

Common Garden Birds Series:

A series specially for the non-birdwatcher, children and families, to learn about our common Malaysian garden birds. And how to make our gardens and cities bird friendly to support them.

Common Garden Bird 1: Yellow-vented Bulbul (Merbah Kapur) *Pycnonotus goiavier* Amar-Singh HSS

The Yellow-vented Bulbul is a medium sized bird recognised by the patch of yellow at the vent (underside of body, just where the tail starts). They are brown on the upper parts and whitish on underparts, and have a black stripe on the head and just in front of the eye. Both sexes look alike. The feathers on the head can sometimes be lifted up like a crest.



They have a cheerful personality and a delightful bubbly call and song which makes up part of the 'dawn chorus', singing with the rising sun. Yellow-vented Bulbuls should be considered as a candidate for the national bird as they best symbolise the average Malaysian. Like many of us they seem to 'think with the stomach'. They have a large diet and are always ready to try new tasty food, especially sweet desserts like ripe bananas, papayas and the nectar of the *Callistemon* tree. They will also feed on insects and invertebrates.



They are common garden birds in the city, and will nest in many locations, often quite near and visible to humans, even in a potted plant. If you see one, remember not to touch the nest or approach too close as we may harm the chicks.

We can encourage Yellow-vented Bulbuls to thrive in our garden or neighbourhood by planting bushes and trees that enable nesting or offer food items. Consider leaving some fruit on your trees to ripen fully for birds to feed on.