Birds Korea is dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats in Korea and the wider Yellow Sea Eco-region.

The Birds Korea Bird Review 2006

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This 2006 Birds Korea Review contains records of some 145 species of especial note, including 26 of special conservation concern, out of the c. 400 species recorded in total during the year.

Records were gathered by Birds Korea members, or have been gleaned from key literature and from almost a dozen other birding websites. Identifications of the Review species have in almost all cases been made by the observer(s) themselves, and are usually supported by photographs, as clarified in the text. In the absence of a national records committee, details of several of the records were (respectfully) requested from observers (and in the absence of a response or necessary online supporting details, have occasionally been omitted), while many of the more significant records have also already been open to public review, through online-posting by Birds Korea or by other websites. In the case of a few very difficult identifications, images or descriptions have also been passed on to leading overseas specialists for their opinion.

Following this process, 2006 produced ten new additions to Category One of the Birds Korea Checklist. In addition, Lesser Whitethroat was promoted to Category One from Category Two, and there were also four new additions to Category Three, as well as two further species fully-documented as breeding for the first time in South Korea. A further 25 or so species are included in the Review as they have likely been recorded less than ten times in South Korea previously. While some of these species are likely very rare in Korea, an un-measurable proportion will simply have been overlooked in previous years, now recorded due to greatly increased observer activity, improved access to and coverage of coastal areas (especially Yellow Sea migration hotspots like Socheong, Eocheong, Hong and Heuksan Islands, with the latter two islands alone providing seven new Korean species during the year), as well as improved communication.

Comparison with earlier publications on Korean birds (e.g. Austin, 1948; Gore and Won, 1971; Lee, Koo and Park, 2000; Tomek, 1999-2002; Park, 2002) suggests that: (1) A growing number of species appear to be over-wintering, presumably due to increasingly mild winters; (2) An increasing number of ‘warmer-climate’ species (especially wetland-related) are now breeding in Korea, apparently as part of a wider range expansion; (3) Offshore islands, unsurprisingly, remain better for finding unusual species (and new records for Korea!) than mainland sites; (4) Most mainland sites, especially wetlands, are suffering severe degradation and enormous threats (with the loss to reclamation of 40,100 ha of estuary and sea-shallows at Saemangeum in 2006), while forests are generally less threatened, and following extensive reforestation projects (initiated in the 1960s) are becoming in many areas more diverse and bird-rich again.

In sum, some species groups are now very well-know and well-counted, especially compared to previous decades (The annual nationwide Ministry of Environment [MOE] Waterbird Census held in mid-January for example covered c.127 sites in 2006), even though several others (like owls, crakes and most seabirds) still remain particularly poorly known.

While somewhat incomplete, the Birds Korea Annual Bird Reviews (now covering the years 2002-2006) remain the only such reviews of their kind, containing many records and insights that would otherwise be lost to future reviewers of the avifauna. Discussions and efforts, as always, continue in the hope of developing an ever more comprehensive, peer-reviewed and much-needed bilingual (Korean and English) record.

This Review is based on records contributed by the following (arranged alphabetically):

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Jean-Leonard (JL)
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Jin Yu-Jeong (JYJ)
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Joh Song-Sik (JSS)
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K
Kang Hee-Man (KHM)
Kang Jeong-Hoon (KJH)

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Selected Species Accounts

Order and nomenclature follows the Birds Korea Checklist. Species covered in the Review include: those of global and regional conservation concern; those species considered to have been recorded in Korea less than ten times previously in total; those recorded in exceptional concentrations or locations; those species recorded on unusual dates in 2006 (including attempted breeding or over-wintering); and those species whose status in South Korea remains rather unclear. Assessments of global conservation status are based on the Asian Red Data Book maintained by BirdLife International and other publications, e.g. Wetlands International, 2006, while Korean status is based largely on Park (2002), Birds Korea year reviews covering 2002-2005 (Moores and Moores, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), and to a lesser extent on Tomek (1999, 2002) and other contemporary publications.

Swan Goose Anser cygnoides ENDANGERED

Now with a global population estimated at between 60,000 and 100,000 (Wetlands International, 2006), this is a local migrant (most regular at the Han-Imjin Estuary) and scarce winter visitor to a few sites elsewhere in South Korea. Away from the Han-Imjin in spring and autumn (when most numerous), 55 were logged in the nationwide waterbird counts conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) in mid-January, including one at Seosan, 23 at the Geum Estuary, two at Suncheon Bay (still present there on February 20th: [NM and Avi]), six at the Joonam Reservoirs, one on the Lower Nakdong River, and 22 at the Nakdong Estuary. Twenty-two (including the neck-collared R90) were also present at the Geum Estuary from January 23rd until at least February 20th, with R90 last seen there on February 5th (JM, PN).

"R90" and 22 other birds had returned to the Geum Estuary (for the 3rd successive winter) by November 4th, with 41 there on December 25th, including a new neck-collared individual, R05 (PN, JM, JL). A further three neck-collared birds (R01, R91 and R9E) were also photographed at an undisclosed location, apparently on March 19th (KYS- see http://www.wildinkorea.com).

In the second half of the year, eight had arrived back at Paju, on October 4th (CSK). Ten were also at Sobumyon, near Seosan on December 6th included the collared R2M (LHS). Additionally, five were at Gimpo on December 10th (RN, TE).

Lesser White-fronted Goose Anser erythropus VULNERABLE

An estimated 20,000 of the world’s 28,000-33,000 winter in East Asia (Wetlands International, 2006). In South Korea, a scarce migrant (most regular in October/November and March) and a fairly rare winter visitor; often overlooked.

In mid-January 15 were claimed near Goseong (Gyeongsangnam) in mid-January (MOE), an exceptional record in a number of ways, as it is a new location, the first claim of a pure flock of this species (i.e. not mixed with other grey geese), and the largest number claimed in a day anywhere nationwide. In February, one adult was at Suncheon Bay on the 3rd (NM, KS, AK, BR).

Returning birds in autumn included two at Seosan on November 11th, four or five at Cheorwon on November 12th, and another adult at Napo-ri near to the Geum Estuary on December 1st (all sightings by NM & AC). An adult, presumably the same as in previous winters, was back at Joonam from at least December 27th (NM, DS, PH).
Snow Goose *Chen caerulescens*
An estimated 20-30 are believed to winter in East Asia annually (Wetlands International, 2006). A rare winter visitor to South Korea, with probably between three and five individuals most years. One was at the Imjin River Estuary and two were at Ganghwa, Gyeonggi Province, in mid-January (MOE), with one adult still at the latter site on February 1st (PGS), with another at Seosan, Chungcheongnam Province, on February 2nd, and again on February 22nd (KHT).

A single adult was again present at Seosan on December 1st (NM, AC), with the same or a different individual seen again there on December 10th (LHS).

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*
First recorded in 1992 (Park, 2002), this species has been recorded annually or near annually in recent years. While identification criteria are still poorly understood, most records are considered likely to be attributable to *leucopareia*, the subspecies breeding on the Aleutian and Semidi islands, Alaska, with an estimated population now of 70,000 (Wetlands International, 2006), a strongly increasing population. It seems possible too that some of the recent increase in Korean records could be due to an introduction program of Aleutian Cackling Goose on Erakuma Island in the Kuril Islands, between Japan and Kamchatka (Masayuki Kurechi, *in litt.*, 2008).

In 2006, one was photographed at Joonam Reservoir, Gyeongsangnam Province, on December 27th (NM, DS, PH).

Black Brant *Branta bernicla nigricans*
A very local species, most regular on the South coast at the Nakdong Estuary and especially Gwangyang Bay, Jeollanam Province, with lesser numbers on the East coast (especially Gangneung and the Guryongpo peninsula). In mid-January 2006, 63 were counted at Gwangyang/Galsa Bays (MOE).

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*
A very uncommon winter visitor. In 2006, at least one presumed hybrid (between the regularly-occurring nominate *jankowskii* and a nominate Whistling Swan) was noted at the Nakdong Estuary Busan, e.g. on February 17th (NM and Avi).

