

# Hong Kong 2016

Lars Olausson&Hans-Erik Persson

## Introduction

The former British colony Hong Kong was just visited as a stopover on our way to and from Australia (separate report). We stayed two nights at hotel Novotel in the Kowloon district on the way down and one night on our way back home.

We arrived in the early afternoon 26/10 and left with an overnight flight to Sydney 28/10.

The second visit was from early afternoon 23/11 and then we left with an overnight flight to London late 24/11.

## General information

Travelling in Hong Kong is very easy with the Metro/train system that takes one to major stations. From there smaller local buses can be used to bring you closer to the birding areas, or have a map and grab a cab. To get to the info center at Mai Po to pay and pick up the daily permission is probably easy with a taxi, but the other spots?

On a visit to Hong Kong Island we realized that not all taxi drivers spoke English!

To get in to Mai Po trail and board walk system one need to pre book, bring the passport and pay the fee of 150 or 180 HKd, depending of high or low season.

## Birding information

While surfing around the internet searching for birding hotspots, presumable species, guiding etcetera we got our eyes on Hong Kong Walks. Info at their webpage [www.walkhongkong.com](http://www.walkhongkong.com) looked very promising so we sent a request by email and received a very quick response from David Diskin.

Visit their web page, there is a lot of very good information about birding.

After a few emails we booked a full day birding with David Diskin.

He then provided us with excellent info how to use and directions where to get off the Metro, as well as travelling time. Included was of course also at which station we should meet him. All that worked out excellent.

As we wanted to give the forest a good chance we decided to start with Tai Po Kau and then we let the rest of the day in to David's hands. Good decision!

As the tide was totally wrong at the famous Mai Po reserve we didn't waste

time there.

On our way back home to Sweden we decided to use their services for a half day and this time we had the opportunity to "tick off" Mai Po.

Afterwards David emailed us a complete list of the day's sightings. Very handy.

We can really recommend David to take care of a day in Hong Kong to get the most out of a short visit.

## **Visited birding localities**

**Kowloon Park** is placed between Nathan Road and Kowloon Park Drive in the southern parts of the busy Kowloon district. It was not more than a 15 minute walk from our hotel (Novotel) and a very convenient place to go birding in the late afternoon. No entrance fee and also handy was a McDonald restaurant just inside the gates. The sad thing is the aviary and the waterfowl park with a flock of flamingos, although caged birds sometimes attract wild ones. We didn't visit the park early in the morning so the species we did see maybe not justify the parks potential.

**Tai Po Kau** is a popular forest area in the eastern parts of New Territories district (get off the Metro at University station), some 40 minutes with the Metro from Jordan station in Kowloon, Tsim Sha Tsui district.

Excellent forest with a well maintained trail system. We found a couple of nice bird waves with quite a few birds that was good for us, for example Chestnut Bulbul, Huet's Fulvetta and Rufous-capped Babbler. We also got close and very nice views of a male Fork-tailed Sunbird in the nearby Tai Po Park.

**Shek Kong catchcenter** was another, but different type of forest. We birded a nice open area while having our packed lunch, which was included in the full day fee. Had a short walk along the road looking for some species seen a few days earlier, but we had no luck.

Continued to **Nam Sang Wai** River. David stopped a few times for birding along the river as the tide was good for Gray-headed Lapwing, and yes we were lucky to see seven of them.

We then spent the rest of the day in **Long Valley**, an area of mixed habitats in mostly open country. Rice paddies, ponds, scattered trees, low bushes and more made the valley full of birds, from waders to munias. Just a place one can easily spend a couple of full days and probably see new species every visit.



Nam Sang Wai

On the visit 24/11 we only visited the famous **Mai Po** Nature Reserve, the tide was delayed because of a few days with low pressure and heavy rains. David told us if we walk quickly for 40 minutes we should have a good chance of seeing Saunder's Gull, and yes we did.....as well as Black-faced Spoonbill, another of our target species.



Mao Po

## Litterature

Most of, if not all, species likely to be seen are found in Birds of South-east Asia, Craig Robson.

I also found a smaller pocket friendly book named A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Hong Kong by Ray Tipper from 2016.

Short text around ID, habitat, habits and status together with photos. It does only present the birds that are likely to be seen during a regular birdwatching day trip. There is also a short chapter; Where to go and some other useful information.

