

CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM

FOREST BIRDS

AND ENDEMIC OF INDOCHINA



Bengal Florican
(Martin Hale)

Tuesday February 12th – Saturday March 2nd 2013

Leader: Chris Bradshaw

Group Size: 8

Birds: 320 – 350

This tour takes in some of the best birding Indochina has to offer. Ravaged by war for many years, Cambodia has opened up to tourism during the last decade with the cultural splendours of Angkor Wat being world renowned as the country's main tourist attraction. What is less well known is that Cambodia offers some excellent birding opportunities and is home to some of the world's rarest birds. A number of important discoveries have been made in recent years and we go in search of the recently described Mekong Wagtail whilst threatened species such as Giant and White-shouldered Ibis, Greater Adjutant and Milky Stork can be found. Moving on to neighbouring Vietnam we visit some of the best birding sites of the southern

part of that country. The lowland forest and grassland habitats of Cat Tien National Park hold Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Siamese Fireback, Green Peafowl and Bar-bellied Pitta. The tour concludes on the Da Lat Plateau where Grey-crowned Crocias, Orange-breasted and Collared Laughingthrush, Vietnamese Greenfinch are among a number of very rare and threatened endemic species that occur here.

Chris Bradshaw has travelled extensively in south-east Asia and this will be his fifth trip to Vietnam.

Days 1-2: Fly to Siem Reap in Cambodia, where arrival is late afternoon on Day 2. Night at Siem Reap.

Day 3: After breakfast we leave for to Tmatboey, making a stop en-route in grasslands where we hope to locate Bengal Florican. Here a project to develop Integrated Farming and Biodiversity Areas (IFBAs) in order to conserve prime florican habitats has been running for a number of years and with the assistance of one of the local villagers, we have an excellent chance of locating this magnificent bird. We also hope to find Manchurian Reed Warbler, a common winter visitor of tall grass and scrub in this area. Raptors also feature, with Greater Spotted and Eastern Imperial Eagles both being possible plus Eastern Marsh and Pied Harriers. After our visit to the IFBA's we continue our journey to Tmatboey. At Tmatboey there is a conservation project set up by the Wildlife Conservation Society together with the Cambodian Government and the village. Once the potential for bird watching tourism at this site had been realised, a local committee was elected which built the guest accommodation and provides the services for the bird watching groups that visit. In return for the income that this brings the villagers have signed no hunting

and land conversion agreements. On arrival at Tmatboey, we take a short walk through the open forest to a site where White-shouldered Ibis come to roost at sunset.

Days 4-5: We have two full days birding at Tmatboey in order to search for the specialities of the area. We'll make an early start in order to drive to one of the less disturbed areas of forest where we search forest pools for Giant Ibis. Tmatboey is one of only two known nesting areas for the species in Asia. The area is also good for Woolly-necked Stork, whilst Greater Spotted Eagle regularly overwinters and Crested Serpent Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle and the scarce and localised White-rumped Falcon are also present. A rich diversity of woodpeckers frequents the area with Great Slaty, Black-headed, White-bellied, Yellow-crowned, Rufous-bellied and Grey-headed among the possibilities. Other forest birds include Scarlet, Small and with luck Swinhoe's Minivets, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Blue-winged Leafbird, Common and Large Woodshrike, Black-naped Monarch, Racket-tailed and Rufous Treepies, Black-hooded Oriole, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Puff-throated Babbler and White-rumped Shama. In the evening we have a chance

to look for owls and nightjars with species present: Brown Fish Owl, Brown Boobook, Spotted and Brown Wood Owls and Large-tailed and Savanna Nightjars.

Day 6: After some final birding we leave Tmatboey and head to Kratie by road. On arrival at Kratie we take a boat to look for the recently described Mekong Wagtail which inhabits the stony islands in the river. Spot-billed Duck, River Lapwing, River Tern, Small Pratincole and the extremely rare and endangered Irrawaddy River Dolphin are also possible here. Overnight at Kratie.

Day 7: This morning we leave Kratie to head for Siem Reap where we have an overnight stay.

Day 8: We have a full day in the Angkor Great Park, site of Angkor Wat and over 200 temples, which are a true wonder of the world. We have a guided tour of this magnificent cultural attraction, but as the temples are surrounded by forest, there are also birding opportunities and we may see Hainan Blue, Red-throated and Asian Brown Flycatchers, White-throated Rock-Thrush, Black Baza, Blue Rock Thrush, Forest Wagtail, Olive-backed Pipit, Asian Barred Owllet, Coppersmith Barbet,



Giant Ibis (Martin Hale)

Ashy Minivet, Yellow-browed and Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler and White-crested Laughingthrushes.

