

5th Singapore Raptor Watch Report

Autumn 2012 Migration - 4 Nov 2012

by TAN Gim Cheong



Grey-faced Buzzard, juvenile, at Changi, 04 Nov 12, 07:34 hrs, photo by Francis Yap.

The 5th Singapore raptor watch held on 4 November 2012 was another raptor watch of records!

Record number of participants

59 participants, previous high was 57.

Record number of raptors

1022 raptors counted, previous high was 739.

774 migrant raptors counted, previous high was 619.

174 resident raptors counted, previous high was 120.

Record number of species

17 species counted, previous high was 16 species.

7 resident species, previous high was 6 species.

A total of eight sites were covered, including Chek Jawa, on Pulau Ubin, off the northeastern coast.



Figure 1 : 2012 Raptor Watch Sites. (source of basemap – maps.google.com.sg)

The day started well with fine weather. Storm clouds started to build up after noontime and hit the eastern sites just after 14:00 hrs. The showers moved west slowly and hit the western most site, Tuas South, at 16:15 hrs, after the count had ended. The peak period for raptor activity was between 09:00 to 12:00 hrs.

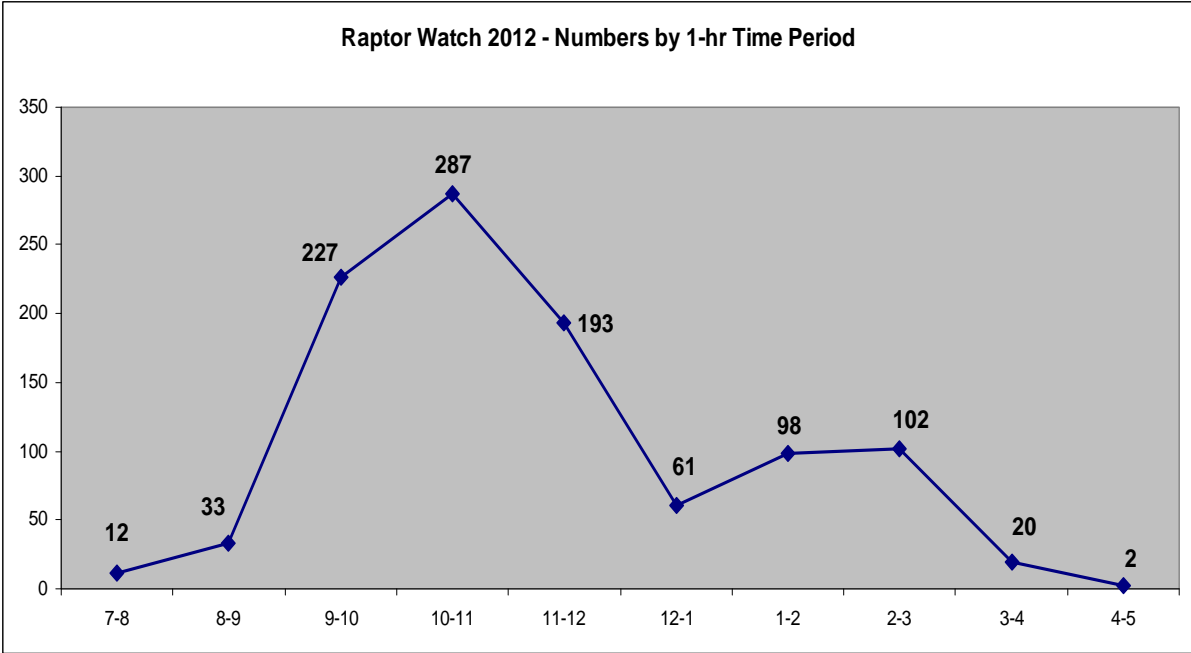


Figure 2 : Raptor numbers by 1-hour time periods

The richest site in terms of number of raptors was Tuas South, followed by Kent Ridge Park and Chek Jawa. The quietest site for raptors was the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

SITE	Tuas South	Kent Ridge Park	Chek Jawa, Jejawi Tower	Japanese Garden	Changi	Seletar West	Marina Barrage Roof Garden	CCNR, Jelutong Tower	GRAND TOTAL
TOTAL	372	210	122	116	77	76	36	13	1022

Figure 3 : Total counts by Site (descending order)

The 774 migrant raptors were identified to ten species and another 74 probable migrants were un-identified. Tuas South had a high count of 346 migrant raptors, followed by Kent Ridge Park with 181.

