



ORIOLE BIRDING



**NORTHERN & CENTRAL
THAILAND**
24TH JANUARY – 13TH FEBRUARY 2019

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TOUR LEADERS

Nick Upton

“Games”

Neil Donaghy

PARTICIPANTS

Alan Baker & Jenny Williams

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THURSDAY 24TH JANUARY

The group met at London Heathrow Terminal Two for our Thai Air flight to Bangkok which departed on time.

FRIDAY 25TH JANUARY

An early morning arrival in Bangkok was followed by a rather chaotic immigration and on to security for our internal flight to Chiang Mai, but not before we had seen our first Tree Sparrows, Great and Common Mynas and Red Collared Doves from the terminal. The flight was uneventful and after a short wait, we met up with Nick for the transfer to Thathorn. Our first Ashy Woodswallows, Barn Swallows and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers were noted en route. We arrived at the rather nice Thathorn Guesthouse resort on a warm and sunny afternoon following a lunch stop, and after a quick bag drop and freshen up, we headed to the nearby Thatorn rice fields for our first birding in earnest. Almost immediately, we found a Citrine Wagtail alongside a couple of very dapper Chinese White Wagtails and two Black-collared Starlings, while large numbers of Great White, Eastern Cattle and Little Egrets were noted in the paddies. A nice flock of Scaly-breasted Munias gave good views as they flitted in and out the reeds, as did a few Plain Prinias and up to four Yellow-eyed Babblers showed exceptionally well. A couple of Sooty-headed Bulbuls flew in, a couple of smart male Stejneger's Stonechats perched up nicely, as did a rather washed out female, an Oriental Magpie Robin sang briefly and perched on a mound, while small numbers of Long-tailed and Brown Shrikes were noted on prominent perches and a superb male Pied Harrier dropped in and made a kill and although distant we had fantastic views through the scopes of it both on the ground and in flight. One or two Little Ringed Plovers and a Green Sandpiper were present around the river, a few Dusky Warblers gave themselves up for brief views and Spotted Doves showed well. As the light started to fail, good numbers of Black Drongos were seen going to roost alongside Chestnut-tailed Starlings, a small flock of Baya Weavers dropped into a reed bed to round off an enjoyable couple of hours. An Asian Barred Owlet was calling as we made our way back to our chalets after dinner.

SATURDAY 26TH JANUARY

We began the day with an early breakfast before setting off to spend most of the day on the eastern slope of Doi Lang. A gusty breeze had got up during the night but thankfully this had died away by the time we set off and we were soon enjoying the warmth of the rising sun as we headed to the meeting point for our vehicle as the bus couldn't make it up the badly rutted road of the mountain. Our first stop was at the bridge where birds came thick and fast as we watched a fruiting tree and at times it was hard to know where to look. First up was a calling Yellow-browed Warbler that was soon gone in the canopy, two Pin-tailed Green Pigeons were a bonus flyover bird and a cracking Mountain Imperial Pigeon gave nice views as it perched openly before flying off as a motorcycle passed, and a Great Racquet-tailed Drongo gave us a view of its extraordinary long tail streamers as it flew overhead. One or two Streaked Spiderhunters were noted; their large decurved bills being almost as big as their bodies and we enjoyed a run of barbets that began with a lovely Golden-throated Barbet, followed by a couple of Blue-throated Barbets and capped by a super Great Barbet that gave prolonged views as it pecked among the fruits, while both Grey-capped Pygmy and Stripe-breasted Woodpeckers showed well alongside each other.

A female Maroon Oriole was joined firstly by a female Slender-billed Oriole, and then a male dropped in, and another was later seen in flight, a couple of busy diminutive Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, Black-throated Sunbirds and striking Orange-bellied Leafbirds flitted restlessly around the tree, an Ashy Drongo posed briefly and a small party of Black Bulbuls were very welcome visitors. Red-whiskered and Flavescent Bulbuls were also noted, a nice male Grey-chinned Minivet was followed quickly by a singing male Scarlet Minivet, a rather elusive party of White-necked Laughingthrushes were soon gone giving themselves up with good views to only some of the group though everyone saw them at least in flight and a Speckled Piculet also showed well to those lucky enough to be in the right place as it hopped along a branch alongside the first Hume's Leaf-warbler of the day. A nice male Rufous-bellied Niltava showed well, albeit briefly, as did both Slaty Blue and Slaty-backed Flycatchers before we had to tear ourselves away from this amazing spot and continue heading up the mountain. The next stop was at some open fields where a couple of Olive-backed Pipits showed very nicely in a dead tree, a rather distant Grey Wagtail was a bit of a surprise, an initially elusive Grey-backed Shrike eventually gave nice if distant views and a Taiga Flycatcher posed nicely as it sallied to and from a low perch. We arrived at the summit camp in the late morning and almost immediately had a flock of ten or so Dark-backed Sibias performing well at a feeder for us. These were quickly joined by a couple of dazzling Scarlet-faced Liocichlas and Silver-eared Laughingthrushes and we enjoyed excellent views of these species feeding low down as well as the first of a couple of female Himalayan Bluetails.



The next feeder brought us a party of very showy and charismatic Western Spectacled Barwings and we also had excellent views of a White-tailed Robin and a female Large Niltava and we later had super views of a singing male and an extremely showy Eye-browed Thrush. A Blue Whistlingthrush was briefly seen on the road, parties of Cook's Swifts wheeled overhead and a showy flock of half a dozen or so Whiskered Yuhinas were joined by a Yellow-cheeked Tit and our first Buff-barred Leaf-warbler.

By now it was hot so we took lunch while continuing to watch more of the above, as well as a Hume's Treecreeper and a Mountain Hawk-eagle that flew over and was followed straight afterwards by a Japanese [Eastern] Buzzard. A couple of Mountain Bulbuls showed well, as did Yellow-bellied Fairy-fantails that as always were constantly on the move. A mixed feeding flock produced a few gorgeous Chestnut-crowned Warblers, a sought after but sometimes difficult to find Black-eared Shrike-babbler which presented us with fantastic views and a calling Collared Owlet eventually gave us two brief flypasts to end a superb visit here. We spent the remainder of what was now a very hot afternoon at a different area of the Thatorn rice fields and this provided us with more excellent birding. Large numbers of Great and Collared Mynas were present, a couple of Racquet-tailed Treepies were all too brief, but a party of Asian Green Bee-eaters were more co-operative as they perched and hunted nearby. The first of several Greater Coucals was seen running around on a mound with others in flight, an immature male Eastern Marsh Harrier drifted overhead and masses of Chinese Pond Herons, Eastern Cattle and Great White Egrets were gathered around the wet paddies. A flock of ten Common Starlings were unexpected, but the star prize here was seeing over one hundred of the critically endangered Yellow-breasted Buntings at a pre-roost gathering. We enjoyed excellent views of these birds in a variety of plumages before they departed to spend the night elsewhere. A Common Kestrel landed nearby, another male Pied Harrier gave nice views, large numbers of Red Collared Doves were joined by a few Spotted Doves and a single Zebra Dove, a small flock of Common Snipe were flushed by the river where there were also four Common Sandpipers, seven Wood Sandpipers and two Eastern Jungle Crows flew overhead, as did a Grey Heron as we watched a beautiful sunset to end a long but ultimately a brilliant and rewarding first full day.

SUNDAY 27TH JANUARY

A pre-dawn start today for a two hour drive to the most northerly wetland in Thailand at Chiang Saen. It was cool and cloudy when we arrived at Nan Khan reserve but almost immediately we picked up the first of at least seven White-throated Kingfishers seen today, as well as the first three Coppersmith Barbets in the same tree and we later saw a pair excavating a nest hole, while a Pied Kingfisher came in and hovered right in front of the blind we were stood behind before flying off and out of sight. What a great start! Good numbers of noisy Great Mynas and Chestnut-tailed Starlings were leaving roosts, as were the usual selection of egrets, at least thirty Asian Openbills, two Green Sandpipers and a Citrine Wagtail flew off the muddy edge and Stejneger's Stonechats and Dusky Warblers were again the common passerines. Careful scanning of the reed beds and patience brought us excellent views of the endangered Jerdon's Bushchat; a cracking male that posed and perched beautifully but was always just a little too distant for photographs. A Common Kingfisher also made several feeding sorties from a dead tree, a Shikra dashed through and a Rufous-winged Buzzard gave excellent and prolonged views despite being distant; a rather odd looking raptor which eventually flew off over the forest. A Brown and a Long-tailed Shrike showed well, a couple of Streak-eared Bulbuls shared a bush with an Olive-backed Sunbird, and a White-breasted Waterhen was also the first of many seen today. A few Asian Palm Swifts circled overhead, a couple of very vocal Lineated Barbets showed very well and we were able to note that they call without opening their bills as we watched them in the scopes, a walk through some woodland brought us a male Black-naped Monarch that was constantly flitting around in the canopy so we will hope for better views at some stage and a frustrating half an hour or so brought the briefest glimpses of a Baikal Bush-warbler. Everyone eventually had some sort of view of this skulker, but not many, if any, could say they saw it well... Finally, a male Purple Sunbird showed well if distantly and a Taiga Flycatcher was briefly in view. With the day warming up and the sun breaking through, we moved on to various stops at Chiang Seam Lake, where a large raft of Common Coots held a few Ferruginous Ducks, a pair of Tufted Ducks and good numbers of Lesser Whistling Ducks and Indian Spot-billed Ducks. We searched for the extremely rare Baer's Pochard that sometimes winter here but were unable to find any. Grey-headed Swamp-hens gave superb views as they fed in the waterside vegetation and during the course of the day, we must have seen at least twenty five of these birds, while Little Grebes were dotted around the site and a Eurasian Hoopoe and a Purple Heron both put in a brief appearance.

