

Volume 3/2024, September 2024

Malaysian Bird Report



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Contents:

		Page
Editorial	Editorial Team	4
Field Notes		
Possible First Breeding Record of the Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda) <i>Pitta sordida mulleri</i> in Peninsular Malaysia	Saravanan Palanisamy & Mohd Semail	5
Use of Limestone Cavities for Nesting by the Oriental Pied Hornbill	Amar-Singh HSS & Sein-Chiong Chiu	10
Nesting Black-naped Monarchs	Cheow-Lim Lee, Kang-Chuan Ching, & Chee-Kong Neoh	16
Breeding Ecology of the Green Iora	Amar-Singh HSS	21
Photo-Shorts		
Invertebrate Prey in the Diet of the Pin-tailed Parrotfinch <i>Erythrura prasina</i>	Sein-Chiong Chiu	29
Plumage of the Chick and Juvenile Bornean Peacock-Pheasant	Alexander John, Elfean Jahanin & Siew-Hian Ng	33
Aberrant Nesting Site and Nest Structure of the Malaysian Pied-Fantail	Amar-Singh HSS	37
Young Birders		
Young People, Go Bird Watching!	Soussan Mokraoui	40
The Search Alone is Beautiful: a Retrospective on Birdwatching	Jessica Ooi Yun En	42
Birdwatching - an Opportunity to Discover Nature and Self	Li Zhen	45
Special Report		
Caged Birds - An Evaluation of the Malaysian Pet Bird Trade	Collaborative work	48
Rare Bird Reports		
Reporting Rare Birds		59
Articles		
Birdwatching Hotspots Series: Sabah Birding Routes 2024	Ron Pudín	60
Bird Trees Series: <i>Macaranga bancana</i> – the Ice Cream of the Forest	Amar-Singh HSS	64

Common Garden Birds Series:	Amar-Singh HSS	69
Common Garden Bird 1: Yellow-vented Bulbul (Merbah Kapur) <i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>		
Common Garden Bird 2: Oriental Magpie-Robin (Murai-Kampung Biasa) <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Amar-Singh HSS	70
Recent Publications & Research		
Research/Review articles relevant to Malaysia	Kim-Chye Lim	71
Book & Site Reviews		
The Hornbill Specialist Group Website	Swee-Yian Lim	74
Upcoming & Recent Bird Activities	Swee-Yian Lim	
October Big Day 2024: 12 October 2024		75
Sony Bird Race 2024: 19 - 20 October 2024		77
14th Borneo Bird Festival: 26 - 27 October 2024		77
Singapore Bird Race: 9 - 10 November 2024		78
13th Asian Bird Fair: 22 - 23 November 2024		79
Contributions to Malaysian Bird Report	Editorial Team	80
Cover Page		
Bornean Bristlehead (Tiung-Batu Kepala Merah) <i>Pityriasis gymnocephala</i> , Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sepilok, Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia, March 2024 © Richard Chong		

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The Malaysian Bird Report has recently entered into a formal content collaboration with Birds of the World (BOW). Birds of the World is a participatory avian life history platform that empowers a global community of ornithologists to unlock transformative insights for research and conservation. BOW species accounts are under a constant state of revision and special efforts are being made to address data gaps and surface regional science. Please work with us so we can incorporate our mutual expertise on Malaysian birds into this important online resource. If you are interested in being involved, supporting or contributing to the work please contact the MBR committee.

Editorial

Editorial Team, Malaysian Bird Report

We are delighted to bring to you another issue of the Malaysian Bird Report. We hope you will enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. There is such a wealth of information, knowledge and experience, that we collectively hold and we need to document as much as possible. Notice how "Photo Shots" allows images to add to our understanding of bird ecology, especially when we collaborate. We have now requested commentaries on selected articles to allow for a discussion of the findings and offer further insights.

In recent years we have seen more species making Malaysia their home and, in this issue, there is a report of the Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda) Pitta breeding in Peninsular Malaysia. Hornbills usually nest in tree cavities but occasionally use limestone cavities; see the report on page 10.

We have three exciting articles from young birdwatchers, a group that all of us need to cultivate and nurture. In line with this, we have also started a 'Common Garden Birds' series to support the general public's interest.

There is a 'painful' special report on the Malaysian pet bird trade – conducted with the help of many bird watchers. We hope all of us will work to end this travesty. The Sabah Bird Watchers Association in collaboration with the Sabah Tourism Board have launched 'Sabah Birding Routes'; an interesting way to promote bird tourism.

This year's October Big Day 2024 is 12 October 2024 and we hope that more of us will participate and put Malaysia on the map. Last year Malaysia ranked number 27 with 373 species recorded from 133 checklists submitted (see the [December 2023](#) issue of the Malaysian Bird Report for more details). Bird watchers from Sabah, Johor and Selangor led the way but we are certain we can do much better. It will only take a couple of minutes to upload your observations on eBird but collectively the impact will be large.

As always, we are in awe of the beautiful images of birds taken by all of you, and the Malaysian Bird Report is a vehicle to use them productively. The cover page for this issue is the magnificent Bornean Bristlehead, captively documented by Richard Chong, who has kindly allowed us to use it.

Field Notes

Possible First Breeding Record of the Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda) *Pitta sordida mulleri* in Peninsular Malaysia

Saravanan Palanisamy & Mohd Semail

Introduction

In the 2023 edition of the Clements Checklist (Clements *et al.*, 2023) there are listed five subspecies of the Western Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*. Of these two are found in Malaysia. The Western Hooded Pitta (Chestnut-crowned) *P. s. cucullata* which breeds in northwestern Peninsular Malaysia (Perlis and Kedah) and is a passage migrant and winter visitor throughout the peninsula (Wells 2007; Lambert & Woodcock 1996; Erritzøe & Erritzøe 1998). The second is the Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda) *P. s. mulleri* which is found in Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak) (Lambert & Woodcock 1996; Kirwan & Erritzøe 2023; Phillipps & Phillipps 2014). Wells (2007) describes one specimen of an all black headed bird, possible *P. s. mulleri*, occurring in the north of the peninsula but there is no confirmation and Thailand images south to Songkhla affirm only *cucullata*. Erritzøe & Erritzøe (1998) states that their presence requires affirmation.

The key plumage differences between the two subspecies are that *P. s. mulleri* has a completely black head with a variable size white wing patch and reduced or absent black on the belly. *P. s. cucullata* has a black face and throat with a rich brown forehead and crown; the white wing patch is large and there is some black on the belly (Erritzøe & Erritzøe 1998). Plate 1 illustrated the differences with the head colour being the most distinctive feature.



Plate 1: *P. s. mulleri* (left, seen at Ganchong, Pahang, May 2023) compared to a *P. s. cucullata* seen at Taiping Perak, February 2024).

This report suggests the presence of *P. s. mulleri* in Peninsular Malaysia with a report of breeding.

Field Observations

In May 2023 Mohd Semail observed a Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda). He saw a bird dashed in front of him when he was riding his bike to his rubber plantation in Ganchong, Pahang. At first, he assumed it could be a kingfisher. A closer observation changed his assumption; it was a Hooded Pitta. Yet, this Hooded Pitta did not look like the ones we usually see on migration.

