

Tips & Tools to Aid Birdwatching & Bird Photography Series: Useful Websites for Bird and Prey Identification

Shorebirds Malaysia

<https://shorebirds.my/>

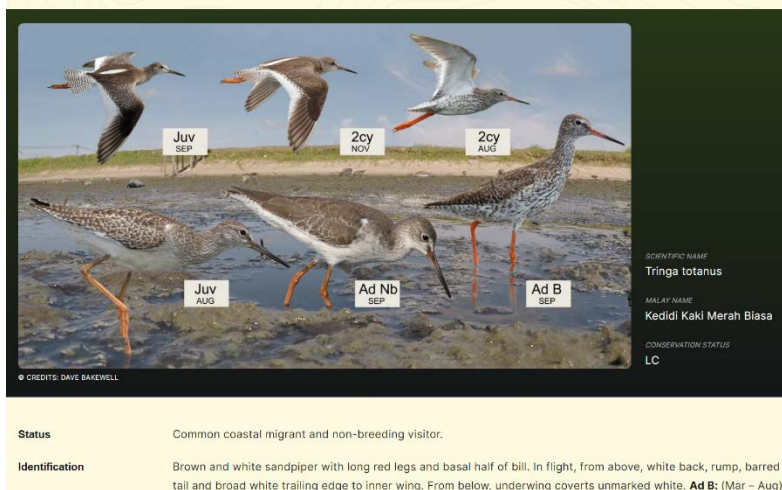


The *Shorebirds Malaysia* website was launched on 27 January 2024 together with a celebration of World Wetlands Day and the unveiling of interpretive signboards at Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda (TAT-KM) Coast, Key Biodiversity Area by the Shorebirds Peninsular Malaysia Project (SPMP).

Shorebirds Malaysia aims to provide a reference platform for Malaysia's 70 shorebird species and serve as a valuable resource for researchers, conservationists, and enthusiasts. It hopes to raise awareness and understanding of the vital role these birds play in the ecosystem and to advance the cause of shorebird conservation and protection of their habitats within Malaysia and along the East Asian Australasian Flyway.

Shorebirds are not the easiest to identify, especially plovers, sandpipers and snipe, when on migration in non-breeding plumage. The *Shorebirds Malaysia* website has excellent descriptions of shorebird families and species (some still under construction). See the example in the image. There are video guides to understand shorebird topography and more video guides on moult are in the pipeline.

Common Redshank



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Scientific Name	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Malay Name	Kedidi Kaki Merah Biasa
Conservation Status	LC
Status	Common coastal migrant and non-breeding visitor.
Identification	Brown and white sandpiper with long red legs and basal half of bill. In flight, from above, white back, rump, barred tail and broad white trailing edge to inner wing. From below, underwing coverts unmarked white. Ad B: (Mar – Aug)

The website is a work in progress and will be updated from time to time. Please drop by regularly to check for the latest information. The team welcome comments on the usability, information, and other relevant topics that can improve the website for everyone. You can contact them at shorebirds.pm@gmail.com and follow their media social <https://www.facebook.com/shorebirdspeninsularmalaysia>.

Shorebirds Malaysia website is managed by a group of researchers and volunteers comprising Nur Munira Azman, Mohd Nasir Azizan, Nurul Salmi Abd Latip, Aini Hasanah Abd Mutalib, and Dave Bakewell. The establishment of the website is supported by Canon Malaysia.

Ecology Asia

<https://www.ecologyasia.com/index.htm>

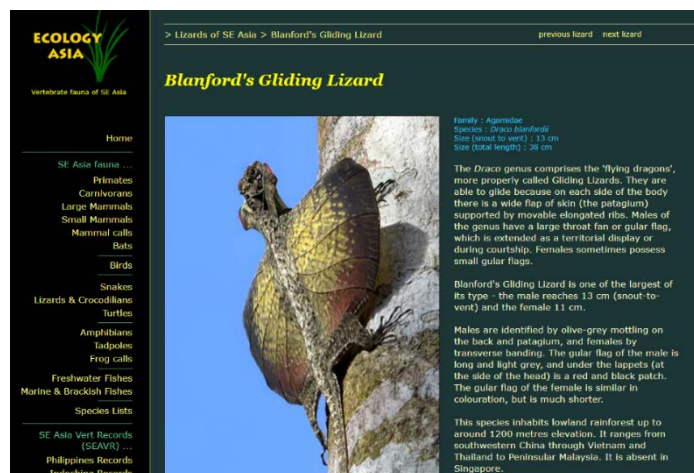
Ecology Asia is a common 'go-to' website for many birdwatchers to identify prey that birds have taken or to identify animals they encounter while in the field. The website, a personal endeavour of Nick Baker, has been online since 2000. The site features over 1000 species of vertebrate, including reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and fishes.



The layout is simple, and easy to view and navigate on smartphones, tablets or desktop computer; there are no complicated menu systems to navigate, and as a result web pages download quickly. The site is best described as 'easy-viewing'.

Ecology Asia has a section on birds, which slowly expands with the addition of new images taken by Nick as he comes across species that are new to him. This section is dedicated to the late Charles Currin (credited for ~20% of the species on the site) with whom Nick corresponded during the 2-year covid pandemic. The value of the birds section is in the preference for images of birds deep in their habitat tangle, rather than 'birds on sticks'.

However, the real strength of Ecology Asia lies in its comprehensive coverage of mammals (including bats), reptiles, amphibians and fishes (freshwater and intertidal), particularly in the Malay Peninsula. Birds such as barbets and kingfishers often take protein-rich reptile prey to feed their growing chicks. The site has an excellent account of small diurnal reptiles including skinks (which may be ground-dwelling or arboreal) and agamids (which are mainly arboreal).



The agamids include the gliding lizards (*Draco* spp.), of which 11 species occur in Peninsular Malaysia, with additional species in Sabah/Sarawak. See example in the image.

The site also helps with the identification of diurnal mammals which might visit fruiting trees where birds (and bird watchers/photographers) are active. For example, there are 11 species of diurnal primate in Peninsular Malaysia, and 15 species of squirrel; all are well covered in the website.

Though simple in its traditional layout, this website is packed full of useful information and is clearly a 'labour of love' for Nick Baker, who you may cross paths with while birding in the forests around Ipoh, Taiping and Penang.