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
A locally numerous winter visitor, with 5,104 counted in the mid-January national waterbird census (MOE). At least one and possibly two, were seen in June in/near the Nakdong Estuary (PDH), and were considered to have over-summered.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*
With a conservative estimate of 5,000 for the Korean population (Wetlands International, 2006), and only 777 recorded nationwide in the mid-January Waterbird Census (MOE), a flock of 460+ at Yanggu in Gangwon Province on October 20th (BH) seems notable.

Falcated Duck *Anas falcata*. NEAR THREATENED
Now classified as globally near-threatened, with a population estimated at 35,000 (Wetlands International, 2006). A total of 2,686 were recorded in the mid-January National Waterbird Census (MOE), with the highest single site count being 919 in the Nakdong Estuary.

American Wigeon *Anas americana*
First documented record in 1993 (Park 2002): subsequently few records. Probably annual in very small numbers, but status confused by comparatively numerous hybrids.
In mid-January two were reported in the Cheorwon basin (MOE). One First-winter female was found at the Geum Estuary on December 2nd (NM, AC). An adult male was found and photographed at the Nakdong Estuary, Busan, on 3rd December (SKS) and was seen irregularly through much of the winter by multiple observers.

Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*. VULNERABLE
Now South Korea’s most numerous wintering duck (though with only 270,834 recorded in the mid-January census: MOE), with individuals very occasionally over-summering.
On February 4th, c. 280,000 were counted upstream of the Geum Estuary barrage in the morning and c. 400,000 were counted at Seosan (less than 100 km to the north) the same afternoon, while c. 450,000 were also noted at the Geum Estuary barrage on February 21st (JP, AJ, BJN, BP, NM). On June 24th, a single female was seen at Seosan (NM, DN, JN): the third year in a row with a mid-summer record. Approximately 400,000 had returned to the Geum barrage lake by November 11th (NM, MC), with ca 600,000 at the same site on December 1st (NM, AC). The largest count of the winter was of an estimated 621,000 at the Geum River on 15th December (NM et al) - the birds being counted in thousand blocks. This is significantly more than the world estimate of 500,000 in Wetlands International (2006), though still rather less than a Korea-wide estimate of 658,000 made by Lee Han-Soo in 2004.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* NEAR THREATENED

Three previous records (in 2002, 2004 and 2005). A male found and photographed on Paldang on Dec 28th (GJB) becomes the 4th national record. While the species is increasingly reported in East Asia, its status may be clouded by the increasing occurrence of hybrids (especially with *A. baeri*).

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* 

An under-recorded though probably fairly rare winter visitor to South Korea, with less than 10 records cited in Park (2002) and 4 only individuals recorded since. In 2006, two were seen off Gangneung, Gangwon Province, on February 10th, (RN, HSN, PAN).

**Scaly-sided Merganser** *Mergus squamatus* ENDANGERED 

The global population has recently been estimated at only 1,000-2500 individuals, and declining (Wetlands International, 2006). This is a typically very wary winter visitor favoring broad (20-100m wide), shallow rivers with areas of faster-flowing, open water. Probably between 20 and 50 winter most years in South Korea (e.g. Moores, 2002), with an additional 40 found on one stretch of river in central Korea (DPRK) in a recent autumn (Duckworth and Kim, 2005).

In 2006, 51 were logged during the mid-January national waterbird census, including an exceptional, national high count of 46 at one northern site (MOE). At year’s end, five (2 pairs and 1 female) were located on the “southeast river” in Gyeongsangnam Province on December 27th (NM, DS, PH). Both of these key sites are threatened by increasing disturbance and construction (including a new motorcycle racetrack running along a favoured stretch, and either directly or indirectly by a proposed Grand Canal project).

**Yellow-billed Loon** *Gavia adamsii* 

Although considered a rare winter visitor to South Korea by Lee, Koo and Park (2000), recent satellite tracking initiatives in Alaska suggest a significant number of North Slope Yellow-billed Loon likely migrate across the Korean peninsula to winter in the Yellow Sea (Moores, 2007). The only record in 2006 known to Birds Korea was of one off Gangneung on February 10th (RN, HSN, PAN).

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas* 

A common breeding summer visitor to offshore islands, with still relatively few records from the mainland (largely due to lack of coverage).

A sample count of 1030 counted moving north in one hour on August 19th, viewed from Igidae, Busan (NM), were associated with a SW tropical depression moving into the East sea.

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris* 

An uncommon migrant from April to October. In 2006 one was off Eocheong Island on June 25th (NM, JN, DN), followed by another seen from Busan on September 16th (RN).

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* 

An uncommon migrant, most frequent in summer/autumn. Two were reported from Hong Island in September (KNPS, 2006), one was well-photographed off Chilbal Island, Jeollanam Province, on September 25th (YHS), and another two were seen off Socheong Island on October 2nd (RN).
**Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*
A scarce winter visitor, mostly along the East coast. On February 16th at least 50 were off Guryongpo (Avi, NM), constituting the highest documented day count nationally known to Birds Korea.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*
A locally common winter visitor, especially along the East Coast. Four hundred and fifty at Guryongpo on February 16th (Avi, NM) is a notably high count.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*
Rare in East Asia, with a flyway population of less than 500 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). In 2006 two were present at their regular wintering site in Hampyeong on at least January 8th and again in mid-January (MOE). In addition, one was seen near Yeonggwang on February 5th (GKN). One was also reported on October 14th on Hong Island (KNPS, 2006).

**Oriental Stork** *Ciconia boyciana* ENDANGERED
Formerly bred in Korea, presently a rare and localised winter visitor from late October to March. In 2006, only five were counted nationwide in the mid-January national waterbird census (MOE): two at Seosan, two at Yeongam Lake, and one on Jeju (present from at least January 3rd [KHT] to at least March 26th [JYC]). Further records from Seosan included two on January 22nd (KHT) onwards, increasing to five by February 22nd (RN, HSN, PN, LMH, KHS, KJH). In addition, an immature was present near Seosan Lake A from at least June 17th (KSH) until at least July 1st (TE, RL), presumably constituting the first recent national record of over-summering on the mainland. In the second half of the year, three were at Seosan on November 11th (KHT), with only one remaining by December 29th (JJJ).

A single bird was also at the Mangyeung Estuary, on November 1st (JYG) and again on December 2nd (NM, AC), while one was on Heuksan Island on November 26th (KNPS, 2006).

**Black-faced Spoonbill** *Platalea minor* ENDANGERED
A local breeding summer visitor (nesting on islands in the Yellow sea), and a scarce winter visitor, almost exclusively to eastern Jeju Island. In mid-January, one was claimed on the Hyeongsan River (between Gyeongju and the coastal city of Pohang), while 21 were counted on Jeju Island (MOE).

In June, 30+ were counted nesting on Yu Island in the Han Estuary (RN, LMH, PKS), while 47 at the Sngodo mudflats, Incheon (presently undergoing reclamation) on September 12th (TE) is apparently the highest count for this particular site, and represents over 3% of the global population (estimated at 1500 by Wetlands International, 2006).

**Black Bitten** *Dupetor flavicollis*
A rare overshooting migrant, first recorded in 1990, with further records at least in 2000, 2003, 2004, and 2005. In 2006 an adult male was seen flying off the sea on April 21st on Eocheong Island (TE, RN). A second adult male was found dead at Jeju Island on May 28th (KHK), representing perhaps the 7th or 8th national record.