Mohd Semail later set up a feeding station in the active rubber plantation, in order to photograph the pitta that he had seen. Up to three Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda) visited the feeding station (see Plate 2). This attracted many bird enthusiasts. One of the pittas was noted to be a little smaller and had immature calls when compared to the other two and was suspected to be an immature bird. One of the birds was seen collecting small twigs at the plantation, which suggested that they could be nesting nearby. However, no nest was found at that time. After approximately a month, the sightings of these pittas were less frequent, until they were not seen at all.



Plate 2: Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda), Ganchong, Pahang, June 2024 & May 2023.

In May 2024, up to five Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda) were seen at another location. This was an abandoned rubber estate, approximately two kilometres away from the first site (see Plate 2 & 3). One of those pittas was also seen gathering nesting materials. A nest of this Hooded Pitta was found on 11 July 2024. It was built on a small fig tree, approximately two meters high from the ground. The nest was made of a variety of twigs and leaves (see Plate 4). One Western Hooded Pitta (Sunda) was observed entering and leaving the nest a few times. Unfortunately, this nest was raided and destroyed by a troop of Long-tailed Macaques *Macaca fascicularis* on the same day it was found.

No Western Hooded Pitta (Chestnut-crowned) type birds were seen at either site in 2023 and 2024.



Plate 3: A clearer view of the head of a Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda), Ganchong, Pahang, June 2024 to show the all-black crown.



Plate 4: Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda) nest, Ganchong, Pahang, July 2024.

Discussion

Some bird watchers who observed the pittas suggested that the Western Hooded Pittas (Sunda) found at Ganchong, Pahang were migratory birds from Sabah. Wells (2007) had considered the possibility of "*long-distance, over-sea vagrancy (chance remote but not inconceivable as mulleri has occurred on Krakatau and Bangka islands, and there is circumstantial evidence of movements off-shore around Borneo)*". Lambert & Woodcock (1996) offer data from Borneo that *P. s. mulleri* might undertake regular long-distance movements. They also note that birds were only seen during some months in Borneo and absent between October and April. The experience in our observation is similar with bird seen during the May to July period, when nesting.

A review of images in the Macaulay Library (2024) for Malaysia showed no other nests reported. One image of nest building is from Sabah. There are 19 posts from Pahang state. 16 are images of *P. s. cucullate* and are dated from 25 November to 2 April. One post is from Saravanan showing an all black headed bird, dated 30 Jun 2024. There are 2 images of the same bird by Lars Mannzen dated 10 July 2024 from Taman Negara NP, Mutiara Resort, Pahang, Malaysia but the quality is limited and the crown cannot be seen. He notes it was "*Definitely behaving like a resident, endlessly calling*". He observed two birds. A review of images for Western Hooded Pitta in Thailand (Macaulay Library 2024) showed no images of black crowned birds; all had a chestnut cap.

These observations suggest the presence of *P. s. mulleri* in Peninsular Malaysia. The nest observation is possibly the first breeding record for *P. s. mulleri* in Peninsular Malaysia and continental South East Asia.

Acknowledgement

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Commentary on the Observation:

Frank Lambert

I wonder if a single bird might have dispersed to Malaysia, most likely from Sumatra, and hybridised with *cucullata* to produce a small population of dark-headed individuals. Some of the photos have the suggestion of some chestnut feathers on the forehead and onto the centre of the forecrown. I also think it is possible that an Indonesian could have brought a pet one to Malaysia that was released or escaped and then bred with *cucullata*.

Genetic studies show that *bangkana* is a true hybrid between *cucullata* and *mulleri* (Ericson 2019). That also has some 'brown' markings in the crown. So, I suspect these birds are probably hybrids. The bird trade could easily be to blame.

David Wells

An apparently stabilized hybrid subspecies *bangkana* marooned on what is now Bangka island implies (ice-age?) the breeding range of *cucullata* once extended further into Sundaland than it does now. With no non-wintering season occurrences on record that appears to include all Malaysian territory east of the Main Range, so if any *cucullata* genes were involved at Ganchong, they appear not to have been collected locally.

Note that there was one or more birds observed at Taman Botani Negara, Shah Alam, Selangor from January to early April 2023, with mixed cap characters, having a black median stripe on otherwise brown cap; with calling recorded there in late February and March of that year (Macaulay Library 2024). This requires investigating and suggests at least that some migrants could be coming from as nearby as the mixed gene zone of the breeding range.

Perhaps Hooded Pitta breeders are in the process of (re-)invading Peninsular Malaysia, just as Blue-winged Pitta *Pitta moluccensis* apparently has done over the last few decades?

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Use of Limestone Cavities for Nesting by the Oriental Pied Hornbill

Amar-Singh HSS & Sein-Chiong Chiu

Introduction

There have been previous reports of Oriental Pied Hornbills *Anthracoceros albirostris* nesting in limestone cavities. Although these birds prefer natural cavities in trees, uncommonly they have been observed investigating or using limestone cavities (Kemp & Boesman 2020a; Connie Khoo 2017; Amar-Singh HSS 2022; Baylis & Fletcher 2021). Oriental Pied Hornbills have also been observed locally using abandoned earthen jars placed sideways on the ground (locally known as 'tempayan') for nesting (Ahmad Ismail, *et al.*, 2015), suggesting some adaptability in use of nesting locations.

This report describes the use of a limestone cavity by Oriental Pied Hornbills to nest in 2024 at Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Nest Observation Disclosure

The nest was very high up on a karst limestone outcropping. We observed the nest from ground level using long or zoom lens cameras and were located at least 50 meters from the nest site. The birds did not appear to be distressed by our presence.

Key Timelines of Nesting Activity Observations

02 March 2024	Information was received that a pair of Oriental Pied Hornbill was nesting in a nest cavity in a limestone hill.
04 & 07 March 2024	An adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill was seen regurgitating food to feed an adult female at a limestone cavity. A video of the activity can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHCh_53rdSo
Follow-up visits 12 to 21 March 2024	The adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill was seen bringing food to the cavity.
02 May 2024	The adult female was seen outside the nest.
09 May 2024	The adult female was observed feeding the chick(s).
13 May 2024	On a follow-up visit there were no longer any hornbills in the cavity or vicinity. The chick(s) were believed to have fledged sometime between 10 May 2024 and 12 May 2024.

Nesting Location and Environment

The nest was located 38 meters up on a karst limestone outcropping in Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia (Plate 1).

The opening had two cavities and the hole on the right was used; we are unsure if the holes are connected within the cavity (they do not appear to be connected). Unlike a tree cavity, there was no material covering the entrance of the limestone cavity (Plate 2).



Plate 1: Overview of limestone cavity used by Oriental Pied Hornbills to nest, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, March 2024.



Plate 2: Karst limestone cavity used by Oriental Pied Hornbills to nest was on the right, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, March 2024.

Incubation and Fledging Periods

The juveniles(s) were believed to have fledged sometime between 10 May 2024 and 12 May 2024. The estimated duration from incubation to fledging was at least 72 days, 02 March to 12 May 2024.

Feeding Behaviour

The adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill frequently brought food to the nesting site (Plate 3). Most food items were regurgitated and appeared to be fruit, possibly *Ficus* fruit (Plate 4). Once, on 12 March 2024, the adult male brought back either a bat or bird prey to the nest cavity.

