

Fourth Singapore Raptor Watch Report

Autumn 2011 Migration - 13 Nov 2011

by TAN Gim Cheong

The 4th Singapore raptor watch held on 13 November 2011 was a raptor watch of records!

Record number of participants

a) 57 participants, previous high was 55.

Record number of raptors

- b) 739 raptors counted, previous high was 706.
- c) 619 migrant raptors counted, previous high was 610.
- d) 120 resident raptors counted, previous high was 96.

Record number of species

- e) 16 species counted, previous high was 14 species.
- f) 10 migrant species, previous high was 9 species
- g) 6 resident species, previous high was 5 species.

A total of nine sites were covered, spanning from west to east, including Chek Jawa, on Pulau Ubin, off the northeastern shore. The pattern of late afternoon showers the few days prior set the stage for a good show for the most part of the day, with drizzle and showers at most sites after three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Most of the raptors were seen between 9:00 to 13:00, with the peak period between 10:00 to 12:00.

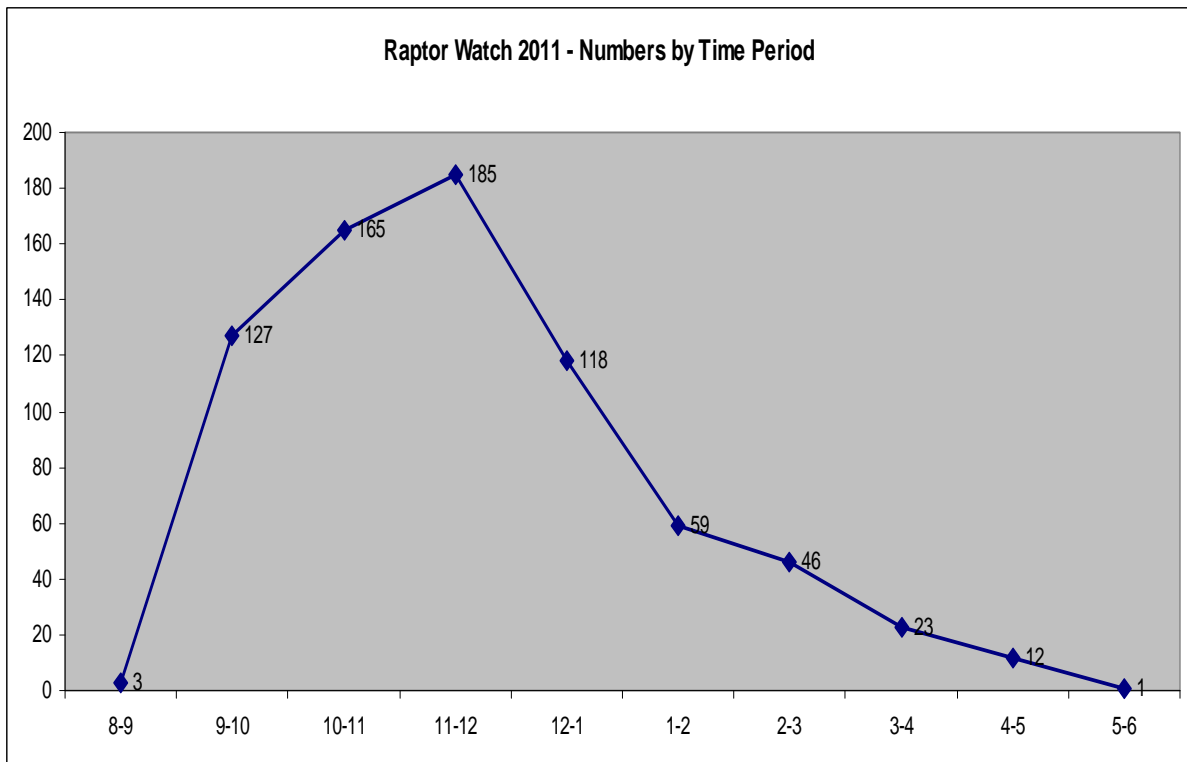


Figure 1 : Raptor numbers by 1-hour time periods

The richest site in terms of number of raptors was Tuas South, followed by Tanah Merah, Kent Ridge Park and Telok Blangah. The quietest site for raptors was Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve.

