**AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF HONG KONG BIRDS**

**2021 – JULY 2021 UPDATE**

This update brings the **Annotated Checklist** into line with the HK List that was updated in May 2021 - <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/viewthread.php?tid=30089> . The HK list incorporated changes introduced in IOC 11.1. as well as a number of records that have now been assessed by the HKBWS Records Committee. Officially, the HK List now stands at 564 species in Categories I and II.

A number of records are still awaiting assessment, including seven potential firsts: Ring-billed Gull, Swinhoe’s Storm Petrel, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Ryukyu Minivet, Large Cuckooshrike, Black-chinned Yuhina and Asian Glossy Starling. These are blocked in light blue in the updated **Annotated Checklist**. Other records of rarities (mainly from late 2020 and 2021) still awaiting assessment are entered in a dark blue font. All of these “blue” entries are not part of the official record at the time of writing.

IOC 11.2 (draft) indicates three important changes that will soon affect the Hong Kong list. Mew Gull (Short-billed Gull) *Lanus brachyrhynchus* will be split from Common Gull, and Ryukyu Flycatcher *Ficedula owstoni* will be split from Narcissus Flycatcher. The updated **Annotated Checklist** recognises these changes, so treats the Hong Kong List as containing 566 species. The third change deletes Common House Martin *Delicon urbicum* from the list, but adds the newly-defined species Siberian House Martin *Delichon lagopodum* in its place.

The updated **Annotated Checklist** includes records up until mid-July 2021 in order to make the information as current as possible.

For information about the makeup of the **Annotated Checklist** please read the **FORMAT** section below.

**Citation**

Diskin, D. A. 2021. *An Annotated Checklist of Hong Kong Birds 2021.* Birding Hong Kong. https://www.birdinghongkong.com

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**2020.2 – JULY 2020 UPDATE**

This update brings the **Annotated Checklist** into line with the HK List that was updated in March 2020 - <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/BBS/viewthread.php?tid=28893&extra=page%3D1> .

This incorporated changes introduced in the recent IOC V.9.2 and 10.1 species and taxonomic updates. Of particular importance was a change in the taxonomic order of the non-passerines. On a local level, there were changes in a few English names, as well as a number of records that have now been assessed and accepted. The current total in the number of birds in Category I & II that have occurred in Hong Kong is now 559 species. (\*But see amendment below.)

A number of records from 2019 and the first half of 2020 are still awaiting assessment, including four potential firsts: Chinese Grey Shrike, Kloss’s Leaf Warbler, Goldcrest, and Jacobin Cuckoo. These are blocked in light blue in the new update. Other records of rarities (mainly from 2019 and 2020) still awaiting assessment are entered in a dark blue font. All of these “blue” entries are not part of the official record at the time of writing.

I have also added a number of records up to and including mid-July 2020 in order to bring the **Annotated Checklist** as up-to-date as possible.

Once again, I am indebted to Carrie Ma, the secretary of the HKBWS, for responding so efficiently to my requests for information.

\* One late amendment: on July 25, 2020 the IOC released a new update, IOC Version 10.2. <https://www.worldbirdnames.org/updates/species-updates/> . One change relevant to the HK list is the splitting of White-faced Plover *Chararadrius dealbatus* from Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*. I have thus amended the **Annotated Checklist** to take this into account. The HK list therefore stands at 560 species.

**Citation**

Diskin, D. A. 2020. *An Annotated Checklist of Hong Kong Birds 2020.2.* Birding Hong Kong. https://www.birdinghongkong.com

**2020.1 – JANUARY 2020 UPDATE**

**Notes on the new update**

I first published **An Annotated Checklist of Hong Kong Birds** in early 2019; this dealt with the birds that had occurred in Hong Kong up until the end of 2018, although omitting a number of records that had not yet been assessed for 2018. This update covers records until the end of 2019, including a number from 2018 that have now been assessed and accepted. First records accepted in 2018 are Hen Harrier, Silver Oriole, Buff-throated Warbler and Lapland Longspur, bringing the total number of birds in Category I & II that have occurred in Hong Kong to 555.

