
Brief note from Tasik Kenyir

(21 - 23 May 08)

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Photo by: Wong Chung Cheong & Edwina Seah

Introduction

It was a last minute plan to self-drive up to Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu for family vacation. Most of my pre-trip preparation was based on a trip report (http://www.travellingbirder.com/tripreports/view_birding_tripreport.php?id=281) written by Paul Jones, a Canadian who had visited Tasik Kenyir in July 2007. It provided much information detailing various birding spots visited and species seen during his trip, which proved very useful to me. I also email to MNS Terengganu branch seeking for advice. Coincidentally in both Paul's report and Prof. Liew' reply (MNS), one name was mentioned and that I should contact – Anuar Abdullah Con McAfee. After several email exchanges with Anuar, his recommendation was to focus on Waterfall Road given the fact that I have only limited time for birding.

Accommodation

We stayed put at Lake Kenyir Resort and Spa (<http://www.lakekenyir.com/>) for 2 nights. The resort is probably the closest one can get at Tasik Kenyir located next to some of the best birding spots in the area, namely Waterfall Road and Main Road in the area. The chalets are built to blend in well with the



surroundings. The resort is huge thus it provides buggy service ferrying guests around.

Views of our chalets

View of the resort looking out

at Tasik Kenyir

Direction

It is a 1,200km round trip journey from Singapore. Having at least 2 drivers per vehicle would be recommended to avoid fatigue. We drove up via Yong Peng using the N-S highway turning in to Kuantan, Dungun and Tasik Kenyir using the trunk road. On our way back, we routed via Kuala Besi, Kuantan (overnight stay), Mersing, Johore Bahru and back to Singapore. Besides endless stretch of palm plantations, we also get to see interesting views of kampungs, coconut plantations, paddy fields and the coast line throughout our journey.

Trip Report

21 May 08

By the time we arrived at Lake Kenyir Resort & Spa, it was almost 1800hrs. The very first bird to greet us at the Main Entrance was a **Crested Serpent Eagle** trying to dry itself up after being drenched from an earlier downpour. As we drove towards the car park, we spotted **Oriental Magpie Robin** flittering in and out of the road pavement. The star bird of the evening got to be the **Great Hornbill** which flew in and greeted us at our chalet! It landed and perched less than 10m above our chalet. Everyone got excited including my 3-years old daughter, Victoria, exclaiming “Big Bird”. While we enjoyed good views of the hornbill for a couple of minutes, so did the mosquitoes who fed on us as if they have been starved for weeks. Thereafter we checked into our chalets. We were told by the staffs that the location of our chalet is one of the usual spots it can be found.



Crested Serpent Eagle greeting us at entrance



Great Hornbill perched near our chalets

22 May 08

At 0700hrs, together with Encik Latif the hotel manager, my father-in-law and I spent the next 3 hours birding along the Main Road (at 1.8km, the bridge and 12.3 km mark) and the Waterfall Road. At the resort car park, we managed to get good view of **Striped-throated Bulbul**, **White-rumped Shama**, **Oriental Magpie Robin** and **Common Tailorbird**. We first tried birding along the Main Road taking advantage of the cold wet morning to pick up motionless (almost) raptors perched on bare branches. Our effort paid off quite a bit and managed to bag more **Crested Serpent Eagles**, **Rufous-bellied Eagle**, **Changeable Hawk Eagle** and a juvenile **Hawk Eagle** (either Wallace or Blyth) being mobbed by 2 **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo**. At the 12.3km turnoff, we managed to scope 4 **Bushy-crested Hornbills**. We proceed further birded along Waterfall Road. Here we got good views of **White-rumped** and **White-bellied Munia**, **Rufescent Prinia**, **Chestnut-bellied Malkoha**, **Asian Fairy Bluebird**, **Greater Leafbird** and **Brown Barbet** among others.

In the late afternoon, together with Edwina and Victoria, we waited at the resort jetty trying our luck to pick up **Oriental Pied Hornbill** and **Lesser Fish Eagle** while enjoying the scenery. Not much luck this time, as we only managed to pick up a lone **Hill Myna** flew past above us, spotted a **Yellow-vented Bulbul** nesting and heard only calls of the **Oriental Pied Hornbill**.

When night fall, we also tried searching for owls near the Main Entrance. According to the security guards manning at the entrance, an owl always seen perched nearby. Somehow it just did not turn up that night. The only consolation was an **Asian Palm Swift** seen nested under a palm leaf.

23 May 08

Today, 3 of us took a ride out of the resort to enjoy some scenery along the Main Road and Waterfall Road. Along the Main Road, again we spotted several Crested Serpent Eagles at various locations. Our favorite bird got to be the sightings of 2 male **Scarlet-breasted Flowerpeckers**. The 1st bird was spotted by Edwina when she saw something moving among the tall grass making the “jzcheep... jzcheep... jzcheep” high pitch notes. The 2nd bird was seen further down the road while observing a troop of Long-tailed Macaque. This time the bird was among some bushes (1 – 1.2m high) and several metres away from the macaques.

