

# Birding Singapore – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015

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One of 22 Common Hill Mynas we encountered in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

Simon Bakewell, a casual birder from London, UK, was in Singapore with his family and he wanted to get to know the birds better. So, we decided to go birding for a full day to see what we can find. We started early and were in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve by 6.00 am. Both Brown Hawk Owls and Sunda Scops Owls were actively calling and we did get close to one Sunda Scops Owl although it did not stay long. We also heard Large-tailed Nightjar and saw Common Flameback and Common Hill Mynas as it got close to 7.00 am. It was still dark, so we waited at the edge of MacRitchie Reservoir for the sunrise which promptly appeared and soon swiftlets, parakeets and starlings were in motion. We also saw Purple Heron, Black-naped Oriole, Olive-winged and Yellow-vented Bulbuls, the gorgeous Asian Fairy-bluebird, Malaysian Pied Fantail, and both Dark-necked and Ashy Tailorbirds. At 8.15 am, we retreated into the forest.

Things were only slightly better at Jelutong Tower. We had a healthy Hill Myna count (of 22) but the action was slow due to the hazy weather. After we had seen our flowerpeckers and sunbirds, we decided to move on.

We had spent nearly four hours in the forest and this yielded a healthy 44 species. Breakfast was next and we took our time to enjoy our tea and *roti prata* as the heavens opened up.

Our next stop was Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. We got there at 11.00 am and were thrilled to see two adult White-bellied Sea Eagles drying their wings on a tall dead tree in the company of Asian Glossy Starlings. We encountered several Malaysian Water Monitors and a female Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker as we moved to the river called Sungei Buloh Besar. The tide was rising and we saw a few Grey Herons, a single Oriental Dollarbird, a few Collared Kingfishers and a family of Oriental Pied Hornbills.



A lone Oriental Dollarbird hawking for insects at Sungei Buloh. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

After a few minutes of scanning, we moved on to the main hide, which was empty, and then to the sluice gates, where we could see a variety of water birds including Striated Heron, Little Egret, a few escaped Milky Storks, White-breasted Waterhens, and more than a hundred Common Redshanks and

Common Greenshanks. We explored the bund all the way to the coastal platform, adding Common Iora, Malaysian Pied Fantail, Brown-throated and Copper-throated Sunbirds but we did not see Great-billed Heron and we missed a singing Golden-bellied Gerygone.

On our way back, we stopped by the bridge over Sungei Buloh, and saw our “missing” Common Sandpipers. At the visitor centre, we saw some photographers and chatted a little. They were waiting for a Blue-eared Kingfisher to appear and then an Ashy Tailorbird interrupted us and posed for pictures as the camera shutters clicked.



A cooperative Ashy Tailorbird looking very much at home at Sungei Buloh. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

We left Sungei Buloh at 12.30 pm and then stopped by at Neo Tiew Lane 3 for lunch. A group of 27 Little Ringed Plovers delayed us as we tried to get better looks.

Lunch over, we moved on to our last spot, Bukit Batok Nature Park. We got there at 3.00 pm and found that the afternoon heat had dissipated. We stopped by at Lorong Sesuai and admired a gathering of three male Crimson Sunbirds that were showing off their brilliant colours.

After descending the steps to the quarry pond, we heard the *whuit-whuit* notes of a pair of Straw-headed Bulbuls. We saw the pair in a densely-foliaged tree. They were preening and flew off to the pond shortly after. There was only one more bird to try and see – the laughingthrush. The park was however strangely quiet and we were past the playground before we heard the familiar inquiring *wheows* of a foraging group of White-crested Laughingthrushes. We admired their antics for a while before deciding to move on.

Simon had an appointment in the evening, so we decided to call it a day there and then. Despite the early end, we had seen 54 species of birds and heard an additional 13 species. We also saw lots of other wildlife and some of the wilder parts of Singapore to make it a wonderful day.



An inquisitive White-crested laughingthrush at Bukit Batok Nature Park. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

## **A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015**

Nomenclature, sequence and taxonomy follow IOC. Species highlighted in yellow indicate those that were “heard only”.

#	English Name	Scientific Name
1	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
2	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
3	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
5	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
6	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
7	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
8	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
9	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
10	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
11	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
12	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
13	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
14	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
15	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
16	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
17	Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
18	Large-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>
19	Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
20	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
21	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
22	Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
23	Oriental Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
24	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
25	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
26	Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
27	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>
28	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
29	Long-tailed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>
30	Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>
31	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
32	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
33	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
34	Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
35	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
36	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
37	Straw-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus zeylanicus</i>
38	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
39	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
40	Asian Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>

41	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
42	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
43	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
44	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
45	Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sericeus</i>
46	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
47	Chestnut-winged Babbler	<i>Stachyris erythroptera</i>
48	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
49	Abbott's Babbler	<i>Malcocincla abbotti</i>
50	Short-tailed Babbler	<i>Malcocincla malaccensis</i>
51	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolopus</i>
52	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
53	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
54	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
55	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
56	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
57	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
58	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
59	Blue-winged Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>
60	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma</i>
61	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
62	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>
63	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>
64	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>
65	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
66	Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>
67	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>