Simple but very useful for a short visit.

In app store on our smart phones we also found a free of charge app of Hong Kong birds named HKcBirds: Common Birds of Hong Kong. This also included song and calls of the birds included.

## Species list

### **Greater White-fronted Goose** (*Anser albifrons*)

3 (2 ad+1 imm) Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*A great rarity in Hong Kong, David thought this was the 7<sup>th</sup> record.*

### **Eurasian Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*)

3 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

### **Eastern Spot-billed Duck** (*Anas zonorhyncha*)

4 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*Nice surprise, David had seen up to 7 on a visit a few days earlier.*

### **Northern Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)

Common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

### **Northern Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)

At least 10 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

### **Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*)

10 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

### **Eurasian Teal** (*Anas crecca*)

2 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Tufted Duck** (*Aythya fuligula*)  
3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)  
6 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Great Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)  
Common Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Gray Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)  
Common Nam Sang Wai River and 5 Long Valley 27/10 also common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*)  
2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*)  
1 Kowloon Park 26/10, common Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Intermediate Egret** (*Mesophoyx intermedia*)  
1 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10, and 1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11 .  
*More common than this, David just pointed out one each day for the trip list.*

**Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)  
Common Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*)  
2 Long Valley 27/10.

**Chinese Pond-Heron** (*Ardeola bacchus*)  
Common Nam Sang Wai River and Long Valley 27/10, 3 Hong Kong Island 28/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)  
3 (1 ad + 2 imm) Kowloon Park 26/10 and 5 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10.

**Black-faced Spoonbill** (*Platalea minor*)

25 (low count) Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*A couple of hundred were present in the area at the time of our visit.*



Black-faced Spoonbill

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)

2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Greater Spotted Eagle** (*Clanga clanga*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Imperial Eagle** (*Aquila heliaca*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Eastern Marsh-Harrier** (*Circus spilonotus*)

5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Crested Goshawk** (*Accipiter trivirgatus*)

1 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Black Kite** (*Milvus migrans*)

A quite common bird. Seen from Kowloon Park, Nam Sang Wai River, Hong Kong Island and around Mai Po Nature Reserve.

**Eastern Buzzard** (*Buteo japonicus*)

5 seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.



Black Kite, a common sight.

**White-breasted Waterhen** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

1 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10, 1 Long Valley 27/10 and 1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)

2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*Shorebirds below are just the numbers we did see and could id. Because of outgoing tide at Mai PO the 24<sup>th</sup> it was impossible to even estimate numbers, so we just looked at one or a few individuals, mostly the birds close to the hide and just to add that one to the species list of the day.*

**Black-winged Stilt** (*Himantopus himantopus*)

30 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 10 Long Valley 27/10.

**Pied Avocet** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

2 Long Valley 27/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Black-bellied Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)  
Common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Pacific Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis fulva*)  
At least 100 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Gray-headed Lapwing** (*Vanellus cinereus*)  
7 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10.



Grey-headed Lapwing

**Lesser Sand-Plover** (*Charadrius mongolus*)  
1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Greater Sand-Plover** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)  
2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)  
Common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.



**Little Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius dubius*)

3 Long Valley 27/10.

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)

10 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Eurasian Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)

20 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*We also saw 2 birds with really long bills, resembling Far Eastern Curlew. It could have been that species or the eastern race "orientalis" of Eurasian Curlew. Distance a little long for safe ID.*

**Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)

At least 100 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)

20 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Great Knot** (*Calidris tenuirostris*)

1 or 2 seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Red-necked Stint** (*Calidris ruficollis*)

2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)

Common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

5 Long Valley 27/10 and 3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

2 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and at least 10 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Green Sandpiper** (*Tringa ochropus*)

2 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)

5 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Marsh Sandpiper** (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

2 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*)

5 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 30 Long Valley 27/10.

**Common Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Saunders's Gull** (*Saundersilarus saundersi*)

5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*Up to 25 had been counted a few days before our visit.*



Saunders's Gull

**Black-headed Gull** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

Common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Herring Gull** (Mongolian) (*Larus argentatus mongolicus*)

2 adult birds Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*This taxon is treated as an ssp of Herring Gull by Clement's but is recognized*

*as an ssp of Vega Gull by IOC.*

*Klaus Malling Olsen writes in his book "Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America" that "Mongolian Gull" breeds on lakes in Central Asia, isolated from other large white-headed gull taxa. KMO also mention that "mongolicus" now is generally regarded as an ssp of Vega Gull. "Mongolicus" differs from cachinnans and are genetically closer to Vega Gull based on preliminary mitochondrial DNA analysis and could therefore attain full species status, alternatively become regarded as a ssp of Vega Gull.*

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (Heuglin's) (*Larus fuscus heuglini*)

Around 15 seen, mostly young birds.

