

# Birding Singapore – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018

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



Male Red Junglefowl dashing for cover at the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng

I met Lindsay and Keith and also Andrew and Chris, all keen birders from Australia, at their hotel in downtown Singapore and then we were off to the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. We got there shortly after 6.00 am and disappeared into the semi-darkness of the rainforest trail. We heard both Sunda Scops and Brown Hawk Owls but had no views. A Blue-winged Pitta called once as we approached the famous Jelutong Tower near 7 am. We climbed up the 20-m tall tower and waited as the rainforest awoke. Swiftlets soon replaced the bats as it got brighter and we spent almost three hours at treetop level. It helped as we located a lone Chestnut-bellied Malkoha, Banded Woodpecker, the locally rare Blue-rumped Parrot, an adult Long-tailed Parakeet with two noisy juveniles, the spectacular Asian Fairy-bluebird as well as the usual bulbuls, flowerpeckers and sunbirds. We also heard Banded Bay and

Plaintive Cuckoos but both were not seen despite much effort. We left the tower at 9.15 am and were surprised to see a male Red Junglefowl crossing a trail in front of us. It appeared shy and likely a wild bird, and dashed quickly into cover. Other good finds on the way out was a male Common Emerald Dove with a leg ring that foraged for a long time on the trail and a female Green-backed Flycatcher, a rarity in Singapore. It was a fantastic morning and we left with 40 species in the bag, plus Long-tailed Macaque, Plantain Squirrel, Malayan Water Monitor, Common Sun Skink and Asian Toad.

Next, we headed for traditional Singapore breakfast in a nearby coffee shop. The humidity was rising and it was good to rest in the air-conditioned place. Bukit Batok Nature Park was next and we spent just over an hour exploring the park. It was almost noon but we got our White-crested Laughingthrushes easily. However, it took some patience to eventually see the globally endangered Straw-headed Bulbuls at their haunts by the quarry. Our main targets achieved, we walked out and also managed to get close to a Clouded Monitor.



Straw-headed Bulbul at Bukit Batok Nature Park. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng

It was 1.30 pm when we reached Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. This was our last stop and we spent quite a bit of time exploring the mangroves and ponds. The tide was high and the usual waders were

missing from the flooded ponds. We did however see Great and Little Egrets, Striated Heron, some escaped storks, and raptors – Western Osprey, Black Baza and Japanese Sparrowhawk. After the time spent at the river and main pond, we returned to the visitor centre to check out the Mangrove Boardwalk. True enough, both Ashy Tailorbird and Copper-throated Sunbird were seen fairly quickly. As we walked out, we saw more Malayan Water Monitors and a big roost of Common Fruit Bats to wrap up our wildlife experience.

We had a late lunch at a nearby café before calling it a day. It was in many ways a great way to spend a day in Singapore watching some of its wonderful birds at a relaxed pace. In all, we logged 63 species of birds, with the highlights being those wonderful sunbirds, the majestic Black Baza and the scarce Straw-headed Bulbul.

### A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018

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	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
3	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
4	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
5	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
6	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
7	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
8	Black Baza	<i>Aviceda leuphotes</i>
9	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
10	Japanese Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter gularis</i>
11	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
12	Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
13	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
14	Chestnut-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus sumatranus</i>
15	Banded Bay Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>
16	Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>

17	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</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	Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
22	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
23	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
24	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
25	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
26	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
27	Blue-rumped Parrot	<i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>
28	Long-tailed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>
29	Blue-winged Pitta	<i>Pitta moluccensis</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	Crow-billed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus annectans</i>
34	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
35	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
36	Straw-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus zeylanicus</i>
37	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
38	Cream-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus simplex</i>
39	Asian Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>
40	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
41	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
42	Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>
43	Eastern Crowned Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus coronatus</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	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
48	Abbott's Babbler	<i>Malcocincla abbotti</i>
49	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolopus</i>
50	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
51	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
52	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
53	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
54	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
55	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
56	Green-backed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula elisae</i>
57	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma</i>

58	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
59	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>
60	Van Hasselt's Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma brasiliana</i>
61	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>
62	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
63	Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>



A flashy White-crested Laughingthrush poses at Bukit Batok Nature Park. Photo © Birding Singapore/Lim Kim Seng