

Birds Feeding on Durian Fruit

Alex Yee

Durian is a favourite fruit of many Malaysians. There are many species of durian with some producing edible fruit, particularly *Durio zibethinus* and its many variants. Bats and birds, in particular spiderhunters, are known to visit durian flowers for the nectar and in the process help with pollination. The Plantain Squirrel *Callosciurus notatus* is well known to visit ripe durian fruit and gnaw through the spiky shell to get at the fleshy seeds (Wee 2016). This opening then provides an opportunity for birds to feed on the flesh of the durian fruit.

In June 2025, I was at my family durian farm at Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, Malaysia. I observed some durian fruit that had been opened, possibly by Plantain Squirrels, with a number of birds having a durian feast. I saw a pair of Brown-throated Sunbirds *Anthreptes malacensis* (Plate 1) and a Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier* (Plate 2) feeding. It was clear that they were feeding on the flesh of the fruit and not on insects attracted by the open durian.



Plate 1: Male (left) and female Brown-throated Sunbirds feeding on durian fruit, Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, Malaysia, June 2025.

There have been a number of previous reports of birds feeding on durian fruit in our region (Wee 2016; Wee 2006; Tang Tsair Ching & Wee 2016). They include:

1. Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* (feeding on *Coelostegia borneensis*, wild Black Durian).
2. Laced Woodpecker *Picus vittatus*.
3. Common Flameback *Dinopium javanense*.
4. Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*.
5. White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*.
6. Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati*.
7. Orange-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum trigonostigma*.
8. Brown-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes malacensis*.

This observation adds the Yellow-vented Bulbul to the list.



Plate 2: Yellow-vented Bulbul feeding on durian fruit, Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, Malaysia, June 2025.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Amar-Singh HSS for assistance in preparing the manuscript and Jia-En Ho & Wai-Mun Choy for reviewing the manuscript.

References

1. Wee, Y.C. (2006). *Durians and birds*. *Bird Ecology Study Group*. [online] <https://besgroup.org/2006/09/04/durians-and-birds/> Accessed on 30 August 2025.
2. Wee, Y.C. (2016). *Durio zibethinus*, the durian tree. *Bird Ecology Study Group*. [online] <https://besgroup.org/2016/11/29/durio-zibethinus-the-durian-tree/> Accessed on 30 August 2025.
3. Tang Tsair Ching & Wee, Y.C. (2016). Great Hornbill feeding on Black Durian fruit. *Bird Ecology Study Group*. [online] <https://besgroup.org/2016/04/16/great-hornbill-feeding-on-black-durian-fruit/> Accessed on 30 August 2025.

Citation: Alex Yee. (2025). Birds Feeding on Durian Fruit. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 3/2025, Sept 2025: pg. 51-52.