**Malayan Night Heron** *Gorsachius melanolophus*
On June 4th in Gunsan City, one was found injured by a cat, taken into captivity and photographed (KJHO). The normal range of this species lies well to the south of Korea and it is known to be only a partial migrant. However after much consideration, it also seems highly unlikely that the bird is of feral origin, and has therefore been added to Category One.
Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Apparently first recorded only in 1988, but now increasingly regular, especially on northward migration, but also as a very scarce breeding species and occasional over-winterer. Records in 2006 for example included one on Eocheong Island on April 19\(^{th}\) (TE, RN), increasing to 11 by May 4\(^{th}\) (YY, Al), and to 21 + on May 7\(^{th}\). (NM, JV, DK). Away from offshore islands, one was at Seosan on May 25\(^{th}\) and again on July 3\(^{rd}\) (KSH); one was at Suwon on May 26\(^{th}\) (KHK); two were seen on Gangwha Island on June 6\(^{th}\) (PGS); two were at Cheorwon, on June 3\(^{rd}\} (NM, HA, HON, IY, YY); and one was at Hwajinpo, Gangwon Province, on June 24\(^{th}\) (PWO). In addition, five were found in Gunsan City on May 5\(^{th}\) (SKS) and were present through the summer, apparently with evidence of successful breeding (JM,PN). One on November 5\(^{th}\) at the Mangyeung estuary (PN, JM, GS, JL) is considered rather late.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

A widespread summer visitor and migrant. One at Seosan on December 23\(^{rd}\) (DS, PH) is considered exceptional, and constitutes probably the first mid-winter record for Korea.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

A rare annual passage migrant. Records in 2006 included one at Jeju island on April 17\(^{th}\} (KHK), three at Socheong island on May 22\(^{nd}\} (NM), and two at Seosan on June 29\(^{th}\} (KSH), where a single was also seen on at least three dates in October: on the 3\(^{rd}\} (KHT), 11th (LHS) and 14\(^{th}\} (KHK). One was also seen in September and October on Heuksan Island (KNPS, 2006).

Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* VULNERABLE

A scarce summer breeder on remote islands in the Yellow Sea, typically arriving on mainland coastal mudflats in early April and departing by mid October. Noteworthy in 2006 were an adult and two juveniles at the Nakdong Estuary on August 7\(^{th}\} (NM, KHG, JSJ), suggestive of local breeding. Twenty-two at the Geum Estuary on September 26\(^{th}\} (NM, DR, JYG, PN, AN) included one banded individual (Left Tarsus: Green-yellow-green; Right Tarsus: Green-green). Two extremely late individuals were at the Geum Estuary on December 1\(^{st}\} (NM, AC).

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

A very rare species in Korean waters, first recorded in 1986 (Park, 2002), and with probably five or fewer records to date. One was photographed offshore from Mara Island, Jeju on April 18\(^{th}\} (GCH, PJY, KEM).

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*

One on Socheong Island on May 19\(^{th}\} and 20\(^{th}\} (NM) was seen well but briefly. No images of this most distinctive species were taken, but plumage details noted included e.g. the all-black head with white breast bib below, the dark and white barred underparts, and the large whitish oval on the scapulars. This is the first record of the species in Korea and the species has been added to Category 3 of the Birds Korea checklist.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* NEAR THREATENED

A total of 45 were counted nationwide during the mid-January waterbird census (MOE).

Steller’s Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus pelagicus* VULNERABLE

A regular winter visitor in small numbers to a few traditional sites. In 2006, an exceptional ten were apparently claimed along the Han River in East Seoul, on January 8\(^{th}\} (YDH). Between two and three remained, as expected, at this same site through the winter, until at least March 17\(^{th}\} (TE, RN). In the national mid-January waterbird census (apparently not covering this area), six were reported nationwide, with singles at Shiwa Lake, Cheorwon, Hwajin Po and Gangneung, and two at the Nakdong Estuary (MOE). Later in the month, two were at Gangneung on the 22\(^{nd}\} January (PUN), while one was still at Cheorwon on February 13\(^{th}\} (Avi and NM). In the south-east, one was at the Nakdong Estuary on January 21\(^{st}\} (PM, NM, PDH) and again on February 2\(^{nd}\} (NM, KS, BR, AK), with three seen on 17\(^{th}\}, along with one adult at Ulsan, the same day (NM, Avi). In the second half of the year, two were at the Nakdong Estuary on December 28\(^{th}\} (PH, NM, DS, JSJ).
**Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* NEAR THREATENED
An estimated 1000 or 1200 have been present in recent winters (e.g. Lee *et al.*, 2004), and 1055 were recorded in the 2006 mid-January national waterbird census (MOE). Of great concern was the closing of several feeding stations for the species in late 2006, due to concerns over outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, or Poultry Flu, leading to several reports of birds being found either dead or starving.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*
An uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, and possibly very scarce breeding species. One was photographed at the nest in late March, at Chungcheongnam Province (KHK, KHSO): this constitutes the first confirmed breeding record in recent years (for historic records, see Duckworth and Moores, *in press*).

**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* VULNERABLE
A very scarce winter visitor and migrant. Only two records in 2006, with one at Seosan on February 4th (NM, BR, KS, AK), and another remaining on Jeju Island, perhaps through the year (being photographed e.g. on July 7th: KHK).

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*
In January, the First-year bird remained near Jinju, Gyeongsangnam Province, while in the second half of the year, a juvenile-type photographed on Socheong island on October 1st (RN) is considered to be approximately the 5th record for the Korean peninsula (with one record in DPRK, and the remainder in South Korea).

**Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* VULNERABLE
Two were reported in the mid-January national waterbird census (one at Cheorwon, Gangwon Province, and one at the Nakdong Estuary [MOE]), and one was reported on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, in October (KNPS, 2006).

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*
One photographed on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province, on October 30th (PJG) is the first fully documented record for Korea. An earlier sight record of a light-phase individual on Socheong Island on October 20th 2005 (NM) was unsupported by photographs. This species has been reported from eastern China several times in recent years.

**Swinhoe’s Rail** *Coturnicops exquisitus* VULNERABLE
One was well watched at very close range on Hong Island on September 21st (PJG). This follows on from one recorded on Hong Island on October 28th, 2005 (the first record in South Korea in 70 years).

**Ruddy-breasted Crake** *Porzana fusca*
An under-reported species, probably occurring at low density in summer throughout South Korea in suitable habitat. One was at Seosan on May 31st (KSH), and again on September 4th (LHS); two or more birds were seen at a
Cheorwon reservoir (RL) in July; and singles were seen on Hong Island in October (KNPS) and on Socheong Island on October 20th (NM).

**Sandhill Crane** *Grus canadensis*  
Although presumably migrating through the Korean peninsula to winter annually in very small numbers in western Japan, one found in mid-January (MOE) and later photographed at Suncheon Bay on February 20th (JP, AJ, BJN, BP, NM) becomes apparently only the fifth or sixth national record.

**White-naped Crane** *Grus vipio* VULNERABLE  
A regular migrant and winter visitor, especially to the Cheorwon area and the lower Nakdong River. A total of 1,321 were counted nationwide in mid-January (MOE). In the second half of the year one at Cheorwon on 25th November carried an engraved flag, E96, on its left tarsus (Name of photographer unknown, from: [http://www.wildinkorea.com](http://www.wildinkorea.com)).

**Common Crane** *Grus grus*  
A scarce migrant with occasional singles wintering, most especially at Suncheon Bay, Jeollanam Province, where probably annually in recent years. Status confused by presence of apparent hybrids with Hooded Crane. One was at Gimpo on January 12th (PGS), with possibly the same bird reported in the Han Estuary, with one further single at Suncheon Bay in mid-January (MOE). In the second half of the year, three were at the Mangyeung Estuary, Jeollabuk Province, from November 7th (PN, AN) to November 11th (NM, MC), another was found on the Han-Imjin Estuary on November 12th (NM, MC), and one was also at Seosan on November 29th (LHS), increasing to two there on December 2nd (NM, AC) and 12th (LHS). In addition, two hybrid Common x Hooded Cranes were seen at Seosan on December 12th (LHS).

**Hooded Crane** *Grus monacha* VULNERABLE  
A recent estimate suggests a world population of 10,160 with 8,700 wintering in Japan (presumably after migrating through Korea), and a much smaller number in Korea (Wetlands International, 2006). A total of 219 were counted nationwide in mid-January, including one in Cheorwon (MOE).

