

Singapore Raptor Report Spring Migration, January 2010

Summary:

Compared with previous years, January 2010 was a good month with 196 raptors from 14 migrant species reported. Amazingly, this number is almost thrice the total number (66) reported last month when 9 migrant species were reported. Black Bazas continued to be the most numerous at 130 birds, with a flock of 50 reported by Mike Tan at Upper Jurong. Oriental Honey Buzzards came in second in terms of numbers with a total of 27. Three migrant species were recorded for the first time this season. January 2010 also marked the month when a good haul of 3 rare sedentary (resident/non-breeding visitor) raptors were reported.



*Jerdon's Baza with snake in talons at
Singapore Quarry on 090110,
by Martti Siponen*



*Himalayan Vulture, juvenile, in flight at
MacRitchie on 150110, by Leslie Fung*

Highlights for migrant species:

On the 9th of the month, a rare **Jerdon's Baza** was seen by Peter Jones and Martti Siponen at Singapore Quarry. It was even photographed flying with a green snake (likely an Oriental Whip Snake)! This enigmatic species is distributed disjointedly across India and Southeast Asia. Little is known about the nature of its movements. Following an advisory of 7 Himalayan Vultures for Thailand in December 2009 by Chaiyan of the Thai Raptor Group, a lone **Himalayan Vulture** was finally seen and photographed by Leslie Fung at MacRitchie on the 15th of the month. On the same day at Tuas, 4 huge raptors whose size and wing position recalled vultures in glide were seen but they were gone before Martti Siponen could retrieve his binoculars for a thorough identification. There are only a small number of records for this rare scavenger and most of the previous sightings have been in the month of January

as well. Danny Lau, Lau Jia Sheng and Tan Kok Hui reported the first sightings, this season, of the uncommon **Black Kite** at Seletar West. Thus, the 3 migrant species recorded for the first time this season are Jerdon's Baza, Himalayan Vulture and Black Kite.

Seletar West seems to be the favoured wintering area for **Booted Eagles**, with a total of 3 reported by Tan Kok Hui, Danny Lau and Lau Jia Sheng. Over at Changi Cove, a single female **Common Kestrel** first reported by Alfred Chia & pals and again 12 days later by Lee Tiah Kee & Lim Kim Chuah added to the month's highlights. Alfred Chia & pals also recorded the lone **Pied Harrier** sighting for this month at Changi Cove.

Highlights for sedentary species:

For the sedentary species, it was an exciting month with 3 rare species reported. The first rarity was a **Crested Goshawk** seen and photographed in flight on 23 Jan 2010 by Martti Siponen at Singapore Quarry. It was carrying an avian prey in its talons! Also on 23 Jan 2010, the second rarity, the **Crested Serpent Eagle**, was reported at different locations indicating that 2 individuals were present. One was seen at Springleaf by Danny Lau and Tan Kok Hui while the other was seen at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve by John Spencer. The third rarity was not one but 2 **Blyth's Hawk-eagles** seen at Kent Ridge on 30 Jan 2010 by Horst Flotow while walking his dog! This is only the fifth record for this species in Singapore. They are rare non-breeding visitors and may be dispersants from Johor.

A one-day count of 4 **Grey-headed Fish Eagles** (1 adult, 2 second/third year birds and 1 juvenile) at one location – Singapore Quarry – may represent the highest density at a single location ever reported for this species. With a good count of 18 **Changeable Hawk-eagles**, we hope that this species will continue to thrive in Singapore. However, the population of **Black-winged Kites** seems to have reduced, with only 6 individuals of this formerly very common species reported this month.

Table 1

S/N	Species	No.	S/N	Species	No.
1	Osprey	7			
2	Jerdon's Baza	1		<i>Residents / Sedentary Species</i>	
3	Black Baza	130	15	Black-winged Kite	6
4	Oriental Honey Buzzard	27	16	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	11
5	Black Kite	1	17	Crested Serpent Eagle	2
6	Himalayan Vulture	1	18	Crested Goshawk	1
7	Eastern Marsh Harrier	6	19	Changeable Hawk-eagle	18
8	Pied Harrier	1	20	Blyth's Hawk-eagle	2
9	Chinese Sparrowhawk	3			
10	Japanese Sparrowhawk	6			
11	Common Buzzard	3		<i>Unidentified</i>	
12	Booted Eagle	3	21	Unidentified Raptors	8
13	Common Kestrel	1	22	Unidentified Accipiters	2
14	Peregrine Falcon	6			
Total for Migrants		196	Grand Total		246

Note: The total numbers are indicative only with similar species in the same area discounted to prevent duplication.

Compiled by Tan Gim Cheong