

Bird-watching with Yong Ding Li at Bukit Batok Nature Park

By Wing Chong

31 NSS members joined this walk, on the Sunday morning of 28th, March 2010.

After a brief introduction of the park by Ding Li, we proceeded walking towards the lake, where calls of the Straw-headed Bulbul were heard. Along the way, some monkeys were seen foraging among the trees. Near the exercise area, 5 uncommon **Red-eyed Bulbuls** showed up on a Wild Cinnamon tree. The birds were busy foraging for food, making it challenging for some of us to have a good view of them.

We stayed for quite a while at the edge of the lake where there were waves of excitement, as birds come and gone. A group of **Straw-headed Bulbuls** were nearby. Their melodious songs filled the air and injected much vibrant into the morning. A pair of **Pink-necked Green Pigeons** sat quietly on top of a bare tree, perhaps also enjoying the melodious song of the Straw-headed Bulbuls. A pair of **Banded Woodpeckers** was seen busy checking out a hole on the other side of the bare tree. A few **Blue-throated Bee-eaters** used the bare tree as their launching point for hunting. They would suddenly shot into the air, acrobatically grab an insect and return to the exact point where it took-off. This routine was repeated many times as we watched. A while later, a pair of **Black-naped Orioles** perched briefly to show-off their bright yellow feathers.

A **Laced-woodpecker** greeted us on the way as we proceed towards the 1st look-out point. While we were observing a **Asian Brown Flycatcher** and listening to Ding Li's comment about the bird, a male **Purple-throated Sunbird** suddenly showed up to rob our attention. This little bird, with luminous purple feathers, bathed with the droplets of dew collected on Simpoh Ayer leaves. The thump-sized little bird flew off after about 1 minute of brilliant display. What a beauty, many said! On an adjacent tree, a **Greater-racket-tailed Drongo** was seen with a huge grasshopper on its beak. It took the bird quite a while to finish off the mega breakfast.

At the 1st look-out point, a handsome male **Pink-necked Green Pigeon** sat quietly near us. He seemed to have accustomed to presence of people in the park and ignored us totally. Many members were seen taking photographs of this handsome bird while Andrew Chow sat down, pulled out his painting materials and started doing a on-the-spot portrait painting of the bird. We were still admiring the Green Pigeon when a **White-bellied Fish-eagle** grabbed our attention towards the sky. Ding Li was quick to point to us the small group of un-common **Grey-rumped Tree-swifts** in the sky. The male **Banded-woodpecker** that we spotted earlier was seen now working hard on a hole. We smelt romance in the air! A persistently calling **Drongo-cuckoo** were seen on a tall Albizia tree, on the other side of the lake. That was a lifer to many members though it was a bit too far for a good look of the bird.

We proceed to the 2nd look-out point where we spotted a pair of newly fledged **Pink-neck Green Pigeon** on a Blue Mahang tree. A few **Olive-winged Bulbuls** were seen actively foraging on the tree. We were unable to locate the **Asian Fairy Bluebird** that we heard calling across the lake. But we were happy with the presence of a male **Scarlet-**

backed Flower-pecker at our side of the lake. He foraged briefly on nearby tree and left with its signature 'clicking' calls.

We continued our walk to the car-park areas around the ex-Japanese shrine and later to the tranquil Hume Height area.

Under a huge Rain-tree Ding Li gave us some information on local birds and issues relating to environment conservation. Here we heard the calls of **Rufous-tailed Tailorbird** and **Artic Warblers**.

We re-traced our way back to the lake area where we ended the trip officially.

All in all, it was a beautiful morning, a good walk, with good varieties of birds. The trip had been both informative and educational one.

Birds sighted:

Babbler: Thin-striped
Barbet: Lineated
Bee-eater: Blue-throated
Bulbul: Olive-winged, Red-eyed, Straw-headed and Yellow-vented
Corella: Tanimbar
Cuckoo: Asian Drongo
Drongo: Greater Racket-tailed
Fish-eagle: White-bellied
Flowerpecker: Scarlet-backed
Flycatcher: Asian Brown
Green Pigeon: Pink-necked
Kingfisher: Collared and White-throated
Laughingthrush: White-crested
Myna: White-vented
Oriole: Black-naped
Starling: Asian-glossy
Sunbird: Crimson, Olive-backed and Purple-throated
Swallow: Pacific
Tailorbird: Common and Dark-necked
Tree-swift: Gray-rumped
Woodpecker: Banded and Laced

Birds heard but not sighted:

Blue-bird: Asian Fairy
Fantail: Pied
Tailorbird: Rufous-tailed
Warbler: Artic