**Red-crowned Crane** *Grus japonensis* ENDANGERED  
A recent estimate suggests a total world population of 2,650 individuals, with 750 wintering in Korea (Wetlands International, 2006), mostly in the Cheorwon area. In mid-January 2006, 643 were counted nationwide (MOE), all in the far north (Cheorwon, 489; Yeoncheon, 141) and northwest (Ganghwa, 13).

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*  
Two reported in mid-January on Jeju (MOE) is perhaps the first over-wintering record of the species.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*  
A rather rare migrant, now recorded annually, most often in autumn, and very occasionally in winter. In 2006 the only record known to Birds Korea was of one photographed at Songdo, Incheon on October 7th (CSK).

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*  
A scarce and local winter visitor, with a non-breeding population estimate of 250 (Moores, 2006). Highest counts in 2006 were at the Geum Estuary, where 51 present on January 1st had risen to 63 by January 8th (JM, PN), 72 on February 4th (PN, AN, JM) and up to c.80 on February 12th (JM). In addition, 64 were counted in Sacheon Bay in mid-January, out of a national count of 179 (MOE). In the latter half of the year, 45 were counted at Seosan Lake A on November 12th (TE, RN, LEJ, LYD, LHYS, HJIH, HJO).

**Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*  
A very scarce migrant, with several records annually (largely concentrated on western islands, at Seosan and on the East coast). The only records in 2006 were of one on April 24th, apparently remaining into May, on Hong Island (KNPS, 2006), and one photographed at Seosan on the 25th August (KHH), which remained until at least the 30th (LGH).
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
An uncommon migrant. In 2006, 90 at Yubu Island on September 24th (NM, DR, JYG, GS, TS, TE) probably represents a national high count.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*
A very scarce migrant, possibly annual in the far southwest. One photographed on April 17th on Jeju Island (KHK) was the only record of the year known to Birds Korea.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*
A scarce and largely overlooked species, with probably small numbers breeding, occurring on migration and also over-wintering. The first record of 2006 was one in Gunsan on May 6th (JM), while on May 20th an adult male was photographed on the nest at Seosan, Chungcheongnam Province (KHK). Successful breeding there was confirmed when a family with four young was photographed on June 18th (SHS), becoming perhaps the first fully documented record of breeding for Korea. However, possibly as many as 30 pairs are suspected to breed in the area (KHT, verbally, 2007). At Haenam, Jeollanam Province, one was observed from July 28th-31st (JSD), while breeding was also confirmed near Busan, where a pair with four young were photographed on September 14th (KBS).

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
First recorded in 1993 (Park, 2002), and now reported annually, especially in summer. In 2006, breeding was confirmed for the first time in Korea (on Jeju Island), with the pair and three young photographed on August 2nd (KHM). Elsewhere, one apparently over-summered on Gageo Island, Jeollanam Province, after being first reported on May 28th, (HTS), and one photographed on June 3rd at Songdo, Incheon (TE) was still present the next day (NM, HA, HN, IY, YY).

Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria*
A rare and extremely localised winter visitor from November to March, with a non-breeding population estimate of only 10 (Moores, 2006). Away from the regular wintering site at the National Arboretum, three were seen on Socheong Island on November 3rd (NM), and one was at Namhansan, Seoul on November 28th (KBH)- where it apparently overwintered.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*
A very scarce migrant first recorded in 1998 (Moores, 1999), and now recorded annually. One at the Geum Estuary tidal-flats on February 11th and 12th (JM, PN, AN) is apparently the first Korean midwinter record.

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* NEAR THREATENED
Most recent estimate puts the global population at a conservative 23,000 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). Scarcey annual in South Korea. At least two were found by the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program: one photographed on the inner Dongjin Estuary between April 27th and at least May 6th; and one at the Geum Estuary on May 13th (NM).
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
A common coastal migrant, often mistakenly claimed in winter. One at the Geum Estuary on December 24th (PH, DS) was followed by observations of presumably the same bird there also on February 4th, 2007 (NM et al.). This therefore becomes the second or third over-wintering record of the species known to Birds Korea.

Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
While this species has an estimated global population of only 38,000 (Wetlands International 2006), it still a rather numerous migrant in South Korea, with an estimated 10,000 present on northward migration and 7,500 on southward migration (Moores, 2006), often over-summering, but rare in mid-winter. Five were at the Geum Estuary on December 2nd (NM, AC), with further records there in early 2007.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
An uncommon migrant, with an estimated 100 present on northward migration and 250 on southward migration (Moores, 2006), very rarely reported in mid-winter. One was at Hadori, Jeju, in mid-January (MOE) and again on February 19th (JP, AJ, BHN, BP, NM).

Normann’s Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* ENDANGERED
Globally, this species has an estimated population of between only 500 and 1000 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). A scarce and local migrant (very much overlooked as largely confined to extensive estuarine tidal-flats), with a national estimate of 100 on northward and 150 on southward migration (Moores, 2006). Historically, the majority of records are in autumn with the peak in October.

In 2006, most counts were made during the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program and are documented in Moores et al. (2006) and Rogers et al. (2006). The first record in spring was one at the Geum Estuary on April 13th, followed by up to 14 at Yubu Island, Jeollabuk Province, on April 17th. On April 22nd, five were at the Geum Estuary, and on April 25th, four were in the Mangyeung Estuary. On April 26th, 35 were counted in the Geum Estuary, with four in the inner Dongjin Estuary (Saemangeum, Jeollabuk Province) on April 27th (All records by SSMP observers).

In May, seven were at the Geum and Mangyeung Estuaries on 13th, followed by a record high count of at least 69 birds at Yubu Island on May 17th (all SSMP). This exceeds the largest previous counts in the Saemangeum estuarine system (61, October 21st-23rd, 1998; Moores, 1999).

In the autumn, two adults were found at Yeongjae Island, Incheon (NM, RK, EK) on September 7th. On September 24th/25th, 31-37 individuals, including 2 juveniles, were counted at high tide on Yubu Island (NM and multiple observers including DR, JYG, GS, TS, TE).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
A rare migrant, with perhaps only one or two records per year. On April 5th, one was at the Inner Dongjin Estuary (NM). At Seosan, one on 26th September (AA, MCH, MD, JYF, JO) was photographed (by AA): perhaps the first photograph of the species in Korea?

Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* ENDANGERED
Very fast-declining, with a minimum world population estimate in 2006 of less than 3,000 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). After the completion of the Saemangeum seawall on April 21st, 2006, and facing numerous threats along its flyway, this species is likely critically endangered. In South Korea, a very local migrant, most numerous in autumn in the Saemangeum area. In 2006, extensive coverage by the SSMP showed that the Geum and Mangyeung Estuaries remain vitally important staging areas, and that the much-degraded Saemangeum tidal-flats
can probably continue to support the species, so long as the (now limited) daily tidal flow is maintained (e.g. Rogers et al., 2006).

The earliest records during northward migration were one adult and one non-breeding plumaged bird at the Geum Estuary on April 13th, followed by singles on April 16th and 17th (Mangyeung Estuary and Yubu Island respectively). In the Geum Estuary (mostly at the high-tide roost on Yubu Island), there were two on April 19th, three on 20th, and one again on the 22nd, with four also recorded at Simpo, Saemangeum on April 27th.

On May 14th there was one in the Dongjin Estuary, on 15th, 21 at Okku, and on 18th and a further 12 at Simpo, giving a combined Mid-May count cycle total of 34 (All records SSMP). There was one further single at the Geum Estuary barrage, on May 21st (PN). During southward migration (a period with relatively limited research effort), four juveniles and one dead adult were found at Okku, Saemangeum on September 8th (NM, JYG, RK, EK), while 15 were counted on September 24th/25th at Yubu Island, including at least six juveniles (NM, DR, JYG, GS, TS, TE). Also in September, one was recorded on Heuksan Island (KNPS, 2006). Finally, in October three juveniles were found in the Nakdong Estuary, 3rd/4th (K HG, JSJ), with two juveniles still present on October 12th (NM, K HG, JSJ).