In one evaluation of a single feeding episode, serial images on 04 March 2024 showed the adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill regurgitating and feeding the female 40 times from 0758 to 0804 hrs; on average almost one feed every 10 seconds. Most feeds were of a single fruit but some involved two or three fruits.



Plate 3: Adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill feeding the adult female at the nesting site, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, 04 March 2024.

By 02 May 2024 the adult female had already exited the nest and was feeding the chick(s). The male was not observed coming back to the nest during this three-hour observation. Observations on 06 and 09 May 2024 showed only the adult female feeding the chick(s) with no sign of the adult male. The feeding frequency of the chick(s) by the adult female was every 45 to 60 minutes. After feeding was completed one chick's head and face was visible at the nest cavity entrance (Plate 5). A video of the activity can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/agVjinz3UOw>



Plate 4: Closeup image (software enhanced) of a variety of regurgitated fruit in the bill of the adult male Oriental Pied Hornbill at the nesting site, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, March & May 2024.

Discussion

Oriental Pied Hornbills are not uncommon in Ipoh City and anecdotal observations suggest an increase in recent years. This could be due to a loss of habitat in the surrounding regions or an ability to use alternate sites for nesting. Nesting in limestone cavities does pose risks of predation as many troops of monkeys inhabit these outcroppings and the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* also nest in these locations.

We considered the reason why limestone cavities are used by these hornbills. One reason for using limestone cavities in the city could be that Ipoh has lost a very large number of old trees by extensive mal-development in the past two to three decades. The city council has been replanting with shrubs and palms. This has reduced old tree nesting sites for hornbills, woodpeckers and barbets. Another possibility is the long-standing issue of poachers raiding captive birds in tree cavities which are more easily accessible. Hence, it could be adaptive behaviour on the part of the Oriental Pied Hornbills to nest in 'safer' environments.

A search for other species of hornbills (focus on local available species) having used limestone cavities for nests showed reports of occasional nesting by Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* (Kemp & Boesman 2020b) and Rhinoceros Hornbill *Buceros rhinoceros* (Kemp & Boesman 2020c).



Plate 5: Oriental Pied Hornbill chick at nest entrance, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, 09 May 2024.

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Nesting Black-naped Monarchs

Cheow-Lim Lee, Kang-Chuan Ching, & Chee-Kong Neoh

Introduction

The Talang birdwatching site is located in the district of Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. This important birding site is easily accessed from Tanjung Ipoh. After a slow drive through an idyllic Malay kampong, one will come to the bridge linking Talang to Langkap. From this point, bird-watching can be done along the 9-kilometre stretch of well-paved road which cuts through a relatively unspoiled tropical rainforest. Although forest birds are more often heard than seen, Talang continues to attract a host of local and out-of-town bird-watchers. The best time for bird-watching in Talang is when the *Macaranga gigantea* trees bear fruit or during the breeding season which occurs from May to July.

This report describes two Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* nests observed at Talang.

Observations of the First Nest

Nest Observation Disclosure: We observed the nest using long lens through an opening between some trees. The camera was positioned about 4 meters from the nest. That was the furthest we could observe from, as the nest was just 5 meters from the road. At no time did the birds appear distressed by our presence.

On 30 June 2024, we spotted a pair of Black-naped Monarchs actively building a nest in Talang. The cup-shaped nest was built on a forked vine hanging about 3 meters above a stream. Both the male and female shared the responsibility of collecting pieces of moss, twigs and dry leaves which are held together in place with spider webs (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Both male and female Black-naped Monarchs worked together to build the nest (left) and male with spider web on its beak, 30 June 2024, Talang, Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

The following week, we returned to check on the progress. Much work had been done to the nest since the first observation but the birds were no longer around. Observations around the site showed that the banana trees growing near the nest were being cut. This perceived threat could have caused the monarchs to abandon their nest.

Observations of the Second Nest

Nest Observation Disclosure: As it was an open space, we could observe the nest using long and zoom lens, positioned at 12 meters from the nest. The nest was not approached by our team and at no time did the birds appear distressed by our presence.

On 14 July 2024, during a bird-watching session with friends from Kuala Lumpur, we found a second nest about 20 metres away from the previous nest. The cup-shaped nest was hanging on a branch of a *Macaranga gigantea* tree about 2.1 metres above a drain by the roadside. Not long after, the male monarch, which could be the same as the one observed in June 2024, returned to the nest for a quick inspection before leaving again. We were not sure if any eggs had been laid, but care was taken to protect the nesting site from public knowledge to ensure the success of the brood.

A subsequent visit to Talang on 21 July 2024 and 28 July 2024, saw the pair of monarchs taking turns to incubate the eggs which take about 14 days to hatch (Plate 2) (Moeliker *et al.* 2020). The Black-naped Monarch usually lays a clutch of two to four eggs (Moeliker *et al.* 2020), but at this point we could not see the number of eggs in the nest.



Plate 2: Male (left) and female Black-naped Monarchs incubating on 21 July 2024 and 28 July 2024 respectively, Talang, Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

When we returned to Talang on 31 July 2024, both parents could be seen feeding two nestlings, which probably hatched two days prior to that. Not much could be seen of the nestlings in the nest when the parents fed them with small insects. After feeding the nestlings,

the parents would perch on the edge of the nest for a while before flying off with the faecal sac, if there was any. The next observation was made on 02 August 2024, where two nestlings with their eyes partially open were visible in the nest (Plate 3). They could already raise their heads when being fed. Feeding had become more frequent with both parents flying to and from the nest every few minutes. The abundance of insects such as grasshoppers, butterflies, moths and crickets in the vicinity ensured that both nestlings were well-fed.



Plate 3: Female (left) and male (with a small cricket) Black-naped Monarchs feeding nestlings, 02 August 2024, Talang, Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

The last visit to the nesting site was made on 06 August 2024. The nestlings or fledglings had developed full feathers except on the head which was still bald. By then, they had outgrown their nest and were seen perching on the edge while waiting to be fed simultaneously by both parents. Meanwhile, one of the fledglings had hopped up the vine. It would occasionally stretch and flap its wings while trying to get a hold on the vine. At 1135 hrs, the first fledgling launched itself and flew off, leaving its younger sibling alone in the nest. Feeding continued for the other fledgling until about 1155 hrs, where it finally showed signs of being ready to leave the nest. It launched itself off the nest and flew a few metres before landing on a branch. For the next hour, the male monarch came several times to feed it. One noticeable insect was a large katydid which the fledgling swallowed after several gulps (Plate 4). After the hearty meal and beckoned by the persistent call of the adults, the fledgling took flight heading straight toward the direction of the calls.

The calls of the adult Black-naped Monarchs soon faded. All that could be heard was the buzzing of the cicadas. We packed up our gear and left Talang on a cheerful note. Deep in our hearts, we wished the two juvenile Black-naped Monarchs all the best as they began the next episode of their life in the tropical rainforest of Talang.