SITE	Tuas South	Tanah Merah	Kent Ridge Park	Telok Blangah Hill Park	Chek Jawa	Japanese Garden	CCNR, Jelutong	W. Catchment	SBWR	GRAND TOTAL
TOTAL	181	147	118	101	59	45	35	30	23	739

Figure 2 : Total counts by Site (descending order)

Of the 619 migrant raptors, 568 were identified to ten species and another 51 were un-identified. The ten migrant species recorded included rarities such as a single **Greater Spotted Eagle** at Tuas South between 12:00 to 13:00 and a **Booted Eagle** at Japanese Garden between 11:00 to 12:00. As for the six resident species, the rarity would be the two **Crested Goshawks** at Kent Ridge Park.

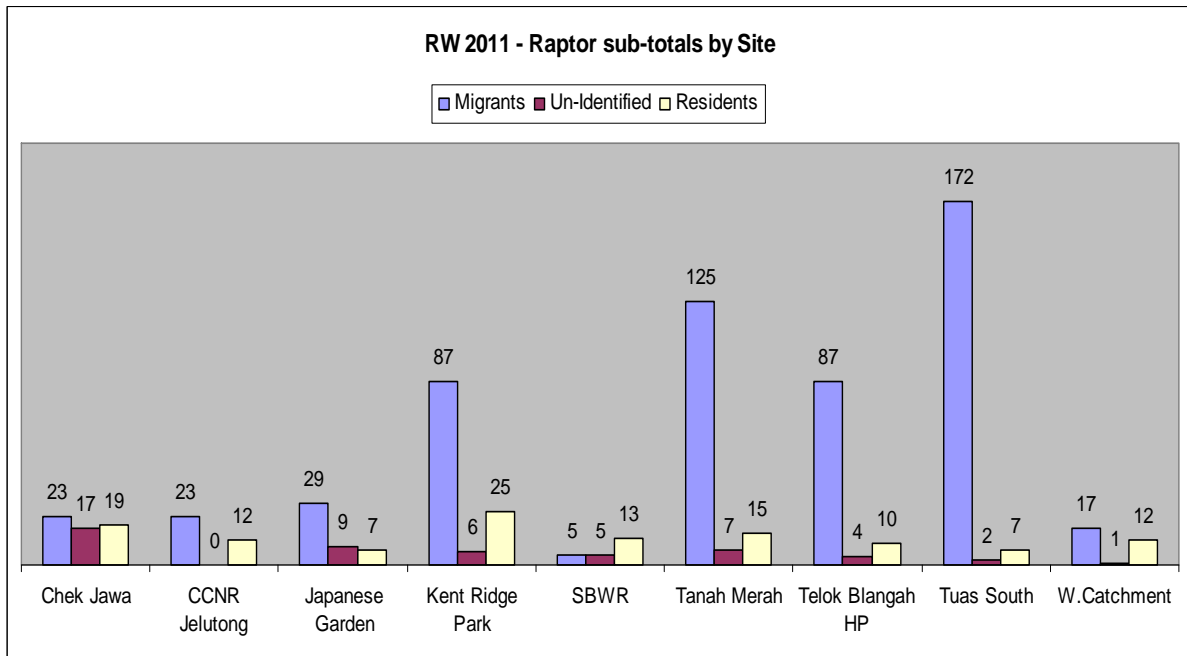


Figure 3 : Raptor Sub-totals by Site

The richest site, by migrant species, was Kent Ridge Park, with 6 migrant species. The poorest was Western Catchment with 2 migrant species, followed by Sungei Buloh with 3 migrant species. The other six sites had either 4 or 5 migrant species.