The ten migrant species recorded included rarities such as a single juvenile **Grey-faced Buzzard** seen and photographed at Changi between 07:00 to 09:00 hrs. It was perched on a tree and may have roosted overnight at that locality.

Of note, 4 **Booted Eagles** and 5 **Common Buzzards** were recorded, probably the highest single day count for these two species in Singapore! For the **Booted Eagle**, 1 dark morph was recorded at Seletar West, 2 were recorded at Changi, including a pale morph and 1 dark morph at Japanese Garden. For the **Common Buzzard**, 2 were recorded at Marina Barrage, another 2 at Kent Ridge and 1 dark morph at Changi.

As for the seven resident species, the rarity would be the **Crested Serpent Eagle** at the Japanese Garden. The other notable resident raptor recorded were the 2 **Crested Goshawks** at Kent Ridge Park.

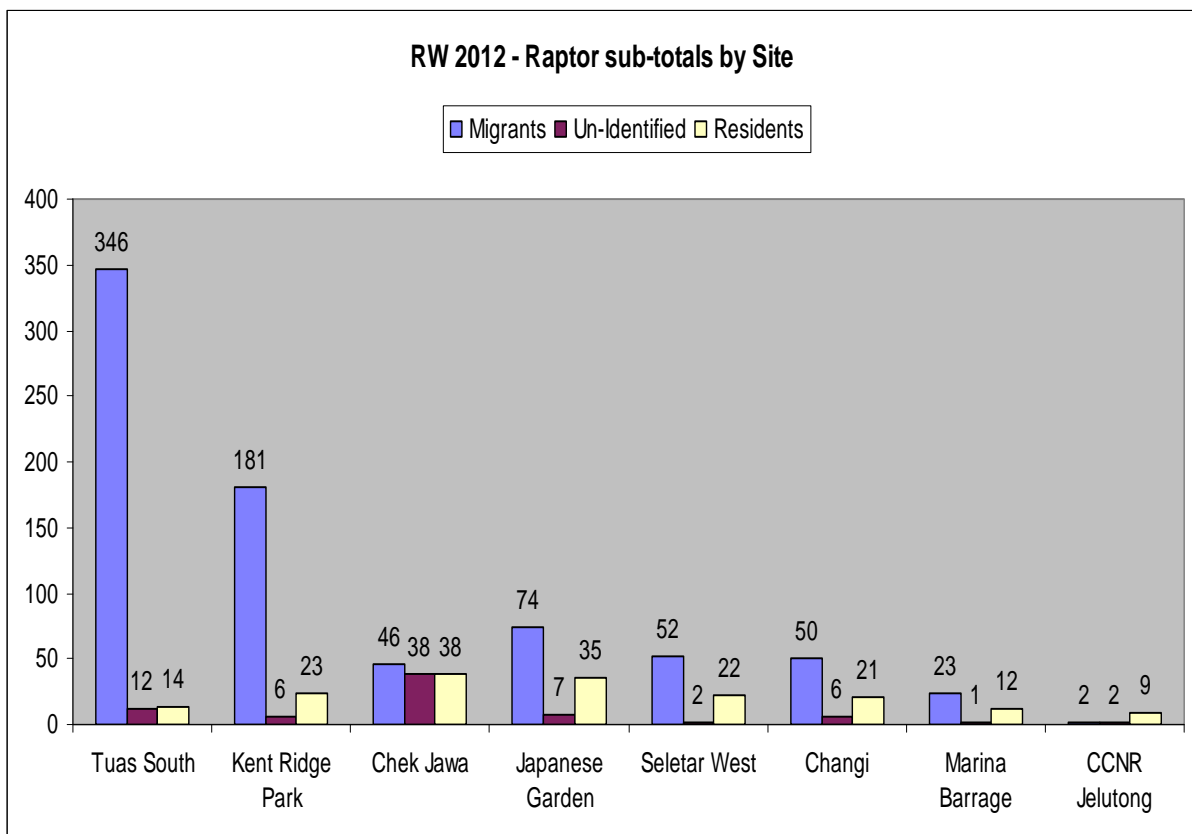


Figure 4 : Raptor Sub-totals by Site

The richest site, by migrant species, was Changi, with 8 migrant species. The next richest site was Seletar West with 7 migrant species. Kent Ridge Park had 6 migrant species, which was last year's record high. The poorest was the Central Catchment Nature Reserve with 2 migrant species, followed by Chek Jawa with 3 migrant species. The other three sites had either 4 or 5 migrant species.

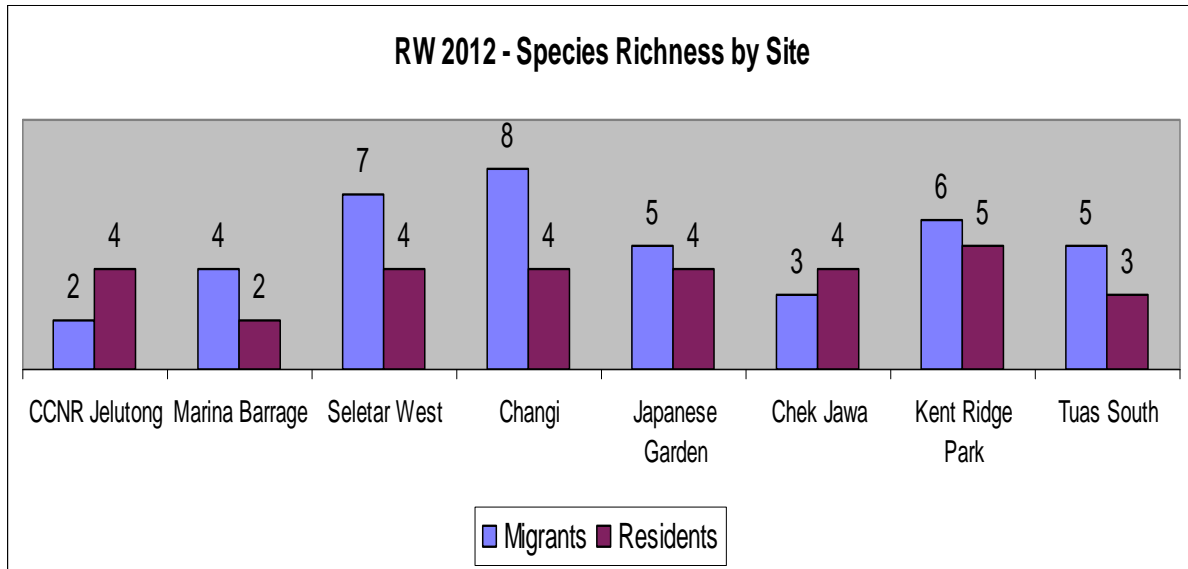


Figure 5 : Species Richness by Site

The most numerous migrant raptor was the **Oriental Honey Buzzard** with 541 birds. The **Black Baza** was a distant second with 177 birds. In third and fourth place were the **Japanese Sparrowhawk** with 21 birds and the **Chinese Sparrowhawk** with 19 birds. There were 5 **Common Buzzards**, 4 **Booted Eagles**, 3 **Peregrine Falcons**, 2 **Ospreys**, 1 **Eastern Marsh Harrier** and a single juvenile **Grey-faced Buzzard**. There were another 74 unidentified raptors.

S/N	Species (Migrants)	Count
1	Oriental Honey Buzzard	541
2	Black Baza	177
3	Japanese Sparrowhawk	21
4	Chinese Sparrowhawk	19
5	Common Buzzard	5
6	Booted Eagle	4
7	Peregrine Falcon	3
8	Osprey	2
9	Eastern Marsh Harrier	1
10	Grey-faced Buzzard	1
	Total Migrant Raptors	774
11	Unid. Raptor	43
12	Unid. Accipiter	29
13	Unid. Eagle	1
14	Unid. Falcon	1
	Total Unidentified Raptors (probably migrant)	74

Figure 6 : Migrant Raptors Counted

Tuas South was **Oriental Honey Buzzard** 'central' for the day with 339 of these birds, a record high. They mostly passed through between 10:00 to 12:00 hrs and again from 13:00 to 15:00 hrs. Of particular note, the team at Tuas was treated to a continuous stream of 67 of these birds between 10:00 to 11:00 hrs, passing to the east-southeast. At other times, they came in flocks of 10 to 20. A few migrated as individuals. Elsewhere, Kent Ridge Park had 80 OHB, including a flock of 21; Japanese Garden had 62 OHB, including a flock of 21 OHB too; while Chek Jawa had a flock of 13 OHB.

Kent Ridge Park was **Black Baza** hotspot with 86 birds. The birds came in a few groups numbering about 20+ birds each, between 09:00 to 12:00 hrs. Elsewhere, Seletar West had 39 Black Bazas and Changi had 32.