Plate 4: Sequence of events when fledging on 06 August 2024, Talang, Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

Discussion

This was the fourth time we have observed Black-naped Monarchs building their nests in an open area beside the road. Wells (2007) notes that nests are usually in the forest and observations that suggest birds favour streams and trail-sides may be biased by finds. Most nests are two to three meters above the ground (Wells 2007), as in our case.

Wells (2007) states that the incubation and fledging periods are unreported locally, while. Moeliker *et al.* (2020) quote an incubation period of 14 days and a nestling period of approximately 10 days. A recent local report (Huzairi Abd Halim 2023) suggests that incubation is longer than nine days and that fledging occurred eight days after hatching. This report could not be certain as to the incubation period; however the nestling period was nine days or less.

Moeliker *et al.* (2020) quotes a clutch of two to four eggs but for our region Wells (2007) states "*full clutch two, one instance from Phuket of three; but no broods of more than two on record.*" Our observation had a brood of two birds while that by Huzairi Abd Halim (2023) had three.

Insects are the predominant food sources for nestlings. The prey we identified included spiders, crickets, katydids and winged insects.

The report confirms that both members of the breeding pair are involved in nest building, incubation, feeding nestlings and fledglings.

Acknowledgement

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Breeding Ecology of the Green Iora

Amar-Singh HSS

Introduction

Breeding behaviour of the Green Iora *Aegithina viridissima* is poorly known. Wells (2007) states that nests are neat cups. Both pair-members incubate and tend nestlings but incubation and fledging period unknown (Wells 2007; Wells 2020). I have had an opportunity to observe two Green Iora nests and report the observations here.

Nest One 2014

Nest Observation Disclosure: I observed the nest building activities for less than 45 minutes. To give the birds a break from my presence, I left and returned three times in the 45 minutes. I was situated quite far away at the foot of a hill, separated from them by a ravine, a stream and thick canopy. Nest building was not interrupted during my presence.

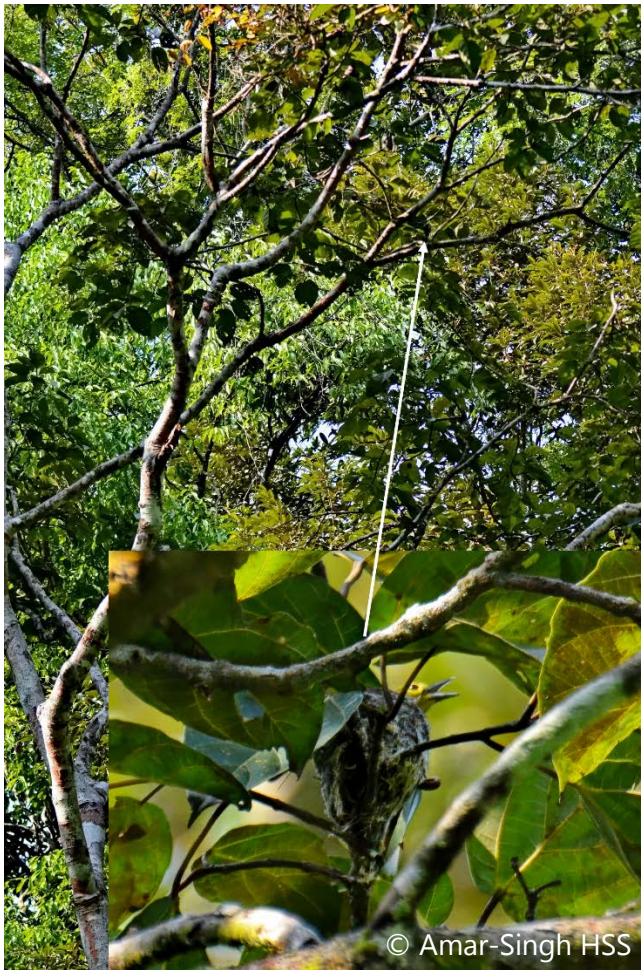
The first nest was seen on 13 April 2014 on a trail through primary forest at the Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. I spotted a pair of Green Ioras collecting nesting material (Plate 1). They were approximately 10 meters up stripping fibre from the bark of a dead branch; I observed three episodes of nest material collection. Both the male and female were equally involved. I also observed them collecting spiderwebs.



Plate 1: Green Ioras collecting nesting material, 13 April 2014, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

I managed to follow them in the canopy and found their nest. It was located on the outer branch of a tall tree on a slope of a hill, approximately 12 meters high. The nest was close to completion and was a small cup, built into 4 small branches, with a small downwards extension, very much like some flycatchers (Plate 2). In addition to adding material, they also would sit in the cup to shape it.

At the time I was not able to follow up on the nest due to work and location constraints.



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Plate 2: Green Iora nest and site, 13 April 2014, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Nest Two 2024

Nest Observation Disclosure: I observed the nest using an 800 mm long lens in DX format (equivalent to 1200 mm) from more than 15 meters from the nest. Often, long video recordings were used while I walked away from the site. At no time did the birds appear distressed by my presence. I returned every two to three days to the site. I avoid observation on weekends and public holidays as there were nature visitors to the area and I did not want to bring attention to the nest in case of harm. At times observations were not possible due to closure of the forest area.

Timelines and Key Observation Dates

13 June 2024	Nest building in final stages observed.
20 June 2024	Both pair-members incubating with some continued nest building.
25-27 June 2024	Incubation in progress.
01 July 2024	Adults seen feeding chicks, possibly very young and just hatched in past one to two days.
11 July 2024	Two chicks being fed actively; at times sitting on the edge of the nest.
14 July 2024	No chicks in the nest (presumed fledged).

Nest Location and Structure

I first observed a pair of Green Ioras bringing nesting material to the crown of a Malayan Teak *Vitex pinnata* located in an open space of a recreational area in the Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia on 13 June 2024. Surrounding the area was primary forest and I have frequently seen social groups of Green Ioras here, often with juvenile birds. The nest was extremely difficult to locate as it was in the crown of the tree 8-9 meters high and hidden by many leaves and branches with moss and lichen (Plate 3). The nest was a neat cup built into a confluence of at least three branches, one being a fork on the branch. The nest had a small hanging extension below. The nest material appeared to be made up of strips of bark and fibre, held together with spider silk (Plate 4).



Plate 3: Overview of nest location in crown of a *Vitex pinnata* tree (arrow shows the location).

Parental Involvement in Nest Construction

Both parents assisted in nest construction but I am unsure of the proportion of involvement as I observed the late stages of nest building. The pair-members would go out together to get nesting material and come back together to build the nest. On one occasion I observed the female using her body to shape the interior of the nest. A video of two nest building activities (13 June 2024) by the adult female is available here: <https://youtu.be/xqW223PBXBE>. On 20 June 2024, despite incubation in progress, the female brought spider silk to enhance the external integrity of the nest.



Plate 4: Closer view of nest: Left female nest building 13 June 2024; right male incubating 20 June 2024.

Incubation and Fledging Periods

I am unsure how many eggs were laid but two chicks were seen in the nest. One appeared younger and may have hatched a day later. The incubation period is more than 10 days and shorter than 16 days. The fledging period is between 11 to 13 days. Plate 5 shows a series of images of chicks over time. Plate 6 shows a chick close to fledging. A video of the two chicks close to fledging is available here: <https://youtu.be/HXz91qN-0rs>



Plate 5: Video grab serial images of chicks on 06, 09, 11 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.