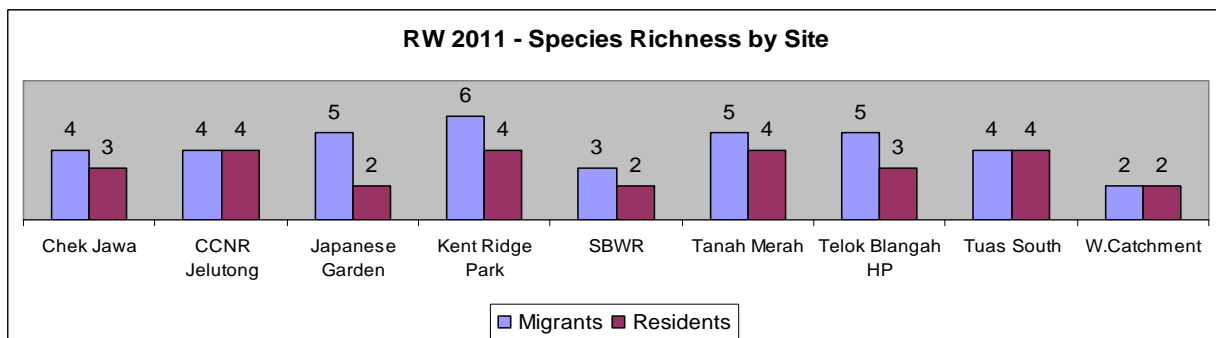


Figure 4 : Species Richness by Site

The most numerous migrant raptor was the **Oriental Honey Buzzard** with 250 birds, followed closely by the **Black Baza** with 244 birds. In third and fourth place were the **Japanese Sparrowhawk** with 45 birds and the **Chinese Sparrowhawk** with 17 birds. There were four **Ospreys** and two each for the **Eastern Marsh Harrier**, **Common Buzzard** and **Peregrine Falcon**. The single **Greater Spotted Eagle** and **Booted Eagle** completed the migrant raptors that were identified.

S/N	Species (Migrants)	Count
1	Oriental Honey Buzzard	250
2	Black Baza	244
3	Japanese Sparrowhawk	45
4	Chinese Sparrowhawk	17
5	Osprey	4
6	Eastern Marsh Harrier	2
7	Common Buzzard	2
8	Peregrine Falcon	2
9	Greater Spotted Eagle	1
10	Booted Eagle	1
11	Un-identified Accipiter	12
12	Un-identified Raptor	39
	Total Migrant Raptors	619

Figure 5 : Migrant Raptors Counted

Tuas South was **Oriental Honey Buzzard** 'central' for the day with 145 of these birds passing through, mostly between 10:00 to 13:00. In particular, Ben Lee and his team counted a continuous stream of 42 of these birds at around 11:00, passing to the east-southeast. Tuas South also had the largest flock of **Chinese Sparrowhawks** comprising 8 birds between 14:00 to 15:00.

Tanah Merah was **Black Baza** hotspot with 113 birds. The biggest concentration was a flock of 60 **Black Bazas** between 10:00 to 11:00, much to the delight of Lim Kim Keang and his participants. Another 48 **Black Bazas** passed through Tanah Merah between 11:00 to 12:00. The other good spot for **Black Bazas** was Telok Blangah Hill Park where 40 **Black Bazas** passed through between 9:00 to 10:00. Over at Kent Ridge Park, 35 **Black Bazas** passed through between 12:00 to 13:00.

The two **Common Buzzards** were recorded and photographed at Chek Jawa, Pulau Ubin and Tanah Merah. The two **Peregrine Falcon** were recorded at Kent Ridge Park and Telok Blangah Hill Park. The only location for the two **Eastern Marsh Harriers** was Tanah Merah.

At Tuas South, the western end of Singapore, most of the raptors flew east-southeast towards Jurong Island and were likely to continue southeasterly towards Batam, Indonesia. Over at Tanah Merah, the eastern end of Singapore, most of the birds flew easterly or northeasterly, towards southern Johor, Malaysia. They may move south into Bintan, Indonesia from there.

The most numerous resident raptor was the **Brahminy Kite** with 56 birds, followed by the **White-bellied Sea Eagle** with 29 and the **Changeable Hawk Eagle** with 23. It was a bit surprising that the **Grey-headed Fish Eagles**, at 6 birds, exceeded the number of **Black-winged Kites**, at 4 birds. The 2 **Crested Goshawks** mentioned previously completed the round up of the resident raptors.