Japanese Garden had the largest flock of **Chinese Sparrowhawks** comprising 7 birds between 10:00 to 11:00 hrs. The Chinese Sparrowhawk was also present in most sites, as were the **Japanese Sparrowhawks**.

Seletar West was the only site where 2 **Ospreys** were recorded. The three **Peregrine Falcons** were recorded at Kent Ridge Park, Seletar West (*japonensis*) and Tuas South (juvenile). The only location for the single **Eastern Marsh Harrier** was Changi.

At Tuas South, the western end of Singapore, the flight was east-southeast towards Jurong Island, as per the previous years and the raptors were likely to continue southeasterly towards Batam, Indonesia, skipping the rest of the main island of Singapore.

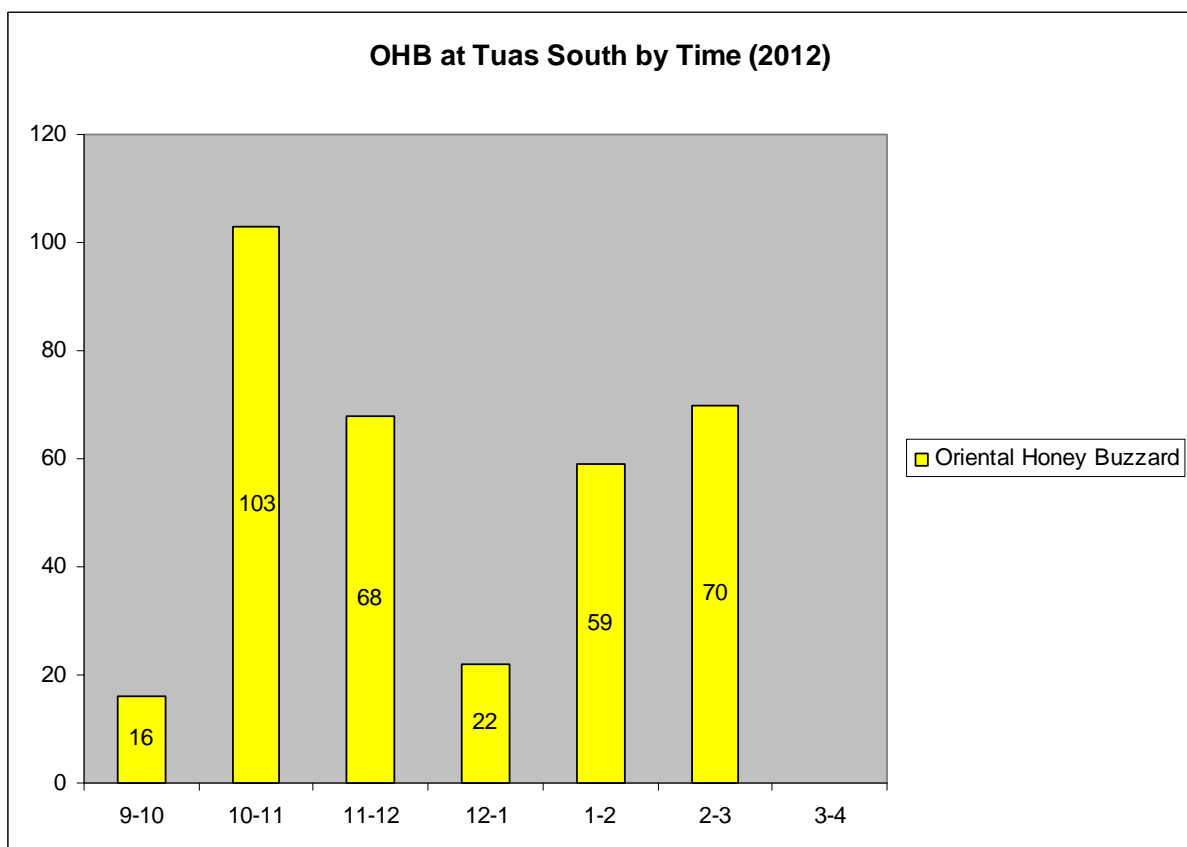


Figure 7 : Oriental Honey Buzzard numbers over Tuas South by 1-hour time period

The most numerous resident raptor was the **Brahminy Kite** with 79 birds, followed by the **White-bellied Sea Eagle** with 53 and the **Changeable Hawk Eagle** with 27. There were 8 **Black-winged Kites** and 4 **Grey-headed Fish Eagles**. The 2 **Crested Goshawks** showed up at Kent Ridge; they were seen there previously and are probably holding territory there. The last resident raptor was the locally rare **Crested Serpent Eagle**, which presented itself at Japanese Garden.