A scan of some flooded meadows produced superb views of three Red-wattled Lapwings and two Grey-headed Lapwings at close range, a party of over one hundred Black-winged Stilts were roosting, two Yellow Bitterns had a territorial dispute, and the first of several Intermediate Egrets showed well.



Perhaps the biggest surprise here was the appearance of a singing Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler in full view; not something you see every day, and we also enjoyed good views of a male Long-tailed Minivet, a couple of Pied Bushchats, a distant Oriental Honey Buzzard and a rather less co-operative Freckle-breasted Woodpecker though we all saw it before it flew off calling. Further water bodies produced a few Eurasian Wigeon and large numbers of Northern Pintails as well as a couple of Great Crested Grebes and a pair of Ruddy Shelducks. We took a lunch stop alongside the Mekong River in the nearby town where we overlooked the border with Laos and a Red-rumped Swallow joined us very briefly, while a scan from a nearby bridge brought us two of the sought after Small Pratincoles, as well as another Eurasian Hoopoe, Plain Prinias, Zebra Doves and a small flock of Scaly-breasted Munias. Scanning the lake from another spot brought a sizeable flock of Garganey among the throngs of wildfowl already mentioned, a distant Great Cormorant and a beautifully marked Burmese Shrike that wasn't always co-operative but which eventually gave itself up. Our final stop was at Yanok Wetlands where we added a Common Moorhen, a few Sand Martins and a brief Lesser Coucal as well as ending the day with the incredible spectacle of at least two hundred Eastern Marsh and Pied Harriers coming in to roost; at times the sky was full of birds –what a superb spectacle before the drive back after a long but excellent day.

MONDAY 28TH JANUARY

Our second visit to Doi Lang East saw less favourable weather conditions than previously and we had periods without birds under the cool breeze and often overcast skies though as the weather improved in the afternoon, we had more success. We began with an Ashy Drongo fly catching in the cool morning air and then were given the run around by a Banded Bay Cuckoo that sang and flew over us a couple of times before giving only the briefest of perched views which was all a little frustrating as little else was happening. Eventually, we found a small feeding flock of Yellow-cheeked Tits that also included a nice Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, but these were also soon lost to view. A Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker showed briefly, but well, a party of two or three White-necked Laughingthrushes played hide and seek but one did offer up a brief view in the open, three Silver-bellied Broadbills passed quickly through and a couple of Collared Babblers remained steadfastly in the canopy though with patience, everyone managed to piece together views of the whole birds. A Greater Flameback flew over calling; an Asian Fairy Bluebird perched obligingly although a little distantly, alongside the first Orange-bellied Leafbird of the day and our first Black-crested Bulbul was present briefly to complete the first stop. Moving onto the rice fields, we saw the Grey-backed Shrike, Grey Wagtail and Olive-backed Pipits again, as well as our first Japanese Tits and an Oriental Magpie-robin as we scanned from the road. With little else showing, we decided to walk along a short track and this proved very productive as we had nice views of the rather scarce Crested Bunting; a female that perched up obligingly, a pair of Common Ioras flitting through the vegetation, a soaring Oriental Honey Buzzard, a party of Yellow-eyed Babblers and a pair of Velvet-fronted Nuthatches. A male Grey Bushchat showed very well as it fed in a dry paddy and the female put in an occasional appearance, a small party of Red Whiskered Bulbuls moved through the canopy and we had an exceptionally good look at Chinese and Chestnut-flanked White-eyes alongside each other as they fed in blossom. We moved on to the top camp and took lunch while watching the feeders that again produced a sizeable number of Dark-backed Sibias as well as a few Scarlet-faced Liocichlas and Western Spectacled Barwing, the Eye-browed Thrush and a female Himalayan Bluetail. We also managed to find a lovely male Bluetail a little later. Two Mountain Hawk-eagles soared high overhead, as did a further two Oriental Honey Buzzards, the resident White-tailed Robin gave exceptionally close views as it followed us around from feeder to feeder, while a couple of Buff-barred Leaf-warblers were also noted. It began to warm up and with more sunshine, the birds were becoming more obliging and we found a couple of Yellow-bellied fairy Fantails, Chestnut-crowned Warblers, the male Large Niltava and another Black-eared Shrike Babbler. We were able to study Davison's Leaf-warblers at close range as singing birds were in evidence and our first mixed feeding flock contained a real find in the form of a Pygmy Blue Flycatcher. The bird showed a couple of times reasonably well but not for long before it disappeared into dense vegetation. A couple of Blue-winged Minlas were with it and after long periods where they were obscured, we finally got good views. One or two Mountain Bulbuls were present, and the first of three Yellow-browed Tits dashed around the tree tops. Making our way back to the feeders, we found another feeding flock and this contained several different species. A pair of Grey-chinned Minivets was joined by a pair of Short-billed Minivets and all four birds were frequently sallying from the canopy, a couple of Whiskered Yuhinas were also present, several Rufous-winged and Yunnan Fulvettas went noisily through a fruiting tree and a superb male Blyth's Shrike Babbler posed in the open before the whole flock departed. A scarce Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker showed very well for a minute or two high in the canopy, a Claudia's Leaf-warbler crept through the vegetation like a nuthatch, a male Black-throated Sunbird perched very briefly in the open but still offered us our best views yet of this species and a dazzling Mrs. Gould's Sunbird was also seen well in the canopy. A couple of Golden Babblers were another bright addition to the trip list and we finished off with a rather smart Rufous-backed Sibia before the flock was gone and so was our time on the mountain. We headed back to our base for a little down time before reconvening for dinner earlier tonight

TUESDAY 29TH JANUARY

Today was a transfer day and following breakfast, we loaded the van and headed to the Fang Hot Springs for our first birding of the day. This was a really nice place to spend a couple of hours and the birding was good too as upon arrival a Striated Heron and Blue Whistling-thrush were showing along the river bank and an Asian Barred Owlet was perched though not everyone managed to see this before it was disturbed and flew out of sight. Lineated and Coppersmith Barbets were present as was a large flock of Barn Swallows that also contained an Asian House Martin and a Striated Swallow, a Blue Rock Thrush gave great views as it perched on a large boulder and before too long we also had the principal target bird here as a flock of fourteen Spot-winged Grosbeaks perched in a fruiting tree before flying off. A Peregrine flew overhead, a restless party of Rosy Minivets showed all too briefly in the canopy, a few of the spectacular White-faced Jays allowed excellent views and finally a Common Tailorbird also showed well. Our next planned stop was Doi Ang Khan but upon arrival the checkpoint we were refused entry and we had to retrace our route and decided to take an early lunch at a riverside restaurant before driving up the western side of Doi Lang. This proved to be an inspired choice as no sooner had we stopped than we had incredible views of the wintering male Ultramarine Flycatcher alongside three Grey Bushchats; superb! Next up was a flock of Olive-backed Pipits that were standing in the middle of the road and here we also got very brief views of a couple of perched Grey Treepies that then flew off; this species was subsequently seen a couple more times this afternoon but always very briefly in flight, so hopefully, we will get better views over the coming days. A very showy male Siberian Rubythroat was a stunning addition at a stake out as it foraged on the forest floor, a Buff-throated Warbler was less co-operative but prize for the biggest show off of the day was the male Spot-breasted Parrotbill that posed right in front of us for a good five minutes before it decided enough was enough and dropped out of sight.



A party of thirty or so Grey-headed Parrotbills were less obliging as they moved quickly through the canopy though one did show reasonably well for a few seconds, a mixed party of Silver-eared Laughingthrushes, another Blue Whistling-thrush and Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler came to a stake out, a couple of dazzling male Mrs Gould's Sunbirds were nice to see though never close and a pair of Golden-fronted Leafbirds put in a brief appearance. Another stake out produced superb views of a male Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher and a blink and you missed it male Slaty Blue Flycatcher, an Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike was rather good at concealing itself in the canopy though we did get reasonable views as it occasionally perched in the open, a White-throated Fantail, fanned its tail as it buzzed around like its hyper active Yellow-bellied cousin, a very smart Bronzed Drongo sallied to and fro and the prize for the most ridiculous poses of the day went to a male Stripe-breasted Woodpecker that managed to contort itself into several extremely uncomfortable looking positions as it tapped away loudly on some bare branches to round off a brilliant day.

