



# SINGAPORE AVIFAUNA

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Little Tern at Changi Cove on 27 August 2009 by Lee Tiah Khee



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## Bird Report

AUGUST 2009

By Andrew Chow and Lim Kim Seng

### Singapore Highlights



**Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus* at SBWR on 29/8 by Harry Ong

This month saw the return of the usual complement of migrant shorebirds to the coasts of Singapore with nine species present. Most surprising of this lot was a single **Asian Dowitcher** that stayed just one day but was rare enough to make bird of the month! Presumably, it was on passage to Sumatra. The other new shorebirds for the winter included **Common Greenshank**, **Curlew Sandpiper** and **Pacific Golden Plover**. Other migrants detected for the first time this winter included **Common Kingfisher** at Neo Tiew Road on 31<sup>st</sup>, **White-winged Tern** at Kranji Marsh on 11<sup>th</sup>, **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** at Jurong Island on 25<sup>th</sup> and **Asian Brown Flycatcher** at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. A **Blue-winged Pitta** in the Kranji area on 17<sup>th</sup> continues to mystify local birdwatchers as to its actual status.

There were also some notable residents recorded during this period. It was good to note the continued presence of **Oriental Pied Hornbills** in the Changi area and good numbers of **Malaysian Plover** at Changi Cove and **Red-wattled Lapwing** in the Kranji area. Noteworthy too was the nest records of five resident species including only the second breeding record of **Common Emerald Dove** for Singapore.

### Johor Highlights

The only records of note were a record number (up to 20) of **Crested Partridge** and a male **Jambu Fruit Dove** at Panti Forest Reserve on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **Summary**

This report covers noteworthy bird sightings in August 2009 for Singapore and the surrounding region. In general, the report will include but are not limited to the following categories: rarities, breeding or nesting records, arrival and departure dates for migratory species, new locality records, escapees and unusual behaviour.

In addition, contributors are also advised to be as precise as possible concerning records. Please remember to include details such as how many birds were seen, the plumage, sex and age of the birds, the type of habitat in which they were observed, the food they were eating (if possible, identify the plant or animal), the weather encountered (what was the wind direction, tide conditions, etc.). Although it is not necessary to have such details for all record submissions, it is a good habit to cultivate and is normally required for very rare or unusual species.

Please send all your records of interest to Lim Kim Seng @ [ibisbill@yahoo.com](mailto:ibisbill@yahoo.com) or Lim Kim Chuah @ [pittalover@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:pittalover@yahoo.com.sg) or Yong Ding Li at [zoothera@yahoo.com](mailto:zoothera@yahoo.com). Alternatively you can also post your sightings at the NSS Bird Group website at <http://wildbirdsingapore.nss.org.sg> Please send your records no later than one week after the end of every month. Your contributions will be greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

Unless stated otherwise, nomenclature and systematic follow K.S. Lim's (2007) "Pocket Checklist of the birds of the Republic of Singapore (Second Edition)", K.S. Lim & K.C. Lim's (1999) "Pocket checklist of the birds of Johor, Peninsular Malaysia" for Johor, and B.L. Monroe Jr. & C.G. Sibley's (1993) "A World Checklist of Birds " for the rest of the region.

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Doreen Ang (DA), Jimmy Chew (JC), Alfred Chia (AC), Willie Foo (WF), Gerard Francis (GeF), Ho Hua Chew (HHC), Kenneth Kee (KK), Raj Krishnan (RK), Danny Lau (DL), Ben Lee (BL), Lee Tiah Khee (LTK), Lim Kim Chuah (LKC), Lim Kim Seng (LKS), Lim Kim Keang (LKK), Harry Ong (HaO), Ulf Remahl (UR), Angelia Teng (AT), Wing Chong (WC), Wong Chung Cheong (WCC), Felix Wong (FW), and Yong Ding Li (YDL), as well as all those who contributed by posting their sightings in the wildbirdsingapore E-group.

In addition, we would like to thank Danny Lau, Raj Krishnan Ben Lee, Lee Tiah Khee, Harry Ong and Wing Chong for allowing us to use their photos in this report.

## **Abbreviations Used:**

SBWR Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

## SINGAPORE

**RUFOUS WOODPECKER** *Celeus brachyurus*

1 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK).

**COPPERSMITH BARBET** *Megalaima haemacephala*

1 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK).

**ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL** *Anthracoceros albirostris*

4 seen at Changi Village and 8 at Pulau Ubin on 15/8 (WCC).

**COMMON KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

1 seen at Bollywood area on 31/8 (FW).

**RUSTY-BREASTED CUCKOO** *Cacomantis sepulcralis*

1 heard at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK).

**LONG-TAILED PARAKEET** *Psittacula longicauda*

4 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK).

**COMMON EMERALD DOVE** *Chalcophaps indica*

1 seen at Pulau Ubin on 15/8 (WCC). 1 seen feeding at Hume Avenue on 28/9 (UR).

**RED-LEGGED CRAKE** *Rallina fasciata*

1 heard at Simpang Grassland on 26/8 and another heard on many occasions since July at King's Avenue (MH).

**PURPLE SWAMPHEN** *Porphyrio porphyrio*

1 seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 1/8 (WCC). 1 seen at Bollywood area on 31/8 (FW).

**COMMON MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

1 seen at Bollywood area on 31/8 (FW).

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

1 seen at SBWR on 16/8 (BL). Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL).

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

Several seen at SBWR on 16/8 (BL). 6 seen with 1 in breeding plumage at SBWR on 10/8 (WCC). Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL).

**COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

7 seen at SBWR on 1/8 (AT/RK). 10 seen at SBWR on 10/8 (WCC). Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL).

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Tringa hypoleucos*

1 seen at SBWR on 1/8 (AT/RK). 1 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). A few seen at SBWR on 16/8 (BL).

**ASIAN DOWITCHER** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

1 seen at SBWR on 29/8, feeding together with a flock of Common Redshanks *Tringa totanus* (HaO).

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL).

**PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis fulva*

Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL).

**MALAYSIAN PLOVER** *Charadrius peronii*

6 seen at Changi Cove on 27/8 (LTK).



**Malaysian Plover** *Charadrius peronii* at Changi Cove on 27/8 by Lee Tiah Khee

**LESSER SAND PLOVER** *Charadrius mongolus*

1 seen at SBWR on 16/8 (BL). Some seen at SBWR on 23/8 (DL). 20 seen at Changi Cove on 27/8 (LTK).



**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* at SBWR on 9/8 by Ben Lee

**RED-WATTLED LAPWING** *Vanellus indicus*

About 5 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). 1 pair seen at Sungei Gedong Camp on 26/8 (YDL).

**LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons*

A flock of 25 seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 1/8, at the reservoir (WCC). 10 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). 6 seen at Changi Cove on 27/8 (LTK).

**WHITE-WINGED TERN** *Chlidonias hybridus*

1 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK).

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

1 seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 1/8, perched at BBC Transmission Tower (WCC).

**CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE** *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

1 heard and seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 1/8, along the wooded area (WCC). 1 heard at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). 1 dark morph seen at Sungei Gedong Camp on 26/8 (YDL).

**LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

A few seen at SBWR on 10/8 (WCC) and on 16/8 (BL).

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

1 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). 2 seen in flight at Pulau Ubin on 15/8 (WCC).

**PURPLE HERON** *Ardea purpurea*

3 seen at Kranji Marsh on 11/8 (HHC/KK). 1 seen at Sungei Gedong Camp on 27/8 (YDL).

**BLUE-WINGED PITTA** *Pitta moluccensis*

1 photographed at Kranji Nature Trail on 17/8 (KK) confirms its continued presence at this site.

**ASIAN PARADISE FLYCATCHER** *Terpsiphone paradisi*

1 seen at Jurong Island on 25/8 (LKC).

**ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa dauurica*

1 seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 22/8 (LKC).

**ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** *Copsychus saularis*

2 seen at Bollywood area on 31/8 (FW).

**WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA** *Copsychus malabaricus*

3 seen at Pulau Ubin on 15/8 (WCC).

**STRAW-HEADED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*

4 seen and 6 heard at Pulau Ubin on 15/8 (WCC). 2 seen on 26/8 and 1 heard on 27/8 at Sungei Gedong Camp (YDL).

**RED-WHISKERED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus jocosus*

1 seen at Woodlands Street 81 on 25/8 (LKS).

**ESCAPEES**

**RED JUNGLEFOWL**

*Gallus gallus*

1 heard at Sungei Gedong Camp on 26/8 (YDL).