A number of 2018 records (not firsts) are still under consideration and most 2019 rarities are still to be reviewed. I have included the unassessed records I am aware of in this latest update. These include five more potential first records for the territory: Collared Owlet, Chinese Grey Shrike, Fire-capped Tit, Wood Warbler and Western Yellow Wagtail. In the **Annotated Checklist**, these five records are blocked in pale blue; they are not yet part of the ‘official’ record. I have indicated additional unassessed rarities by typing them in a bold dark blue font; these too are unofficial records – indeed some of them are contentious and may end up being ‘not proven’.

I confess to not being entirely consistent here, as I have included certain rare reports in the official record. These are species which have been well-documented and conform to past patterns of occurrence. Two examples are the Black-necked Grebe at San Tin from 19 November to 15 December 2019, and the Japanese Night Heron at Pak Tam Chung from 28 November to 24 December 2019.

Finally, in this section, I repeat the following from the introduction to the first **Annotated Checklist**: ‘I should stress that there is little that is original here. My main task over the several months that it has taken me to compile the checklist, has been to bring together available information from various sources. As such, I am indebted to a number of different bodies, and these are specified below.’

I should, however, add special thanks to Carrie Ma, the secretary of the HKBWS, for responding so promptly to my requests for information about certain records in the 2017-2019 period.

**FORMAT**

The checklist is in the form of an Excel file containing seven columns: English names; Latin names; Principal Status; Occurrence; Distribution; Notes.

The Annotated Checklist follows the last updated checklist issued by the HKBWS. The taxonomy and scientific nomenclature used follows that of the International Ornithological Congress (IOC). The IOC World List is updated twice a year. This is the taxonomy adopted by the HKBWS Records Committee, which in turn is that used by the compilers of the annual HK Bird Reports.

**English Name**

This is the name currently in use on the latest Hong Kong List available from the HKBWS website. For the most part, it follows the English names in the recent IOC World List but there may be some differences based upon regional preferences. In some cases, other taxonomies have adopted different names, some of which are in popular use e.g. Light-vented Bulbul for Chinese Bulbul. These are mentioned in the Notes section.

**Latin Name**

This follows the latest IOC World List. If a species has different subspecies, I have used the Latin name of the race (or races) that occur in Hong Kong. If the nominate race occurs in Hong Kong, I have abbreviated the specific name e.g. *Anser a. albifrons* for Greater White-fronted Goose.

**Principal Status**

Key as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| R | Resident |
| W | Winter |
| M | Migrant (spring & autumn) |
| SpM | Spring migrant |
| AM | Autumn migrant |
| Su | Breeding summer visitor |
| Vagrant | Vagrant/Rare visitor |
| O | Occasional |

Note that the species on the Hong Kong list are placed in five categories, as follows:

**Category I**: species that have been recorded in an apparently wild state in HK.

**Category IIA**: southeast China breeding species, the currently established HK  
breeding population of which is considered to derive from captive stock, but which  
probably occurred in HK prior to habitat changes.

**Category IIB**: extralimital species that, although originally introduced to HK by  
man, maintain a regular feral breeding stock without necessary recourse to further  
introduction.

**Category IIC**: previously established feral species.

**Category III**: species for which all published HK records are considered likely to relate  
to birds that have escaped or have been released from captivity.

In the Checklist, all species in the Principal Status column are in Category I unless otherwise delineated as Category II species. (Category III species are on a different page of the Excel file – accessed at the bottom left of the Excel page).

**Occurrence**

This is the heart of the checklist. My main concern here is the current status of the species in question, and I have drawn extensively on the information available in recent bird reports. I am indebted to all those involved in their compilation, especially from 2007 onwards. I am also interested in the current status of species c.f. their status in the past and make extensive reference to the records in The Avifauna of Hong Kong. This was published in 2001 and details the status of birds in Hong Kong up to and including 1998.

In line with recent HK Bird Reports, this column gives details of seasonal occurrence, extreme dates of migrants, and high counts. It also aims to summarise changes in the status of species since the Avifauna. Those requiring more detailed information are referred to the Avifauna and to Hong Kong Bird Reports after 1998. The latter are available as free downloads (up to 2016) from the HKBWS website.