WEDNESDAY 30TH JANUARY

An early start to pick up breakfast and lunch in order to be on Doi Lang West at dawn, where we were to spend the whole day. We were in place at a spot where we could use the vehicle as a hide in order to look for Mrs Hume's Pheasant and before long we were enjoying superb views of a male and three females as they fed on the road. An additional bonus was the appearance of four Mountain Bamboo-partridges, and a small flock of White-necked Laughingthrushes, as well as the male Ultramarine Flycatcher, several Grey Bushchats and Japanese Tits and a couple of Chestnut-vented Nuthatches. We watched for some time, spellbound by this magical experience. Moving further up the mountain, two male Little Pied Flycatchers gave only brief views as they flitted around the canopy in the cool morning air, a couple of Rufescent Prinias showed very well in the low vegetation and our first Hill Prinia and a stunning male White-bellied Redstart gave fantastic views alongside Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and Silver-eared Laughingthrushes at a stakeout. A couple of female Common Rosefinches flew into the high canopy, two male White-gorgetted Flycatchers flitted in and out of a feeding station, a very smart and diminutive Black-throated Bushtit perched overhead and another Rufous-backed Sibia proved to be rather elusive with just one or two managing to see it. We had much better luck with Grey-headed Parrotbills today as they went through the canopy taking a few Yunnan Fulvetta, and the rather strange but sought after Himalayan Cutia with them. This was a species we had hoped for but without much expectation of actually seeing so a real bonus especially to see them so well. A male Slaty-backed Flycatcher gave the best views so far as it sallied overhead, a Pallas's Leaf-warbler was seen well as it called, a Hume's Treecreeper was briefly in view and a stop at the checkpoint gave us a nice flock of Crested Finchbills as well as great views of a Giant Nuthatch to end the morning on a real high note. Following lunch, we retraced our steps and quickly saw another Himalayan Cutia, alongside a beautiful Verditer Flycatcher, a Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike was seen occasionally as it crashed through the canopy and a Chinese Leaf-warbler gave us a fine show as it called and perched overhead. With it getting hot, we decided to descend the mountain and make a couple of stops on the way down. A fruiting tree provided a nice mixed flock of Sooty-headed and very smart Black Bulbuls alongside a pair of colourful Blue-winged Leafbirds, while a Striated Heron and a cracking Slaty-backed Forktail gave excellent views as they perched around the edges of a fast flowing stream. That seemed a good moment to continue on to the hotel for a little downtime before going out again to the nearby rice fields for the last couple of hours of daylight. We had another excellent hour or so watching large numbers of Common and Great Mynas, Black Drongos and Barn Swallows in the surrounding countryside, while a couple of Striated Swallows, Pied Bushchats and Stejneger's Stonechats were in the drier areas and a small party of Black-winged Stilts flew over. An Oriental Sky Lark was singing overhead, a couple of Horsfield's Bushlarks were seen in flight a couple of times and very briefly on the ground, as was a very brief Small Buttonquail that one or two managed to be lucky with. A distant pipit proved slightly problematical but was eventually identified as Paddyfield Pipit, a Zitting Cisticola flew over going to roost and the day ended with a superb hunting Black-winged Kite as the sun set over the mountains.

THURSDAY 31ST JANUARY

Another early start as we headed to Doi Ang Khan on a different route, which although longer, did allow us to access the mountain after the disappointment of a couple of days ago. On arrival it was already warm and we scanned around the campsite finding a nice Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush almost immediately and this was soon followed by a showy Giant Nuthatch, a male Short-billed Minivet and a few Asian House Martins overhead. A singing male Blyth's Shrike Babbler was a stunner though it was constantly on the move through the canopy, a couple of Great Barbets gave a fly by, as did a Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, a couple of Mountain Bulbuls and a Buff-throated Warbler showed well and we added a small flock of Striated Bulbuls to the trip list when we found them perched in a small hedge.



Our next stop was on the Kings Project and almost immediately, we found a group of three Black-bellied Thrushes feeding on the lawn though they were rather nervous and were often out of view for long periods, good numbers of Red-whiskered Bulbuls were in the flowering trees, a small party of Spot-winged Grosbeaks included a smart adult male and we had excellent views of a male Maroon Oriole, Oriental Magpie-robin and a super male Daurian Redstart. As we made our way to the recently re-opened stake out, we were fortunate to get great views of a couple of male Mrs Gould's and Black-throated Sunbirds and find a pair of Crested Serpent-eagles that were calling to each other and indulging in some early season display at an altitude that allowed us to get superb and prolonged views before they eventually gained height and drifted out of sight; magic! At the stakeout, we enjoyed more fantastic views of White-tailed Robin as well as a small party of colourful Silver-eared Mesias, a lovely male Hill Blue Flycatcher, a few Yunnan Fulvettas and a couple of Yellow-bellied Warblers. The return journey to the coffee shop produced a couple of smart Oriental White-eyes, a circling Japanese Buzzard and finally a decent view of the previously skittish and difficult to see Banded Bay Cuckoo. However, all of these birds were eclipsed by a pair of truly stunning male Asian Emerald Cuckoos that indulged in display flight, calling and just generally posing in superb light so that we could fully appreciate the fantastic colours – a leading contender for bird of the trip. A brief stop at the exit produced a nice male Verditer Flycatcher and a Streaked Spiderhunter among other commoner species.

Following lunch and a little souvenir shopping, we headed up to the army camp where we were given a guided tour by one of the head soldiers which included being right against the Myanmar border and the chance to observe and purchase clothes woven by the women from the local hill tribe. There weren't many birds here apart from a lovely male Burmese Shrike and an unexpected and showy Large Cuckoo-shrike that perched high in a pine tree. Our final new bird of the day was a small party of Brown-bellied Bulbuls at the Chinese cemetery, while a roadside stop on the way back to Fang produced a few Cook's Swifts and several Red-whiskered Bulbuls to end another fantastic day in the mountains.

FRIDAY 1ST FEBRUARY

With today being a transfer day, we decided to spend a couple of hours on a final visit to Doi Lang West and set off early in the hope of picking up some of the missing species. A sub adult Common Rosefinch caused some initial identification problems in the flat light, and we were surprised to see a small party of Spot-winged Grosbeaks here. Davidson's and Chinese Leaf-warblers, Spectacled Barwings, Crested Finchbills and Brown Shrike were all added before we picked our first new species of the day in the form of two White-browed Scimitar Babblers that gave brief, but acceptable views before flying into dense cover. A pair of Chestnut Buntings was very difficult to pin down, but eventually everyone managed some sort of view with a couple lucky to see the male perched in the open. A male Little Pied Flycatcher showed well, as did a Grey Treepie that we finally managed to scope, a pair of Indochinese Cuckoo-shrikes were busy feeding in the canopy, a pair of Maroon Orioles posed briefly, a Sapphire Flycatcher was even less obliging as it flitted through the canopy without ever stopping long enough to get more than a glimpse, as did a Buff-chested Babbler, but we ended on a high with superb views of a couple of Mrs Gould's Sunbirds and Black-throated Bush-tits.



The remainder of a hot day was spent travelling to Doi Inthanon via a lunch stop and a brief Wire-tailed Swallow while stuck at traffic lights in Chiang Mai, and upon arrival, we birded the agricultural area at the bottom of the mountain road.

This provided us with great views of Ashy Woodswallows, Asian Green Bee-eaters, Zebra Dove, Scaly-breasted Munia and a male Verditer Flycatcher. We also enjoyed fantastic views of a few of the rather inaptly named Plain-backed Sparrows as they are rather gorgeous birds, a showy Rufous Treepie and several Blossom-headed Parakeets. We ended a long day in the grounds of our accommodation watching Indochinese Rollers and a superb Spotted Owlet.

SATURDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

We spent the whole of today at various sites around Doi Inthanon; Thailand's highest mountain. The weather was a lot cooler than we have experienced elsewhere and for the most part, we had to work quite hard for our birds. We began at the Wacharathin Waterfalls where almost immediately we found a couple of White-headed Bulbuls perched high in a tree where there were also Black-crested and the rather drab Grey-eyed Bulbul but the flock soon moved on. We had to wait a little while at the impressive waterfall before we found a cracking male White-capped Water Redstart feeding on the rocks where a couple of Blue Whistling-thrushes were also present. A couple of Blue-bearded Bee-eaters dropped in and perched for a short while allowing scope views albeit at distance. Moving on to the track at Kilometre 34.5 our principal target was Clicking Shrike Babbler. We found a bird rather quickly, but it wasn't very showy and views were rather disappointing for what was a life bird for everyone in the group. However, another bird seen later on gave much better views, so the whole group was happy to tick it. A couple of Slaty-backed Forktails gave nice views as they flitted round the stream before flying off into the forest, while Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Hume's Treecreeper, Golden Babblers and a male Little Pied Flycatcher were also noted. We spent some time searching for the strange and diminutive Slaty-bellied Tesia and did eventually get good views of a bird along a shady track, where at least three White-throated Fantails were also present. A fast moving feeding flock contained several Claudia's Leaf-warblers, as well as a Sulphur-bellied Warbler, and a Red-headed Trogon for a couple of lucky members of the group, a pair of Slaty-backed Flycatchers gave nice views as they flitted among the canopy and a male Grey-chinned Minivet also showed well. Our next stop was an overgrown trail at Checkpoint Two where we got excellent views of a male Small Niltava and a White-bellied Erponis also showed well but we could not find the calling Bay Woodpecker that was present. We took a very nice lunch at Mr Daengs with the added bonus of a Lesser Shortwing showing well in the garden, as well as a large number of Spotted Doves, two Eastern Jungle Crows and a few Tree Sparrows. A stop at The Campsite quickly produced a small flock of the hoped for Ashy Bulbuls; a rather dapper looking bulbul, as well as a nice Taiga Flycatcher and an Oriental Magpie-robin. Our final stop was at The Summit. It was rather busy with tourists but we persevered and got superb views of a few Chestnut-tailed Minlas, Blue Whistling-thrushes and Silver-eared Laughingthrushes. A Pygmy Wren-babbler was calling tantalisingly close to us, but we just could not find it, a couple of very smart Inthanon Sunbirds perched up in a brief period of sunshine, as did a couple of Yellow-browed Tits. A walk into the damper forest gave us a superb views of a male Snowy-browed Flycatcher as it perched on a fence and a tree trunk, a couple of Rufous-throated Partridges were very uncooperative as they skulked in the dense vegetation, though one or two did seem them reasonably well, but the star of the show was a White-crowned Forktail that fed on the forest floor totally unaware of our presence; what a great way to end the day with such brilliant views of such a shy bird.

