

Birding Singapore – 5th May 2016

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Adult Grey-headed Fish Eagle surveys the water at MacRitchie Reservoir. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

There was a crescent moon in the sky as Marvelyn, a birder from Goa, India, and I made our way into the Central Catchment Nature Reserve at around 6 am. The air was heavy with moisture and we heard very few things stirring. There was a distant Sunda Scops Owl, a few equally distant Brown Hawk Owls and some insomniac Greater Racket-tailed Drongos. Near dawn, we were at the western edge of MacRitchie Reservoir and awaiting more activity. The swiftlets were out and about and we also added Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Plaintive Cuckoo, Collared, White-throated and Stork-billed Kingfishers, Long-tailed Parakeet, a juvenile Dark-necked Tailorbird and a male Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker. We also explored the fig trees at the golf course and picked up quite a few small frugivores including Yellow-vented, Olive-winged and Asian Red-eyed Bulbuls, a male Lesser Green Leafbird, Asian Fairy-bluebirds and Brown-throated Sunbird.

As the sun rose, it got hotter and we walked back to the forest. Near the reservoir, we saw a lone Grey-headed Fish Eagle perched in a tree and waiting for its breakfast.



A sleeping juvenile Buffy Fish Owl at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

It was not very active at Jelutong Tower as we waited in the sun for birds to move. We did see three fly-by Purple Herons, a female Blue-winged Leafbird, more Asian Fairy-bluebirds, Common Hill Myna, Orange-bellied Flowerpecker and Brown-throated and van Hasselt's Sunbirds.

At 9.30 am, we left the tower and headed out, adding a pair of Short-tailed Babblers and a Malayan Box Tortoise along the way. It was a good three-and-a-half hour visit that yielded 51 species. A great start to our day!

We had breakfast of *roti prata* and *teh tarik* before heading to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Our first bird here was a White-breasted Waterhen enjoying a bath. It was high tide at the river and we only saw some escaped Milky Storks. The main pond was also flooded and lifeless, and also we decided to check the Coastal Trail for mangrove birds. Along the way, we met a photographer who pointed us to a juvenile Buffy Fish Owl perched high up in a rain tree. A good tick! The mangroves were extremely

humid and we found bird activity very low. We did add a Western Osprey, two Little Egrets and a few Copper-throated and Brown-throated Sunbirds.

We left Sungei Buloh at 1 pm and headed east for Changi Village. We had lunch in the sleepy village where Red-breasted Parakeets were ubiquitous. Our stomachs satiated, we moved on to Pasir Ris Park, an open parkland on the north-east coast of Singapore. An afternoon downpour occurred during our lunch and stopped just in time for us to look for birds. It was strangely quiet with only a pair of Common Flamebacks actively feeding in the carpark. We tried looking for the resident Spotted Wood Owls but they were not around. We did see a mixed group of Red Junglefowls, two more woodpeckers – Sunda Pygmy and Laced, two Oriental Dollarbirds, two Plaintive Cuckoos, Collared and White-throated Kingfishers, and a host of smaller birds such as Common Iora and Oriental White-eye.

Our last site was Lorong Halus and we spent about half an hour checking the barrage road. We saw two Wild Pigs along the way and explored the grasslands beside the road. It was gloomy and we saw the storm clouds gathering. Birdlife was good as we added more new birds to our day list – Sooty-headed Bulbul, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Baya Weaver and Paddyfield Pipit.

Overall, it was a great day of birding as we recorded 78 species of birds as well as other interesting wildlife ranging from Long-tailed Macaque to Clouded Monitor.



A pair of Baya Weavers in grassland at Lorong Halus. Photo © Lim Kim Seng

A Checklist of the Birds Recorded in Singapore on 5th 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	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
3	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
5	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
6	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
7	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
8	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichhyaetus</i>
9	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
10	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
11	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
12	Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>
13	Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
14	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
15	Little Bronze Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx minutillus</i>
16	Banded Bay Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>
17	Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>
18	Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>
19	Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>
20	Buffy Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa ketupu</i>
21	Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
22	Large-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>
23	Grey-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>
24	Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
25	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
26	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
27	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
28	Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>
29	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
30	Red-crowned Barbet	<i>Megalaima rafflesii</i>
31	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
32	Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus moluccensis</i>
33	Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>
34	Laced Woodpecker	<i>Picus vittatus</i>

35	Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
36	Tanimbar Corella	<i>Cacatua goffiniana</i>
37	Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>
38	Blue-rumped Parrot	<i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>
39	Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
40	Long-tailed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula longicauda</i>
41	Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>
42	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
43	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
44	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
45	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
46	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
47	Black-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus atriceps</i>
48	Sooty-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>
49	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
50	Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
51	Asian Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>
52	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
53	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
54	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
55	Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
56	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
57	Abbott's Babbler	<i>Malcocincla abbotti</i>
58	Short-tailed Babbler	<i>Malcocincla malaccensis</i>
59	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
60	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
61	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
62	Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
63	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
64	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
65	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
66	Lesser Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cyanopogon</i>
67	Blue-winged Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>
68	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma</i>
69	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
70	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>
71	Van Hasselt's Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma brasiliana</i>
72	Copper-throated Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma calcostetha</i>
73	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>
74	Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
75	Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>

76	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
77	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
78	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>



Adult Plaintive Cuckoo at Pasir Ris Park. Photo © Lim Kim Seng