



Editor Kanda Kumar

Malaysian Nature Society Penang

MNS Mission: To Promote The Study, Appreciation, Conservation And Protection Of Malaysia's Natural Heritage, Focusing on Biological diversity and Sustainable Development.

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National MNS Newsletter

From December 2006 the hard copy newsletter 'Pencinta Alam' will be a national newsletter, coordinated by MNS HQ and Selangor Branch. Up and coming activities submitted by the various branches will be published in that newsletter. Articles will depend on what branches forward to the editors. The national newsletter will allow members to be aware of what is going on in their own and other branches. Penang will still produce the e-newsletter 'Nature Penang' and we will also publish a hardcopy quarterly newsletter which will include items not published in the national newsletter and relevant items from 'Nature Penang'. This is basically for members who are unable to receive the electronic 'Nature Penang' With this arrangement production cost of newsletters will be reduced as we will only be paying for the postage of the national newsletter and members will receive monthly issues of 'Pencinta Alam'. Please note that 'Pencinta Alam' will not be posted to members who have not renewed their subscription in time but they will still receive 'Nature Penang' electronically if they had elected to receive it.

Check out Penang Branch pages at the MNS National website for the latest Penang events and announcements. The web address is
www.mns.org.my/state.php?stid=8

All items for **Nature Penang** must be forwarded to Kanda Kumar, e-mail address: kandakum@tm.net.my

We had hold back articles and other items for the next issue of Nature Penang as the file is already too big with forms and notices regarding the Branch and National AGMs in this issue.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

Dear Members,

We wish members and friends happy returns for the festive seasons that goes on from October to end of January. For the past few months we have been using the electronic media and our Yahoo Group to keep members informed on our activities.

Members are encouraged to sign up to receive our electronic newsletter 'Nature Penang' as we will not be producing the hard copy 'Pencinta Alam' since it will be a national MNS newsletter and will be produced by volunteers from Selangor Branch. (See box in page 2). With the national newsletter it is hoped branches will be able to work to gather more closely and will also assist members in participating in other branches activities and at the same time members will be more aware of the activities of other branches in addition to environmental problems highlighted in the national newsletter.

On an unpleasant note, I have to inform members that our NIC was burgled last month. Since we do not keep cash or other valuables at the NIC, the thieves carted away our aluminum wash basin, ladder and items we had collected for recycling.

We have also forwarded our comments to the Dept. of Town and Country Planning on the Draft Penang Structure Plan. We will publish details of our comments in the next newsletter.

Thank you.

Kanda Kumar
Chairman
MNS Penang



UP & COMING ACTIVITIES

Annual October Penang Bird Watch 2006 (PBW-2006)

A reminder if you have not sent already in your October bird sightings that you have to forward them by the end of November. Please state your name and give your contact details and if there were more than 1 person during the sighting, give their names as well. Post your records to our P.O. Box or e-mail it to kandakum@tm.net.my or mnspenang@yahoo.com.

Sample of your sighting report:

Name of Observer: xxxxxxxx E-mail:xxxxxxxxxxx Phone:xxxxxxxxx

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>No. of Birds/Time</u>
01/10/06	Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis	MTC Gelugor, PEN	20/ 8.30 am

(Please use PEN for Penang Island and SEB for Seberang Perai)

This is a long term project to collect data on the distribution and abundance of bird species in Penang State. The data collected will also be used to keep track of the distribution and status of bird species in Penang. The data can also be used for any future studies, analysis or publication of birds species in Penang

Telok Ayer Tawar-Kuala Muda IBA Wader Count, 29th October 2006

Our annual wader count at the Telok Ayer Tawar-Kuala Muda IBA will be held on 29th October. This count will be the autumn migration wader count and will also be one of the activities of Penang Bird Watch 2006. This area is the only IBA in Penang and supports a large migrant wader population, so far 3 internationally threatened species have been identified from among the water birds species, the mangroves in this IBA is one of the largest roosting sites for herons, egrets and wagtails. Depending on tide conditions on the count morning, we may visit and view waders in the nearby rice fields. We meet the Penang Bridge Toll Gate car park and push off from there at 7.30 a.m. Even if you are new to wader identification you are most welcomed, we need extra hands to record down details and in the process you can learn about bird counts and wader identification. Contact Kanda if you like to participate so that you can be updated on the details.