### **RED-WINGED STARLING**

*Onychognathus morio*

1 seen at Jurong Lake area on 16/8 (WC). This species is described in page 490 of "The Avifauna of Singapore" as an escapee to the former Tang Dynasty Village area since c2007. So far, it seems to be just one bird hanging around this site and Jurong Lake.



**Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio* at Jurong Lake area on 16/8 by Wing Chong

### **BREEDING / NESTING REPORTS**

**PLAINTIVE CUCKOO** *Cacomantis merulinus*

1 juvenile seen and photographed at Chinese Garden on 31/8 (LTK).



**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus* at Chinese Garden on 31/8 by Lee Tiah Khee



**ASIAN DRONGO CUCKOO** *Surniculus lugubris*

A juvenile seen and photographed at Senapang Link on 22/8 (RK)



**Asian Drongo Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris* at Senapang Link on 22/8 by Raj Krishnan

**COMMON EMERALD DOVE** *Chalcophaps indica*

A juvenile seen and photographed at Kranji Nature Trail on 9/8 (DL) is a rare breeding record for this elusive resident.



Juvenile **Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* at Kranji Nature Trail on 9/8 by Danny Lau

**BRAHMINY KITE** *Haliastur indus*

A flock of 2 adults and at least 4 juveniles seen at Neo Tiew Lane 2 on 1/8, opposite the pond (WCC).

**YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus goiavier*

Two chicks was hatched on 7 Aug at a nest at Toh Tuck Road report in SINAV Vol 23 No 7. 1 of the chick fledged on 19/8 (DA). The adults continue to feed the remaining chick. Food include praying mantis, green and brown grasshoppers, spider, red cherries, grub, orange petals and many other unidentified fruit and insects.

**SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA** *Lonchura punctulata*

A nest seen at Pulau Ubin on 22/8, about 5m up a tree (GeF/HHC).

## JOHOR

**CRESTED PARTRIDGE** *Rollulus rouloul*

18 to 20 Seen at Bunker Track in Panti Forest Reserve (JC/AC/WF/LKK/WCC). For details, check out the article on Page 10.

**JAMBU FRUIT DOVE** *Ptilinopus jambu*

A male at Bunker Track, Panti Forest Reserve, on 23/8 (JC/AC/WF/LKK/WCC).

## **An encounter with families of Crested Partridges *Rollulus rouloul***

By Alfred Chia

On 23 August 2009, Kim Keang, Chung Cheong, Jimmy Chew, Willie Foo and I had the rare honour of witnessing at Bunker Track of Panti Reserve an amazing flock of at least 18 to 20 Crested Partridges. This consisted of a mixed-sex and age group of at least 4 males, equal number of, if not more, females and juveniles.

They were observed at a recently cut trail just after the popularly-known 5km stream. We were observing then from the main Bunker Track less than 20 metres away. The partridges were seen at about 8.05am, when the first flock came through the foliage and onto the narrow trail. They then disappeared as quickly into the opposite-side foliage. No calls were heard.

Each group consisted of between 4 birds to 6 birds. Based on this observation, we would like to believe this to be a party of 4 families. There was an interval of approximately between 8 to 15 seconds between groups. Male inevitably led each group, with the female and young birds following closely behind. Some walked across the narrow track while others scampered across. There was a stream very near to where the partridges appeared from within the foliage. Were they feeding near there prior to moving off? Or were they roosting nearby?

Our observation of this number of *Rollulus rouloul* might be the highest ever recorded of this species as they usually occur “singly or in pairs, but also frequently in mixed-sex and age groups up to 15” (S. Madge, 2002) and “occurs singly, in monogamous breeding-pairs, and family and larger parties [up to 13 birds on record: Davison 1986a] (D. Wells, 1999). A. Jeyarajasingam (1999) also states “moves about in large coveys of up to fifteen” while J. MacKinnon (1993) says it “associates in parties of 5-15”.

We hoped this sighting is an indication that *R. rouloul* is doing well in the fragmented forest habitat that is Panti. On the other hand, it can mean too that continued destruction and fragmentation of this forest reserve have begun to “push out” many of these species from within the deep of the forest to the edge. We can only hope that it is the former.

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## Birding Kerinci

By Lim Kim Seng



View of Kerinci from Kersik Tua by Lim Kim Seng

### Introduction

Birding Kerinci Seblat National Park, Sumatra's highest mountain and a magnet for montane endemics, had been my dream for a long time. When the opportunity came to do it with two of my birding friends, Doreen Ang and Jimmy Chew, I jumped on it.

### Birding Highlights

The intent of our six-day trip to Sumatra was to see as many birds as possible, and in particular localized species. I had four objectives. First, I wanted to see all the Sumatran endemics possible on the mountain. Current taxonomic changes have raised that from 10 to the current 20. Second, I wanted to see the Greater Sunda/Sunda endemics such as Sunda Minivet that I have missed elsewhere. Third, I wanted to see the extralimital species such as Mountain White-eye. Consulting Wheatley's "Where to Watch Birds in Asia" and numerous trip reports on Sumatra in *Surfbirds*, I estimated a yield of between 10 and 27 species.

In total, we recorded 101 species (only one heard only – Brown Hawk-owl) during this trip, including 18 (16 seen) of 20 Sumatran endemics. See below for full checklist.

My overall impression of Sumatran montane avifauna based on this short visit is of low diversity and very low density, somewhat offset by the relatively high endemism (low compared to Philippines). The species total for a morning's birding is below that for Singapore forest birding and far below Malaysian forest birding. The forest was often quiet for long periods until a mixed flock encounter. Ground birds were scarce. Rain or the lack of rain also seemed to affect montane Sumatran rainforest bird diversity. In contrast, the submontane forests at Tapan Road were more productive with an average of above 40 species in a full day compared to the summit trail which averaged around 20 to 30 species.

A large proportion of the Sumatran endemics were shy or in low densities and difficult to see. The Shiny Whistling Thrush was the exception being seen daily on the summit trail. The others were tough and required some dedicated searching. The endemics were far easier at the Tapan Road, where all but two of the known species were seen on the first day.



Shiny Whistling Thrush *Myiophoneus melanurus* at the summit trail by Lim Kim Chuah

## **Birding Log**

### Day One (Aug 4, 2009)

We arrived on TR224 landing at Padang airport at 13h30 local time (Sumatra is an hour behind Singapore). It took us about 30 minutes to clear customs, thanks to heightened

security caused by the recent Jakarta hotel bombings. We met our guide, Pak Subandi, who was already waiting at outside the arrival lounge, with his son (driver) and daughter. At 14h00, we left in a minivan for our destination, Subandi's Homestay at Kersik Tua (also spelled as Keresik Tua).

The drive to Kersik Tua took about six hours, including a short stop for a *nasi padang* lunch en-route. After Padang, the road climbs up the mountain road. Traffic is heavy with big trucks lumbering with their load and occupying the narrow two-laned mountain highway.

We were greeted by Subandi's wife and quickly settled into our rooms. Dinner (traditional *nasi padang*) was served and quickly consumed. At 22h00 local time, we retired to our rooms, to await the start of our Sumatran montane birding.

#### Day Two (Aug 5, 2009)

We were up at 05h30 for our first full day at Kerinci. After finishing our breakfast, we were ferried by jeep to our starting point at the end of the vegetable farm by 06h30. It saved us from a tortuous walk of 5 km of tea plantation and vegetable farms where the only birds were the ubiquitous Long-tailed Shrike and the occasional Hill Prinia.

Subandi took us past the TSNP signage and the remains of its main entrance building to the forest edge. The forest was full of bird calls when we entered the tall montane forest with a well developed understorey. Familiar birds such as Grey-throated and Golden Babblers, White-throated Fantail, Mountain Tailorbird and Mountain Leaf Warbler were common in the bird waves encountered as well as the occasional Sunda Warbler, a Greater Sunda endemic, and a suite of flycatchers - Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Little Pied Flycatcher and White-browed Flycatcher.

It did not take long for us to encounter our first Sumatran endemic, a Shiny Whistling Thrush perched low on a liana. It took off before we could see it well although the pale lores were discernible. We were to see it well later in the day, and on the summit trail daily.

At 09h30 we were attracted by a small commotion high up in the canopy. Small birds were behaving very agitatedly around a horizontal branch. Looking up, we saw a small round bird ignoring the mock attacks of Mountain Leaf Warblers, Grey-headed Canary-flycatchers and a male Temminck's Sunbird. It was a Sumatran Owlet, recently split from the mainland Asian Collared Owlet, on account of its distinct vocalisation. Jimmy got decent shots as the owlet ignored the small birds and perched there for a full ten minutes before flying towards us with the birds in hot pursuit. We did not find the owlet again.

Later that morning, we reached the Base Camp and took a break. The birds were quiet except for the tirelessly calling Black-browed Barbet. We put down our packs and went off an obscure trail Subandi motioned to us to follow him as he tried to lure out the endemic Red-billed Partridge with tape. Sure enough, a bird soon appeared in front of a

tree for seconds before walking away. Its brilliant red bill and eye-ring were distinctive. However, only I got a view of it.



Red-billed Partridge *Arborophila rubrirostris* at the summit trail by Lim Kim Chuah

After the partridge episode, we headed for Air Minum where we had our lunch, and then we climbed higher. Not far from this camp-site, we found two Sumatran Trogons perched close together, our third endemic of the day. Birdlife by this time was low, and we continued our ascent to the clearing before Camp Cochoa. About 200 metres past Air Minum, we got our fourth endemic of the day in somewhat ridiculous situation. The trail was steep and we were resting on the trail to catch our breaths when I accidentally flushed a bird from its untidy nest just beside me. It did not come back. We only knew on the way down and after searching the forest floor in the evening that it was a Rusty-breasted Wren-babbler, the most melodious bird on the summit trail. It was a bird heavily marked with streaking all over its body. Jimmy managed to photograph the bird sitting on its nest when we were at the Cochoa clearing.

Another heart-stopping moment happened just before the clearing when we heard the Sumatran Cochoa call for a few minutes. Despite searching all the trees until our necks ached, we failed to it. We returned to the homestay at 18h30.

We finished our first day with 4 Sumatran endemics and a day total of 31 species. The weather throughout was fair with just a few clouds.

Day Three (Aug 6, 2009)

We were at the forest edge by 07h00 for our second day at the summit trail. A Crested Honey Buzzard provided some spectacle before we started our forest walk. Just 100 metres into the trail, I flushed a dark medium-sized bird which hopped three times before flying into the forest. Despite hunting for it, we never saw it again. I suspected that it was a Schneider's Pitta but could also not rule out Shiny Whistling Thrush. Subandi also seemed to think it was the pitta as there was only some rustling but no calls.

Scrutinising the mixed flocks occupied most of our time until we reached Base Camp and Air Minum. It paid dividends with more of the same species but also flocks of Grey-chinned and Sunda Minivets, an endemic of Java and Sumatra, accompanied by the abundant White-throated Fantail and pretty Blue Nuthatches. The latter species was also seen again in a pure flock of about 20 birds above Air Minum. Another bird of interest was the Mountain White-eye, a nondescript white of montane forests of Indonesia and the Philippines. An attempt to see Long-billed or Sumatran Wren-babbler ended in failure as it did not respond at all.

After lunch, we ascended the trail all the way to Camp Cochoa, where a tame Three-striped Ground Squirrel entertained us by trying to steal our biscuits but the hoped-for Sumatran Cochoa failed to show. Nevertheless, we were thrilled by close-up looks at a Lesser Shortwing with a spotty young. Subandi tried again for Red-billed Partridge for Doreen near the camp and they emerge an hour later with a brief sighting of two birds.

The descent was uneventful. In the late evening we waited at Base Camp for darkness to fall. Unfortunately, the full moon and clear skies meant nocturnal activity was low. We detected a calling Barred Eagle Owl and a distant Short-tailed Frogmouth but did not connect with either bird. The hoped-for Rajah Scops Owl, an endemic of Borneo and Sumatra did not call at all.

We returned to the homestay at 7.30 pm and after a light dinner, retired for the day. We finished our day with 30 species and no endemics.

Day Four (Aug 7, 2009)

We awoke at 04h30 and left the homestay on a minivan for the Tapan Road by 05h00. It was a two-hour drive from Kersik Tua to the Tapan Road, and we mostly slept through the journey. At 07h10, we were awoken by Subandi. We had arrived at the Bukit Tapan pass, within TSNP. It was a fine cloudy morning and the first birds to greet us were a family of 4 Black-thighed Falconets. There was a fine vista of forested valleys and we were entertained by the numerous Barred Cuckoo Doves and a fly-by Helmeted Hornbill, which also gave its signature maniacal laughter throughout the morning. Eventually, we made our contact with our first Sumatran endemic, Sumatran Treepie. They came in flocks amidst loud chattering, looking for fruits. Other birds of interest included three Sumatran Green Pigeons, an endemic of Sumatra and Java, Fire-tufted Barbet, Ashy Drongo, Hill Prinia, Temminck's Sunbird and Verditer Flycatcher. We also got good looks at Mountain White-eyes.



