

# Birding Singapore – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015

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



One of two Buffy Fish Owls encountered at Singapore Botanic Gardens. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

Scott Olle, a birder from California, USA, was in town for a meeting but still wanted to bird even though he had only the afternoon free. It wasn't ideal but it was the only period that he was available to do some birding on his first trip to Singapore. We arranged to meet at 1.30 pm and, as it was raining, opted to start our birding at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. We got there at 2.00 pm and were happy to see the rain petering out as we saw our first birds in the new carpark. Yellow-vented Bulbuls were out and about, together with a Black-naped Oriole and some Javan Mynas.

We walked over to the visitor centre where we saw a large Malayan Water Monitor, several Plantain Squirrels and a White-breasted Waterhen. At the bridge overlooking Sungei Buloh Besar, we discovered that it was high tide and birds were largely absent, so we moved on to the main hide. The ponds were

exposed but there were no shorebirds. We did see a Collared Kingfisher, two Striated Herons, and several Giant Mudskippers. As it was generally quiet, we decided to walk on the bund to the coast, where there is an observation platform. The walk was filled with birds as we saw a female Oriental Magpie-robin, a pair of Common Ioras and another pair of Malaysian Pied Fantails. We reached the Platform and saw lots of Grey and Striated Herons, Little Egrets but no Great-billed Herons. Also present here were some Little Terns. After a while, we walked back to the visitor centre and then dropped by the mangrove boardwalk. Despite the gloomy sky, we saw Ashy Tailorbird and a pair of Copper-throated Sunbirds. We lingered a while around the cherry trees at the visitor centre and saw the resident pair of Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers and a pair of Crimson Sunbirds.

Our next spot was Bukit Batok Nature Park and we got there around 4.00 pm. The first bird to greet us was a Lineated Barbet. We walked down to the quarry pond and picked up without too much effort, Glossy Swiftlet, Blue-throated Bee-eater, the much desired and globally threatened Straw-headed Bulbul, Pin-striped Tit-babbler and the charming White-crested Laughingthrushes. The key birds seen, we left the park after just 30 minutes.

Our last spot was the Singapore Botanic Gardens, newly minted as Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. We got there at 4.45 pm and saw lots of people. Fortunately, the people didn't bother the birds as one of our first birds there was a pair of Buffy Fish Owls. We also saw a roosting Sunda Scops Owl, Oriental Dollarbird, a pair of Banded Woodpecker, a Common Hill Myna and several Eurasian Treesparrows. Birds weren't the only wildlife of interest as we saw a Clouded Monitor and lots of Plantain Squirrels.

We finished the half day tour at 5.30 pm. It was brief but very successful in terms of the birds and other wildlife encountered. In total, we recorded 51 species of birds for Scott's first foray into the birds of Singapore.

## **A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 26<sup>st</sup> July 2015**

Sequence, taxonomy and nomenclature 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	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
5	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
6	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
7	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>

8	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
9	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
10	Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
11	Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>
12	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
13	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
14	Buffy Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa ketupu</i>
15	Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
16	Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
17	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
18	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
19	Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
20	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
21	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
22	Laced Woodpecker	<i>Picus vittatus</i>
23	Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
24	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
25	Coconut Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
26	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
27	Pied Triller	<i>Lalage nigra</i>
28	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
29	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
30	Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
31	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
32	Straw-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus zeylanicus</i>
33	Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
34	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
35	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
36	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
37	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
38	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
39	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
40	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
41	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolopus</i>
42	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
43	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
44	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
45	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
46	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
47	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
48	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>

49	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>
50	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>
51	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>



A roosting Sunda Scops Owl at Singapore Botanic Gardens. Photo © Lim Kim Seng