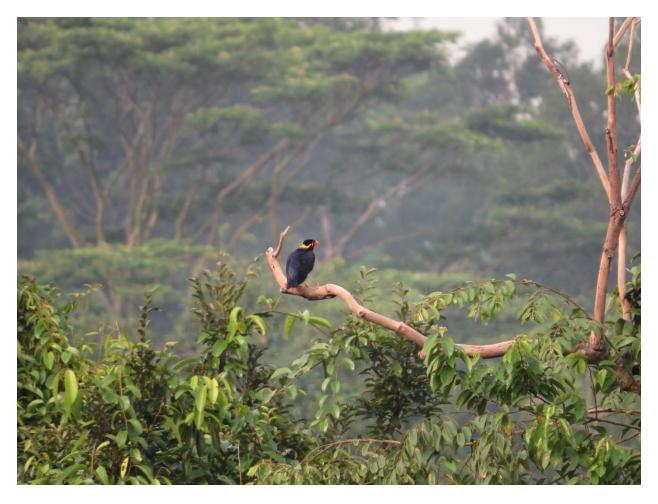
Birding Singapore – 21st August 2015

Text & Photos by Lim Kim Seng (ibisbill@yahoo.com)



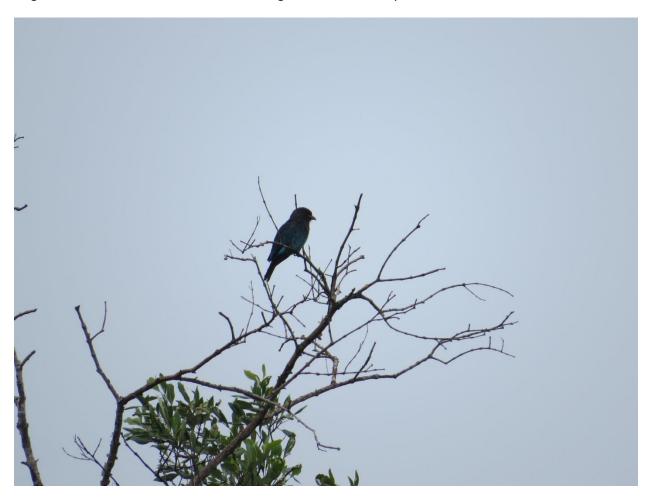
One of 22 Common Hill Mynas we encountered in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

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

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