**Ruff Philomachus pugnax**

Five at the inner Dongjin Estuary on April 10th (SSMP) is a rather high count of this very scarce migrant.

**Red Phalarope Phalaropus fulicarius**

Two, possibly three, non-breeding plumaged birds were seen well from a ferry by (NM) several km offshore from Socheong Island on November 3rd. Possibly seven or eight more, presumably of this species, were then seen from a different ferry in the same area, perhaps only 30 minutes later (RN).

**(Ring-billed Gull Larus delawarensis**

A First-winter, presumably of this species, was seen at rather long range at the Nakdong Estuary on December 28th (DS, PH, NM). Although digi-scoped images were taken, they were insufficient to confirm identification. The only previous record is of a Second-winter seen at Suncheon Bay, Jeollanam Province, on May 3rd 1997.)

**Glaucous Gull Larus hyperboreus**

First officially recorded only in the 1990's, and subsequently recognized as an uncommon winter visitor, primarily to the East coast. In 2006, 34 along the Guryongpo Peninsula, Gyeongsangbuk Province, on February 1st (NM, AK, BB, KS) probably represents one of the highest site-counts to date in Korea. A Third-summer photographed at the Nakdong Estuary on August 7th (NM, K HG, JSJ) is possibly the first mid-summer record in Korea.

**Iceland Gull Larus glaucoides**

A rare winter vagrant to the East coast. In 2006, one was seen in flight on the Guryongpo Peninsula, Gyeongsangbuk Province on February 16th (JP, AJ, B JN, BP, NM).

**Mongolian Gull Larus mongolicus**

A wing-tagged adult, AA63, was seen at the Nakdong Estuary on February 2nd (NM, KS, BR, AK), and again on 17th (JP, AJ, B J N, B P, NM). This bird had been flagged and photographed as a sub-adult on 24th May 2004, at a breeding colony 1940km away at Kokh Nuur, Mongolia.
Pallas’s Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
First recorded in December 2002 and annually since, always in the winter or early spring. In 2006, a near breeding-plumaged adult was photographed on Heuksan Island on February 23\(^\text{rd}\) (PJG), followed by an adult on March 10\(^\text{th}\) & 11th, along the Han River at Oksu, Seoul (RN). Towards the end of the year, another (or the same?) adult was seen again on Heuksan Island on December 2\(^\text{nd}\) (PJG): the 9\(^\text{th}\) national record.

Saunders’s Gull *Larus saundersi* VULNERABLE
A very local breeding species, becoming more widespread in winter. The mid-January census recorded 1,899 nationwide (though surprisingly none in Gyeongii Bay), with the largest concentrations being reported at Yubu Island (650) and Suncheon Bay (632) (MOE). Despite ongoing mudflat reclamation at Songdo, Incheon, breeding at the local colony was still successful, with 133 adults and 24 juveniles counted on August 8\(^\text{th}\) (TE). The only other known colony in 2006, on Yeongjeong Island, Incheon, is likewise undergoing damaging development. Despite this, 120 were present there on June 24\(^\text{th}\) (NM, JN, DN).

Relict Gull *Larus relictus* VULNERABLE
An apparently rare and very local winter visitor, threatened in South Korea by the reclamation of Song Do and the continuing degradation of the Nakdong Estuary. In 2006, very few reports with two adults in the Nakdong Estuary on January 17\(^\text{th}\) (NM), followed by one at Sokcho, Gangwon Province, on March 19\(^\text{th}\) (BH). In December, one was in the Nakdong Estuary on the 29\(^\text{th}\) (DS, PH).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*
A locally common breeding summer visitor. One photographed at the Nakdong Estuary on December 28\(^\text{th}\) (DS, PH, NM, JSJ) is believed to be Korea’s first midwinter record, possibly the result of hand-rearing (and releasing back into the wild) birds that were artificially hatched from confiscated illegally-taken eggs.

Aleutian Tern *Sterna aleutica*
One (of probably several) was confirmed moving south with flocks of Common Tern *S. hirundo* (totaling 520 south in one hour), from Igidae, Busan on August 28\(^\text{th}\) (NM). Previous sight records are of one, 70km E/SE of Socheong Island, on August 23\(^\text{rd}\) 2004, and up to three from Igidae, Busan on September 7\(^\text{th}\) 2005 (all NM).

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*
One photographed on Jeju Island on July 10\(^\text{th}\) (KHM) constitutes the first Korean record. This bird was wrecked during the passage of Typhoon Ewiniar, an early and very powerful typhoon that moved through Japan’s Nansei Shoto, and up into the Yellow Sea before crossing the Korean Peninsula, and dissipating in the East Sea.

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*
On June 15\(^\text{th}\), an adult was found dead on Jeju Island, and was subsequently preserved (Anon, 2008). This was followed on July 11th by a juvenile found exhausted inland (after the passage of Typhoon Ewiniar) on a school sports field in Danyang, Chungcheongbuk Province. This bird was taken into care, rehabilitated and successfully released on July 13\(^\text{th}\) (DB).
**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*
A scarce (but increasingly recorded) passage migrant. In June 2006, one was at Songdo, Incheon, on the 3rd (TE, RL), 10 were at Seosan (KSH) on the 24th, and one more was on Jeju Island on the 30th (KHK). In July, one was at Haenam, Jeollanam Province, from the 28th-31st (JSD), and in September one was at the Geum Estuary on the 26th (NM, DR, JYG, PN, AN).

**South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki*
First recorded in 1995, and thereafter noted as a scarce but regular migrant, with e.g. 13 records in the outer part of Gyeonggi Bay (between Incheon City and Socheong Island) between September and November 2003-2005: Moores, 2007). In 2006, two further records in the same area, with one on October 17th (NM) and one on November 3rd (RN).

**Pomarine Jaeger** *Stercorarius pomarinus*
First recorded in 1995, and believed the most numerous jaeger in Korean waters (see: Moores, 2004), recorded in almost all months from ferries, though with still few records from the mainland. In 2006 an immature was seen from Igidae, Busan, on July 24th, followed by another there on August 1st (NM), while one was off Samcheok, Gangwon Province, on October 21st (RN). A total of 20 were reported over five dates from the Incheon to Socheong ferry between October 2nd and November 9th (RN and NM).

**Parasitic Jaeger** *Stercorarius parasiticus*
Uncommon coastal and pelagic migrant, most often recorded in late summer/early autumn. In 2006, one was seen from Igidae, Busan, on August 16th (NM); two were seen between Gunsan and Eocheong on August 21st, with one more on the 23rd (TE, RN); two were near Socheong Island on October 17th (NM); one was off Samcheok, Gangwon Province, on October 21st (RN).

**Long-tailed Jaeger** *Stercorarius longicaudus*
Rarely recorded in Korean waters, and not yet documented adequately for inclusion in Category One of the Birds Korea checklist. In 2006, one was seen from Igidae, Busan on August 16th (NM).

**Thick-billed Murre** *Uria lomvia*
First recorded in Korean waters in 2006. In January, one was apparently found washed up dead on the East coast (via PJG), though details unknown, and three were claimed mid-month during the National Waterbird Census mid-month between Sokcho and Ganseong, Gangwon Province (MOE). These was followed by a slightly oiled winter-plumaged individual photographed at Daebo, on the Guryongpo Peninsula, Gyeongsankbuk Province, on February 1st (NM, KS, BR, AK), and two seen at Okye, Gangwon Province, on February 14th (JP, AJ, BJN, BP, NM).

**Common Murre** *Uria aalge*
An apparently scarce species in Korean waters, exclusively in the East Sea, and not recorded annually in recent years. In 2006 one was seen from Geojin, Gangwon Province on January 14th (KHT, HJU, KHK, SKS, GKN).