After this, we descended to another spot lower down and soon saw more endemics. The *Macaranga* trees were fruiting and attracted flocks of Cream-striped Bulbuls, an attractive Streaked Bulbul look-alike and Blue-masked Leafbird, a small leafbird with blue on its face. After this spectacle, we were treated to a fly-over by a Black Eagle and then a Rufous-bellied Eagle.

We had lunch at a scenic spot before venturing to one of Subandi's stakeouts for Graceful Pitta. It took about an hour of clambering a slippery hill slope before we all eventually had good views of a bird that circled us repeatedly! Even Jimmy got in some shots.

Descending further, we eventually got to the first of three bridges where we encountered two more Sumatran endemics, a few Sumatran Leafbirds and a group of Spot-necked Bulbuls.

The weather after this was wet and it rained intermittently. We turned back after the Second Bridge after it rained. On the way back, we were delighted by sightings of a Sumatran Peacock-pheasant on the road, past the First Bridge, and a Yellow-throated Marten nearer Sungei Penuh.

What a day! We ended the day with 42 species including 7 Sumatran endemics and one endemic to Sumatra and Java. We got back to the homestay at 19h00.



Cream-striped Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogrammicus* at Tapan Road by Lim Kim Chuah

Day Five (Aug 8, 2009)

At 07h00 we were already at the start of the summit trail, ready to hunt down the remaining endemics. A Shiny Whistling Thrush offered us some good views but a Sumatran Wren-babbler gave us the run-around for over two hours but remained elusive. Only two glimpses! Disappointed, we climbed until Air Minum, where we had our lunch. There was little activity of interest.

We descended to Base Camp by the right hand trail and encountered a tame Shiny Whistling Thrush, which posed obligingly for Jimmy, and an even tamer Sunda Blue Robin.

We arrived at Base Camp at 15h00 and duly had our late afternoon tea. We rested here for a long time during which Subandi disappeared into the trails, looking for our much wanted pitta and pheasant. At 16h30, he reappeared and said that he had just seen a pair of Salvadori's Pheasants not far from Base Camp. Excitedly we followed him for about 300 metres and then waited while he stalked the birds. They were not cooperative and disappeared into the forest without any of us getting a glimpse. At length, Subandi said he was going to flush the birds in our direction and told us to wait behind a big tree. About half an hour later, we heard a big commotion as a bird flew up to a tree above us. Apparently, it was spooked not by Subandi but by a Golden Cat which appeared on the trail, as surprised to see Jimmy (the rest of us were unsighted) as Jimmy was to see it! The bird was a female Salvadori's Pheasant, and as it perched unsteadily in the tree, we could see all its details from the bright red eye patch to its rufous tail. Eventually, after about half an hour, it flew off into the forest. Wow!

Night fell shortly after and as it was cloudy, we waited at the forest edge, for the birds to call. The Salvadori's Nightjar didn't call at all but Subandi detected a frogmouth calling from the riverbed. After stumbling around in darkness for over an hour, we were triumphantly looking a Short-tailed Frogmouth perched on a small tree in a slope. We had it in view for about ten minutes before it flew off when Subandi's torch drifted off it.

So, Day five ended with a list of 24 species including two new endemics. Now for the pitta and cochoa!

Day Six (Aug 9, 2009)

We were at the forest edge at 7h10 and quickly ascended to the Base Camp. We heard the Sumatran Wren-babbler but it remained elusive. At 08h30, Subandi heard a strange call and immediately said that a Schneider's Pitta was close. Doreen and I followed Subandi to a narrow trail on the right hand side of Base Camp. Jimmy did not follow us as he was still tired after the previous day's exertions. We waited at a long log and kept quiet. After about five minutes, a male Schneider's Pitta leapt into view. I was excited and quickly raised my binoculars. The pitta saw me and quickly turned around and disappeared. Ten minutes passed without any sighting prompting Subandi to play its usual song. About five minutes later, the pitta replied and shortly after, appeared on the left hand side of the trail in front of us. It froze for a split second before jumping across. Wow! Even though the

views were brief, I had gotten front, back and side views of the mystical Schneider's Pitta at long last!

