

Birding Snippets

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Marathon birding in NW Thailand Part 5 : Doi Lang and back to Chiang Mai



Spot-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis guttaticollis*
a local and uncommon resident of northwestern Thailand

Day 6
Late Afternoon
Weather: cloudy

We found a room in Tha Ton village and then made our way up Doi Lang. We drove past a checkpoint with guards and knew we had missed the turn and dutifully executed an U-turn. The kind guard informed us of the collapsed road at the end and then we were on our way up the narrow road.

It was getting late and the cloudy conditions didn't help. Many **Oriental Turtle-Doves** (lifer) were foraging on the fields. We saw a raptor perched at the far edge of the fields and found it to be a **Grey-faced Buzzard** (lifer). Another lifer from the fields was a single **White Wagtail**. Oriental Magpie Robin, Grey-backed Shrikes and Sooty-headed Bulbuls were also around.



Oriental Turtle-Dove
Streptopelia orientalis



Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus*

Farther on, we had 3 Spectacled Barwings and a **Crested Finchbill** (lifer) in flight. A number of birds were heard, they were: Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Blue-throated Barbet, Great Barbet, Collared Owlet and Large Hawk Cuckoo.



White Wagtail
Motacilla alba



Crested Finchbill *Spizixos canifrons*

On the way down, a few birds flew across the road. I looked at the nearest one and it was a **Red-tailed Laughingthrush** (lifer)!

Final Morning of Birding

Day 7
Morning
0530-1030
Weather: overcast

On the final morning of birding, I drove up Doi Lang pre-dawn and saw a **Collared Owlet** in the vehicle lights. 5 nightjars were flushed and the calls of the Large-tailed Nightjar was heard.

An attractive pair of **Spot-breasted Parrotbills** (lifer) were seen near the end of the road. They had given themselves away by the male's calls and they went on to make duets.

Spot-breasted Parrotbill
Paradoxornis guttaticollis
the spots on its breast are visible in this picture



White-browed Shrike-Babbler
Pteruthius flaviscapis
male

Better views of 2 Crested Finchbills were obtained as they remain perched. A pair of White-browed Shrike-Babblers were seen foraging in the trees. On the same tree, a **Rufous-backed Sibia** (lifer) made an appearance.

A **Large Cuckoo-Shrike** called as it flew over. Golden-throated Barbets seemed quite conspicuous here. Finally I recorded a **Great Barbet** (lifer) as it flew across the road and down the slope. A Streaked Spiderhunter also made its presence known.



Golden-throated Barbet
Megalaima franklinii
Above – normal
Right - with throat sac inflated while calling



The commoner birds present were: Silver-eared Laughingthrush, Green-billed Malkoha, Short-billed Minivet, Common Stonechat, Grey Bushchat and a male **Little Pied Flycatcher**.



Buff-throated Warbler
Phylloscopus subaffinis

A number of warblers provided some ID challenge. In the end, I had Buff-throated Warbler, **Greenish Warbler** (lifer), **Hume's Warbler** (lifer) and either White-tailed or Blyth's Leaf Warbler (too difficult to tell the 2 apart).



Two views of Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*



White-tailed/Blyth's Leaf Warbler
carrying nesting material



White-tailed/Blyth's Leaf Warbler

Familiar bird calls heard were from the Mountain Bamboo Partridge and White-browed Scimitar-Babbler. I also had a calling Red-headed Trogon which called at a much slower pace than its counterpart in Malaysia.

Road between Tha Ton and Doi Chiang Dao

Day 7
Midday
Weather: partly cloudy

An unmistakable male **Pied Harrier** (lifer) flew across the road as we drove south of Tha Ton. Another raptor seen was a **Black-shouldered Kite**. **Cattle Egrets** were also seen on the fields as were Common Mynas and **House Sparrows**.

Huai Hong Khrai Royal Project

Day 7 Just north of Chiang Mai, we made a detour east then northeast to see the Green Peafowl. The royal Project is signposted along the Chiang Mai-Chiang Rai road. Here, we saw at least 4 male **Green Peafowls** (lifer). This species has declined throughout much of its former range and these rare birds may have been attracted by the calls of the captive ones.
1600-1730
Weather: sunny

Green Peafowl
Pavo muticus
male



Asian Barred Owlet
Glaucidium cuculoides
in a classic gaze



Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*
feeding on identified prey

Chiang Mai City

Day 7 Before dark, we found our hotel in Chiang Mai and
Evening after a filling dinner, spent some time visiting the
Weather: good tourist areas – namely the night market.

The next morning, we caught our flight back home. In our marathon birding, we covered 7 locations in just 7 days! Whew!