

**Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong** by M.L. Chalmers. Fourth (revised) edition. Hong Kong Birdwatching Society, Hong Kong, (1986). 279 pp. Softback. HK\$65.00.

In the almost exactly 30 years since its formation, the Hong Kong Birdwatching Society has provided the main focus for ornithological recording in the colony, having produced no less than 4 editions of the Annotated Check-list of Hong Kong Birds: Macfarlane and Macdonald (1960); Caunter and Macfarlane (1966); Webster (1975) and now Chalmers in 1986. The latest author has been able to draw upon a greatly increased body of information collected over the past decade, as coverage has been improved and field identification skills refined, and this is attractively and concisely summarised in the recent edition. A total of 463 bird species are listed for Hong Kong, divided into 5 categories in order to take account of introductions, probable escapes from captivity and those species for which previously published records are open to doubt. Even allowing for these latter, a total of 380 apparently wild species have been recorded, thanks partly to the enormous variety of passage migrants and winter visitors which occur there. The text is clear and authoritative and the seasonal status of those species which are winter visitors and passage migrants is illustrated with the aid of histograms, the year being divided into quarter months. This last feature is a most useful touch which provides much instructive comparative data for observers in Thailand and elsewhere in the region. The introductory chapters describe the history of Hong Kong ornithology; the territory's physical features, climate and topography (illustrated by 8 monochrome plates) and also summarise the seasonal and distributional status of the avifauna. A detailed bibliography is given and the book is illustrated by the author's most attractive line drawings. The Hong Kong Birdwatching Society is to be congratulated for having maintained such high standards of systematic ornithological recording, though its checklists and annual bird reports. This book deserves its place on the bookshelf of every Asian birdwatcher.

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