**Spectacled Guillemot** *Cepphus carbo*
An apparently scarce species in Korean waters, exclusively in the East Sea, and not recorded annually. In 2006, one was seen from Geojin, Gangwon Province on January 14th (KSUH).
**Long-billed Murrelet** *Brachyramphus perdix*
NEAR THREATENED
An apparently scarce and probably under-reported species in Korean waters. In mid-January, three singles were reported along the East coast, between Ulsan and Guryongpo, and north and south of Uljin, Gyeongsangbuk Province (MOE). On February 16th, four were off the Guryongpo Peninsual, Gyeonsangbuk Province (Avi, NM), the highest day count to date of this species.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
Based on the specimen record (e.g. Austin, 1948), formerly more regular. One photographed by KHT on January 16th at Yeongdeok, Gyeongsanbuk Province, is approximately the seventh record for South Korea since the last was collected in 1961.

**Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
First recorded in South Korea in 1993, with the second and third records in 2001 (Park, 2002). In 2006, one female-type was on Socheong Island Incheon, on May 19th (NM, RT), with a second (the first national record in autumn) photographed on Eocheong Island, Gunsan, on October 14th (NM, GS, ES, MS, DST, AH, TS). These are approximately the 10th and 11th national records.

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*
One, photographed on May 23rd and again on May 30th by PJG and KSUH on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, is the first record for South Korea, and the Korean peninsula, and has been added to Category 1 of the Birds Korea checklist.

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis*
One seen twice briefly and clearly, in flight at very close quarters, on May 23rd, on Socheong Island (NM), with identification based primarily on size, and complete lack of upperpart or head streaking. The species has been added to Category 3 of the Birds Korea checklist.

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis*
One photographed (YK, AI) on May 1st, on Weiyon Island, Chungcheongnam Province becomes Korea’s second record. The first was one found dead on Geokrelbiyel Island, Gunsan, on June 9th 2005.
Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*

One photographed on Jeju Island on May 11th (KHK/KWBS website) is South Korea’s third record (with the two previous records of one on Jeju Island in April 1994, and one seen in Gyeonggi Province in May 1999: Park, 2002).

Asian Drongo-cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris*

An adult photographed at Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, on May 4th (JSD) is the first record for the Korean peninsula, and has been added to Category 1 of the Birds Korea checklist.

Collared Scops Owl/"Northern Scops Owl" *Otus (bakkamoena) semitorques?*

The status and taxonomy of what has until recently widely been known as *Collared Scops Owl* sensu latu remains very unclear in South Korea, and it appears possible that both the newly-coined *Japanese Scops Owl* *Otus semitorques* and the sensu strictu *Collared Scops Owl* *Otus lettia* occur in South Korea, leading to the temporary coining of the term “Northern Scops Owl” to include both taxa (see Note in Checklist for more commentary). Forty-nine “Northern Scops Owl” (and 102 *Oriental Scops Owl* *Otus sunia*) were reported killed by traffic on only 119 km of road around Jiri Mountain between July 2004 and December 2006, in a survey conducted by Seoul National University, suggesting that the species is both locally numerous, and also vulnerable to traffic (see: [http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200701/200701290006.html](http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200701/200701290006.html)).

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Probably a local and scarce resident, with only a few recent records known to Birds Korea. One was seen near Jeonju, Jeollabuk Province, on August 6th (GS, ES).

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*

This species is “frequently found” very locally and breeds in the DPRK; has been recorded (very rarely) within the breeding season in South Korea as well in winter months in more northern provinces (Duckworth and Moores, in prep.); is fairly widespread in Japan, and is generally considered to be largely sedentary throughout its range. This suggests that this species is likely to be a scarceresident, especially in forested areas of Gyeonggi and Gangwon Provinces. One was seen (imperfectly) on November 2nd on Socheong Island (RN). An owl, also considered to have been this species, was also seen on Socheong Island (KY) on October 22nd 2005.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

While recorded occasionally in the summer months in DPRK (with at least one historic breeding record there [Duckworth and Moores, in prep.], and one seen between July 26th and August 5th 2005 on the DPRK side of the DMZ: Joakim Hammar), records in South Korea have up to now all come in autumn or the winter months. There were five or six such records in both 2004 and 2005. In 2006, presumably the same individual was noted (and photographed) on multiple occasions at Seosan from at least January 10th (KHT) to February 19th (LGH), with either another or the same bird seen there also in November 2005 (KHT). In autumn 2006, one was again photographed on September 11th at Seosan (KSH), while one was also seen very briefly on Socheong Island on October 23rd (NM).

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*

Status unclear. Recorded annually since 2001, with all records from offshore islands (most especially Eocheong Island, and most especially in early May.) In 2006, one was seen for five minutes on Eocheong Island on the highly typical date of May 9th (NM), constituting probably the 12th national record.
Common Swift *Apus apus*
On May 28th, three or four were identified on call, and then watched moving north together over Socheong Island with a flock of Pacific Swift *A. pacificus*, at which time their lack of white rump-band was noted (NM). This species is now claimed annually in South Korea (being seen by multiple, experienced observers). Lacking better documentation, however, the species remains on Category 3 of the Birds Korea checklist.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
Seven on Eocheong Island on April 21st (TE, NM, RN) is possibly a new national high day-count of the species. A probable sighting of an individual at Hadori, Jeju Island on February 19th (NM, BR, KS, AK) if confirmed would have constituted Korea’s first over-wintering record.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Hypopicus hyperythrus*
A rare migrant, in both spring and autumn, with c. ten previous records (most in recent years). While Tomek (1999) traced only three records for DPRK (in May, May-June and in September), the last of which was in the 1930s, a paper by Val’chuk (2000) confirms that the species regularly summers and breeds in the southern Far East of Russia, presumably after migrating through Korea. In 2006, a male was present at Baebongsan, East Seoul from 13th April to May 2nd, being first found by members (JYJ, YGK) of the Seoul University bird watching club. It was seen by multiple observers, and well-photographed. A second male, on May 20th on Socheong Island (NM, RT), becomes the 12th record.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*
A rather scarce species, with a highly enigmatic distribution. On the Korean peninsula it was considered by Austin (1948) to be “a not uncommon summer resident: a few winter in the central and southern provinces,” and in South Korea by Gore and Won (1971) as an “uncommon resident,” “in the mountains in summer, in the lowlands in winter.” In recent decades it has been reported only rarely and mostly in the winter months, with just two records in the 1990s, both in Gyeongii Province (Park, 2002). Based on its historical distribution, however, and a recent increase in records (reflecting perhaps both increased observer activity and also re-growth of forests), it seems likely that this species will prove to be a scarce resident in Gyeonggi and perhaps Gangwon Provinces. One was at Pocheon, Gyeongii Province, on February 9th (KDH).

Fairy Pitta *Pitta nympha* VULNERABLE
A very scarce and local breeding species, most regular and numerous on Jeju Island. One was heard singing in a national park in June in Jeollabuk Province (PN, AN).

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
A scarce, declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. One *L. cristatus superciliosus* was photographed on Eocheong Island, on 10 May (NM).

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
A rare but regular, and increasingly recorded overshooting migrant, usually in May and June, and almost always on offshore islands in the Yellow Sea. Among numerous records in 2006, one at Gunsan on June 3rd (JM) is a rare mainland record.
Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*
First recorded in 2001, and thereafter almost annually in spring, and more rarely, autumn. One was at Eocheong Island from May 1st (YK, Al), being seen and photographed by multiple observers until at least May 8th (NM, JVDK).

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
One was photographed on the mainland at Gunsan airport on May 2nd & 3rd (PN). On Socheong Island, one was noted on May 24th, followed by another on November 9th (both records NM) - approximately the 11th record for Korea.

Japanese Waxwing *Bombycilla japonica*
NEAR THREATENED
A scarce passage migrant and irruptive winter visitor. At the Gwangneung National Arboretum, a small flock was found on January 10th (RN, JAL, BK) remaining until at least February 13th (NM, Avi), when 8 were counted.
At Ulsan, 15 were found on February 17th (NM, Avi), one or more were on Hong Island in February and March (KNPS, 2006), and there were 15 at Shiripdae, east Seoul, between April 25th and at least May 5th (TE, RN). The last report of the Spring was of three at Nowon, Seoul, on May 8th (KHK).

