

Singapore Raptor Report Late Spring Migration, April-June 2016



A rare photo of an adult and a young White-bellied Sea Eagle "cartwheeling" over Sentosa, 21 Jun 16, by James Tann.

Summary:

On 21st June, James Tann captured a rare series of photos of two talon-locked **White-bellied Sea Eagles** 'cartwheeling' through the air over Sentosa. Some books described this as 'talon-grappling' and 'tumbling'. Interestingly, an adult and a young eagle was involved in this instance whereas this behaviour is usually attributed to mated pairs but only mature adults have been known to form breeding pairs.

Now, for the migrants. Five migrant raptor species were recorded in the April to June period. Four of them - the Osprey, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Japanese Sparrowhawk and Peregrine Falcon were also recorded during last year's late spring migration. The notable addition this year was the **Rufous-bellied Eagle**: a juvenile was photographed at Lorong Sesuai on 23 April enjoying a meal.

Of the 14 *orientalis* **Oriental Honey Buzzards** recorded, 11 were juveniles (there were 10 in the same period last year), one was an adult female while the remaining two were not aged. Most of the juveniles were moulting their flight feathers (most were showing new P1 & P2,

counting from the inside). It is worth mentioning again that juveniles are known to 'over-summer' in the tropics.

Only one **Japanese Sparrowhawk**, an adult female, was recorded on 2nd April. Two **Ospreys** were recorded at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in Apr and May, but none in June; elsewhere, there was a record at Singapore Quarry in Apr and another record at Seletar Dam in May.

Two **Peregrine Falcons** were recorded in April - one at Pulau Ubin on 8th and another at Chinatown on 21st. An *ernesti* Peregrine Falcon returned to its usual haunt at the rooftop of buildings at Church Street on 26 May and a juvenile, likely also *ernesti*, flew over Punggol Barat on 15 June.

Back to the resident raptors. The usually encountered resident raptors were all present (see the table of records below). Notable records included the locally rare **Crested Serpent Eagle** which was recorded thrice in April (Kent Ridge Park, Ubin & Bidadari), twice in May (Sungei Tengah & Malcolm Road), and once in June (Chancery Lane).

Also, April to June was a good quarter for the **Crested Goshawks** - in April, two juveniles were photographed at the leafy compounds of the Singapore Zoo and an adult male was seen collecting twigs at the Southern Ridges where two nest structures were seen; in May, the species was recorded at the Botanic Gardens and Bishan; and in June, a total of four juveniles from two different nests were recorded at the Botanic Gardens.

Compiled by TAN Gim Cheong