Plate 6: Dominant chick close to fledging, 11 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Parental Responsibilities for Incubation and Nestlings

Both parents incubate eggs and feed nestlings. However, the adult male appears to play a larger role. Every early morning that I visited the nest (eight occasions), during incubation and once the chicks had hatched, the male was the one sitting on the nest. In addition, I observed more feeding episodes by the male than the female of young nestlings. On two mornings I observed the male calling out, possibly to the female, for a change in incubation responsibility. When the female did not show, the male left, presumably to feed, and returned shortly after to continue incubation. On two other occasions I saw the male leave the very young chicks to get food and return with prey shortly after; the female was not in attendance. I have also seen the female leave and not wait for the male to arrive while the chicks were still very young. There were other observations where the male called out and the female did respond by arriving at the nest to take over responsibilities. Note that all my observations were in the 0730 to 1130 hrs periods and I cannot be sure of behaviour at other times.

Feeding Behaviour, Frequency and Food Items

Adults often landed on a branch about 0.5 meters away from the nest and checked for safety before approaching the nest to feed the young. Younger chicks, one to five days old, were seldom left unattended. Older chicks were left unattended while parents went to forage for prey. Foraging for prey by the adult female was observed 20-30 m from the nest site but usually they were further away.

Extended video recording assessments, when the chicks were approximately six days old, showed that the feeding frequency in the morning (0800 to 1100 hrs) was, at peak intensity, every three to six minutes. But could range from 30 seconds (adults coming one after the other) to gaps of 20 minutes. The feeding intensity was higher after 0900 hrs. The ratio of male to female feeds was 5:3 when nestlings were young but appeared equal when they were older. A video of some feeding episodes (from 01-09 July 2024) is available here: <https://youtu.be/oMFgUUAwJHY>

Food items brought to nestlings were not always easy to identify due to the height and foliage. The majority were invertebrates and insects (Plate 7). They included caterpillars, spiders, moths, plant hoppers, beetles and a possible Leaf-rolling Cricket Nymph (*Gryllacrididae*). No fruit items were brought to nestlings but I have observed adults feeding on fruit in the past. Once the adult female appeared to be regurgitating four feeds at one time but the food item was small and could not be seen. On one occasion, after feeding the chicks, the female picked up a number of insects from around the nest, possibly ants, and fed them to the chicks.



Plate 7: Video grab image of various prey brought to nestlings, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Faecal Sacs and Removal

Both adults collected faecal sacs (Plate 8). Often, after feeding, adults would wait expectantly at the nest edge to see if nestling produced a faecal sac. When nestlings were still young the faecal sac was collected and eaten by the adults. When the nestlings were older, the faecal sac

was taken far away from the nest, presumably for disposal. Video recording assessments, when the chicks were about six days old, showed two faecal sac removal in a duration of 60 minutes.



Plate 8: Video grab image of an adult male Green Iora collecting a faecal sac, 06 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Interaction with Other Birds

On a few occasions I observed Spectacled Bulbul *Rubigula erythrophthalmos*, Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus brunneus*, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* and Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Mixornis gularis* come within 0.75 to 1m of nest to forage but they were not chased away.

Prior Observations of Feeding of Fledged Juveniles

I have often seen Green Ioras in small family groups of two adults and two juveniles, or in social groups of six to seven with adults and two to three juveniles. Both adult males and females feed fledged juveniles. Plate 9 shows a few food items given to fledged juveniles, all observed at the Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia, close to the second nesting site. I have also observed an adult with a Leaf-rolling Cricket Nymph (*Gryllacrididae*) that was fed to a fledged juvenile.

Wells (2020) notes that nest-building, incubation and nestlings have been recorded in April and May. The two nests I observed had nest building in April and June, with nestlings in July (second nest). I have seen fledged, dependent juveniles in August on four occasions, suggesting a second breeding season later in the year.



Plate 9: Food items given to fledged juveniles: 1-caterpillar, 2-caterpillar, 3-winged insect, 4-spider.

Discussion

A literature and online search, including the Macaulay Library, for Green Iora nests did not reveal any other reports of nests apart from unverified accounts (Well 2020). There are three videos online of Iora nests labelled as Green Iora but all three are of the Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*. These observations offer some information about the breeding ecology of the Green Iora. Further observations are required to ascertain more accurately incubation and fledging periods and as to which cuckoo species, if any, use them as a brood host.

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Photo-Shorts

Invertebrate Prey in the Diet of the Pin-tailed Parrotfinch *Erythrura prasina*

Sein-Chiong Chiu

The Pin-tailed Parrotfinch *Erythrura prasina* is well documented locally to take bamboo seeds (Wells 2007). It has also been documented to take rice and other grass seeds in the wild; in captivity it eats smaller seeds of grass and millet (Clements *et al.*, 1993; Payne 2020).

Wells (2007) questions what the diet may include during periods of relative shortage of bamboo seeds, and notes that during one 15 minute observation where "a lone male on the ground, working its way slowly along a small stream running under high bamboo cover, dipping its bill into water at intervals and searching purposefully among fallen leaves, either for fallen seed or small invertebrates. Unfortunately, while in view it took nothing." This observation suggests other prey sources.

On 02 May 2021, 12 August 2021 and 16 August 2021 I observed a group of five Pin-tailed Parrotfinches foraging at a stream at Perak, Malaysia (Plate 1) for over 45 minutes on each occasion. There was one male and four females. They were feeding on a small snail species from the stream (Plate 1 & 2).



Plate 1: Video grab images of Pin-tailed Parrotfinches foraging at a stream and feeding on snails, Perak, Malaysia, 12 August 2021.

They would obtain the snails from the stream rock surface or submerge their heads to acquire them in the stream bed or rock under water (Plate 3 & 4). They held the snails in the beak, with the opening facing towards them, and flicked their tongues rapidly to acquire the prey. After searching for snails and feeding for a while, having eaten approximately seven to nine snails each, the birds would fly to the plants by the side of the stream and rest for 10 to 15 minutes before resuming feeding on the snails again. During the observation periods they were seen feeding only on the snails.



Plate 2: Pin-tailed Parrotfinches feeding on snails in a stream, Perak, Malaysia, 16 August 2021.



Plate 3: Video grab images of a Pin-tailed Parrotfinch foraging for snails under water at the edge of a stream, Perak, Malaysia, 16 August 2021.

Videos of the activity can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUkAHTrlp4>,
<https://youtu.be/4BjEFoWJwY>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbYv1oVV6k>,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7ptQfmD-mI>.

The snail identity is uncertain but possibly a *Sulcospira* species.



Plate 4: Video grab images of a Pin-tailed Parrotfinch foraging for snails under water in the midst of a rushing stream, Perak, Malaysia, 16 August 2021.

This observation broadens our understanding of the diet of Pin-tailed Parrotfinches to include invertebrates

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Commentary on the Observation by David Wells, Amar-Singh HSS & Dave Bakewell

This fascinating observation helps us to better appreciate the diet of Pin-tailed Parrotfinches. A review of images in the Macaulay Library (2024) for Pin-tailed Parrotfinch (388 images) identified four other observations, from Thailand, China and Malaysia, of the species feeding on snails. This suggests that the observation is not an isolated event. The snails were of different sizes, suggesting that a variety of snail species may be fed on.