Indoor Talk: Designing Dwellings – The Asian Persona, 9th November 2006

Dr. Azizi Baharuddin from USM Faculty of Housing, Building and Planning, will be giving this talk on designing your homes that is nature related with an Asian theme. He will also touch on the interior decorations as well. Want make your home more in tune with nature? Come and listen to Dr. Azizi.

Time: 8.00 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall, 3rd Floor, Pantai Mutiara Hospital,
Jalan Tengah, Bayan Baru, Penang

Kampung Sungei Pinang Mangrove Sunset Cruise, 26th November 2006

Joseph and Beatrice will be leading this afternoon and evening outing to the west coast of Penang Island. The outing will include a walk around the fishing village viewing the way of life and wildlife around the village, a walk around the oil palms plantations to view the wildlife and later a boat tour of the mangroves and view of the evening sunset over the Straits of Malacca. This area is one of the flyways of the White-bellied Fish Eagle returning to their roost in Penang National Park, Sungei Pinang (Kechil) is the South-West Gateway to the Park. As the trip leaders need to be pre-arrange the boat ride, you need to confirm your bookings early.

Cost for boat ride: RM10.00 for members and RM15.00 for non-members.

Meeting Place 2 p.m. – Kampung Sungei Pinang Fishing Village

Return approx 6.30 p.m. – Kampung Sungei Pinang Fishing Village

Confirm your booking via e-mail to freegatemy@gmail.com

For more information contact Joseph or Beatrice at 012-4800584 or 012-4387806

Birds and Ecology Workshop for Secondary School Students in November 26th November 2006

I will be organising a one day workshop (8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.) for secondary school students on Sunday 26th November. The topics will include bird identification, effects of introduction of foreign bird species (crows), importance of trees and plants and a few related topics. The workshop is free with meals provided and is open to all Penang secondary school students.

We will need volunteers with scopes for the morning session (between 9.30 a.m. to 11 a.m.) We will also like to request members to loan their old binoculars for the workshop. For more information or to register your children or would like students from your school to participate please get in touch with me. - Kanda

MNS Booth at Penang Environment Week 10th & 11th November 2006

DOE Penang is organizing the Penang Environment Week from 10th November. The launching will be on the 10th and an exhibition will be on at KOMTAR on 10th and 11th. We need volunteers to assist Kanda to put up the exhibits especially on the 10th morning. Members who also to assist at the booth at other times on 10th and 11th please contact Kanda. If you are in downtown George Town please drop by KOMTAR and visit the MNS booth during the following times.

10th Nov. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 11th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2nd Forestry/Conservation Workshop 12th November 2006

The second Forestry/Conservation workshop for the participants of the first workshop held in May 2006 is will be held on 12th November 2006 at Pantai Mutiara Hospital. Participants who attended the 1st workshop are requested to contact Kanda as soon as possible. As some of the participants of the 1st workshop will be out of town, other members who are interested in working with the Branch Conservation Group and were unable to attend the 1st workshop can be accommodated in attending this 2nd workshop but places are limited. Contact Kanda if your want to assist the Branch Conservation Group.

NIC Jumble Sale – 17th December 2006

We will be holding our end of the year Jumble Sale at the NIC to raise funds for the running of the NIC, NEC and to carry out our branch conservation activities. The sale will start at 8 a.m. and will end at 12 noon. We accept donations of any saleable items for the Jumble Sale. Please contact Kanda if you want to drop off your donation items at the NIC.

We need pre sale volunteers to sort and price tag the items and also volunteers on the day of the Jumble Sale. If you are able to help in sorting out and pricing the items or help during the jumble sale please contact Kanda

In Search of the Blue-breasted Quail at Bukit Gambir 19th November 2006

The Blue-breasted Quail has historically been stated as common in Penang, unfortunately reports of sightings of the species has increasingly been on the decline over the years. Currently Bukit Gambir is the only documented location where the species has been recorded but we have not received any reports of Blue-breasted Quail from this site for the past few years. This birding trip is to verify the status of this quail at Bukit Gambir and also to re-record the bird species in the area. Bukit Gambir is fast developing and many of the undeveloped areas will be concrete jungles soon. We meet in front of the Bukit Gambir Secondary School at 8 a.m. For more information contact Kanda.

Caving – Single Rope Training

Calling all cave lovers who participated in the March caving course. Hymeir will be conducting the second part of the course, that is the Single Rope Training. He was unable to carry out this training earlier as advertised in our last newsletter as suitable tower for the rope training has not been located and also many of towers are in security areas and permission to use these towers is nearly impossible. He is working out a new schedule using other structures instead of towers. The training will take place at the NIC but the date has not been set yet. Hymeir would like those interested to contact him at 019-4428926 or speleocorp@myjaring.net.



PAST ACTIVITIES

Basic Caving Course 4th & 5th March 2006

Organized by Northern Cave Group

(A full write up on this activity was not published in earlier newsletters)

This basic course was held over a weekend and was attended by 14 participants a few who were new members of MNS. Joining for the sole purpose of participating. This course covered subjects any decent caver should know including basic geology, life in caves, how caves were formed, their importance, threats to caves, how to cave safely, etc. Participants also learnt about the kind of equipment cavers use in exploration including how a cave is surveyed. The last two subjects will be covered in more detail on another soon to be announced date.

The main objective of the course is to groom more cavers to help explore and document caves of the northern Peninsular Malaysia particularly those in Perlis and Langkawi. There is a dire need to increase the number of cavers in this region as at the moment only two cavers exist in the area. Certainly not enough! Working together, this new group of cavers (if they are still interested after going through the course!) is expected to help explore and survey the long, wet and vertical caves of Wang Mu in Perlis. These natural caves were previously mined by Chinese miners but is now abandoned. Caves here are different from anything found in Malaysia or even in this region. They tend to be long and wet, more similar to the wet European caves although its not as cold!

Langkawi has many areas not explored yet and this is a secondary area for future exploration. In addition, there other areas to be explored and mapped like the Baling (Kedah) – Pengkalan Hulu (Perak) area, Kodiang (Kedah), Chuping (Perlis), Lenggong (Perak) and Temenggor (Perak). Much still needs to be done and if you are interested in joining us, do contact me at 019 442 8926 or speleocorp@myjaring.net.



Photo bv Al Kordesch

Hymeir Kamarudin
Coordinator
Northern Cave Group

Birding at Telok Bahang Forest Reserve 16th July 2006

A small group of 9 people, a few of them new birders, met up at the Reserve's car park and the birding session itself started at the car park and quite a fair bit of time was spent in the Reserve's recreational area. As this was leisurely slow paced walk with fairly detailed explanation of each species sighted, we only went half way along the main track before turning back. Along the track there was a large flock of grey-throated babblers foraging on both sides of the track and the Hairy-backed Bulbul was common. Although only 15 species were sighted it was a fruitful outing for the new birders. - Editor

Trip to Kuala & Bukit Juru – 17th September 2006 by Tan Choo Eng

The Branch Birding trip was very well attended by 7 members, and 4 guests. When we arrived at the Kuala Juru jetty where the bloody cockles were unloaded, washed and packed, we were greeted by a family of black-naped orioles, it was a sight, 2 Adults and 2 juveniles. It was the same tree where I photographed a family of 5 collared kingfishers some time ago. It seems that this skeleton rain tree offers a certain degree of protection to feeding juveniles, but it is real bad for my photo composition. By the way, I would call these orioles, the crows of the sub-urban forest. They are real bullies here. It seems that they would not hesitate to snatch young chicks from nest! Look at their Zorro mask - you know they are up to something!

We moved to the jetty where we sighted a group of little terns diving for fish at the Sungei Juru river mouth. After a while we walked towards the 'dead end road' where the bee-eaters' nesting grounds were. Halfway there, we caught sight of an unidentified heron/wader flying into the mangroves, while most of us were trying to look for and ID it, I notice a raptor swooping down towards the tree, I had to choose, grab my camera for a shot, or alert the rest to the raptor, I choose the later. The unidentified heron/water was ID'd as a Little Heron as it flew off as fast as possible for his/her life when the raptor swooped into the trees. The raptor was later ID'd as a Changeable Hawk-Eagle. The bee eaters had finished their breeding and had departed, Nelson Khor had witnessed an unidentified raptor swooping down and snatching off a bee eater on a previous trip. (Not really National Geographic stuff but live!)

At mid morning some of us decided to make a climb up the steep Bukit Juru as Kanda wanted to check for passage migrants. It took me about 1 hour to reach the top. The very fit could do it in half an hour. Nothing much, except for the resident Striped Tit Babbler of which we managed to photograph some bulbuls. On the way down we came across a huge hole where plant poachers had dug up a 'Tongkat Ali' tree. At midday we moved to Sungei Sembilang mudflats but there were no waders at the high tide roost, it was low tide. Looking up we saw 3 different raptors circling over Bukit Juru, Brahminy Kite, White Bellied Sea Eagle and Changeable Hawk Eagle. Most of the group left after that but some of us stayed back to have a meal.