*This ssp is still much debated where it belongs, or if it should be recognized as a full species. Both Clement's and IOC still place "heuglini" as ssp of Lesser Black-backed, although many authors of field guides use the name Heuglin's Gull and present this ssp as a full species.*

**Domestic Dove** (*Columba livia domestica*)

20 Kowloon Park 26/10 and a few seen there 23/11.

**Oriental Turtle-Dove** (*Streptopelia orientalis*)

3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Spotted Dove** (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

Seen at Kowloon Park 26/10 and 23/11, Long Valley 27/10 and Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Plaintive Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis merulinus*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Asian Koel** (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*)

1 female colored Kowloon Park 26/10, 3 Long Valley 27/10 and 6 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Greater Coucal** (*Centropus sinensis*)

1 Kowloon Park 26/10, 1+1 heard Long Valley 27/10 and 3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Asian Barred Owlet** (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)

1 seen Long Valley 27/10.

**Fork-tailed Swift** (*Apus pacificus*)

3 Long Valley 27/10.

**House Swift** (*Apus nipalensis*)

5 Long Valley 27/10 and 1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)

1 Kowloon Park 26/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**White-throated Kingfisher** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

1 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Black-capped Kingfisher** (*Halcyon pileata*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Pied Kingfisher** (*Ceryle rudis*)

3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Eurasian Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Alexandrine Parakeet** (*Psittacula eupatria*)

10 Kowloon Park 26/10 and 4 there 28/10, also 3 seen 23/11.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** (*Psittacula krameri*)

1 Hong Kong Park 28/10.

**Gray-chinned Minivet** (*Pericrocotus solaris*)

4 Tai Po Kau and 4 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Scarlet Minivet** (*Pericrocotus speciosus*)

At least 4 Tai Po Kau and 4 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Black-winged Cuckooshrike** (*Lalage melaschistos*)

2 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Long-tailed Shrike** (*Lanius schach*)

1 Tai Po Kau 27/10, 1 Long Valley 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.



Grey-chinned Minivet

**White-bellied Erpornis** (*Erpornis zantholeuca*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Black Drongo** (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Ashy Drongo** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)

2 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Azure-winged Magpie** (*Cyanopica cyanus*)

15 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Red-billed Blue-Magpie** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*)

2 Kowloon Park 26/10.

**Eurasian Magpie** (*Pica pica*)

2 Long Valley 27/10 and 1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Large-billed Crow** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

4 Kowloon Park 26/10, 2 flying by Tai Po Kau and 2 Long Valley 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Collared Crow** (*Corvus torquatus*)

2 flying by Nam Sang Wai River and 1 flying by Long Valley 27/10 and at least 5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Pale Sand Martin** (*Riparia diluta*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Barn Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

25 Long Valley 27/10 and 3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Red-rumped Swallow** (*Cecropis daurica*)

3 Nam Sang Wai River 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Cinereous Tit** (*Parus cinereus*)

2 Kowloon Park 26/10, 5 Tai Po Kau 27/10 and common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Yellow-cheeked Tit** (*Parus sibilans*)

5 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** (*Sitta frontalis*)

5 Tai Po Kau and 2 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10.

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)

Common Kowloon Park.

**Light-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)

Common Kowloon Park and Mai Po Nature reserve.  
*David preferred to call this species Chinese Bulbul.*

**Sooty-headed Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)

2 Long Valley 27/10.

**Chestnut Bulbul** (*Hemixos castanonotus*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Mountain Bulbul** (*Ixos mccllellandii*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10.