SUNDAY 3RD FEBRUARY

A cold start to the day near The Summit of Doi Inthanon, but by the middle of the afternoon temperatures had risen to become the hottest day of the tour so far and with clear blue skies and no breeze the crowds were out in force. Our first target was a post roost gathering of Speckled Wood Pigeons and we saw about a dozen, but they could be surprisingly difficult to see when perched and were rather skittish though with a bit of perseverance, we did get excellent views before they flew off and into the forest. After a coffee break, we headed to the boardwalk and quickly saw a few Mrs Gould's Sunbirds, Davison's Leaf-warblers and the male Snowy-browed Flycatcher again. The glare of the sun hitting the water meant it was difficult to view some of the damper forest areas so we did well to get good views of a Pygmy Wren-babbler, while some also had reasonable views of a Himalayan Shortwing but both of these birds were only in view for a short time before scuttling off into the dense undergrowth.

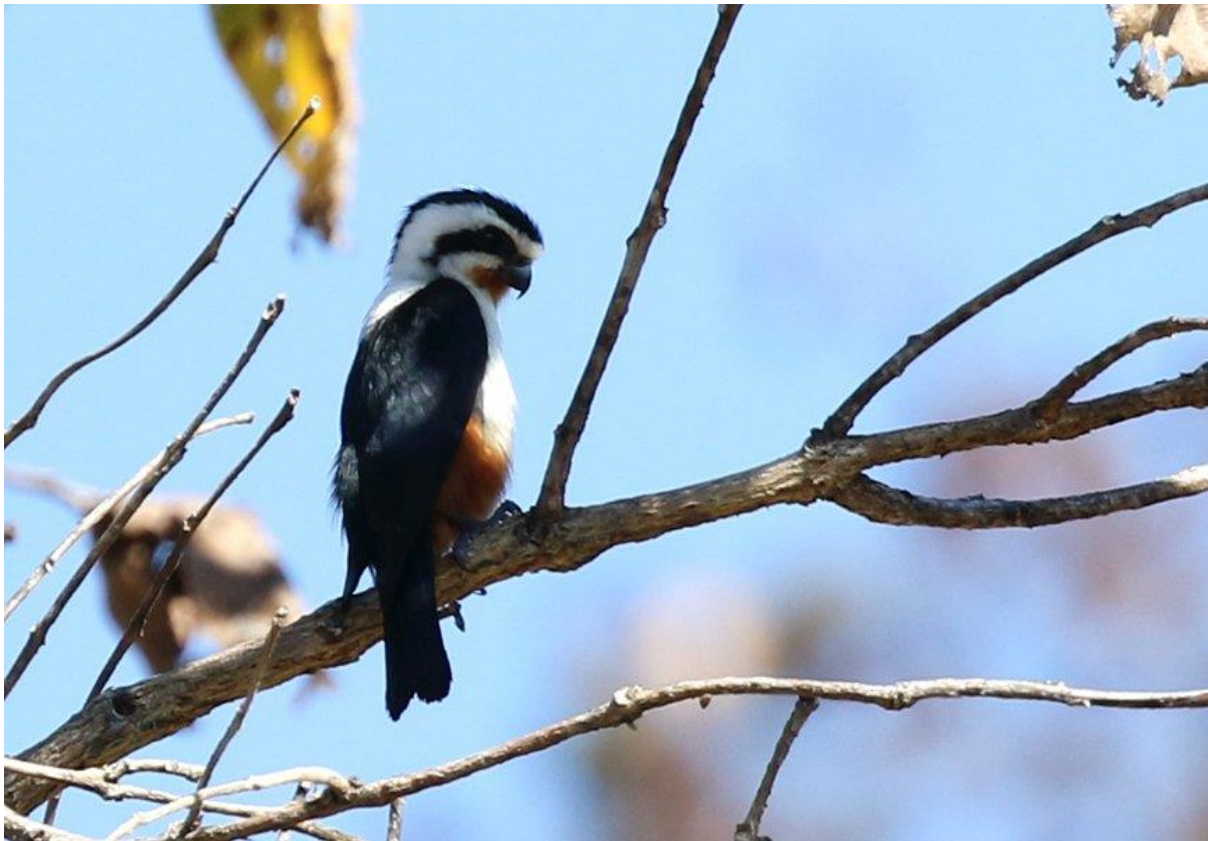
A Brambling was heard calling but wasn't seen, a mixed flock of Chestnut-flanked White-eyes and Inthanon Sunbirds moved through, a few Dark-backed Sibias and Chestnut-tailed Minlas showed well in the Rhododendrons, a small flock of Yellow-bellied Fairy-fantails raced around the canopy, as did a few Rufous-winged Fulvettas and Ashy-throated and Blyth's Leaf-warblers flitted through with the former singing occasionally. Some of the group had nice views of a Grey-sided Thrush, and all caught up with two birds later back around the cafe, where a Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker also showed very well. By now it was extremely busy here so we moved to the Mae Pen Waterfall road where we soon picked up Lesser Racquet-tailed and Bronzed Drongos and a rather showy Speckled Piculet. The real prize here though was the flock of twenty or so Long-tailed Broadbills. The birds were calling loudly but were incredibly mobile and difficult to pin down and unfortunately not everyone managed to get on them as they flew over the canopy or perched momentarily in the open before disappearing again from view. We took lunch again at Mr Daeng's and a stop for ice cream at the stall opposite produced a Plain Flowerpecker and a few Oriental White-eyes. We decided to have a go for Plumbeous Water Redstart at Srithian Waterfall and managed to pick up a female bird feeding on some rocks, where there was also a Grey Wagtail and a very brief Slaty-backed Forktail, while a male Hill Blue Flycatcher was also seen briefly. With our luck in, we returned to an extraordinarily busy Wacharathin Waterfalls, but our luck held and we found a Puff-throated Bulbul among a small flock of Black-crested Bulbuls and a pair of Blue-winged Leafbirds, and we also had a lovely male Plumbeous Water Redstart that was occasionally seen on the same rock as the male White-capped Water Redstart that we initially found yesterday. By now it was hot and late afternoon and after discovering that the Collared Falconet roost that we were about to visit was no longer active, we returned to the accommodation where in the grounds, we saw a couple of Spectacled Owlets, a couple of Asian Barred Owlets and at least five Indochinese Rollers and those who stayed out latest also had a Brown Boobook fly in for an exciting end to a very enjoyable day.

MONDAY 4TH FEBRUARY

Today was another transfer day, but we had time before departure to have another go at some the species we still hoped to see or get better views of before we left this area for the foothills. We began again at dawn at a bridge that crossed one of the rivers and soon had flight views of a Greater Racquet-tailed Drongo as it left its roost site, but we were here to see Black-backed Forktail and after ten minutes or so we heard a bird calling and once we located it some fifty metres or so on a large stone in the centre of the water we were treated to unusually good and prolonged views of this notoriously shy species; what a great start to the day!! Buoyed by our success, we headed up the mountain to The Summit and were very quickly on to a small covey of Rufous-throated Partridges that were in the undergrowth just off the trail. We were able to get excellent views despite the gloomy light before they disappeared into denser vegetation. Most of the group also had much better views of Himalayan Shortwing as well as further views of Inthanon and Mrs Gould's Sunbirds, Chestnut-flanked White-eyes and Davison's Leaf-warbler. Dark-backed Sibias and Chestnut-tailed Minlas were again in the Rhododendrons around the cafe and we finally found a small flock of roosting Ashy-throated Wood Pigeons that showed well as they preened in the trees behind the toilet block. A quick stop on the way back to the accommodation produced nice views of a pair of Purple Sunbirds and once we had lunch we set off for the town of Li which is our base for the next two nights. Upon arrival a Brown Shrike was in the garden, and after time to unpack and relax, we headed to Mae Ping in the mid afternoon. It was certainly hot as we scoured the woodlands and whilst the quantity of birds was low, the quality was high. We began with superb views of a pair of White-rumped Falcons perched high in a dead tree and we spent some time watching these beautiful birds preening and resting before they flew off in different directions. A Greenish Warbler then popped into view and a male Black-hooded Oriole was seen with varying degrees of success before it too disappeared into the canopy. Woodpeckers are highly prized at this site and we enjoyed fantastic views of a Lesser Yellownape that certainly lived up to its name as its flaming nape contrasted with the bright red crown and green upperparts. We were less fortunate with the first of three White-bellied Woodpeckers, all of which posed only briefly before giving us the right royal run around. Thankfully, everyone did at least get good flight views of this huge woodpecker. A Rufous Treepie flew overhead and wended the day with very brief flight views of a Red-billed Blue Magpie going to its roost site.

TUESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY

We began again at dawn for the drive to Mae Ping where we spent the morning trying to catch up with more of the species we may struggle to see elsewhere. Once again White-bellied Woodpecker gave us the run around, but we were more successful in obtaining fantastic views of at least three Black-headed Woodpeckers with one even allowing superb scope views. A male Golden-fronted Leafbird gave nice views as it flitted around the canopy, a couple of Eastern Jungle Crows flew overhead and two Shikra circled over low enough to get nice views before they drifted off. A calling Burmese Nuthatch gave super views as it perched atop a dead tree, a male Black-hooded Oriole also showed very well but a pair of Large Cuckoo-shrikes were less obliging. Small parties of Grey-headed Parakeets bombed overhead but we only managed to find one perched bird that some of the group managed to get on to through a scope before it too disappeared, a Red-billed Blue Magpie was typically elusive and a female Red Junglefowl was seen by some as it crossed the road in front of the bus. A party of White-crested Laughingthrushes certainly lived up to both plumage and voice as they moved noisily through the forest, a few Red-wattled Lapwings, Chinese Pond Herons and Striated Swallows were around The Campsite, but the piece de la resistance of what by now was a very hot morning was a superb Collared Falconet that posed beautifully for us before swooping down to grab a meal as we disturbed the ground.



We drove back down to the town for lunch and a little down time before returning to the forest in the late afternoon. It was rather slow going for the first hour or so as it was hot and the birds just weren't showing other than a single Taiga Flycatcher, but as the heat of the day began to diminish we started to find birds again. A Green-billed Malkoha flew across the road and crashed through the canopy at the same time as a Lesser Yellownappe and a Rufous Treepie also decided to put in an appearance and a Common Flameback was noted shortly afterwards. A couple of Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers were seen high on a dead tree, a Lineated Barbet came in and investigated the commotion before flying out again and after struggling with the dense vegetation, we eventually got good reasonable views of a Greater Flameback; not much difference in the plumage as both birds were females, but the bill was a lot larger than on the Common Flameback.

WEDNESDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

Our final morning at Mae Ping began quietly, but as the morning progressed we started to see a few birds. Everyone finally managed to get on to a perched Grey-headed Parakeet, the White-crested Laughingthrush flock moved noisily through the forest with some giving good views, three Red-billed Blue Magpies gave good if rather brief views and a small flock of Sooty-headed Bulbuls flew in. A loud drumming alerted us to the presence of a Rufous Woodpecker and we were able to watch this bird for a while as it performed on its anvil and it or another was later seen on a trunk. A Velvet-fronted Nuthatch hung upside down from the top of a dead tree, two Oriental Honey Buzzards flew over The Campsite, where we also had a feeding flock that included Black-hooded Oriole, Green-billed Malkoha, Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike, Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers and an Ashy Drongo. With time moving on and the day getting very hot, we headed back to the hotel for our bags and lunch in the nearby restaurant before heading to Chiang Mai. We noted a few Eastern Cattle Egrets en route and upon arrival, we headed straight to the Agricultural College. A small mixed flock of House and Asian Palm Swifts were present and several Germain's Swiftlets gave excellent views as they came down to drink on the ponds. A few Ashy Woodswallows and Scaly-breasted Munias were also present and we had brief views of a Plain Prinia, a Striated Heron and Common Kingfisher. A couple of Olive-backed Pipits perched up in a tree, a Paddyfield Pipit ran along the edge of the road and an Indochinese Bushlark sat on a wire panting in the heat before deciding to show us its pipit like display flight. We braved the traffic in the late afternoon to check in at the hotel in readiness for our morning flight back to Bangkok.

THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY

With today being a transfer day back to Bangkok there was no time for any birding in the morning so we took a much needed lie in before breakfast and transfer to the airport where we said goodbye to Nick who had to pick up another group. Our flight departed and arrived on time and we were soon through baggage collection to meet with our driver. We took lunch in a nice restaurant before continuing on to Pak Thale where we would meet with Games our local guide for the final part of the tour. We arrived in the late afternoon and it was immediately apparent that there were masses of shorebirds at this internationally important site. Large numbers of Lesser Sandpipers were present and these were joined by a mixed flock of Red-necked Stints, Black-winged Stilts, Curlew Sandpipers, Broad-billed Sandpipers and two of the highly prized and critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers that spend the winter here; finding these birds so quickly took the pressure right off for this part of the trip. A Caspian Tern was among a large flock of gulls that took off before we had chance to go through them, good numbers of Gull-billed Terns were joined by a few *longipennis* Common Terns that have a black bill and legs and a couple of Little Terns were also noted. The next lagoon held small numbers of Grey and Pacific Golden Plovers and many of these birds took flight when three Brahminy Kites appeared over another lagoon. Once everything had settled back down, we were able to scan through a sizeable flock of Black-tailed Godwits which also held a few Common Greenshanks, Common Redshanks, Terek Sandpipers and Marsh Sandpipers as well as at least two Asian Dowitchers which showed a totally different feeding action. Small numbers of Spotted Redshanks, Sanderling and Great Knot were also present, along with a single Common Sandpiper and a Painted Stork, while the only birds to show any hint of breeding plumage were a couple of Kentish Plovers. We also noted a few Little and Indian Cormorants, Great White and Little Egrets and ended the day with a very smart Collared Kingfisher. We arrived late at our accommodation at Baan Maka but were treated to a delicious meal to end another superb day.

FRIDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

Following breakfast, we took a short drive for our first visit to the excellent Kaeng Krachan National Park and as soon as it was light we began to see birds. A party of Vernal Hanging Parrots and Thick-billed Green Pigeons shared a dead tree and shortly afterwards a couple of Black-naped Orioles also took a liking to it and posed beautifully and a few Dusky Langur monkeys jumped around from perch to perch. An Asian Fairy Bluebird perched high in the canopy and a Crested Treeswift circled overhead and we were later fortunate to get the pair of this beautiful birds sat together.

A Wedge-tailed Pigeon also sat briefly but showed well, a Banded Broadbill was not quite so obliging though we did all manage at least some sort of view as it faced away from us and the first of several Oriental Dollarbirds flew overhead and a pair were later seen high in a dead tree by the side of the road. Our first Oriental Pied Hornbills were rather distant and a little unobliging as they crashed through dense vegetation, but we couldn't argue with a superb pair of Black Baza which although distant gave stunning views as they sat warming in the sun. Black-headed Bulbuls and Hair-crested Drongos were added, a Bronzed Drongo performed nicely, as did a couple of Dark-necked Tailorbirds and Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrikes, while a sizeable troop of Stump-tailed Macaques which included several babies walked along the road; they left behind a noticeably strong scent which could hardly be described as pleasant. A Greater Coucal showed well as it called from a tree, a couple of Stripe-throated Bulbuls perched in the open before flying off, a lovely Blue-bearded Bee-eater gave us prolonged views as it perched and hawked from a high post and a Banded Bay Cuckoo flew in and began to call. During a hectic five minutes or so for raptors we recorded a couple of Chinese Goshawks and Oriental Honey Buzzards, an unexpected Jerdon's Baza and a displaying pair of Besra. Olive-backed and Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds showed well, as did a couple of Indochinese Rollers and we finished our visit by watching a Black-thighed Falconet devouring its breakfast and a cracking male Common Flameback. Back at Baan Maka, the feeding station was busy with Streak-eared Bulbuls, Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes and Golden-fronted Leafbirds, an Eastern Crowned Warbler flitted in as we ate lunch and at least three White-rumped Sharmas were involved in territorial disputes. We spent the afternoon at the amazing Uncle Sim's Waterhole where we enjoyed a true wildlife spectacle as several species of squirrels and a wide variety of birds came in to drink. First up were a couple of Puff-throated Babblers and these were quickly followed by another White-rumped Sharma and a flock of Streaked-eared Bulbuls, while a few Red Junglefowl and both Bar-backed and Scaly-breasted Partridges that were grubbing around for food on the forest floor. Lesser and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes showed very well, a couple of Racquet-tailed Treepies did likewise and a gorgeous Orange-headed Thrush made an all too brief appearance.



A White-bellied Erponis sat on a branch before rapidly heading down to the water and was gone just as quickly, but a pair of Black-naped Monarchs were much more obliging as they visited several times. A diminutive Lesser Mouse Deer came in a few times to drink and was always very wary, a Greater Racquet-tailed Drongo posed for some time allowing us to see just how long the tail streamers really are, a pair of Kalij Pheasants strode majestically around and a Large Scimitar Babbler popped in a couple of times but was soon gone. As the light started to fade, two Asian Emerald Doves came in to feed, a male Indochinese Blue Flycatcher posed beautifully, a small group of Oriental Brown-cheeked Fulvettas arrived and we ended the day with a very showy Pied Fantail.