Hope to see more of you all during our next trip. But don't expect Nat. Geo. scene on every trip. Those 1 hour TV documentary may take 1-2 years to make, and sometimes scenes or sections could be staged.

(Number of species recorded 30, highlights were Changeable Hawk-Eagle at close range a male Orange-breasted Pigeon and a single Crow-billed Drongo - Editor)

Indoor Talk 'Harta Karun Keladi Hutan- In Search of Aroids in Sarawak' 5th October 2006

Peter Boyce gave this talk on aroids is a plant taxonomist currently stationed in Sarawak, had worked at Kew Gardens, UK for more then 15 years and has travelled extensively in South East Asia. He introduced the audiences to a broad selection of the genera and species found in Sarawak and also gave an insight to the immense pleasures, intellectual rewards (and occasional pain!) of undertaking fieldwork in one of the world's botanical hotspots. Nearly 85% of aroids found in Borneo are found nowhere else and many more have not been discovered. Many species of aroids have striking leaf patterns and flowers and can be cultivated as garden plants. Some of the insect pollinators of the aroids are so specialised that no other insects can pollinate these aroids. He highlighted the importance of conservation of aroids as a numbers of species were found in isolated populations and in some cases only a single population has been documented.

(We thank Peter for taking the time to present this talk and for also patiently explaining in simple terms on the taxonomy of aroids)

Migratory Raptor Count – Sg. Sedim 15th October 2006

Seven of us undertook to go to the Sg. Sedim Forest Reserve in Kedah to count the autumn migration of raptors. The first migrating raptor, an unidentified hawk was observed at 8.58 a.m. Unfortunately the haze was quite bad on that day, quite bad on that day and very few raptors were sighted. By 12 noon we had only sighted a total of 25 migrating raptors, mostly Oriental Honey Buzzard, so we decided to pack up by 1.00 p.m. Other raptors sighted included Crested Serpent Eagle, Blyth's Hawk Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Rufous-bellied Eagle. We had to walk through a small section of the forest reserve to get to our counting site and during this walk a Japanese paradise Flycatcher was sighted among the birds in a bird wave.



OTHER ISSUES & EVENTS

Nature Discovery Trip to Endau Rompin - Fri-Sun 24-26 Nov. 2006 (Organised by MNS HQ)

Nature Education & Research Centre (NERC) Endau Rompin, Johor
This 3D2N special programme is for members to experience and study the richness of Endau Rompin's biodiversity. It includes basic educational field activities on birds, insects, wildlife, plants, a visit to the orang asli community, boat rides through gentle rapids and a generally fun time with experienced facilitators from MNS and the Johor National Parks Corporation. Accommodation is dorm-style at NERC, which was built by MNS in 1998. A great experience for family groups and first-timers.

Cost ex-Kahang: RM280 children (below 16, min age 8 yrs old), RM320 adult. Priority to MNS members

Contact: Kuala Selangor Nature Park (Nagarajan 03-3289 2294), MNS HQ (Andrew 03-2287 9422) or email ksnaturepark@yahoo.com



BIRD CHASE

Birding News



New records and Important sightings

The October Bird Watch 2006 has some unexpected result although the full reports from members has not been received yet. Four Lesser Adjutant, a Hoopoe and Red-legged Crake have been sighted in Seberang Perai. More details will be given in the next e-newsletter after all the sighting reports have been received.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nature Penang is MNS Penang's E-Newsletter for members of the Penang Branch. Sign up to be in the mnspenang Yahoo Group to receive the e-newsletter

WE NEED ARTICLES FOR NATURE PENANG FROM MEMBERS

Be Part of the Newsletter Team put your experiences or thoughts to print

Members are encouraged to send in their nature photographs with a short description to be included in the e-newsletter. This is to encourage members to participate in the content of the e-newsletter. Articles by members will be included in the e-newsletter 'Nature Penang'.

Nature Trips Dos and Don'ts

What you should do and should not do when you are out there enjoying your nature outing. These are basic requirements that applies for all nature trips, regardless, whether you are on a specialised outing or general nature appreciation. It not only makes the trip enjoyable but also ensures that your presence causes as little as possible damage, to nature and the environment.

Utmost is the welfare of all wildlife, vegetation and the environment is supreme, it takes precedence above everything else, except when your life is in danger.