In the afternoon, we ascended to the Burnt-out Tree in a last ditch attempt to see the Cochoa, leaving Jimmy at the Base Camp. It took over about two hours to reach the Burnt-out Tree. We rested here for almost two hours before descending as there was still no sign of the Cochoa. On the way down, we saw once again the Rusty-breasted Wren-babbler at its nest, re-united with Jimmy at base camp before rushing down to the forest edge to await our transport. It was already 16h00.

At the homestay we took our lunch and then took the transport to the Letter W Waterfall. However, it was 18h00 when we got to the Waterfall. It was gloomy and overcast when we arrived. The waterfall was magnificent but there were no Chestnut-winged Whistling Thrush on the grounds where they should be. There also were no Waterfall Swifts, only Glossy Swiftlets. Disappointed, we left the place at 19h30.

Back at the homestay, we had our dinner of durians before returning to the forest edge at 20h30. However, it was quiet save a single hoot from a Barred Eagle Owl and a distant calling Mountain Scops-owl. The Rajah Scops Owl didn't call at all. To make things worse, it rained. Eventually, we retired at 22h30.

#### Day Seven (Aug 10, 2009)

Our last day was spent on the Tapan Road. We left our homestay at 05h00 and promptly arrived at the Tapan Road's First Bridge by 7h10. Soon after we arrived, we hit some bird activity despite the almost incessant rain. Blue-masked Leafbird, Mountain White-eye and a Temminck's Sunbird were active despite the wet weather. Below the bridge, we found a Blue Whistling Thrush. Then, Subandi and I found a wave that included Sumatran Trogon, Sunda Cuckoo-shrike, Black Laughingthrush, Spot-necked Bulbul, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike and Verditer Flycatcher.

After a wet breakfast, we walked down to the second bridge. Activity was low but we found the endemic bulbuls and leafbirds to be pretty common and just before we arrived at the Second Bridge, we found two Sumatran Drongos, another Sumatran endemic, with a massive flock of some 30 Chestnut-capped Laughingthrushes. There were also a number of Wreathed Hornbills but no sign of Marbled Wren-babbler.

We drove down to the Third Bridge in the hope of more birds but gave up as it was getting dark and the rain showed no signs of stopping. The return journey was quiet until sometime past the First Bridge, when our driver discovered we had a ruptured engine sump. We waited over three hours for an alternative vehicle from Subandi and another two hours before we arrived at the homestay. It was 23h00 when we had our dinner and we chatted with Subandi until midnight.

Day Eight (Aug 11, 2009)

We awoke at 03h00 and checked out of the homestay at 03h30. Subandi's son got us to the airport by 09h00. Our flight, TR225, departed Padang at 09h30 and we arrived in Changi Terminal 3 at 15h00 after a flight of 3 hours 20 minutes.

## Acknowledgements

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## Complete Species List

(Nomenclature and systematics follow MacKinnon & Phillipps's A Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali with some exceptions. Endemics are referred to in capitals.)

1. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
2. **Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*
3. **Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptiloryncus*
4. **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*
5. **Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*
6. **Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis*
7. **Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Hieraaetus kienerii*
8. **Changeable Hawk Eagle** *Spizaetus cirrhatus*
9. **Black-thighed Falconet** *Microhierax fringillarius*
10. **RED-BILLED PARTRIDGE** *Arborophila rubrirostris*
11. **SALVADORI'S PHEASANT** *Lophura inornata*
12. **SUMATRAN PEACOCK-PHEASANT** *Polyplectron chalcurum*
13. **Sumatran Green Pigeon** *Treron oxyura*
14. **Barred Cuckoo Dove** *Macropygia unchall*
15. **Little Cuckoo Dove** *Macropygia ruficeps*
16. **Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*
17. **Rusty-breasted cuckoo** *Cuculus sepulcralis*
18. **Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
19. **Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis*
20. **Mountain Scops Owl** *Otus spilocephalus*
21. **Barred Eagle Owl** *Bubo sumatranus*
22. **SUMATRAN OWLET** *Glaucidium (brodiei) peritum*
23. **SHORT-TAILED FROGMOUTH** *Batrachostomus poliocephalus*
24. **Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta*
25. **Whiskered Treeswift** *Hemiprocne comata*
26. **SUMATRAN TROGON** *Harpactes mackloti*
27. **Red-headed Trogon** *Harpactes erythrocephalus*
28. **Bushy-crested Hornbill** *Anorrhinus galeritus*
29. **Wreathed Hornbill** *Aceros undulatus*
30. **Rhinoceros Hornbill** *Buceros rhinoceros*