S/N	Species (Residents)	Count
1	Brahminy Kite	56
2	White-bellied Sea Eagle	29
3	Changeable Hawk Eagle	23
4	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	6
5	Black-winged Kite	4
6	Crested Goshawk	2
	Total Resident Raptors	120

Figure 6 : Resident Raptors Counted

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

SITE	Tuas South	Tanah Merah	Kent Ridge Park	Telok Blangah Hill Park	Chek Jawa	Japanese Garden	CCNR, Jelutong	W. Catchment	SBWR	Grand Total
SITE TOTAL	181	147	118	101	59	45	35	30	23	739
Migrants										Total
Osprey			1						3	4
Black Baza		113	54	50	10	1	5	10	1	244
Oriental Honey Buzzard	145	2	20	32	8	21	14	7	1	250
Eastern Marsh Harrier		2								2
Chinese Sparrowhawk	9		3	1		2	2			17
Japanese Sparrowhawk	17	7	8	3	4	4	2			45
Common Buzzard		1			1					2
Greater Spotted Eagle	1									1
Booted Eagle						1				1
Peregrine Falcon			1	1						2
Residents										
Black-winged Kite	1	3								4
Brahminy Kite	4	7	14	7	4	3	2	8	7	56
White-bellied Sea Eagle	1	2	3	1	10	4	2		6	29
Grey-headed Fish Eagle							3			3
Crested Goshawk			2							2
Changeable Hawk Eagle	1	3	6	2	5		5	4		26
Un-identified										
Unid. Baza				2						2
Unid. Accipiter		1	6	1	2	1		1		12
Unid. Buteo						5				5
Unid. Eagle					1				5	6
Unid. Raptor	2	6		1	14	3				26

Figure 7 : Raptor numbers by Site (descending order) from left to right, and break down of Species



Figure 8 : 2011 Raptor Watch Sites. (Source of basemap – Google Earth)

An appreciation dinner cum slide show was held two week's after the count to detail the results to the participants. The slide show also included a detailed summary of all the raptors reported during the full 2010/2011 season. In addition, Gim Cheong introduced the Taiping Raptor Festival to everyone by recounting his experiences during the recent festival in 29-30 October 2011. Kim Keang treated us to videos of big flocks of migrating Black Bazas he encountered in Chumphon in October 2011. We also enjoyed a video, brought back by Kim Keang, on the Grey-faced Buzzard in Taiwan.

Thanks to all the 57 leaders and participants for spending their Sunday in the hot sun counting raptors. National Parks Board staff from Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and Pulau Ubin as well as NParks volunteers also participated in the count this year. Thanks to Lim Kim Chuah for the use of his place for the appreciation dinner, and to Lee Ee Ling for taking charge of the food. The following fantastic people led or assisted in the raptor count and helped to make it a success:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Aditya Sikka | Doreen Ang | John Spencer | Loke Wai Yin | Tan Gim Cheong |
| Alan OwYong | Gerard Francis | Kenneth Kee | Louise | Tan Hang Chong |
| Ali Jaffar | Gloria Seow | Larry McCloskey | Michael Quinn | Timothy Pwee |
| Barindra Sana | Goh Pei Hao | Lee Ee Ling | Ng Kim Tee | Ulf Remahl |
| Bari Mohamed | Horst & Estella Flotow | Lee Yoke Kheng | Ng Sin Yong | Vicky |
| Ben Lee | Ian & Freda Rickwood | Leslie Fung | Ng Wen Qing | Willie Foo |
| Chee Wei-lin | Jacky Soh | Liana Knight Spencer | Pat Chan | Win |
| Chiam Chye Hock | Jane & Terry Heppell | Lim Kai Qi | Pauline Lee | Wong Kang San |
| Choi Yook Sau | Jeremy Lewis | Lim Kim Keang | Pui Cuifen | Wong Soh Leng |
| Con Foley | Jimmy Lee | Linda Oei | Seow Ser Guan | Yong Ding Li |
| Danny Lau | Joan Blake | Lioe Kim Swee | Susan Knight | |