Light-vented Bulbul

**Pygmy Cupwing** (*Pnoepyga pusilla*)

1+2 heard Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Mountain Tailorbird** (*Phyllergates cucullatus*)

Common Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Dusky Warbler** (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)

1+1 heard Nam Sang Wai River and 1+2 heard Long Valley 27/10 also common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

1 Tai Po Kau 27/10, 1 heard calling Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10 and fairly common Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Arctic Warbler** (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

1 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Oriental Reed-Warbler** (*Acrocephalus orientalis*)

1 seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Common Tailorbird** (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

Fairly common Tai Po Kau 27/10 and Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Yellow-bellied Prinia** (*Prinia flaviventris*)

1+4 heard Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Plain Prinia** (*Prinia inornata*)

5 Long Valley 27/10.

**Japanese White-eye** (*Zosterops japonicus*)

Common Tai Po Kau and 10 Shek Kong catchcenter 27/10, 2 Kowloon Park 28/10 and seen and heard Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Rufous-capped Babbler** (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*)

5 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler** (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*)

1 heard singing Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Huet's Fulvetta** (*Alcippe hueti*)

5 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Masked Laughingthrush** (*Garrulax perspicillatus*)

4 Kowloon Park 26/10, 2 Long Valley 27/10, 5 Hong Kong Park 28/10, 2 Kowloon Park 23/11 and 3 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Blue-winged Minla** (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*)

5 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Asian Brown Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa latirostris*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.





Huet's Fulvetta

**Oriental Magpie-Robin** (*Copsychus saularis*)

4 Kowloon Park 26/10, 5 Tai Po Kau and 2 Long Valley 27/10, 2 Kowloon Park 23/11 and also 10 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.



Masked Laughingthrush

**Blue Whistling-Thrush** (*Myophonus caeruleus*)

1 Kowloon Park 26/10.

**Mugimaki Flycatcher** (*Ficedula mugimaki*)

2 female colored Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Taiga Flycatcher** (*Ficedula albicilla*)

2 (1+1 heard) Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Daurian Redstart** (*Phoenicurus auroreus*)

6 (1 ad male+5 female colored) Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.



Daurian Redstart

**Siberian Stonechat** (*Saxicola maurus stejnegeri*)

5 Long Valley 27/10 and 5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*This ssp is split to Stejneger's Stonechat by IOC.*

**Black-collared Starling** (*Gracupica nigricollis*)

4 Kowloon Park 26/10, common Long Valley 27/10, 1 Kowloon Park 23/11 and seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**White-shouldered Starling** (*Sturnia sinensis*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Red-billed Starling** (*Sturnus sericeus*)

1 Long Valley 27/10 and 5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Crested Myna** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)

Common in Long Valley 27/10 and at Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum ignipectus*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum cruentatum*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Fork-tailed Sunbird** (*Aethopyga christinae*)

3 (2 male+1 female) Tai Po Kau 27/10.

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla tschutschensis*)

2 Long Valley 27/10 and 5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*On both dates the ssp taivana and macronyx were seen.*

**Gray Wagtail** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

1 Tai Po Kau 27/10 and 1 Shek Kong catch center 27/10.

**White Wagtail** (*Motacilla alba*)

1 Kowloon Park 26/10, 2 Tai Po Kau and Nam Sang Wai River 27/10, common Long Valley 27/10 and 5 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

*Both ssp leucopsis and ocularis were seen.*

**Richard's Pipit** (*Anthus richardi*)

2 Long Valley 27/10 and 2 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Olive-backed Pipit** (*Anthus hodgsoni*)

1 Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**Red-throated Pipit** (*Anthus cervinus*)

At least 15 Long Valley 27/10.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** (*Emberiza aureola*)

2 (1 ad+1 first year male) Long Valley 27/10.

**Gray-capped Greenfinch** (*Chloris sinica*)

1 Long Valley 27/10.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)

Seen Kowloon Park 26/10, Long Valley 27/10 and Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

**White-rumped Munia** (*Lonchura striata*)

2 Tai Po Kau 27/10 and 10 Long Valley 27/10.

**Scaly-breasted Munia** (*Lonchura punctulata*)

Common Long Valley 27/10 and a few seen Mai Po Nature Reserve 24/11.

## **Mammals**

**Rhesus Macaque** (*Macaca mulatta*)

1 Tai Po Kau Park 27/10.

**Pallas's Squirrel** (*Callosciurus erythraeus*)

2 Tai Po Kau Park 27/10.

Compiled by Lars Olausson, Slottsvägen 21, 86134 Timrå, Sweden

Cell phone +46 70 650 05 92

Email:birdinglarne@gmail.com