- Do not harass any of the wildlife by throwing things or make noise to frighten them so that you can have a better view. You need to move to a different position to get a better view not the wildlife.
- Do not touch any wildlife or vegetation you are not familiar with, they may be poisonous or cause allergic reaction.
- Do not interfere with the animals' (including insects etc) normal activities. Remember life and death is part of the life cycle and you do not interfere with this in the wild. (There are exceptions when it involves threatened species).

- Do not disturb any nesting, roosting or resting wildlife. Stay as far as possible from such sites when observing them. Remember your presence will alert other predators including humans to what you are observing.
- Do not crowd around any nesting, roosting or resting wildlife site or stay at the site for too long and if the wildlife shows any signs of distress, immediately move away from the area. This also applies to feeding sites.
- Do not touch the eggs of any species of wildlife or poke into dens. Do not remove anything at such sites, if a rock or wood is moved, to briefly observe what is underneath it, make sure that you put it back in its original position.
- Do not use playback equipment to attract wildlife as it will interfere in their courtship, territorial area or other behaviour. Use of playback equipment is for specific purposes and research only.
- Do not make loud noises or scream unless you yourself are in danger and require help.
- Stay to the existing tracks and do not make additional tracks or paths. Walk around any obstacles that may be across the track and if you need to cut, just cut a very small passage. If possible bend the vegetation to make a passage rather than cutting.
- Do not remove plants or objects from the forest, leave things as they are. Remember every little thing is important in the eco-system you are visiting. (Collection of specimens should be left to people who are trained in their specific fields)
- Do not spray repellents while in the forest. Apply spray repellents at the campsite, before you enter the forest. Foreign airborne odors will interfere with the predator/prey mechanism of the forest community.
- If you are in a group always heed the advice of the group leader and when in the forest stay behind the leader do not go ahead of the group leader. If you are last one in the group make sure to keep the person in front in your view and call out to the front person if you need to slow down or stop so that your intentions can be passed on to the group leader. It is advisable for the person in front to look back to ensure that the person behind has not fallen back.
- Try not to go alone to places you are not familiar with and if you have to, carry a map if possible. Take some water along with you, you may never know when you may need it badly. For longer trips, something to munch on will be a great help if you are delayed for some reason or other.
- Taking notes of the animals, vegetation and interesting sites is a good practice and you can pass on such information to people who keep track of such data for conservation. Be careful that your information does not fall into the hands of people who are only interested in making a quick profit from your information and are not interested in nature or conservation.
- Do not throw any unwanted material anywhere except at designated waste disposal sites or collection bins.

Lastly please remember that whatever you do, you are causing some kind of damage to the environment, there is no such thing as causing zero damage to the environment. Be humble, as unknowingly, even your footsteps may kill some

organism, so be extra careful that your activities are not causing unnecessary damage to the natural environment or other structures. The key phrase is sustainable use.



36th MNS Penang Branch AGM

The following members were elected as Branch Officials at the 36th Branch AGM on 22 July 2006 and the table includes members co-opted into the Committee.

MNS PENANG BRANCH COMMITTEE 2006-2007

<p>Chairman Kanda Kumar Tel.: (O) 04-2273673 (H) 04-6439669 (HP) 013-4537992 E-mail: kandakum@tm.net.my</p> <p>Vice Chairman Hymeir Kamarudin (HP) 019-4428926 E-mail: speleocorp@myjaring.net</p> <p>Hon Secretary Lai Ee May (HP) 012-5385642 E-mail: leemaylai@yahoo.com</p> <p>Hon Treasurer Chan Lai Keng Tel.: (O) 04-6577888-3520 E-mail: lkchan@usm.my</p>	<p>Committee Members Michael Tan Hock Hin (H) 04-8998740 E-mail: mthhipoh@yahoo.com</p> <p>Angeline Chew Paik Yong (H) 04-8998740 E-mail: mthhipoh@yahoo.com</p> <p>Joseph Teoh Boon Aun (HP) 012-4800594 E-mail: freegatemy@gmail.com</p> <p>Co-opted Volunteer Committee Members Neoh Chin Boon cbneoh@pd.jarring.my</p> <p>Beatrice Teoh mthhipoh@yahoo.com</p> <p>Hum Kim Choy kimhum@tm.net.my</p>
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The following decisions were made by the members attending the AGM.

1. As the Societies Act only allows the elected Hon. Treasurer to manage the Society's funds and accounts, other members cannot be appointed to manage any of the Society's accounts. The Hon Treasurer however can seek the assistance of Committee Members to assist her.
2. The incoming Branch Committee conduct and inquiry on the complaint of non-compliance of the birding code of ethics.

