridge	Horst Flotow
30	1	Serangoon Gardens Estate	Wong Loong Tat



Oriental Honey Buzzard, dark morph, blind in right eye, at West Coast, by Chris Lee

5. Black Kite *Milvus migrans* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
24	1	Seletar West	Danny Lau & Lau Jia Sheng
30	1	Seletar West	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng

6. Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
15	1	MacRitchie Reservoir, with photo. <i>“pic was taken at MacRitchie park multi-storey car park at about 1130am, 15/1/10. It was seen flying southwards and somewhere above Caldecott Hill turned and overflew me as I was walking to my car heading east. The weather was overcast and windy. No other observers as I was alone. No noticeable behaviour, just gliding along.....it was over very quickly.”</i>	Leslie Fung

7. Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* (6)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
13	1	Tuas South, 1 male hunting over the fields, 4.30-5pm	Martti Siponen
17	4	Changi Cove	Alfred Chia, Lim Kim Keang, David Li, Willie Foo, Jimmy Chew, Siew Kwang
23	5	Changi Cove, mid-morning, 1 adult and 4 immatures	Nicholas Tan
29	1	Changi Cove, sub-adult male	Lee Tiah Kee & Lim Kim Chuah



Nicholas Tan

Eastern Marsh Harrier, male, in flight at Changi Cove on 23 Jan 10, by Nicholas Tan

8. Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
17	1	Changi Cove, male	Alfred Chia, Lim Kim Keang, David Li, Willie Foo, Jimmy Chew, Siew Kwang

9. Chinese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter soloensis* (3)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
2	1	Changi Cove, adult	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
9	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, female	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
30	1	Seletar West, adult male	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng

10. Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* (6)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
2	1	Changi Cove, juvenile	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
9	2	Kent Ridge Park, a smaller- sized Jap Sparrowhawk attacked a larger-sized one.	Alan OwYong
9	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
10	1	Simpang	Tan Kok Hui
29	1	Botanic Gardens	Peter Jones
30	1	Botanic Gardens, morning	John Spencer

11. Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (3)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
2	2	Changi Cove	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui, Con Foley
19	2	Changi Airport, noon	Nicholas Tan
23	1	Serapong, Sentosa, dark morph	Alfred Chia & Willie Foo

12. Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* (3)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
23	1	Seletar West, 1 pale morph	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau

24	1	Seletar West, 1 pale morph	Danny Lau & Lau Jia Sheng
30	3	Seletar West, 1 pale morph and 2 dark morph	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng



Booted Eagle, dark morph, at Seletar West, by Danny Lau



Booted Eagle, pale morph, at Seletar West, by Lau Jia Sheng

13. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
17	1	Changi Cove, female	Alfred Chia, Lim Kim Keang, David Li, Willie Foo, Jimmy Chew, Siew Kwang
29	1	Changi Cove, female	Lee Tiah Kee & Lim Kim Chuah



Common Kestrel, female, at Changi Cove on 290110, by Lee Tiah Kee

14. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (6)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
9	1	East of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
17	1	Lower Seletar Dam	Lim Kim Seng, Doreen Ang & Margaret Yeo
21	1	Sengkang, perched on HDB flat	Jase Foo
21	1	Tuas South, 8.50am	Martti Siponen
23	1	Seletar West, <i>japonensis</i>	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
27	1	Kranji Reservoir	Lee Tiah Kee
30	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng & Con Foley
30	1	Seletar West, <i>japonensis</i>	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
30	1	Jurong East Avenue 1	Peter Jones



Peregrine Falcon at Kranji Reservoir on 270110, by Lee Tiah Kee

Resident raptors

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

15. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (6)

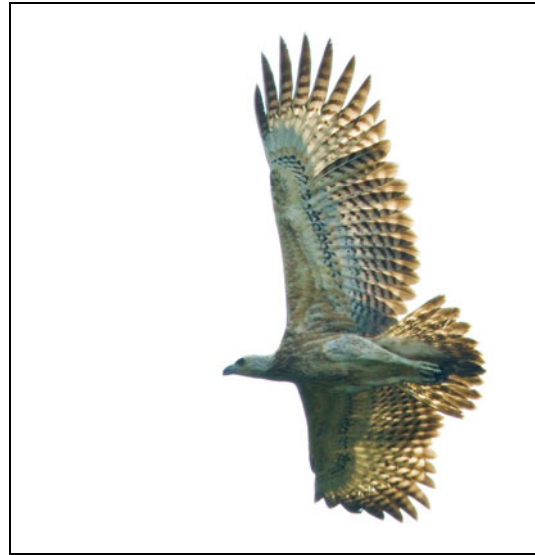
Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
9	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
9	1	Singapore Quarry, afternoon	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
30	2	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Sreedharan G.
30	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng, Con Foley
30	1	Seletar West	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
31	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, mobbed by bigger unidentified raptor	See Toh

16. Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* (11)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning, 2 perched together	Doreen Ang, Ho Fee Hian, Ian & Freda Rickword, Ivy Tan, Eiko & Akihiko Watanabe
1	1	Poyan, mobbed by 2 White-bellied Sea Eagles	Danny Lau
2	2	Singapore Quarry, 1 adult and 1 2 nd -3 rd year bird	Martti Siponen
9	1	Singapore Quarry, 2 nd -3 rd year bird	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
10	2	Singapore Quarry, noon, 1 adult and 1 immature	Sunny Yeo, with Martti Siponen
10	4	Singapore, 1 adult, 2 2 nd -3 rd year bird, 1 juvenile	Martti Siponen
10	1	Mandai Lake, afternoon, perched high on tree	Sunny Yeo
12	1	Upper Seletar Reservoir, morning, perched on tree	Alfred Chia
23	1	Springleaf, adult	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	1	Singapore Quarry, adult	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	1	Singapore Quarry, adult	Martti Siponen
24	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2	Mick Price & Horst Flotow
28	1	National Junior College	Yong Ding Li
30	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, heard only	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng & Con Foley
31	2	Singapore Quarry	Martti Siponen



Grey-headed Fish Eagle, 2nd-3rd year bird at Singapore Quarry, by Martti Siponen



Grey-headed Fish Eagle, juvenile, at Singapore Quarry, by Martti Siponen

17. Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* (2)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
23	1	Springleaf, adult	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning.	John Spencer

18. Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* (1)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
23	1	Singapore Quarry, in flight, with avian prey in talons	Martti Siponen



Crested Goshawk with prey in talons at Singapore Quarry on 230110, by Martti Siponen

19. Changeable Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* (18)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	3	Poyan	Danny Lau
2	2	Changi Cove	Lau Jia Sheng, Danny Lau, Tan Kok Hui & Con Foley
2	3	Singapore Quarry, 1 pale morph, 1 dark morph, 1 juvenile	Martti Siponen
9	1	Saddle Club, Eng Neo Avenue, chased by a lone crow	Doreen Ang, Nessie Khoo, Peng Ah Huay, Ian & Freda Rickwood
9	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
9	1	Singapore Quarry, pale morph	Peter Jones & Martti Siponen
10	1	Bukit Batok Nature Park, morning	Sunny Yeo & Wing Chong
10	1	Singapore Quarry, dark morph, noon	Sunny Yeo
10	2	Singapore Quarry, 1 dark morph & 1 pale morph	Martti Siponen
23	2	Singapore Quarry, heard only	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	1	Seletar West, dark morph	Tan Kok Hui & Danny Lau
23	2	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, dark morph	John Spencer
24	4	Singapore Quarry, 2 dark morph & 2 pale morph	Martti Siponen
26	1	Tengah Air Base, pale morph	Avian Chia
27	1	Krani Reservoir, pale morph	Lee Tiah Kee
29	2	Dairy Farm, 1 dark morph & 1 pale morph	Ben Lee
30	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, pale morph adult	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng & Con Foley
30	1	Seletar West, pale morph adult	Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng
30	1	Pulau Semakau, dark morph	Lee Ee Ling
31	3	Singapore Quarry, 1 pale morph, 1 dark morph, 1 juvenile	Martti Siponen

20. Blyth's Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus alboniger* (2)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
30	2	Kent Ridge <i>"Around 11AM saw one hawk coming over the tree-line and start thermalling up. Quite pale underneath with some barring, slate greyish black on top, the tail had one prominent black band across, with the tip of tail (1-2 cm) being pale. I reckon Blyth's Hawk-eagle, seen it plenty"</i>	Horst Flotow

		<i>of times before (in Malaysia). A few minutes later it was joined by a second individual”</i>	
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21. Unidentified Raptors (8)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
1	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning	Doreen Ang, Ho Fee Hian, Ian & Freda Rickword, Ivy Tan, Eiko & Akihiko Watanabe
15	4	Tuas. <i>“I ... had an interesting sight of a flock of 4 big raptors sliding over my Tuas working place at about 11:45am on Friday the 15th. I was just at our car park but didn't have my binoculars with me. With bare eyes I immediately got the feeling of vultures due the size, wing position as griffon vultures in glide (slightly arched wings with moderately drooping hand as Dick Forsman describes in his excellent book), no wing beats at all.”</i>	Martti Siponen
23	1	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, morning. <i>“one unidentified Kite, all dark, upper view only as it quickly vanished over the trees heading East. Could have been a young Brahminy but it didn't look right, would have called it a Black Kite if they were common, but the view was too brief to be sure.”</i>	John Spencer
26	1	Holland Rise, probable Oriental Honey Buzzard	Yong Ding Li
31	1	Neo Tiew Lane 2, unidentified eagle	See Toh

22. Unidentified Accipiters (2)

Date	No.	Location and Details	Reported By
24	1	Seletar West	Danny Lau & Lau Jia Sheng
28	1	National Junior College, probable Chinese Goshawk	Yong Ding Li

Compiled by Tan Gim Cheong

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 Martti Siponen, Leslie Fung, Chris Lee, Nicholas Tan, Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng and Lee Tiah Kee for the use of their photos.