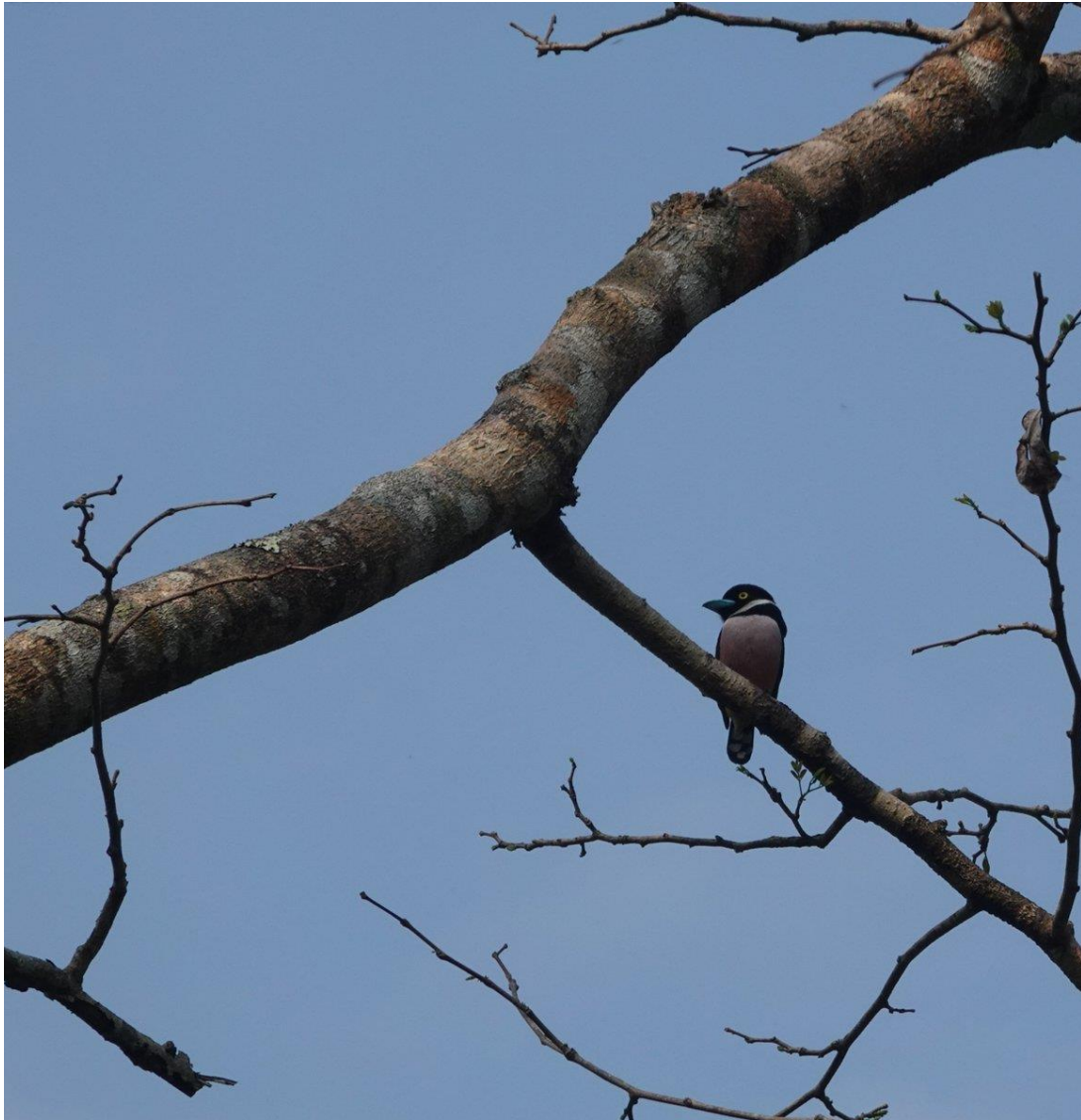
SATURDAY 9TH FEBRUARY

It was cooler at first light today than yesterday as once again we headed into Kaeng Krachan National Park. Initially, we stopped at the same fruiting tree as yesterday and once again had nice views of Vernal Hanging Parrots, Black-naped Orioles, Asian Fairy Bluebirds, Crested Treeswifts, Oriental Dollarbirds including a pair copulating, Thick-billed Green Pigeons and the first of three Crested Goshawks was seen perched up at close range. A male Black-naped Monarch showed briefly but well, a couple of Rufous-fronted Babblers were frantically gathering nesting material while calling and dashing through the vegetation at lightning speed, three Oriental Pied Hornbills flew overhead but these were eclipsed by a magnificent fly over Great Hornbill. A pair of Greater Yellownapes were busy feeding on a dead tree, a male Grey-rumped Treeswift posed nicely for scope views and the first of a couple of Crested Serpent Eagles seen this morning soared low overhead. We added our first Blue-eared Barbets of the trip, but soon added more as they seemed particularly vocal and showy today, four Common Flamebacks left a tree together and a pair of Crested Hill Mynas were also new; their yellow tufts reminiscent of penguins... The Black-thighed Falconet showed well again, a couple of hyperactive Pin-striped Tit-babblers and a Great Iora were moving through dense vegetation together and both Black-capped Kingfisher and Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo showed very well. A waterhole stop produced a couple of Red-wattled Lapwings and a Brown Shrike and a short stop at the first Campsite saw a male Ruby-cheeked Hummingbird and an Asian Brown Flycatcher present. The journey back to Ban Maka for lunch was interrupted by a close Crested Serpent Eagle perched by the roadside and back at the lodge we had nice views of Taiga Flycatcher, the Eastern Crowned Warbler and remarkably our first Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher of the trip, as well as the expected Streak-eared Bulbuls and Greater and Lesser necklaced Laughingthrushes that grace the feeders. We spent the first hour after lunch at Nuy Waterhole where we were unfortunately unsuccessful in our quest for Blue Pitta though we did get great views of a female Siberian Blue Robin and Indochinese Blue Flycatcher as well as large parties of Lesser and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes, a Lesser Yellownapes, a smart Pied Fantail and a White-rumped Sharma and plenty of squirrels, while a small flock of Cattle Egrets were in a field as we departed. Our next stop was at Wat Look Chang where a pair of Western Koels gave good views for some of the group and a Spotted Owlet was seen well at its roost site. A Little Cormorant flew in and a scan of the wetland produced new trip birds in the form of single Wood Sandpiper and Little Ringed Plover as well as the recently split Eastern Yellow Wagtail. A few Red-wattled Lapwings, Asian Green Bee-eaters and Asian Openbills were also present and a White-throated Kingfisher showed well a couple of times. We ended the day by scanning the lake at Baan Maka where we enjoyed the spectacle of large numbers of Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters coming into roost alongside Black-collared and a single Chestnut-tailed Starling, Great Mynas and another White-throated Kingfisher. At least five Bronze-winged Jacanas included one showy bird, a male Yellow Bittern was seen briefly in flight and a Black-browed Reed Warbler capped another excellent day.

SUNDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

Another fantastic morning spent at Kaeng Krachan National Park though the weather was cloudier today and it was therefore humid rather than hot. Red-wattled Lapwings and White-throated and Common Kingfishers greeted us at the first waterhole and an Asian Brown Flycatcher was flitting around above our heads. We finally managed to see our first Green-eared Barbet as it sat high on a dead tree and like buses, the next followed shortly afterwards.

A couple of Sultan Tits flew in and gave very nice views though they were always high in the canopy, a much wanted Black and Red Broadbill posed briefly in full view but it didn't stay and a couple of Great Hornbills flew overhead and were later picked up sat distantly in a tree at the back of the Campsite. A few small groups of Pin-striped Tit-babblers moved through, a flock of ten or so Thick-billed Green Pigeons were seen high in a dead tree and Asian Fairy Bluebirds, Hair-crested, Greater Racquet-tailed and Ashy Drongos were all noted. A superb male Crimson Sunbird perched beautifully for us, the much drabber Baker's Bulbuls were seen along with a single rather uncooperative Ochraceous Bulbul, a gorgeous male Hainan Blue Flycatcher gave excellent if brief views, and a first winter male Blue and White Flycatcher took a little identifying as it flitted in and out of the canopy.



We then enjoyed fantastic and prolonged views of a stunning Black and Yellow Broadbill perched overhead and this was joined by a Violet Cuckoo just as two Banded Bay Cuckoos flew in to end a most productive short walk. Next up, we crossed the river on to the Vanilla Trail where a feeding flock of Great Ioras included one that took and devoured a Praying Mantis, a single Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher and a couple of Eastern Crowned Warblers were with them, but we were unable to locate a nearby Dusky Broadbill despite it calling. A singing Abbot's Babbler showed well despite being in deep cover and we ended the morning with a Black Giant Squirrel and a Dusky Langur over our heads. A small fall of Taiga Flycatchers had taken place at Baan Maka, where we enjoyed lunch with the usual species around the feeders. The sun poked through as we left for the afternoon, which was spent in a couple of hides near to Baan Maka.

Our first stop was Khao Chang Hip where we had the most incredible views of a Blue Pitta as it came to the feeding station and spent a couple of minutes in full view before scuttling off back into the forest; surely a serious contender for bird of the trip!



A Sundra Pied Fantail and male Indochinese Blue Flycatcher were also noted and some saw a Little Grebe on the lake. Next we visited Baan Songnok which produced incredible views of a roosting Large-tailed Nightjar and was apparently the first that had been found this year. The hide was rather quite though we had nice views of another male Indochinese Blue Flycatcher, a female Siberian Blue Robin, a pair of Black-naped Monarchs, a couple of male Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers, Black-crested, Streak-eared and Stripe-throated Bulbuls, Spotted Doves and Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes. Our final stop was at dusk on the road back to Baan Maka where we had nice views of a few Red Collared Doves, an Oriental Pied Hornbill and plenty of Barn Swallows and Ashy Woodswallows, as well as a couple of Lineated Barbets and a female Western Koel. Our prime reason for being here though was to watch the starlings and mynas come in to roost and we had excellent numbers of Chestnut-tailed Starlings and Great Mynas and careful scanning produced small numbers of Asian Pied Starling and Vinous-breasted Starlings to round off a superb day.

MONDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

A very early start today saw us making a return visit to Pak Thale and the salt pans to enjoy the spectacle of the shorebird roost. We made a special effort to search out small numbers of Nordmann's Greenshank and found a few noting the straighter bill, paler underparts and yellower legs that separate it from the Common Greenshank, of which we also saw a few. There were literally thousands of birds on show as the sun came up on what was to be a scorching hot day and we enjoyed the masses of Great Knot, Black-tailed Godwits, Black-winged Stilts, Marsh Sandpipers and Lesser Sandpipers which were the species present in the highest numbers.

