

Birding Snippets

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Birding Borneo Part 2 : Poring Hot Springs - Lowland RainForest

A half day's journey from the Kinabatangan brought us to Poring Hot Springs. It is located at the foothills of Mount Kinabalu National Park, around 500m in elevation and some fifteen minutes from Ranau town.

Map of Sabah,
located at the northern
part of the island of
Borneo.

The places visited are
numbered in sequence.



Map by Tan Gim Cheong

Birding Before Nightfall

We arrived at 5.30pm. Knowing that we have less than an hour of daylight available, we plonked our bags into the hostel and ventured out. Right outside the hostel we encountered small flocks of the endemic **Dusky Munia** – what? A lifer at the doorstep! The local race of the **Oriental Magpie Robin** (with all black belly) was also seen nearby.



Dusky Munia
Lonchura fuscans
(endemic)



**Juvenile
Banded Broadbill**
Eurylaimus javanicus

Crossing the suspension bridge over the river, we moved on to the hot springs area, we saw a juvenile **Banded Broadbill** perching quietly on a tree. Below that tree, a **Little Spiderhunter** tended to its fledgling, perched on a low bush. The calls of the Blue-eared and Gold-whiskered Barbets were heard, as with most barbets, they were not seen. Before darkness fell, more Dusky Munias were encountered and it appeared that they might actually roost among the trees at the hot springs.



Juvenile Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*

The Langanan Trail

Day 4
(Morning)
Weather: good

Early the next morning we hit the 3km+ Langanan Trail which leads to where else but the Langanan Waterfall. It was a quiet morning as we passed through the hot springs and the canopy walkway to get to the start of the trail. After passing the Kipungit Waterfall, the trail climbs steeply upwards. Such punishing terrain together with being under enclosed forest makes for really tough birding, especially when compared to the easy birding sitting on a boat on the Kinabatangan! As a result, some of us could not help but to dub this place "boring poring"!

The steep terrain also meant that we were at mid to canopy level along some stretches of the trail and that allowed us to view a mixed feeding flock as they moved slowly through a patch of flowering trees. Even this was not easy as the bulk of the

action happened behind a row of trees and we had to look between the gaps!

Lesser Green Leafbird
Chloropsis cyanopogon
female



Asian Fairy Bluebirds were evident. The others sighted a Chestnut-backed Scimitar-Babbler, unfortunately, I did not manage to locate the bird among the thick foliage. A **Bornean Spiderhunter** became the next lifer for me, as well as a non-descript **Brown Fulvetta**. A pair of **Lesser Green Leafbirds** decided to forage right above us.

Brown Fulvetta
Alcippe brunneicauda



Moving on, the calls of the Gold-whiskered and Blue-eared Barbets accompanied us once again. **Ashy Drongo** and **Raffles' Malkoha** were then sighted. Then, on a bamboo pole right across the

trail was my next lifer - a diminutive **Rufous Piculet**, right in the middle of the trail, at eye level.

Finally, we arrived at the 2.8km spot, a known site for the Blue-banded Pitta. We searched among the bamboo groves in vain as the bird proved elusive, nary a call was heard.

Buff-rumped Woodpecker
Meiglyptes tristis



On the way back, near the Canopy Walkway, a flock of 5 **Buff-rumped Woodpeckers** and a few Raffles' Malkoha were seen foraging at mid canopy. At the hot springs, **Brown-throated Sunbirds** and Little Spiderhunters flitted from flower to flower.

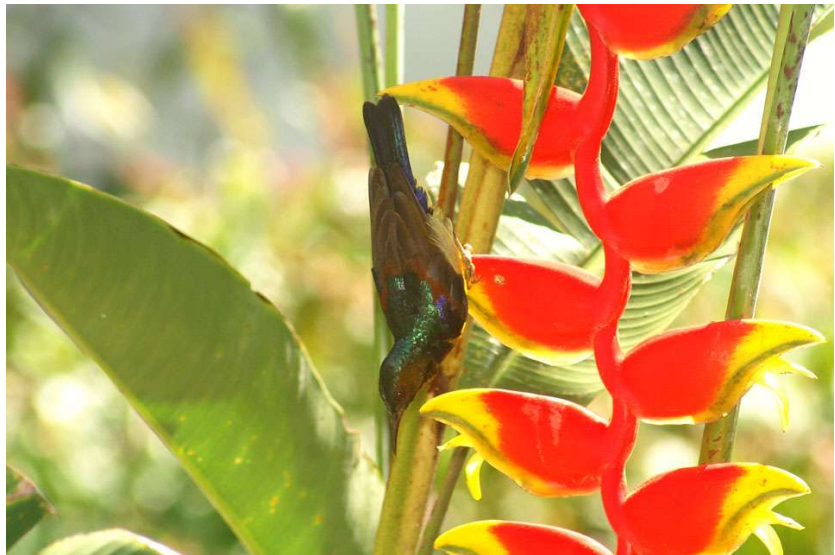
Oriental Magpie Robin
Copsychus saularis
race *plutos* with black belly





Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Passer montanus
at the hostel

Brown-throated Sunbird
Anthreptes malacensis
on a **Heliconia**



Near the hostel, 2 Oriental Magpie Robins (the race with black bellies) were sighted, again. However, they were very shy and skittish, maybe they are still trapped for the caged bird trade.

A **Dark-throated Oriole**, an **Orange-bellied Flowerpecker** and the human loving **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** rounded our list for Poring.

After a relaxed lunch, we moved on to our next destination...