Yellow-bellied Tit *Periparus venustulus*
A male at Songdo, Incheon, on January 22nd (TE, RN) stayed on-site until at least April 3rd (RN). A further male was photographed on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province, on April 21st (YHS). The latter is only the 4th national record, following the first in October 2005 - before which this species had apparently been unrecorded outside of China.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
One seen and photographed by PJG on April 11th, on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, becomes the 4th national record. Previous records (first in 2002) are all in April and May.

Northern House Martin *Delichon (urbecum) lagopodum*
First recorded in 2003, thereafter as a near-annual vagrant in April and early May, and again in September. In 2006, two were on Eocheong Island, Gunsan, on April 22nd, with three counted there on the 23rd (NM, TE, JG), followed by (at least) one photographed at Seosan on April 26th (LHS). In May, one was at Hong Island from the 4th-8th, and another at Socheong Island on the 28th (NM), probably the 11th record for South Korea.
Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
A regular though scarce spring migrant, most regularly found on western islands in mid-April. Although rare on the mainland, one was at Seosan on April 8th (KHT). On Weiyon Island, a high count for the year of eighteen was found and photographed on the 30th (CSK).

Light-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*
First recorded in 2002, and subsequently increasingly recorded, even breeding on Socheong Island, Incheon, first in 2005 (Moores, 2007), and again in 2006, with two or three juveniles seen on October 1st (RN).

One at Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, on January 1st (PJG) represents the first national midwinter record. At nearby Heuksan Island, one or two on September 12th (NM, RK, EK) is apparently only the second autumn record for these southwest islands.

One at Busan on July 7th (YDH) is apparently the first Korean mainland record.

Korean Bush Warbler *Cettia (canturians) borealis*
A fairly common summer visitor, breeding throughout most of Korea. One in Jeju city on February 18th (NM) and a second individual at Hadori, Jeju Island, on the 19th (NM, Avi) appear to be (among) the first winter records.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Two photographed on September 20th (PJG, KSUH) on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province is the first fully documented record for Korea.

Pallas’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*
A locally common passage migrant, particularly in the Northwest, peaking in late April. Less numerous in the autumn (October). One on Jeju Island on December 25th (PH, DS) is probably Korea’s first midwinter record.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*
An occasionally abundant passage migrant. One at Igidae, Busan on January 4th (NM) is perhaps Korea’s first midwinter record on the mainland. Two were also found on Jeju Island on February 19th (NM, BJN, JP, BP).

Hume’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*
A rare, probably much overlooked passage migrant, occurring mostly in late April and early May, and again in late October/early November. In 2006, one was banded on April 28th on Hong Island (KNPS, 2006), one was (heard and seen) on Eocheong Island on May 7th (NM, JVDK), and another presumed individual was at Socheong Island on November 6th (NM).

Two-barred Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*
A fairly scarce passage migrant, most regular on Yellow Sea islands, commoner northward in spring. At least 44 on Socheong Island on May 20th (RT, NM) is a new national high count, with 40 present there again on May 23rd (NM).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*
One photographed in January in Seoul (LGH) was followed by another in Busan, at the Nakdong Estuary, on December 29th (DS,PH) remained until January 6th 2007. Based on photographs it is considered that the Busan bird best matched the subspecies *halimodendrie* (A. Grieve *in litt.*, January 2007). There are apparently only two
previous Korean records: one undated, but collected at least pre-1993, in Busan (Park, 2002), and one in DPRK in December 2001 (Duckworth, 2004).

**Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus*
One was photographed and present at Heuksan Island from May 1<sup>st</sup> until at least May 3<sup>rd</sup> (PYW). This is only the second national record.

**Chinese Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*
A rare, near-annual winter visitor, with apparently all records in 2006 coming from Songdo, Incheon. In January, two were noted on the 12th (NM) and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (RN, TE), with one on the 28<sup>th</sup> (NM), while on February 23<sup>rd</sup> there were seven in the same small area (NM, Avi), perhaps representing a new national high-count, with three still there as late as April 3<sup>rd</sup> (RN).

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*
An apparently very scarce winter visitor, with breeding also suspected e.g. on Jiri Mountain. In 2006, records known to Birds Korea consisted of one in Cheorwon, Gangwon Province on February 13th (NM, BJN, JP, BP), another at Shiripdae, East Seoul in March (JYJ, YGK), and another reported from Seollung tombs, Seoul, in Spring (further details not known).

**Rosy Starling** *Sturnus roseus*
One adult at Seogwipo, Jeju on November 8<sup>th</sup> ([http://www.birdsinjeju.com](http://www.birdsinjeju.com)) is only the 3<sup>rd</sup> national record, after single juveniles at Eocheong Island in September 2002 and Hong Island in September 2004.

**Red-billed Starling** *Sturnus sericeus*
First recorded in 2000 and thereafter as a regular but scarce migrant and over-winterer, recorded mostly along the West coast in Spring, along the East coast in autumn and on Jeju Island in Winter. In 2006, a flock of 21 at Gangneung city on October 19<sup>th</sup> (CSK) appears to be the highest count of the year.

**Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*
An uncommon breeding summer visitor: more numerous on passage. One at Jeju Island on December 25<sup>th</sup> (PH, DS) is presumably Korea’s first midwinter record.  

**Chinese Blackbird** *Turdus (merula) mandarinus*
First recorded in 1999, when found nesting. Now up to 20 records annually, mostly from offshore islands in spring. In 2006 a presumably over-wintering male was in Jeju City on February 18<sup>th</sup> (Avi).
Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*
A scarce migrant and rare winter visitor, with almost all records between October and March. In 2006, there were approximately ten individuals reported, with a First-winter on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam on September 30th (AA) considered rather early.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*
One seen briefly but conclusively in flight, amongst a flock of Dusky Thrushes *Turdus eunomus* on Socheong Island on November 6th (NM), is the first claimed on the Korean Peninsula. It has been added to Category 3 of the Birds Korea Checklist.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
One photographed on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, between March 27th and 31st (KNPS, 2006) is the first record for Korea, and has been added to Category 1 of the Birds Korea Checklist.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa*
Korea’s first record, a first winter female was found in Daejeon on January 13th (CSK), where it was still present on the 22nd (SMY). This was followed by an adult male at Hong Island on November 1st (PJG, KSUH), and a male and female in territory at the “SE River”, Gyeongsangnam Province, on December 27th (NM, DS, PH).

Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferreus*
First recorded in 1987, 2006 proved to be an exceptional year for this species, with all records coming in April. A female at Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, on the 4th was quickly followed by a male on the 8th (PJG). A female at Seosan on the same day (KHT) became Korea’s first mainland record. On Eocheong Island, a female was found on the 17th (TE, RN). Lastly, a male at Heuksan Island on the 27th (YHS), became the 9th national record.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*
2006 proved to be a remarkable year for this species. On April 21st, a First-summer male was photographed on the mainland in Gunsan City (AP, JL, PN). On the same day, another First-summer male was photographed on Eocheong Island, remaining until at least the 24th (NM, TE, JG). A male was on Hong Island, Jeollanam Province, on April 25th (PJG), followed by a female at Eocheong Island on the 27th (via PJG / NPMBC). In May, a female was found on Hong Island on the 8th, this being the fifth record of the year and approximately the 7th record for South Korea, and the 8th for the Korean peninsula.
Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*
First recorded in 2003. One (banded) on Hong Island on May 6th (PJG) is the 5th or 6th Korean record.