Careful searching brought a few Greater Sandpipers, Spotted and Common Redshanks, Kentish Plovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Grey Plovers and Curlew sandpipers, while small numbers of Ruff, Broad-billed Sandpipers, Pied Avocets, Common Sandpipers, Little Ringed Plover, Asian Dowitchers and our first Long-toed Stints were also present but the deepness of the water at this particular area meant that there were no other small waders present. A very large flock of Eurasian Curlews were found but were extremely distant and we were unable to search them for the hoped for Far Eastern Curlew. The usual selection of Great White and Little Egrets and Chinese Pond Herons were also present and Common and Gull-billed Terns were also noted along with a large roost of Brown-headed Gulls. At least five Brahminy Kites soared overhead, a sizeable roost of Caspian Terns took off and headed

towards the sea, a Purple Heron drifted over and a Pied Fantail put in an appearance as we were ready to board our boat trip out into the Gulf of Thailand to search for some special species. Almost immediately upon landing we found the first of several Malaysian Plovers; these birds gave the best views of all the individuals we saw of this species before they flew off to a rocky island that also held good numbers of Greater Crested



and Caspian Terns, Sanderling, Great Knot and a few Common Greenshank as well as single Common and rather surprisingly a Wood Sandpiper. The other most wanted species here is White-faced Plover, but boy did we have to work hard to find one today. After a few false alarms, our local shorebird expert confirmed a male and we did get good views and in good light albeit a little distantly. Relief all round as this was a species we didn't want to miss. Small numbers of Kentish and Lesser Sandpipers Plovers were also present, a couple of Chinese Egrets and dark morph Western Reef Herons were also noted and a Bar-tailed Godwit and a Striated Heron flew in as we made the return journey to the quay. Following lunch we headed to the lake at Wat Khao Ta Khroa where we picked up several Black Kites soaring overhead as well as huge numbers of Painted Storks, Great White Egrets and Little Cormorants, while Lesser Whistling Ducks, Little Grebes and Whiskered Terns were also present in good numbers. A couple of Oriental Darters flew overhead, a White-throated Kingfisher posed on a stick and we managed brief flight views of a Stork-billed Kingfisher as it disappeared behind dense vegetation and could not be relocated. A couple of Purple Herons flew overhead, Common Greenshank, Common and Wood Sandpipers and a few Black-winged Stilts, Caspian Terns and Brown-headed Gulls were present and before long we picked up at least five Black-headed Ibis which were our principal targets here. The birds showed well but were never particularly close. Scanning the distant duck flock produced Garganey, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler and a male Ruddy Shelduck but not the hoped for Falcated Duck, so with time pressing, we headed off to Thong Klad. We noted Long-tailed Macaques by the side of a road in a small town and many wet rice fields en route that held large numbers of Chinese Pond Herons, Asian Openbills and a few Cattle Egrets.

Upon arrival, a couple of Vinous-breasted Starlings were hopping around on the ground, Asian Green Bee-eaters were hunting for final meals, a couple of Paddyfield Pipits were on bare ground and a male Stejneger's Stonechat was the first we have seen for a week or so. A couple of blobs that shot out from under our feet were said to be Bared Buttonquails, but nobody really had much of a view as they raced away, a Purple Heron and Red-wattled Lapwing flushed from near a pond and we ended the day with three Indian Thick-knees in flight before they disappeared into dense scrub.

TUESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY

Our final morning was spent at a waterhole hide near to Baan Maka. It wasn't particularly busy, but we did enjoy excellent views of a pair of Siberian Blue Robins with the male posing beautifully, as did a male Chinese Blue Flycatcher and his mate and a male White-rumped Sharma, while a male Slaty-backed Flycatcher, a Puff-throated Babbler, an Asian Emerald Dove and a female Black-naped Monarch put in brief appearances.



A party of four White-crested Laughingthrushes kept us entertained from time to time and the ubiquitous Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes also passed through. A Lesser Mouse Deer spent some time feeding before scuttling back into the forest and as ever there were plenty of squirrels present. As we were leaving a couple of Red-rumped Swallows passed overhead; our first of the trip. Following packing, check out and lunch which also produced a Verditer Flycatcher and a small flock of Large Woodshrikes we headed off for our final birding stop of the tour at Petchaburi rice fields. Large numbers of Asian Openbills and Black-winged Stilts were in the wet paddies, along with many of the other common herons, while a flock of at least five hundred Germain's Swiftlets were hawking overhead. A few Black Drongos and Asian Pied Starlings were noted, a dozen or so Oriental Pratincoles took to the wing and also hawked for a while but they were never close, a Ruddy-breasted Crake shot through everyone's field of view as we were watching a male Golden Weaver in some reeds, where there was also a female type Baya Weaver. Scanning a small lake produced a few Little Grebes and both Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas and an Oriental Darter flew overhead. We took the long drive back to Bangkok arriving at our airport hotel at dusk before enjoying a farewell meal.

WEDNESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

Following breakfast and check out, we transferred to the airport on what looked set to be a very hot day. Some twelve hours later, we said our goodbyes at the luggage carousel to end a very enjoyable trip packed with good birds and great company.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

- 1/ Rufous-throated Partridge
- 2/Bar-backed Partridge
- 3/Scaly-breasted Partridge
- 4/Mountain Bamboo-partridge
- 5/Red Junglefowl
- 6/Mrs Hume's Pheasant
- 7/Kalij Pheasant
- 8/Lesser Whistling Duck
- 9/Ruddy Shelduck
- 10/Ferruginous Duck
- 11/Tufted Duck
- 12/Garganey
- 13/Northern Shoveler
- 14/Eurasian Wigeon
- 15/Indian Spot-billed Duck
- 16/Northern Pintail
- 17/Little Grebe
- 18/Great Crested Grebe
- 19/Feral Rock Dove
- 20/Speckled Wood Pigeon
- 21/Ashy Wood Pigeon
- 22/Red Collared Dove
- 23/Spotted Dove
- 24/Asian Emerald Dove
- 25/Thick-billed Green Pigeon
- 26/Pin-tailed Green Pigeon
- 27/Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon
- 28/Mountain Imperial Pigeon
- 29/Large-tailed Nightjar
- 30/Crested Treeswift
- 31/Grey-rumped Treeswift
- 32/Germain's Swiftlet
- 33/Asian Palm Swift
- 34/Cook's Swift
- 35/House Swift
- 36/Greater Coucal
- 37/Lesser Coucal
- 38/Green-billed Malkoha
- 39/Western Koel
- 40/Asian Emerald Cuckoo
- 41/Violet Cuckoo
- 42/Banded Bay Cuckoo
- 43/Plaintive Cuckoo
- 44/Square-tailed Drongo-cuckoo
- 45/Ruddy-breasted Crake
- 46/White-breasted Waterhen
- 47/Grey-headed Swamp-hen
- 48/Common Moorhen
- 49/Common Coot

50/Painted Stork
51/Asian Openbill
52/Black-headed Ibis
53/Yellow Bittern
54/Striated Heron
55/Chinese Pond Heron
56/Eastern Cattle Egret
57/Grey Heron
58/Purple Heron
59/Great White Egret
60/Intermediate Egret
61/Little Egret
62/Pacific Reef Heron
63/Chinese Egret
64/Little Cormorant
65/Great Cormorant
66/Indian Cormorant
67/Oriental Darter
68/Indian Thick-knee
69/Pied Avocet
70/Black-winged Stilt
71/Grey Plover
72/Pacific Golden Plover
73/Little Ringed Plover
74/Kentish Plover
75/White-faced Plover
76/Malaysian Plover
77/Lesser Sandplover
78/Greater Sandplover
79/Grey-headed Lapwing
80/Red-wattled Lapwing
81/Pheasant-tailed Jacana
82/Bronze-winged Jacana
83/Eurasian Curlew
84/Bar-tailed Godwit
85/Black-tailed Godwit
86/Great Knot
87/Ruff
88/Broad-billed Sandpiper
89/Curlew Sandpiper
90/Long-toed Stint
91/Spoon-billed Sandpiper
92/Red-necked Stint
93/Sanderling
94/Asian Dowitcher
95/Common Snipe
96/Terek Sandpiper
97/Common Sandpiper
98/Green Sandpiper
99/Spotted Redshank
100/Common Greenshank
101/Common Redshank
102/Wood Sandpiper
103/Marsh Sandpiper
104/Nordmann's Greenshank

105/Small Buttonquail
106/Barred Buttonquail
107/Oriental Pratincole
108/Small Pratincole
109/Brown-headed Gull
110/Little Tern
111/Gull-billed Tern
112/Caspian Tern
113/Whiskered Tern
114/Common Tern
115/Greater Crested Tern
116/Brown Boobook
117/Barn Owl [H]
118/Collared Owlet
119/Asian Barred Owlet
120/Spotted Owlet
121/Collared Scops-owl
122/Black-winged Kite
123/Oriental Honey Buzzard
124/Jerdon's Baza
125/Black Baza
126/Crested Serpent-eagle
127/Mountain Hawk-eagle
128/Eastern Marsh Harrier
129/Pied Harrier
130/Crested Goshawk
131/Shikra
132/Besra
133/Brahminy Kite
134/Black Kite
135/Rufous-winged Buzzard
136/Grey-faced Buzzard
137/Japanese Buzzard
138/Red-headed Trogon
139/Orange-breasted Trogon [H]
140/Great Hornbill
141/Oriental Pied Hornbill
142/Tickell's Brown Hornbill
143/Common Hoopoe
144/Blue-bearded Bee-eater
145/Asian Green Bee-eater
146/Chestnut-headed Bee-eater
147/Indochinese Roller
148/Oriental Dollarbird
149/Common Kingfisher
150/Pied Kingfisher
151/Stork-billed Kingfisher
152/White-breasted Kingfisher
153/Black-capped Kingfisher
154/Collared Kingfisher
155/Coppersmith Barbet
156/Blue-eared Barbet
157/Great Barbet
158/Green-eared Barbet
159/Lineated Barbet