31. **Helmeted Hornbill** *Buceros vigil*
32. **Fire-tufted Barbet** *Psilopogon pyrolophus*
33. **Black-browed Barbet** *Megalaima oorti*
34. **Greater Yellownape** *Picus flavinucha*
35. **Maroon Woodpecker** *Blythipicus rubiginosus*
36. **Long-tailed Broadbill** *Psarisomus dalhousiae*
37. **SCHNEIDER'S PITTA** *Pitta schneideri*
38. **GRACEFUL PITTA** *Pitta venusta*
39. **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
40. **Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*
41. **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus*
42. **Sunda Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina larvata*
43. **Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*
44. **Sunda Minivet** *Pericricotus miniatus*
45. **SUMATRAN LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis media*
46. **BLUE-MASKED LEAFBIRD** *Chloropsis venusta*
47. **CREAM-STRIPED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus leucogrammicus*
48. **SPOT-NECKED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus tympanistrigus*
49. **Grey-bellied Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cyaniventris*
50. **Sooty-headed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*
51. **Ochraceous Bulbul** *Alophoixus ochraceus*
52. **Hairy-backed Bulbul** *Tricholestes criniger*
53. **Ashy Bulbul** *Hemixos cinereus*
54. **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*
55. **Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus remifer*
56. **SUMATRAN DRONGO** *Dicrurus sumatranus*
57. **Black-and-crimson Oriole** *Oriolus cruentus*
58. **Asian Fairy-bluebird** *Irena puella*
59. **Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis*
60. **SUMATRAN TREEPIE** *Dendrocitta occipitalis*
61. **Blue Nuthatch** *Sitta azurea*
62. **SUMATRAN WREN-BABBLER** *Rimator (malacoptilus) albostriatus*
63. **RUSTY-BREASTED WREN-BABBLER** *Napothera rufipectus*
64. **Pygmy Wren-babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla*
65. **Golden Babbler** *Stachyris chrysaea*
66. **Grey-throated Babbler** *Stachyris nigriceps*
67. **Black Laughingthrush** *Garrulax lugubris*
68. **Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush** *Garrulax mitratus*
69. **White-browed Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius flaviscapis*
70. **Long-tailed Sibia** *Heterophasia picaoides*
71. **Lesser Shortwing** *Brachypteryx leophrys*
72. **White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana*
73. **Sunda Blue Robin** *Cinclidium diana*
74. **Lesser Forktail** *Enicurus velatus*
75. **SUMATRAN COCHOA** *Cochoa beccarii*
76. **SHINY WHISTLING THRUSH** *Myiophoneus melanurus*

77. **Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myiophoneus caeruleus*
78. **Golden-bellied Gerygone** *Gerygone sulphurea*
79. **Sunda Warbler** *Seicercus grammiceps*
80. **Yellow-bellied Warbler** *Abroscopus superciliaris*
81. **Mountain Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus trivirgatus*
82. **Mountain Tailorbird** *Orthotomus cuculatus*
83. **Hill Prinia** *Prinia atrogularis*
84. **Sunda Bush-warbler** *Cettia vulcania*
85. **Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassina*
86. **Indigo Flycatcher** *Eumyias indigo*
87. **Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra*
88. **Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni*
89. **Large Niltava** *Niltava grandis*
90. **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
91. **White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis*
92. **Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus*
93. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
94. **Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach*
95. **Javan Myna** *Acridotheres javanicus*
96. **Temminck's Sunbird** *Aethopyga temminckii*
97. **Little Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera longirostris*
98. **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*
99. **Orange-bellied Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum trigonostigma*
100. **Mountain White-eye** *Zosterops montana*
101. **Eurasian Tree-sparrow** *Passer montanus*



View from Tapan Road by Lim Kim Seng