In addition, a number of images in the Macaulay Library (2024) were of Pin-tailed Parrotfinches perched on vegetation or rocks in streams or at the water's edge – what we previously considered as a bathing or drinking activity should now be reconsidered as also a feeding activity. The Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch *Erythrura hyperythra* has also been imaged at similar streams (Zaiton Yunus 2010) but with no food seen in the beak; in light of this observation more information is required about their feeding in streams.

What the Pin-tailed Parrotfinches are feeding on in the snails is not certain. The snails are not crushed for their contents. The videos in this observation confirm the energetic probing of snails with tongues. However, no snail meat can be seen to be extracted. Possibly what is being extracted is liquid only - likely body fluids, nutrients from the fluid in the shell, including blood. Probing is done with the bill held open, so how is sucking done? Could the fluids be draining down into the lower mandible and then taken in? In one video a bird picks up a shell that has been fed on by another bird and discards it as 'empty'; suggesting an ability to discern that useful contents had been extracted.

An online search for images of the Pin-tailed Parrotfinch showed one image of a female feeding on a dragonfly larva at the water's edge (Fuangnakhon 2022).

A review of other parrotfinch species in the world, using the Birds of the World website, does not show any species feeding on snails, although some are noted to feed on insects.

We hope this observation encourages more detailed observation of the diet and feeding behaviour of Parrotfinches.

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Plumage of the Chick and Juvenile Bornean Peacock-Pheasant

Alexander John, Elfean Jahanin & Siew-Hian Ng

The Bornean Peacock-Pheasant (Kuang-Cermin Borneo) *Polyplectron schleiermacheri* is uncommonly seen and is probably the rarest and least known of all peacock-pheasants. It is classified as Endangered by the IUCN Red List for birds (BirdLife International 2024). The 2020 checklist of the birds of Malaysia (MNS Bird Conservation Council 2021) notes observations in Sabah until 1960 followed by a gap from 1961–1980 and then seen again for the 1981–2000 and 2001–2020 periods (Smythies & Davison 1999). In 2016 up to three birds were recorded on a camera-trap in central Sabah (Mohamed *et al.*, 2017), with a juvenile recorded.

Since 2021 the Bornean Peacock-Pheasant has been seen frequently at a bird hide at Telupid Forest Reserve, Kampung Bestari, Telupid, Sandakan, Sabah. The hide is managed by the local village community and they ensure the safety and conservation of this particular species. The hide and observation by many birdwatchers and photographers over time has enabled photographic records of the local population, now in their 'third generation' at the site. Chicks and juveniles have been documented. This short report aims to describe the juveniles, in particular the chicks, which up to now have been undescribed adequately (McGowan & Kirwan 2020). Note that photographing them in the low light conditions, under the dense forest canopy can be difficult and may affect plumage colours.

The adult male is shown in Plate 1. The adult male is 50 cm long of which 20 cm is the tail (McGowan & Kirwan 2020). It has an iridescent salt-pepper crest and nape, looking blue-grey or light green in different lighting. The throat and central breast are white. The sides of the breast extending downwards are iridescent green in good light but can appear black-purple in colour. The rest of the underparts are blackish. The upperparts are rufous-brown with metallic green (blue in some views) ocelli in the wing and tail feathers; ocelli are of a larger size in the tail. Bare part features include deep orange bare skin around the eye, blue iris and grey bill and legs. There are two spurs on each leg; at times three.



Plate 1: Adult male Bornean Peacock-Pheasant, April 2024 & June 2022, Telupid, Sandakan, Sabah.

Adult females (Plate 2) are smaller at 36 cm and appear overall darker in plumage. The head and neck are lighter grey-brown with some white at the throat. The underparts are a darker rufous-brown with non-iridescent ocelli on the wings. There are indistinct, bluish, iridescent ocelli on the rectrices. Females have light orange bare skin around the eye, brown iris and grey bill and legs, but lack spurs.



Plate 2: Adult female Bornean Peacock-Pheasant, April 2024, Telupid, Sandakan, Sabah.

Chicks are overall brownish, lighter below and darker above (Plate 3). Wings are dark mahogany-brown edged pale buff. Throat and sides of breast are light brown with white below. The head is light brown with a dark brown streak extending from the forehead to the nape and sides of the head. The plumage around and behind the eyes is dark, giving the impression of a pale supercilium. Bill and feet are grey. Plate 4 shows a family unit – an adult pair with a chick.

Young juveniles (Plate 5) are like the adult female but lack the iridescent ocelli in the tail; tails are barred. They have a brown iris, grey bill and legs but lack the yellow eye skin; some have a lighter area around the eye.

This magnificent, endangered peacock-pheasant will face threats from habitat loss and requires the authorities to protect forest reserves and locations where it can be found.



Plate 3: Adult female Bornean Peacock-Pheasants with chicks, August 2024, Telupid, Sandakan, Sabah.



Plate 4: Adult Bornean Peacock-Pheasants pair with chick, August 2024, Telupid, Sandakan, Sabah.



Plate 5: Juvenile Bornean Peacock-Pheasant with adult female, July 2022, Telupid, Sabah.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Amar-Singh HSS for the kind assistance in helping to write this article.

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Aberrant Nesting Site and Nest Structure of the Malaysian Pied-Fantail

Amar-Singh HSS

I have found the Malaysian Pied-Fantail *Rhipidura javanica* to be resilient and adaptive birds when it comes to nesting. Over the years I have seen numerous nests, many in our garden. In recent years we had an influx of Common Treeshrew *Tupaia glis* that visit our wild urban garden daily and this has disrupted nesting birds. The Treeshrews have taken the eggs of a number of bird species and our resident pair of Malaysian Pied-Fantails have lost a number of nests. They struggled at first but adapted by using very thin structures, like a single stand of a very thin hanging bamboo, to build nests and hence overcame the threat.

On 22 July 2024 I was at the outskirts of Ipoh City, Perak, Malaysia, at a location where a number of ex-mining pools are used for fish farming; the surrounding land used as orchards. There are quite a number of Malaysian Pied-Fantail to be found here, as flies around. I spotted a pair nesting in a very unusual way - on the top of a wooden stake that had been placed in the waters of an ex-mining pool. The wooden stake was about one meter out of the water and about one meter away from land. The nest was built on a small ledge near the top (Plate 1).



© Amar-Singh HSS

Plate 1: Malaysian Pied-Fantail nesting on a wooden stake, 22 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

The bird appeared to be incubating, so I kept my distance and decided to leave. Just at that moment the nesting partner arrived with more nesting material. They changed places and further nest construction occurred (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Unusual nest building by Malaysian Pied-Fantail, 22 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

I decided to leave the nest site. I returned 45 min later as I saw from afar that they were not at the nest. Plate 3 shows the nest without the adults. There were no eggs that I could see, but direct views into the nest are limited. The nest was made mainly of dried grass fibre, anchored to the wood using spider silk.