Hill Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis banyumas*
One photographed at Seungbong Island (Incheon/Gyeonggi) on May 14th (RN) is the first record for Korea, and has been added to Category 1 of the Birds Korea checklist.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
A male photographed on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province, on May 18th (KEJ) is Korea’s first record. Plumage and structural features suggests that it probably belongs to the *indicus* subspecies-group.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
A now annual migrant, most often recorded in April and May. In 2006, the three April records included South Korea’s first inland record, this at Suwon, Gyeonggi Province, on the 27th (SKS), while there was only one record in May: on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province (KNPS, 2006).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
One found and photographed on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province, on December 21st (PJG, 2006) is the first record for Korea, and perhaps only the second for Far East Asia. It has been added to Category 1 of the Birds Korea checklist.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*
First recorded in 2000, it has since proved to be annual, with three records in 2006. One was at Eocheong Island, Gunsan, on April 23rd (NM), one was on Heuksan Island, Jeollanam Province on May 21st (KNPS), and one was photographed on Hong Island on September 21st (PJG).

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
A fairly scarce passage migrant, particularly to offshore islands in the Yellow Sea, rarely over-wintering. 2006 provided two mainland mid-winter records: one at Gunsan on January 8th (JM & multiple observers), and a male photographed at Seosan, Chungcheongnam Province, on December 15th (JHS).

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*
An irruptive species, most common in spring and autumn. A flock of 22, including at least one young juvenile on Eocheong Island, Gunsan, on May 8th (NM) is perhaps suggestive of local breeding.
**Eurasian Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

An uncommon and apparently irruptive winter visitor. All three subspecies *griseiventris* (1), *cassini* (1-2), and *rosacea* (several) were present together and photographed at the Gwangneung National Arboretum on February 13th (NM, Avi).

**Japanese Grosbeak** *Eophona personata*

One in Jeju City on February 18th (NM, Avi), is a fairly exceptional winter record.

**Tristram’s Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*

A sometimes numerous migrant, scarce and local breeding species, occasionally over-wintering. In February, two were at Hwaum Temple, Gurye, on the 3rd (NM), one was in Mt. Halla Arboretum, Jeju, on the 19th (NM) and a further three were seen well at Hwaum Temple on the 21st (NM, Avi). In December, up to 12 were found in the Mt. Halla Arboretum, Jeju, on December 25th (DS, PH).

**Grey Bunting** *Emberiza variabilis*

A scarce and easily-overlooked migrant and winter visitor, most regular in the southern provinces. In 2006, there were at least three at Mt. Halla Arboretum, Jeju on February 19th (NM, Avi), with one at the same site on December 25th (PH, DS).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

One winter-plumaged bird at Seungbong Island, Incheon, on November 24th (RN) was followed by another at Seosan on December 18th & 19th (KSH, KSUH), remaining through the winter. There are less than 10 records of this species in Korea.
Other Species of Special Conservation Concern

**Emperor Goose** *Anser canagica* NEAR-THREATENED
Category Three: Only one claim, in Cheorwon, Gangwon Province, in December 1995. In the absence of photographic evidence two reported at the very well-watched Joonam Reservoir in the mid-January 2006 national waterbird census (MOE) are considered to be obviously in error (either misidentification or mis-entering of data).

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus Olor*
None recorded in the 2006 MOE mid-January waterbird census, and no further records in 2006 known to Birds Korea of this formerly scarce but apparently regular winter visitor. This species has an estimated population of between only 1,000 and 3,000 individuals in East Asia (Wetlands International, 2006).

**Crested Shelduck** *Tadorna cristata* CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
Category Two. No records since 1916.

**Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri* VULNERABLE
Category One. No records in 2006. The cause of the ongoing and apparently rapid decline of this species remains unknown, although drought in its breeding grounds has been cited as one possible cause. There have been severe declines reported in e.g. Thailand (P. Round, *in lit.*, 2005) and in coastal Hebei (J. Hornskov, *in lit.* 2005), and only eight were found wintering recently in a presumably core part of the range in China (Barter *in lit.*. 2006; 2005 WWF Yangtze Waterbird Survey Report). The estimate of 10,000-20,000 (Wetlands International, 2006) therefore appears very over-optimistic, and the species is better classified as endangered (or even critically endangered).

**Short-tailed Albatross** *Diomedea albatrus* ENDANGERED
Category Two. Three historic specimens and no recent records.

**Black-headed/Oriental Ibis** *Threskiornis melanophaeas* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. Most recent estimate puts the East Asian population at less than 100 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). No records in 2006. Only two national records, last in 2004.

**Crested Ibis** *Nipponia nippon* ENDANGERED
Category Two. Most recent estimate puts wild global population at 350 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). No confirmed records of this winter visitor (never proven to breed in South Korea) since 1978 (Park, 2002).

**Japanese Night Heron** *Gorsachius goisagi* ENDANGERED
Category One. The most recent estimate puts the global population at between only 250 and 1000 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). There were no records known to Birds Korea in 2006.

**Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* VULNERABLE / **Spot-billed Pelican** *Pelecanus philippensis* VULNERABLE (Unlisted)
The most recent estimate of the East Asian population of Dalmatian Pelican is put at only 50 individuals (Wetlands International, 2006). Two records of this species are given by Park (2002) for South Korea: one collected in Incheon on November 13th, 1913 (based on Austin, 1948), and the second collected in 1978 (no month given) on Gapa Island, off Jeju. However, a recently published photograph of this mounted Jeju specimen (Anon, 2008) is not a Dalmatian Pelican but rather Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (as labeled in Anon, 2008), a species presently not included on the Birds Korea Checklist. While Great White Pelican might seem an extremely unlikely naturally-occurring vagrant, Brazil (1991) states that it has been recorded as an accidental to Japan, with the first record in the southern Nansei Shoto on 26th March 1979. Considering that earlier authorities did not separate Dalmatian from Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*, it seems appropriate to remove Dalmatian Pelican from Category Two of the Birds Korea Checklist and place it instead in Category Three.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* VULNERABLE
Great Bustard *Otis tarda* VULNERABLE
Category Two. No confirmed records since 1976.

Band-bellied Crake *Porzana paykullii* NEAR-THREATENED
Category One. No records in 2006. Last known record was in 2004.

Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa (melanuroides)* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. A locally common passage migrant, mostly along the west coast northward from Seosan. The *melanuroides* subspecies population is estimated at 160,000 (Wetlands International, 2006). No records of special note in 2006.

Crested Murrelet *Synthliboramphus wumizusume* VULNERABLE
Category One. Breeds very locally in the far southwest. No confirmed records known to Birds Korea in 2006 (with last eyewitness accounts known to us of breeding birds from c. 1998).

Black Woodpigeon *Columba janthina* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. Apparently a scarce and very local summer visitor or resident, breeding on a small number of offshore islands, with birds recorded on c.15 islands (Park, 2002). No records of especial note in 2006.

Marsh Grassbird *Megalurus pryeri* VULNERABLE
Category Two. Only one historic record, in 1962.

Pleske’s Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei* VULNERABLE
Category One. A poorly-known taxon, being a migrant north to Socheong (rarely), nesting on offshore islands, at least from Gunsan south through the southwest islands, to Busan in the south-east. Total numbers have yet to be properly estimated, but the species seems to be fairly widespread in suitable habitat, occupying territories at quite high densities. No records of especial note in 2006.

Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum* VULNERABLE
Category One. Three previous records, four individuals. No records in 2006.

Black Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. A local summer visitor, especially to Jeju Island; nests only very locally. Fairly scarce migrant. No records of special note received by Birds Korea in 2006.

Japanese Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata* VULNERABLE
Category One. Recorded annually in small numbers, especially in the south and southwest in spring. No records of especial note in 2006.

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. Still a regular migrant in both spring and autumn, especially in the west; formerly much more numerous. No especial records in 2006.

Ochre-rumped Reed Bunting *Emberiza yessoensis* NEAR THREATENED
Category One. A scarce migrant and over-winterer, especially in the southwest. No especial records of note in 2006.
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Further Online Resources

- Birds Korea Checklist, 2008
- http://aves.birdinkorea.net
- http://birddb.com
- http://bird.ecohonam.com
- http://cafe.daum.net/Birdwatching
- http://home.megapass.co.kr/ skua
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