

# Birding Singapore – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Text & Photos by Lim Kim Seng ([ibisbill@yahoo.com](mailto:ibisbill@yahoo.com))



A male Orange-bellied Flowerpecker singing at Jelutong Tower. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng

David Gibson, a birder from Canada, was keen to know what could be seen in Singapore in terms of birds and so, a day's tour was arranged. We were at the Central Catchment Nature Reserve by 6.00 am. A soft hoot indicated the presence of a Sunda Scops Owl. We walked near the source of the call but the bird remained elusive and kept quiet. A moment's wait was all we needed to confirm that the owl had left and we walked into the forest trail. It was about half an hour later when we heard two Brown Hawk Owls calling and about ten minutes after that, we saw one perched high in a tree just off the trail. It stayed for just a few seconds before disappearing. One owl down!

It was getting light and drongos and fairy-bluebirds were calling actively. After crossing a small stream, we got to a clearing and saw a Banded Woodpecker and a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo sharing a dead tree. Moments later, we heard drumming and David managed to find its owner, a Red-crowned Barbet

digging a nest hole. We also added a singing Crow-billed Drongo although Short-tailed Babbler and Siberian Blue Robin remained heard only.

We were up Jelutong Tower by 7.30 am and took our time to pick out the birds. The sun was shining strongly and swiftlets were already swarming about. We picked out a lone Grey-rumped Treeswift and then the tiny and colourful Orange-bellied and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers, and Crimson Sunbird. Other birds seen here included Blue-throated Bee-eater, Common Flameback, Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot, Blue-rumped Parrot, Long-tailed Parakeet, Olive-winged Bulbul, Common Hill Myna and Dark-necked Tailorbird. Migrants were represented by Barn Swallow, Asian Brown Flycatcher and an unexpected male Green-backed Flycatcher.

We left the tower at 9.10 am and walked back to the Rifle Range Road carpark. Just before the stream, we met a small wave consisting of a flock of Pin-striped Tit-babblers, a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, 3 Chestnut-bellied Malkohas, a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and a female Amur Paradise-flycatcher.

Our first site was excellent and we recorded 36 species of birds as well as Long-tailed Macaque, Plantain and Slender Squirrels, and a Dwarf Reed Snake!



A Buffy Fish Owl roosting in a rain tree at Singapore Botanic Gardens. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng

Next, we made a short detour to the Singapore Botanic Gardens for a very special bird. This was the Buffy Fish Owl, a pair of which I had seen just the day before. Sure enough, both birds were seen with ease as we took some photos before moving off for our delayed breakfast.

After our late breakfast, we moved on to Bukit Batok Nature Park to look for the globally endangered Straw-headed Bulbul. It took us an hour before we located a pair at the quarry pond. They entertained us by giving us a hearty rendition of their melodious song. We also saw White-throated Kingfisher, Lineated Barbet, Laced Woodpecker and a flock of a dozen White-crested Laughingthrushes.



A pair of Straw-headed Bulbuls singing at Bukit Batok Nature Park. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng

Next was the famed wetland at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. We arrived at 1.30 pm and opted to check the Mangrove Boardwalk area for the mangrove specialist Copper-throated Sunbird. We found a pair and the male performed magnificently. We also took the opportunity to visit the river and found Great and Little Egrets, Grey Heron, Asian Koel, Common Redshank and Common Sandpiper.

We grabbed some lunch at 3.00 pm followed by a drive eastwards to our last site, Pasir Ris Park. We had hoped to see the Spotted Wood Owls. Unfortunately, they were nowhere to be found and we had to be satisfied with adding the photogenic White-throated and Collared Kingfishers to our list.

We were pleased with the weather which permitted some wonderful birding. We recorded 67 species of birds including two owl species and four parrots. What a day!

## A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017

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

#	English Name	Scientific Name
1	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
2	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
3	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
5	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
6	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
7	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
8	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
9	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
10	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
11	Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>
12	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
13	Chestnut-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus sumatranus</i>
14	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>
15	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>
16	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
17	Buffy Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa ketupu</i>
18	Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
19	Grey-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>
20	Plume-toed Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
21	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
22	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
23	Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
24	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
25	Red-crowned Barbet	<i>Megalaima rafflesii</i>
26	Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus moluccensis</i>
27	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
28	Laced Woodpecker	<i>Picus vittatus</i>

29	Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
30	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
31	Blue-rumped Parrot	<i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>
32	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
33	Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
34	Long-tailed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>
35	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
36	Crow-billed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus annectans</i>
37	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
38	Amur Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
39	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
40	Straw-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus zeylanicus</i>
41	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
42	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
43	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
44	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
45	Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>
46	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
47	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
48	Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sericeus</i>
49	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
50	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
51	Abbott's Babbler	<i>Malcocincla abbotti</i>
52	Short-tailed Babbler	<i>Malcocincla malaccensis</i>
53	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolopus</i>
54	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
55	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
56	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
57	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
58	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
59	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>
60	Siberian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora cyane</i>
61	Green-backed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula elisae</i>
62	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma</i>
63	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
64	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>
65	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>
66	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
67	Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>



A male Amur Paradise Flycatcher in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng