

Birding Singapore – 26th May 2016

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Male Greater Green Leafbird foraging in a fig tree at MacRitchie Reservoir. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

Ben Bell, a birder from New Zealand, and I tried our best but it was an unusually quiet morning for the owls with only two distant Sunda Scops Owls and three Brown Hawk Owls in inaccessible locations. Eventually, we got to MacRitchie Reservoir just as it was getting light and dawn chorus broke. We had the usual noisy Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Olive-winged Bulbul, Dark-necked Tailorbird and Pin-striped Tit-babbler out and about in semi-darkness. The sun rose and we saw lots of swiftlets and green pigeons moving about as well as a flock of Long-tailed Parakeets. We decided to camp at a grove of fig trees by the golf course. Sure enough, the birds were just getting warmed up. We saw Lineated and Coppersmith barbets, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Yellow-vented and Asian Red-eyed Bulbuls, Asian Glossy Starling, Javan Myna, Asian Fairy-bluebird and Greater Green Leafbird. It was a good half an hour spent as we also saw Stork-billed, White-throated and Collared Kingfishers as we returned to the forest.

Back in the forest by 8.15 am, we climbed up Jelutong Tower and waited for bird activity. We saw Chestnut-bellied Malkoha, Blue-throated Bee-eater, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker, and Brown-throated,

Van Hasselt's and Crimson Sunbirds. The walk out was uneventful. It was a good morning still as we recorded 39 species despite the gloomy weather.



Over-wintering Little Egrets at a pond at Sungei Buloh. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

It rained after we got out of the forest so we decided to go for breakfast. After that, we had a short drive to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Our first spot was the new Coastal Trail where we saw Oriental Dollarbird but only glimpses of fly-by Copper-throated Sunbirds. Next, we checked out the visitor centre by a family of Common Fruit Bats and the usual Malayan Water Monitors. At the river, we saw an Estuarine Crocodile, a Grey Heron and some Little Egrets. There were also some Little Egrets at the main hide but no waders as most had departed for their northern breeding grounds. We walked to the coast and found more over-wintering Little and Great Egrets, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Little Tern and Ashy Tailorbird. Back at the visitor centre, we detoured to the mangrove boardwalk where we had great looks at a male Copper-throated Sunbird.

Lunch was next and it was followed by a very short drive to Kranji Marshes. It was only 2 pm and very warm. We walked the long road to the marshes and were greeted by White-throated Kingfisher, Common Flameback, Long-tailed Parakeet, Pied Triller, Malaysian Pied Fantail, Baya Weaver and Scaly-breasted Munia. At the ponds, we saw Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Common Moorhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Little Tern, Lesser Coucal and Yellow-bellied Prinia. The walk

back was tiring in the heat and humidity but we were cheered by a pair of Changeable Hawk Eagle. This proved to be our most fruitful spot as we recorded 41 species in just 90 minutes.

Our last spot was Bukit Batok Nature Park. It was rather quiet when we got there but we soon saw the clowns of the park – a flock of White-crested Laughingthrushes. There were ten of them. We walked all the way to the quarry pond where we waited for our target, the globally threatened Straw-headed Bulbul, to appear. Unfortunately, there was no sign of this large bulbul. After some time, we moved back to the playground where we saw a White-throated Kingfisher. We saw a movement below the kingfisher and found it to be a Straw-headed Bulbul! It was a party of five birds that were grooming themselves.

What a fitting finale to a wonderful day of birding! Despite the lack of migrants, we managed to record 82 species of birds, as well as some interesting wildlife such as Long-tailed Macaque, Malayan Water Monitor and Estuarine Crocodile.



The globally threatened Straw-headed Bulbul at Bukit Batok Nature Park. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 26th May 2016

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	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
7	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
8	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
9	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
10	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
11	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
12	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
13	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
14	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
15	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
16	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
17	Red Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
18	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
19	Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>
20	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
21	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>
22	Chestnut-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus sumatranus</i>
23	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
24	Little Bronze Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx minutillus</i>
25	Banded Bay Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>
26	Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>
27	Rusty-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sepulcralis</i>
28	Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>
29	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
30	Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
31	Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
32	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
33	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
34	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
35	Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
36	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>

37	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
38	Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus moluccensis</i>
39	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
40	Laced Woodpecker	<i>Picus vittatus</i>
41	Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
42	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>
43	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
44	Long-tailed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>
45	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
46	Pied Triller	<i>Lalage nigra</i>
47	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
48	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
49	Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
50	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
51	Straw-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus zeylanicus</i>
52	Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
53	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
54	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
55	Asian Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>
56	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
57	Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicentris</i>
58	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
59	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
60	Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sericeus</i>
61	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
62	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
63	Short-tailed Babbler	<i>Malcocincla malaccensis</i>
64	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolopus</i>
65	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
66	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
67	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
68	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
69	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
70	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
71	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
72	Greater Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>
73	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma</i>
74	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
75	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>
76	Van Hasselt's Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma brasiliana</i>
77	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>

78	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>
79	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
80	Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>
81	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
82	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>



White-throated Kingfisher at Kranji Marshes. Photo © Lim Kim Seng