3. The Branch already has branch publications for sale at the Botanica Store and bookstores that are that have accepted our publications for sale but if other outlets other than book stores are willing to accept our publications sale, including business operated by MNS members, our publications can be put on sale at these establishments.

4. To protect the Branch assets and funds the members unanimously agreed that members would be notified in writing or notice:

(a) any expenditure in excess of 20% of cash in hand for any one project before incurring the expenses, and for

(b) any expenditure in excess of 50% of cash in hand for any one project needs the approval of branch members meeting.

MNS National Council Members

The following members were elected or co-opted in the National Council at the National AGM on 2nd September 2006 at Kuantan.

President

Anthony Sebastian

Vice-President

Dato' Dr Hashim Bin Abdul-Wahab

Vice-President

Lim Kok Beng

Hon Secretary

Dr Jessie Cheah Swee Neo

Hon Treasurer

Bernadette Chin

Ordinary Council Members

Hymeir Kamarudin

Dato' Ahmad Rejal Arbee

Olivia Tay

Angela Hijjas

Lee Siew Yeen

Tan Chin Tong

Prof P N Avadhani

Richard Crawford Prentice

Lim Tien Chee

Dato' Seri Dr Salleh Mohd

Dr Lee Su See



Articles

Mystery Shrouds Loss of Migrant Birds

Article courtesy of BirdLife International

Mystery is surrounding the huge declines of birds that migrate thousands of miles from Africa to Europe each spring.

Scientists fear that their dwindling numbers may be a warning of widespread environmental damage. Climate change, drought and desertification in Africa, and massive pesticide use on African farmland may all be to blame for the declines of once common UK birds such as the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* and European Turtle-dove *Streptopelia turtur*, a BirdLife Europe-wide study led by the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) concludes.

At the same time, birds such as the European Roller *Coracias garrulus*, Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* and Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* have also

vanished from regular breeding sites on the continent. All three are now classified as near- or globally threatened.

Dr Fiona Sanderson, a Research Biologist at the RSPB and lead author of the study said, "This is incredibly worrying. We knew that some of these long-distance migrants were declining but we were shocked at the extent of their losses."

There is something about the migrants' lifestyle that is making them vulnerable and their declines are reminiscent of those we began to see in farmland birds 30 years ago. Migrants have been slipping away for more than three decades but the scale of their disappearance is only now becoming apparent." —Dr Fiona Sanderson

The research, to be published in the journal *Biological Conservation*, shows that 54 per cent of the 121 long-distance migrants studied have declined or become extinct in many parts of Europe since 1970. The study also compared migrants and resident birds with similar characteristics, and in almost every case, the migrant fared worse.

The RSPB's Dr Paul Donald, a co-author of the study, said: "These migrants are highly evolved and some range over a quarter of the planet's land surface. For species like this to be affected so severely suggests that something pretty serious is going wrong somewhere, which cannot be good news for us. These birds used to be common in Europe but many now are rare or extinct in some regions."

Researchers will now investigate four theories for the loss of migrant birds:

Climate change: air temperatures are changing and warmer springs are causing insects to breed earlier. Resident birds may be surviving winters better and, alongside insects, are adapting more quickly to climate change. Long-distance migrants flying from Africa cannot detect the temperature increase that heralds an early spring in Europe and may arrive too late to use the best nest sites and catch the insect food glut on which their young depend.

Drought and agriculture in the Sahel: the Sahel borders the southern Sahara, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Horn of Africa in the east. It covers 1.6 billion hectares and includes regions of 12 countries. Long term drought and agricultural intensification, including the widespread use of pesticides and fertilisers, has turned much of the Sahel into desert. The area is the first feeding opportunity for migrants crossing the Sahara.

Desertification: the Sahara is now much bigger than it used to be, also because of drought. Migrating birds must fly over this desert in one flight, to reach their winter homes. The birds may be unable to fly further in one go and if so, many will not cope with the longer journey.

Pest control: huge amounts of pesticides are now used to kill locusts and protect crops in Africa, and may be killing birds as well.

However, there is proof that conservation work for threatened migrants can be effective. The RSPB is working with the Ghana Wildlife Society (BirdLife in

Ghana) to help reduce trapping of the Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*. The species's population has now stabilised after a 90 per cent decline in the UK between 1969 and 1992. And White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* populations have risen across western Europe after successful reintroduction schemes.