160/Golden-throated Barbet
161/Blue-throated Barbet
162/Speckled Piculet
163/Greater Flameback
164/Common Flameback
165/Rufous Woodpecker
166/Greater Yellownape
167/Lesser Yellownape
168/Black-headed Woodpecker
169/Great Slaty Woodpecker [H]
170/White-bellied Woodpecker
171/Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker
172/Stripe-breasted Woodpecker
173/Freckle-breasted Woodpecker
174/Collared Falconet
175/Black-thighed Falconet
176/White-rumped Falcon
177/Common Kestrel
178/Vernal Hanging Parrot
179/Grey-headed Parakeet
180/Blossom-headed Parakeet
181/Blue Pitta
182/Long-tailed Broadbill
183/Dusky Broadbill [H]
184/Black and Red Broadbill
185/Silver-breasted Broadbill
186/Banded Broadbill
187/Black and Yellow Broadbill
188/Maroon Oriole
189/Black-hooded Oriole
190/Black-naped Oriole
191/Slender-billed Oriole
192/Blyth's Shrike-babbler
193/Black-eared Shrike-babbler
194/Clicking Shrike-babbler
195/White-bellied Erponis
196/Grey-chinned Minivet
197/Short-billed Minivet
198/Long-tailed Minivet
199/Scarlet Minivet
200/Rosy Minivet
201/Large Cuckoo-shrike
202/Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike
203/Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike
204/Ashy Woodswallow
205/Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike
206/Large Woodshrike
207/Common Iora
208/Great Iora
209/Sunda Pied Fantail
210/White-throated Fantail
211/Black Drongo
212/Ashy Drongo
213/Bronzed Drongo
214/Lesser Racquet-tailed Drongo

215/Greater Racquet-tailed Drongo
216/Hair-crested Drongo
217/Black-naped Monarch
218/Brown Shrike
219/Burmese Shrike
220/Long-tailed Shrike
221/Grey-backed Shrike
222/Racquet-tailed Treepie
223/Rufous Treepie
224/Grey Treepie
225/Red-billed Blue Magpie
226/Common Green Magpie
227/White-faced Jay
228/Eastern Jungle Crow
229/Yellow-bellied Fairy-fantail
230/Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher
231/Yellow-browed Tit
232/Sultan Tit
233/Japanese Tit
234/Yellow-cheeked Tit
235/Horsfield's Bushlark
236/Indochinese Bushlark
237/Oriental Sky Lark
238/Zitting Cisticola
239/Hill Prinia
240/Rufescent Prinia
241/Grey-breasted Prinia [H]
242/Yellow-bellied Prinia [H]
243/Plain Prinia
244/Common Tailorbird
245/Dark-necked Tailorbird
246/ Mountain Tailorbird [H]
247/Thick-billed Warbler
248/Black-browed Reed Warbler
249/Pygmy Wren-babbler
250/Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler
251/Baikal Bush-warbler
252/Asian House Martin
253/Sand Martin
254/Red-rumped Swallow
255/Striated Swallow
256/Wire-tailed Swallow
257/Barn Swallow
258/Puff-throated Bulbul
259/Ochraceous Bulbul
260/Grey-eyed Bulbul
261/Baker's Bulbul
262/Ashy Bulbul
263/Mountain Bulbul
264/Black Bulbul
265/Crested Finchbill
266/Striated Bulbul
267/Black-crested Bulbul
268/Red-whiskered Bulbul
269/Brown-breasted Bulbul

270/Sooty-headed Bulbul
271/Stripe-throated Bulbul
272/Flavescent Bulbul
273/Streak-eared Bulbul
274/Black-headed Bulbul
275/White-headed Bulbul
276/Chinese Leaf-warbler
277/Yellow-browed Warbler
278/Hume's Leaf-warbler
279/Pallas's Leaf-warbler
280/Buff-barred Warbler
281/Ashy-throated Warbler
282/Dusky Warbler
283/Buff-throated Warbler
284/Grey-crowned Warbler
285/Marten's Warbler [H]
286/Eastern Crowned Warbler
287/Chestnut-crowned Warbler
288/Greenish Warbler
289/Sulphur-breasted Warbler
290/Claudia's Leaf-warbler
291/Blyth's Leaf-warbler
292/Davison's Leaf-warbler
293/Slaty-bellied Tesia
294/Yellow-bellied Warbler
295/Aberrant Bush-warbler [H]
296/Black-throated Bush-tit
297/Yellow-eyed Babbler
298/Spot-breasted Parrotbill
299/Grey-headed Parrotbill
300/Whiskered Yuhina
301/Chestnut-flanked White-eye
302/Chinese White-eye
303/Oriental White-eye
304/White-browed Scimitar-babbler
305/Large Scimitar-babbler
306/Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler
307/Pin-striped Tit-babbler
308/Golden Babbler
309/Rufous-fronted Babbler
310/Buff-chested Babbler
311/Collared Babbler
312/Rufous-winged Fulvetta
313/Puff-throated Babbler
314/Abbot's Babbler
315/Eye-browed Wren-babbler [H]
316/Oriental Brown-cheeked Fulvetta
317/Yunnan Fulvetta
318/Himalayan Cutia
319/Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush
320/White-crested Laughingthrush
321/Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush
322/Silver-eared Laughingthrush
323/White-necked Laughingthrush
324/Dark-backed Sibia

325/Silver-eared Mesia
326/Rufous-backed Sibia
327/Scarlet-faced Liocichla
328/Blue-winged Minla
329/Chestnut-tailed Minla
330/Western Spectacled Barwing
331/Hume's Treecreeper
332/Chestnut-vented Nuthatch
333/Burmese Nuthatch
334/Velvet-fronted Nuthatch
335/Giant Nuthatch
336/Common Starling
337/Asian Pied Starling
338/Black-collared Starling
339/Chestnut-tailed Starling
340/Vinous-breasted Starling
341/Common Myna
342/Great Myna
343/Common Hill Myna
344/Orange-headed Thrush
345/Black-breasted Thrush
346/Eye-browed Thrush
347/Grey-sided Thrush
348/Oriental Magpie-robin
349/White-rumped Sharma
350/Asian Brown Flycatcher
351/Rufous-bellied Niltava
352/Small Niltava
353/Large Niltava
354/Blue and White Flycatcher
355/Verditer Flycatcher
356/White-gorgetted Flycatcher
357/Hill Blue Flycatcher
358/Chinese Blue Flycatcher
359/Hainan Blue Flycatcher
360/Himalayan Shortwing
361/Siberian Blue Robin
362/White-bellied Redstart
363/Siberian Rubythroat
364/White-tailed Blue Robin
365/Himalayan Bluetail
366/Slaty-backed Forktail
367/Black-backed Forktail
368/White-crowned Forktail
369/Blue Whistling-thrush
370/Slaty-backed Flycatcher
371/Slaty-blue Flycatcher
372/Snowy-browed Flycatcher
373/Pygmy Blue Flycatcher
374/Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher
375/Sapphire Flycatcher
376/Ultramarine Flycatcher
377/Little Pied Flycatcher
378/Taiga Flycatcher
379/White-capped Water Redstart

380/Plumbeous Water Redstart
381/Daurian Redstart
382/Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush
383/Blue Rock Thrush
384/Jerdon's Bushchat
385/Grey Bushchat
386/Pied Bushchat
387/Stejneger's Stonechat
388/Asian Fairy Bluebird
389/Orange-bellied Leafbird
390/Golden-fronted Leafbird
391/Blue-winged Leafbird
392/Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker
393/Plain Flowerpecker
394/Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker
395/Little Spiderhunter
396/Streaked Spiderhunter
397/Ruby-cheeked Sunbird
398/Purple Sunbird
399/Olive-backed Sunbird
400/Black-throated Sunbird
401/Doi Inthanon Sunbird
402/Mrs Gould's Sunbird
403/Crimson Sunbird
404/Asian Golden Weaver
405/Baya Weaver
406/Scaly-breasted Munia
407/House Sparrow
408/Plain-backed Sparrow
409/Eurasian Tree Sparrow
410/Olive-backed Pipit
411/Paddyfield Pipit
412/Grey Wagtail
413/Citrine Wagtail
414/Eastern Yellow Wagtail
415/White Wagtail
416/Brambling [H]
417/Spot-winged Grosbeak
418/Common Rosefinch
419/Crested Bunting
420/Yellow-breasted Bunting
421/Chestnut Bunting
422/Peregrine
423/Lesser Shortwing
424/Bay Woodpecker [H]
425/Indochinese Blue Flycatcher

OTHER WILDLIFE

Lyle's Flying Fox
Long-tailed Macaque
Stump-tailed Macaque
Dusky Langur
Pallas's Squirrel
Black Giant Squirrel
Grey-bellied Squirrel

Indochinese Striped Ground Squirrel
Burmese Striped Ground Squirrel
Northern Pygmy Tree Shrew
Javan Mongoose
Lesser Mouse Deer
Golden Tree Snake
Oriental Whip Snake

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