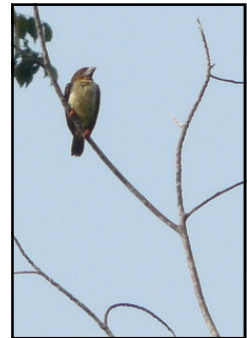
On Waterfall Road, we drove all the way to the Pump Station before making a u-turn back. On this segment of the route, we encountered birds such as **Greater Coucal** and **Buff-rumped Woodpecker**.



Striped-throated Bulbul



Greater Coucal along Waterfall Road



Brown Barbet



3 Oriental Magpie Robin Chicks

waiting eagerly to be fed by parents



Early morning when the surrounding is blanketed by mist



Bushy-crested Hornbills perched on bare branch.



A dark-morph Changeable Hawk-Eagle

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank both Anuar and Paul for providing much information with regards to the birding spots and species to be seen. I also like to thank Kenneth, Alan, Alfred, Kim Chuah and Mike Chong for their inputs and confirmation of the identification of the dark morph Changeable Hawk Eagle. Most importantly the company of my family making the entire trip an enjoyable one.

Annotated Checklist

1. Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* — 1 heard along Main Road on 22 May
2. Buff-rumped Woodpecker *Meiglyptes tristis* — 3 birds seen at last parking lot, Waterfall Road on 23 May
3. Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineate* — Heard daily in resort
4. Brown Barbet *Calorbamphus fuliginosus* — Seen at junction turning into Waterfall Road on 22 May
5. Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* — Heard calling from resort jetty on 22 May evening
6. Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* — 1 male flew and perched near our chalets on 21 May 08 evening
7. Bushy-crested Hornbill *Anorrhinus galeritus* — 4 birds seen on 22 May along 12.3km mark
8. Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis* — Seen daily at resort , Main and Waterfall Road
9. White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* — Seen daily along Waterfall Road
10. Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* — Heard daily at Waterfall Road
11. Chestnut-bellied Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus sumatranus* — 1 seen at last carpark lot, Waterfall Road on 22 May
12. Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* — Seen at least 2 pairs along Main and Waterfall Road on both 22 & 23 May
13. Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* — Seen daily flying in resort. 1 bird seen nesting on 22 May
14. Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* — Common at resort and open area
15. Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata* — Common at resort and open area
16. White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* — At least 2 birds were heard calling on 23 May morning from the
direction of the resort jetty
17. Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* — Seen daily along Main Road
18. Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii* — 1 seen perched along Main Road near the bridge on 22 May
19. Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus cirratus* — 1 seen perched along Main Road on 22 May
20. Asian Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella* — Seen along Water fall Road on 22 May
21. Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati* — 1 male seen at last carpark lot, Waterfall Road on 22 May
22. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* — Seen along Main and Waterfall Road on both 22 & 23 May
23. Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* — 3 birds seen at Waterfall Road on 23 May
24. Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* — Seen daily around the resort
25. Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* — Common in resort
26. Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis* — Very common at resort, Waterfall Road and Pengkalan Gawi jetty.
27. White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* — Seen daily at resort
28. Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* — Seen daily at Waterfall Road
29. Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* — Seen daily at Waterfall Road
30. Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* — 1 bird seen flew past on 22 May. Heard daily
31. Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* — Seen daily at Waterfall Road
32. Stripe-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus finlaysoni* — Common at resort

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33. Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier* — Common at resort. 1 nest was sighted near resort jetty
 34. Cream-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus simplex* — Seen along Main and Waterfall Road on both 22 & 23 May
 35. Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus brunneus* — Seen at 12.3km mark on 22 May
 36. Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens* — 1 seen near the junction turning into Waterfall Road
 37. Common Tailorbird *Ortobotomus sutorius* — Heard daily at resort
 38. Dark-necked Tailorbird *Orthotomus atrogularis* — Seen along Water fall Road on 22 & 23 May
 39. Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* — Seen along Main Road on 22 May
 40. Abbott's Babbler *Trichastoma abbotti* — Heard near resort helipad area on 23 May
 41. Striped Tit-babbler *Macronous gularis* — Heard daily at resort , Main and Waterfall Road
 42. Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker *Prionochilus maculates* — 1 seen along Main Road on 22 May
 43. Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker *Prionochilus thoracius* — 2 males seen along Main Road (between 12.3km mark and the Sarabet stall) on 23 May
 44. Brown-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes malacensis* — Common in resort
 45. Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* — Very common in resort & Pengkalan Gawi jetty
 46. White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* — A flock was seen along Waterfall road on 22 May
 47. White-bellied Munia *Lonchura leucogastra* — Seen along Waterfall road on 22 May