Day 9: We take a morning flight from Siem Reap International Airport to Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat International Airport, arriving around lunchtime. On arrival we transfer to Cat Tien National Park, where if time permits we may undertake some initial birding.

Days 10-12: From our base at the park headquarters, we explore the variety of habitats within Cat Tien National Park. The forest edge has Blue-eared, Coppersmith and Green-eared Barbets, Common Flameback, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Buff-breasted Babbler, Blue-winged Leafbird, Black-naped Oriole, and Little Spiderhunter. Other possibilities include Dusky Broadbill, Pale-headed and Black-and-buff Woodpeckers, Purple-throated Sunbird and Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker. Venturing into the forest, we search for more elusive species including Bar-bellied Pitta. Other birds we hope to locate are Blue-rumped Pitta, Scaly-breasted Partridge, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Great Iora, Black-naped Monarch, White-rumped Shama, Scaly-crowned Babbler and Grey-faced Tit-babbler, the latter being a regional endemic. Driving the

tracks through the forest is a good way to search for the gamebirds of Cat Tien. We hope to encounter the elusive Germain's Peacock-pheasant and Siamese Fireback. In grassland areas within the forest we look for Green Peafowl. Evening excursions can be productive for night birds and we should see Great-eared and Large-tailed Nightjars and Brown Hawk Owl. The park is also home to one of the world's most beautiful primates, the Black-shanked Douc Langur.

Day 13: After a final morning at Cat Tien, we drive northwards onto the Da Lat plateau to the town of Di Linh, our base for exploring the pass at Deo Suoi Lanh. If time permits we will do some late afternoon birding at the pass.

Day 14: We spend the day birding along the quiet road over the forested pass at Deo Suoi Lanh. Here, we hope to find difficult birds including the endemic Orange-breasted Laughingthrush. Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes are also present along with the recently split Black-crowned Parrotbill. The forest here is excellent for a number of species not found in the lowlands at Cat Tien; Annam (split from Black-browed) and Red-vented Barbets, Long-tailed Broadbill, White-bellied Erpornis, White-tailed Leaf Warbler,

Grey-crowned Tit, Black-headed Sibia, Dalat Shrike-babbler, Black-throated Sunbird and Streaked Spiderhunter. With luck, we might encounter rarer species; Blue Pitta, Green Cochoa and Vietnamese Greenfinch. In the afternoon we depart for Da Lat where we have a three night stay.

Day 15: This morning we leave early and drive to Mount Lang Bian. Here, we look for the spectacular but secretive Collared Laughingthrush. Moss-covered branches on larger trees are attractive to two recent splits, endemic to Vietnam: Vietnamese Cutia and Black-crowned Fulvetta. We check the undergrowth for the secretive Pygmy Wren-babbler, Lesser Shortwing and Grey-bellied Tesia whilst other possibilities include Maroon Oriole, Blue-winged Minla, Golden-throated Barbet, Orange-bellied Leafbird and Grey-cheeked Warbler. Dropping down the mountain, we explore the pine forests for Red Crossbill, Eurasian Jay and Long-tailed Minivet. Around the cultivated areas we may find Burmese Shrike and Sooty-headed Bulbul.

Days 16-17: We continue our exploration of the Da Lat area in forests at a slightly lower elevation looking for the extremely rare endemic, Grey-crowned Crocias, only rediscovered in the mid-1990s. We also hope to find Black-hooded Laughingthrushes, Rufous-backed and Black-headed Sibilas, Eye-browed Wren-babbler, Mountain Tailorbird, Bay Woodpecker, Large Niltava, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Slender-billed Oriole and Mugimaki Flycatcher.

Day 18: A final morning spent birding in the Da Lat area. In the afternoon we take a flight to Ho Chi Minh City where we connect with international flights with arrival on the following morning.

Ground Price: (provisional): £3695

Single room: £400

*Air Fare: £1100

Tour Price: £4795

Tour Price Siem Reap/Ho Chi Minh City: £3695

Deposit: £500

*please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights + provisional price on pages 5 and 71

This holiday is fully inclusive of flights, accommodation, transport, and permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance and items of a personal nature and any relevant fuel surcharges.

At Tmatboey, the Lodge comprises a central recreational thatched building and 4 surrounding bungalows each with 2 double en-suite rooms with solar powered electricity. The accommodation is comfortable but basic.

Cat Tien is clean and simple. Otherwise, all other accommodation is in fairly good hotels. Cuisine is Vietnamese/ Chinese with some French influence; western food is available in the larger cities. Walking is on reasonably flat trails and roads. Some trails can be slippery when wet.