Plate 3: Closer view of unusual nest location and structure, 22 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

Many of us would be familiar with the usual nest of the Malaysian Pied-Fantail. It is a small, well woven cup of dead grasses, held together with spider silk and often with a small hanging 'tail'. The nest is usually built in trees, in the fork of a branch or a leaning branch. I have seen Malaysian Pied-Fantails build a nest over water before (Amar-Singh HSS 2015) and it has been reported in literature (Wells 2007), so that was not unexpected. But the site of this nest was very unusual, resting on the ledge of a piece of wood. In addition, the nest is more like that of

a Bulbul rather than the tight cup of a Flycatcher. I was concerned that the nest was very open to the elements and visible. Fortunately, we do not have any Brown Shrikes around at this time but human nuisance predators are likely. I considered reasons for this aberrant nesting site:

1. It could be that there are many arboreal mammalian threats in the area, hence building over water was for safety. The location being a good choice and nest structure appropriate for the site. This is the most likely explanation. I have observed a previous nest over water at the same site (Amar-Singh HSS 2015).
2. Could the birds have learned, adapted to change their nest structure. i.e. copied other birds? This is another possibility but highly unlikely.

A brief follow-up visit on 25 July 2024, with less than 5 minutes spent near the nest, showed both adults still actively building the nest. The nest was deeper and more robust and birds were seen bringing spider webs to strengthen the structure (Plate 4).



Plate 4: Nest construction near completed, 25 July 2024, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.

A final visit on 05 August 2024 sadly showed that the nest had been completely destroyed. Whether this was a result of bad storms, human or animal interferences is uncertain.

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Young Birders

Young People, Go Bird Watching!

Soussan Mokraoui

If I had a Ringgit whenever someone asked, "*Isn't birdwatching for old people?*" I would probably be RM10 richer.

So what is birdwatching?

About four months ago I signed up for Jejak Liar's Young Birders Program during an incredibly stressful assignment week. I was burnt out, and itching to see something other than the blue light of my computer screen - I needed to touch some grass.

I had the same expectations as most people when considering looking at birds. Two hours of sitting in silence waiting for a flash of a wing overhead or to identify the whistle of some unknown source. I mean, the guys giving us our talk... were old. We were not beating the "*birdwatching is for old people*," allegations.

But when we gathered on a Sunday morning outside of Muzium Negara station, bleary-eyed and staring at the drizzle there was a sense of excitement. When we stood in groups at the Perdana Botanical Garden and were handed bird count sheets (Plate 1) I thought, "*There is no way there are this many birds in this city park.*" Turns out there are, you just have to stop to look.



Plate 1: MNS bird count sheets and young birdwatching participants.

Glossy Starlings *Aplonis panayensis* shimmer in the morning sun, their red eyes sparkling as they watch us stare. Among their groups of green and grey are Mynas with their yellow beaks. A Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* hops on a branch above, his tail black and white fan that

flutters with the tune of his song. Zebra Doves *Geopelia striata* with their pale blue faces walk up and down the pathway, unafraid, "*They're too chill,*" explained our group leader Aidil Iman, "*that makes them easy to poach.*" Walking along the lake, some spot Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea* gliding down to land among the bamboo on Goose Island. They crane their striped necks like beaked snakes watching, waiting. Then, a streak of blue as a kingfisher swoops past to land on a concrete post.

Black-naped Orioles *Oriolus chinensis* dance overhead. Yellow-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus goiavier* sing songs that bring me back to grubby Primary School days. In our groups we twirl, holding our breaths. We raised our phones high over our heads eagerly thinking, "*What bird was that?*"

I'll never forget when my friends came along and we spotted Banded Woodpeckers *Chrysophlegma miniaceum* (Plate 2). Standing next to them in awe, as we looked at them with their bronze feathers glowing red under the sun.

Surrounded by people from all kinds of backgrounds, brought together to experience the wonder that is our Malaysian biodiversity.

So go! Walk in your area, slow down, and look. You'll notice that with every new bird you see there will be an excitement and appreciation that can only be brought out by immersing yourself in the nature we were meant to live with.



Plate 2: Banded Woodpecker

Citation: Soussan Mokraoui. (2024). Young Birders: Young People, Go Bird Watching! *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 3/2024, Sept 2024: pg. 40-41.

The Search Alone is Beautiful: a Retrospective on Birdwatching

Jessica Ooi Yun En

Before participating in the Young Birders Program organised by Jejak Liar, birdwatching as a concept had only ever existed to me from a respectful distance - I knew of it, could even imagine liking it in theory, but I never had the opportunity to become familiar with it and didn't find it interesting enough to be worth the effort of engineering such an opportunity myself. As for after, well...



© Jejak Liar



Plate 1: Young birders at programme organised by Jejak Liar (left) and the author birdwatching with her group.

The truth is, I'm still not actually all that passionate about bird watching, at least not enough to go around calling myself a birdwatcher instead of a person who casually watches birds. I recognise how that could come off as an offensively ironic statement considering the fact that I'm currently writing an article about bird watching for a bird watching journal, but I believe that there is something to be gained from examining the perspective of someone at the fringes of this community, that there is something to be considered about how even I could understand the appeal of birdwatching and experience something sublime along the way. It begins like this: within the realm of influence, there is no medium more powerful, no idea more contagious and no argument more compelling than a person who just really, really loves something.

My friend really, really loves birdwatching.

Through his eyes, I could see birdwatching for the endlessly fascinating and fulfilling activity that it was to him - everyone loves something for a reason and if you manage to comprehend that reason, you cannot help but fall a little in love with it too. This was a paradigm shift that resulted in a subtle, irreversible transmutation of my mundane: Now, the piercing whistle carried from the trees could be a Golden-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone sulphurea*, the black-clad and orange-footed menaces hopping about the curb is a flock of Javan Mynas

Acridotheres javanicus, a flash of vibrant yellow in your peripheral vision - the Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*! (Plate 2). In those sequence of moments, a whole new aspect of the world -one that is never unseen, but often unobserved - is revealed to you, and you are, once again, a newborn opening its eyes for the first time.

When you give something a name, history, understanding, attention, a weight, you give them power over you and power to move you. Anyone can look at and dismiss a little brown bird, but a Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*? (Plate 2). It is only then that the metamorphosis from indifferent background filler into something incredibly personal occurs, and you will have witnessed a miracle of probability brought about by the culmination of a work that has been in progress for longer than you are capable of visualising. To experience a delight completely incomprehensible and likely laughable to half the people on this planet - is that not the point of doing anything at all?



Plate 2: Black-naped Oriole (left) and Paddyfield Pipit.

No doubt, there are plenty of eminently practical purposes for birdwatching: to measure the health of an ecosystem, to gather research data for scientific publications, to educate the public on biodiversity, etc. All vitally important work and kudos to everyone involved in it, but to quote mathematician Paul Lockhart: "*just because something happens to have practical consequences, doesn't mean that's what it is about*". Any utility gleaned from birdwatching is a byproduct of the impractical, irrational, terribly human core of giving a shit about something for the sake of it.

