

Noteworthy Records for Oct - Dec 2025, Malaysia

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Report

There were three new species for the country in the period, two of them simultaneously at Sungai Balang, Johor: 2 **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* (Plate 4), 14 December onward (SP *et al.*) and a **White-cheeked Starling** *Spodiopsar cineraceus* on 14 December only (SP), a long-awaited national first; and a **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* (Plate 5) at Tempasuk Plain, Sabah, 7 November–14 December (JB *et al.*).



Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*, Sungai Balang, Johor, Malaysia, 14 Dec 2025.

Three **Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* were at Sungai Balang, 20–21 December (AD), continuing the species' upward trend. Migratory wildfowl were present in reasonable numbers, although **Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* numbers were lower than might be expected: in Peninsular Malaysia, up to 2 were at Sungai Balang, 25 October–30 November (ATH) and singles at Sungai Tembus, Pulau Pinang, 29 November (QS) and Malim Nawar, Perak, 3 December (A-SHSS); in Bornean Malaysia, 7 were at Kuala Baram Wetlands, Sarawak, 20

November onward (DB), 2 at Tempasuk Plain from 1 December (JPS), with 6 on 18 December (CKV), and 2 at Sankina Aquaculture, Tawau, Sabah, 6 December (STS). A peak of 6 **Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* were at Tempasuk Plain, 14 December (LM), up to 5 at Penampang paddyfields, Sabah, 30 November–6 December (TG *et al.*), up to 3 at Kuala Baram Wetlands, 27 November (DB) and 1 at Sankina Aquaculture, 7 November–23 December (STS). The only **Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope* were a pair at Taman Harmoni, Sandakan, Sabah, 23 November onward (LM *et al.*) but there were good numbers of **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*, with a high of 23 at Tempasuk Plain, 29 November (JBR) and a **Eurasian Teal** *A. crecca* there, 11 December (LM). **Large Hawk- Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparverioides* is a scarce migrant in Borneo, 1 at Kinabatangan, Sabah, 13 November (JJ) being the only one reported, while a **Northern Hawk-Cuckoo** *H. hyperythrus* on Pulau Mantanani Besar, Sabah, from 30 October (HSK) was noteworthy – all previous records also come from Sabah. Pulau Mantanani hosted a **Nicobar Pigeon** *Caloenas nicobarica* on 23 October (ITR-H). Single **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* were at 4 sites in Sabah, 30 November–18 December (many obs.). A **Band-bellied Crake** *Zapornia paykullii* at Tanjung Karang, Selangor, 16–23 November (LYH) was a great find. An **Oriental Plover** *Anarhynchus veredus* was at Sungai Balang rice-fields, Johor, 27 October (WLW) and 2 **Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus* were at Penampang paddyfields, 4–6 December (CT). Another seldom-seen migrant was a **Little Whimbrel** *Numenius minutus* at Penampang, 14 December (CM). Rarer still was a first-year **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* at Sungai Balang, 8–20 November (ATH), the first confirmed record for Peninsular Malaysia. Away from regular wintering sites, **Nordmann's Greenshank** *Tringa guttifer* included up to 3 at Kuala Abai, Sabah, from 10 November (JB), 1 at Pulau Gusung Semawang, Sabah, 30 November (JB) and up to 9 at Sankina Aquaculture from 4 December (STS), including 1 with a transmitter, tagged at Tiaozini, Jiangsu, China, in September. A **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* at Kuala Baram Wetlands, 6 December onward (DB) was the first photographically-documented state record.



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Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Tempasuk Plain, Sabah, Malaysia, 18 Nov 2025.

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers *Calidris acuminata* were confined to Bornean Malaysia: 2 at Kuala Baram Wetlands, 23 October–13 November (DB) and 3 at Tempasuk Plain, 7 November (CG *et al.*), while a **Dunlin** *C. alpina* was at Kuala Baram Wetlands, 1 November (DB). Two **Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea* were at Sungai Balang, 12–14 December (WLW), overlapping with the Common Pratincoles mentioned above. A **Parasitic Jaeger/Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* was at Teluk Labuk, Sabah, 13 December (MLB), while 23 **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* were at Pulau Gusung Semawang on the same date (RMM) and up to 11 at Sankina Aquaculture (STS). A satellite-tagged **Chinese Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bernsteini* was tracked to Teluk Labuk by Chinese researchers who then alerted local birders, leading to the remarkable find of at least 5, including 2 tagged and 2 untagged birds, 26 November–13 December (JB *et al.*); these were undoubtedly wintering in the area. Malaysia's first **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* (see *BirdingASIA* 44: 93) remained at Morib, Selangor, to 12 October at least (YML *et al.*) while a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus taimyrensis* was off the North Selangor coast, 29 October (CG). A **Storm's Stork** *Ciconia stormi* on the runway of Mulu Airport, Sarawak, 13 October (HSK) was an intriguing record. At least 1 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* was at an undisclosed site in Perak, 4 December (SCC) and single **Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* were at two geographically distant sites, at Sungai Balang, 12–15 November (ATH *et al.*) and at Kepala Batas, Pulau Pinang, 17–22 November (AD *et al.*), suggesting that just 1 bird was involved. A male **Schrenck's Bittern** *Botaurus eurhythmus* (Plate 6) on Pulau Mantanani Besar, 29–30 October (HSK) was a good find, and a **Malayan Night Heron** *Gorsachius melanolophus* was there at the same time (HSK). Further **Malayan Night Herons** were at Trusan Sugut Forest Reserve, 8 October (JB) and Sepilok Rainforest Discovery Center from 10 November (DF), both in Sabah, while in Peninsular Malaysia singles were at Pulau Dayang Bunting, Kedah, 11 December (LN), Hutan Lipur Perdik, Selangor, 13 December (LKC), Taman Negara, Pahang, 14 December (AA) and Tanah Rata, Pahang, 20 December (NU). **Silver-backed Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis* was only recently recorded for the first time in Borneo, so 1 at Sabang, Sugut, Sabah, 9 October (JB) and another at Pulau Mantanani Besar, 30–31 October (JB *et al.*) were noteworthy. A **Besra** *Tachyspiza virgata* at Kuala Gula, Perak, 11 December (A-SHSS) was an excellent find. Two **Northern Boobook** *Ninox japonica* were on Pulau Mantanani Besar, 23 October–9 November at least (ITR-H *et al.*). **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* continues to establish a population in Bornean Malaysia, with birds at Sukau, Lahad Datu and Kota Belud (all in Sabah) during the period (many obs.). A first-year **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* took up residence on Pulau Mantanani Besar, 31 October–18 November at least (HSK *et al.*), and presumably the same bird was at Kota Belud on mainland Sabah, 14 November (CKV). **Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus* was recorded at Sungai Kapur Virgin Jungle Reserve, Sabah, 31 October (RS) and at Taman Harmoni, 29 November (CC). **Crow-billed Drongo** *Dicrurus annectens*, a scarce migrant to Bornean Malaysia, were at Sg Bidut, Sarawak, 13 October (DL) and Sepilok Rainforest Discovery Center, 18 October (WG). A flock of 25 **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Agropsar philippensis* was in Miri, Sarawak, 2 November (DB). A **Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher** *Cyornis brunneatus* delighted photographers at a hide in Taman Eko Rimba Bukit Ayer, Perlis, during October (A-SHSS *et al.*) and a **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* was at Royal Belum, Perak, 11–12 December (TG). A **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* was seen briefly on Pulau Mantanani Besar, 9 November (DB *et al.*) and a **Yellow-breasted Bunting** *E. aureola* was at Sungai Balang, 15 December (LYH).



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