BirdLife and its European Partners have launched an environmental education campaign to raise awareness of migrants among children throughout Europe and collect more data about the timing of migration. The initiative, *Spring Alive*, allows people to record their first sightings of migrants online, and then combine them with thousands of others to produce maps showing the advance of spring. - End

(There is also concern on the decline of migrants in Asia though a detail study has not been carried out, some of the problems could very similar)

Welcome New Penang Members

Teh Tick Siang, Chan Kok Thye, L H Teoh, Mervyn Liew Wing On
Mohd Abdul Muin b. Md. Akil, Foong Swee Yeok, Chye Onn Teck,
Jarellyn Yee, Tan Kim Peow, Khor Khing Tong, Chaw Kit Yee,
Goh Byn Dee, Lim Kok Kuan, Judy Yeoh

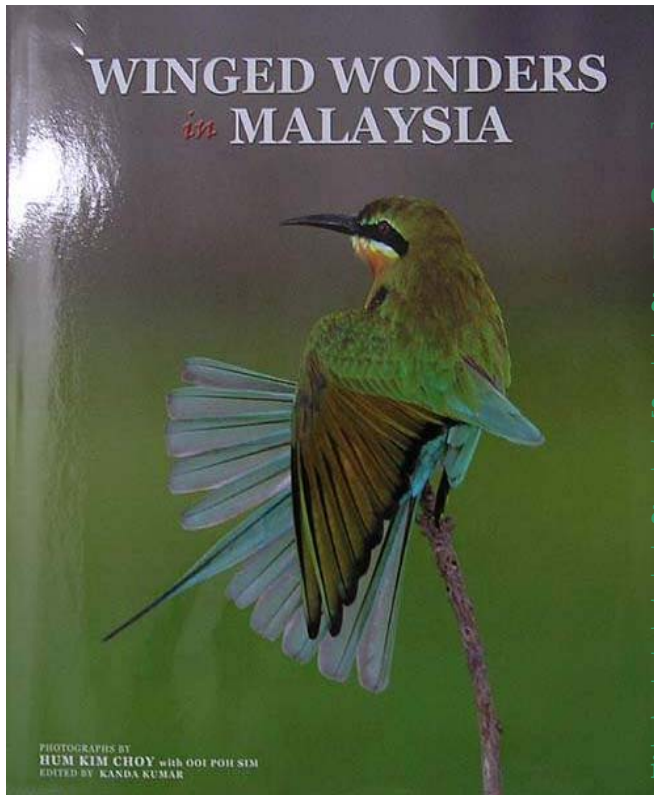
MNS MERCHANDISE - Items for sale at NIC

MNS NIC Book Shop
Merchandise & Books for sale

- *Notebooks MNS Car Sticker MNS Cloth Badges Postcards*
- *MNS Collar Pin Greeting Cards Penang Hill Brochures*
- *Penang Hill Map MNS Caps 2007 Desk Calendar*

Books

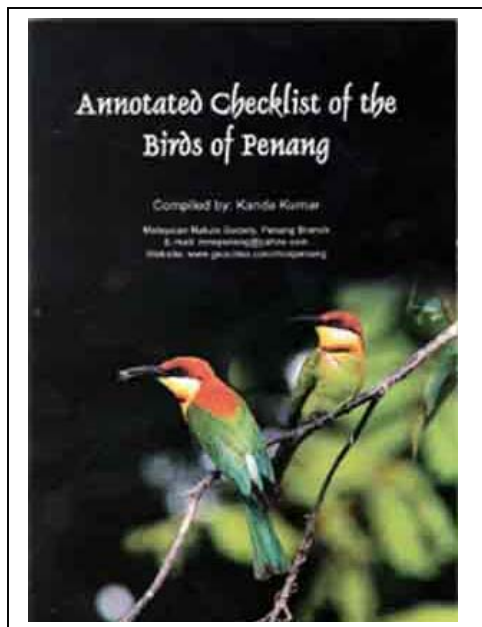
- *Nature Trails of Penang*
- *Rags and Ragas (Poetry)*
- *Awakening: A Journey of Discovering Nature*
- *Pak Cipan series for children both the English and Bahasa versions are available*
- *Winged Wonders in Malaysia – a coffee table book on birds*
- **NEW PUBLICATION** *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Penang*
(Published in October 2006)



WINGED WONDERS IN MALAYSIA

This coffee table book of excellent photographs of bird by HUM KIM CHOY and edited by Kanda Kumar is available at a special discount at the NIC for Penang Members, at only RM85.00 per PENANG member. Normal member price RM90.00 and non-member price RM140.00 (Postage Not included)

Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Penang



Published by the MNS Penang Branch in October 2006, this 48 page book, lists all the current active bird species in the State of Penang with notes on conservation status, synonyms of common names and Latin names. The book also lists species that have not been sighted in the State over the past 50 years, species that have been recorded but are still awaiting confirmation and species that have been dropped from the Penang bird checklist. The book was compiled by Kanda Kumar and printing of the book was sponsored by the O'Neill family.