A qualification: first and last dates of migrants are of interest, but you are, for example, unlikely to see a Dusky Warbler in Hong Kong on 6th September (the earliest date on record). I have therefore, on occasion, referred to general peak periods for some migrants to give the prospective visitor a more realistic idea of when they are likely to encounter certain species.

I have used a number of abbreviations in this column, as well as in the following Distribution column. These are defined in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CP | Country Park | MPNR | Mai Po Nature Reserve |
| HK | Hong Kong | NT | New Territories |
| HKBR | Hong Kong Bird Report | TPK | Tai Po Kau |
| KARC | Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre | SK | Shek Kong (e.g. SK catchwater, SK Airfield Road) |
| HKWP | Hong Kong Wetland Park | WC | Waterbird Count |
| KFBG | Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden | 1st-w | First-winter |
| LMC | Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Wetland Mitigation Area | 1st-s | First-summer |
| LNEC | Lions Nature Education Centre, Sai Kung |  |  |

Locations referred to follow those in Hong Kong Bird Reports:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deep Bay area | the Deep Bay inter-tidal area and the area of marshes and fishponds from Tsim Bei Tsui to Hoo Hok Wai including Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP), Nam Sang Wai, Kam Tin, Mai Po (MPNR), San Tin, Lok Ma Chau (LMC) and Ma Tso Lung |
| northwest New Territories  (nw NT) | Tuen Mun to Yuen Long, the Deep Bay and Long Valley (LV) areas, Kam Tin valley and hills north of the Lam Tsuen Valley |
| northeast New Territories (ne NT) | the region to the northeast of the Fanling Highway including Starling Inlet and Pat Sin Leng and Plover Cove CPs |
| north New Territories  (n NT) | both northwest and northeast NT |
| central New Territories  (c NT) | Tai Lam, Tai Mo Shan, Shing Mun and Kam Shan CPs, the Lam Tsuen Valley and Tai Po Kau (TPK) |
| Southeast New Territories  (se NT) | Lion Rock, Ma On Shan and Clearwater Bay CPs, Kowloon Peak, the Ho Chung Valley and Sai Kung town |
| Lam Tsuen | the whole Lam Tsuen valley |
| Kowloon | the built-up areas of Kowloon west, north, south and east from Lai Chi Kok to Wong Tai Sin and to Kwun Tong, and the Kowloon peninsula. |
| Hong Kong Island  (HK Island) | the whole of Hong Kong Island |
| Outlying Islands | Lantau, Lamma and Cheung Chau, plus Tung Ping Chau and Po Toi. |

The use of the word ***widespread*** indicates that the species occurs in suitable habitat in most of the aforementioned regions, including HK Island and the outlying islands.

**Distribution**

This column puts the birds that occur in Hong Kong into a wider global perspective. Firstly, I delineate the zoogeographical zones of the species, followed by the number of races of the species involved, with particular reference to China, and beyond that to east and southeast Asia. In this, I have followed the IOC list.

In writing this column, I have drawn not only on the IOC checklist, but on the relevant Distribution sections in what was once Handbook of Birds of the World online. The latter has now been incorporated into the Birds of the World website run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

In this column, I have also included the conservation status of species, based on the IUCN Red List. A status other than ‘Least Concern’ is indicated by the use of the abbreviations below:

|  |
| --- |
| **IUCN Red List** |
| CR | Critically Endangered |
| EN | Endangered |
| VU | Vulnerable |
| NT | Near-threatened |

**Notes**

Basically, this is a column where I have included anything I consider to be of relevant interest.

It includes:

alternative English names for the species involved if these are in common usage elsewhere;

taxonomic points of note, especially with regard to recent splits in the Oriental region;

taxonomic differences between HBW and the IOC;

reference to important papers concerning the species involved (note that most papers of first records for Hong Kong are included in the relevant Hong Kong Bird Reports. I have not referenced them in the Notes column except where there are details of particular interest);

points with regard to the status of certain species (especially Cat. IIA species);

errata in previous published records.