Note: numbers for resident raptors, especially the top three, may be over-stated. The possibility of the same birds re-appearing more than once cannot be ruled out. Only the numbers for the Brahminy Kite at Tuas South were moderated.

S/N	Species (Residents)	Count
1	Brahminy Kite	79
2	White-bellied Sea Eagle	53
3	Changeable Hawk Eagle	27
4	Black-winged Kite	8
5	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	4
6	Crested Goshawk	2
7	Crested Serpent Eagle	1
Total Resident Raptors		174

Figure 8 : Resident Raptors Counted

A complete breakdown of the species counted at each site is presented in the table below:

SITE	Tuas South	Kent Ridge Park	Chek Jawa, Jejawi Tower	Japanese Garden	Changi	Seletar West	Marina Barrage Roof Garden	CCNR, Jelutong Tower	Grand Total
SITE TOTAL	372	210	122	116	77	76	36	13	1022
Migrants = 774									Total
Osprey						2			2
Black Baza	2	86	17	1	32	39			177
Oriental Honey Buzzard	339	80	24	62	11	6	18	1	541
Eastern Marsh Harrier					1				1
Chinese Sparrowhawk	1	6		8	1	1	1	1	19
Japanese Sparrowhawk	3	6	5	2	1	2	2		21
Grey-faced Buzzard					1				1
Common Buzzard		2			1		2		5
Booted Eagle				1	2	1			4
Peregrine Falcon	1	1				1			3
Residents = 174									
Black-winged Kite	2				3	3			8
Brahminy Kite	8	9	11	28	5	8	8	2	79
White-bellied Sea Eagle	4	4	21	3	8	7	4	2	53
Grey-headed Fish Eagle		1	1					2	4
Crested Serpent Eagle				1					1
Crested Goshawk		2							2
Changeable Hawk Eagle		7	5	3	5	4		3	27
Un-identified = 74									
Unid. Accipiter	4	5	8	7	3			2	29
Unid. Eagle			1						1
Unid. Falcon		1							1
Unid. Raptor	8		29		3	2	1		43

Figure 9 : Raptor numbers by Site (descending order) from L-R, and break down of Species

An appreciation dinner cum slide show was held two week's after the count to detail the results to the participants. In addition, Gim Cheong shared his experience watching large numbers of raptors migrating at Khao Dinsor, attending the Field Raptor ID Course and the official opening of the Chumphon Raptor Centre in Thailand last month. We also enjoyed a video on the Oriental Honey-buzzard in Taiwan.

Thanks to all the 59 wonderful people, both leaders and participants, for spending their Sunday in the hot sun counting raptors and braving the afternoon rain. National Parks Board staff from Pulau Ubin and NParks volunteers also participated in the count. Thanks to Lee Ee Ling for the use of her place for the appreciation dinner, and for taking charge of the food. The following fantastic people led or assisted in the raptor count:

Alan OwYong	Francis Yap	Kenneth Kee	Peck Chan
Andy Dinesh	Gloria Seow	Lee Ee Ling	Pui Cuifen
Ann Ang	Goh Pei Hao	Lee Wei Siang	Quak Wan Ling
Babu & Subha Narayanswamy	Goh Yue Yun	Lee Yoke Kheng	See Toh Yew Wai
Benjamin Lee	Grace Ang	Lim Kim Chuah	Soe Tint
Cecilia Man	Ho Yong Tze	Lim Kim Keang	Tan Gim Cheong
Chee Wei-lin	Horst Flotow	Linda Oei	Tan Hang Chong
Chew Wing Kit	Ian & Freda Rickwood	Lioe Kim Swee	Tan Kok Hui
Chong Qiai	Jacky Soh	Loke Wai Yin	Tan Zhong Yi
Christine Kelly	Jane & Terry Heppell	Low Choon How	Terina
Christopher Pua	Jean-Marc Chavatte	Muhammad Haniff	Thng Wei Wei
Chung Yi Fei	John Ang	Muhammad Haziq	Timothy Pwee
Danny Lau	John Spencer	Nova Olivia	Wunson
Emily Lim	Jonathon Ee	Paul Parusuramanathen	Yong Ding Li