Members' Price RM9.00, non-member price is RM12.00

2007 Desk Calendar of paintings by Dr. Neoh

The 2007 desk calendar with paintings of birds by Dr. Neoh Chin Boon is available at the NIC. Member price is RM8.00 and RM10.00 for non members. Contact Kanda if you want to get copies of the desk calendar.

**Nature Corner**

The Problem of forest clearing
Is a worldwide problem and the hardest affected ecosystem is the tropical hard wood forests.

Malaysia faces the same problem of forest clearing

DO WE WANT OUR FORESTS TO LOOK LIKE THIS?



Photo: courtesy of BirdLife International

OR
DO WE WANT IT LIKE THIS?



Photo: courtesy of Leong Yueh Kwong MNS

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MNS-Boh Nature Study Centre: Bookings Tel: 03 22879422 (MNS HQ)

For latest activities and news please check out our
Website: www.mns.org.my/state.php?stid=8
Email us at: mnspenang@yahoo.com
Subscribe to our E-newsletter and Members' discussion group at
mnspenang@yahoogroups.com
(by visiting our website)

Any exciting ideas for the Special Interest Groups (SIGs)? Contact us.

Indoor & Outdoor Talks: Chan Lai Keng & Kanda

Birding: Kanda, Hum & Dr. Neoh

Scuba Diving: Peggy Tan

Newsletter: Kanda Kumar

Membership: Kanda Kumar

General: Seet Mei Ling, Joseph & Beatrice

Caving: Hymeir.

Hiking: Kanda (Temp)

RECYCLE & REUSE

RECYCLE YOUR OLD COMPUTER & OTHER DISCARDS

Send your old computers to the NIC for recycling. You can also send in your old newspapers, books, drink cans, food cans and plastic drink bottles coloured containers and glass bottles.

Please **Do Not** mix your newspapers with other paper. Newspaper (newsprint) needs to be **separated from all other types of paper**.

Cardboard and packages like shoebox, cereal box etc can be mixed but **cannot** be mixed with other types of paper.

Separate your tin cans and aluminum cans.

Styrofoam and ceramics are not recycled in Penang, sorry.

Call the NIC at Tel. No. 2273673 and speak to Kanda about your recyclables



MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY PENANG BRANCH**Membership Renewal Form**

Send your cheque/ money order (payable to **Malaysian Nature Society**) and forward it to

**The Treasurer,
MNS Penang
P. O. Box 61
Gelugor Post Office
11700 Penang**

I wish to Join	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 years
Type of Membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate
I would like to receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Naturalist Only	<input type="checkbox"/>	Naturalist & Journal				

Please mark X in the corresponding box

*** Postgraduates are classified under membership type 'Ordinary'**

Membership Number _____

Name (Mr/ Ms): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Email Address: _____

Tel. (O) _____ (H) _____ (HP) _____

New I.C. No. _____ Profession _____

Related Interest/ Hobby/Profession: _____

*Payment enclosed: RM: _____ Cash/Cheque/Draft/PO/MO

No: _____ (Payable to Malaysian Nature Society)

MEMBERSHIP RATES: * Naturalist Only

Ordinary:	RM 70	(60)
Family	RM 95	(85)
(spouse and children below 16)		
Student	RM 45	(35)
School	RM 120	(110)
Institution	RM 270	(260)
Corporation	RM 5010	
Life	RM 1260	

Journal & Naturalist

RM 100	(90)
RM 120	(110)
RM 70	(60)
RM 145	(135)
RM 320	(310)
RM 5010	
RM 2010	

* Rates inclusive of RM10 entrance fee. For renewals, please subtract this amount

- Members will get a rebate of RM\$10 for 2 years renewal, RM\$20 for 3 years renewal, and RM\$30 for 5 years renewal. **Students' renewal is only available on a yearly basis.**
- () Renewal rates