When you think about it, birdwatching isn't even really about the birds themselves. If someone merely wanted to see beautiful or rare birds, they could just go to a zoo or a bird park, but where would be the fun in that? Nothing exists in isolation: to cut a favourite part out of a larger tapestry in order to admire it separately is to ruin both the fragment and the original

piece it came from; to display a treasure is to rob someone of the thrill inherent in discovering hidden wonders. While it is not inaccurate to say that 'seeing some bird' could sum up the collective holy grail of all birdwatchers, the individual journeys taken to reach that destination is what truly gives it context and therefore meaning beyond the textually obvious.

There are countless other avenues of thought to explore of which I could indefinitely continue waxing poetry about in order to justify and rationalise bird watching as a not-quite-birdwatcher, but if I've learnt anything from this entire affair, it is that nothing beats experiencing something yourself:

There is a bird perched on the tree outside your window right now. You identify it as a House Crow *Corvus splendens*. You may have seen this specific bird before, or maybe you have not - they are virtually indistinguishable from one another to the untrained eye. Hundreds of them exist above you and around you, if you notice; thousands more live and die where you do not. A couple million years of evolution has granted it a prominent beak, dull greyish feathers and a brain incapable, by any human metric, of having the existential crisis that you are currently experiencing.

It is remarkable how the universe perpetually spits out beautiful, fleeting marvels of biological engineering that crash and burn and rot in a blink of its eye - to call it an indifferent creator would strain even the limits of anthropomorphism. What is one House Crow against the breadth of everything else that is? At such a scale, surely, nothing must matter; not you, not the bird, and certainly not this accidental, forgettable meeting between one creature of *Least Concern* and another. But you make it matter, and through you, the universe perceives itself, briefly, and it realises it is beautiful.

The bird flies down from its perch and begins pecking at the ground. It does not care; it cannot. But you can, and through you, the universe cares. You pull out your laptop and begin writing an article about birdwatching.

Citation: Yun-En Ooi, Jessica. (2024). Young Birders: The Search Alone is Beautiful: a Retrospective on Birdwatching. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 3/2024, Sept 2024: pg. 42-44.

Birdwatching - an Opportunity to Discover Nature and Self

Li Zhen

The borrowed binoculars slung heavy around my neck, which quickly became sore as I craned it upwards. Soft sunlight filtered through the curtains of leaves; a disjointed symphony of chirps from birds and insects, as well as the distant shrieks of joy of families from the centre of the park. "There," my team member pointed up above. "The sounds are coming from there." I couldn't see anything. I had barely ticked 3 birds off the checklist 45 minutes in, and there were 28 on the list.

It was my first-time birdwatching at the Perdana Botanical Park. I had been invited to participate as a Malaysian Youth Delegation* member, there to observe and experience the birdwatching session conducted by Jejak Liar to see if it was suitable as a session for our upcoming Local Conference of Youth#.

"I know it sounds like an old person's hobby," one friend I had met there joked. She was actually right. The only people I had known to enjoy birdwatching was my father and uncle. So, colour me surprised when participants who joined ranged from 18 to 30 years old.

After a quick briefing, we split into 4 to 5 people per group, with the checklist in everyone's hand. We trekked up well-paved slopes, climbed stairs and strolled along the waterway that yawned into a huge lake. I saw some Ayam-Hutan Biasa (Red Junglefowl) *Gallus gallus*, dogs, tortoises, a Biawak (Malayan Water Monitor) *Varanus salvator* and some deer (see Plate 1). My team member pointed out the waterway at Taman Rusa. "There were lots of kingfishers here the last time we came." Before I could respond, someone else piped up excitedly: "I saw a Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* hanging around the centre canopy!" (see Plate 2). I was impressed. Why had I never heard of this biodiversity oasis in the middle of KL?



Plate 1: Red Junglefowl) *Gallus gallus*, dogs, tortoises, a Biawak (Malayan Water Monitor) *Varanus salvator* and some deer

Listening to the enthusiastic sharing between the participants, I considered how I had never been interested in birdwatching before. Hankering after endless tasks and achievements throughout my schooling years, I had equated activities that didn't contribute towards a specific goal to idling away precious time that I could be using to complete more work. I was induced to guilt if I did anything else than what I considered work. Indeed, I realised, I had grown afraid of not only slowing down, but of trying new things.



Plate 2: Superb Starling, native to west Africa and a vagrant bird is often seen at the park.

Instead of lamenting the lost time, I focused on the present, fully immersing myself in the unique experience before me. This was an opportunity to discover a new way of appreciating nature. I soon realized that the seemingly simple task of birdwatching was, in fact, an exercise in patience, especially as the heat intensified after 10 am. Within 2 hours, I learned about various bird species, forged meaningful connections with my peers, and even enjoyed a cardio workout.

Other birds I managed to see that day include the White-throated Kingfisher (Pekaka Dada Putih) *Halcyon smyrnensis*, Asian Glossy Starling (Perling-Kilat Asia) *Aplonis panayensis*, House Crow (Gagak Rumah) *Corvus splendens*, Oriental Magpie-Robin (Murai-Kampung Biasa) *Copsychus saularis*, Common Myna (Gembala-Kerbau Rumah) *Acridotheres tristis*, Javan Myna (Gembala-Kerbau Sawah Jawa) *Acridotheres javanicus*, Rock Pigeon (Merpati Biasa) *Columba livia*, Spotted Dove (Tekukur Jerum Timur) *Streptopelia chinensis*, Zebra Dove (Merbuk Biasa) *Geopelia striata* (see Plate 3).

This outing had me reflecting on my beliefs and values. If everyone took time to observe and be with nature, I am sure more of us would come to understand the importance of protecting our earth. As an environmental advocate, I sometimes overlook the profound impact that the simplest activities - like birdwatching or a 10-minute walk - can have in raising environmental

awareness and soothing climate anxiety. Slowing down and setting aside work for a few hours wouldn't stop the world - it might even improve it.



Plate 3: Some birds seen during the outing

In fact, I returned with more than I had expected: new reflections and an opportunity to practice my writing, and more importantly, a new discussion topic to spend time with my dad and my uncle. These are the luxuries in life I have to learn to cherish more than my success on paper.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Amar-Singh HSS for kindly allowing the use of his images.

*Established in 2015, the Malaysian Youth Delegate (MYD) is a Malaysian civil society organisation made up of young, passionate Malaysians. It provides a unique, one-of-a-kind training ground for aspiring Malaysians aged 18-35 years old to be engaged in climate policy and negotiations at local, regional and international levels. You can find them on Instagram at @mydclimate. #The Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) is the national (local) version of the International Conference of Youth, both events under the umbrella of YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. All youths who are interested to learn more about climate advocacy, are welcome. For more on LCOY in Malaysia which happens annually, please check out MYD's instagram page.

Citation: Li Zhen. (2024). Young Birders: Birdwatching - an Opportunity to Discover Nature and Self. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 3/2024, Sept 2024: pg. 45-47.

Special Report

Caged Birds - An Evaluation of the Malaysian Pet Bird Trade

Amar-Singh HSS, Chong-Hock Chua, Huzairi Abd Halim, Anthony Wong, Jing-Yi Tou, Saravanan Palanisamy, Priya Paramanathan, Ashwin Kalai Chelvan, Belinda Wong, Naventhan Ahrasan, Lingeshwarry Jewarethnam, Wei-Rong Ler, Cheow-Lim Lee, Mark Tan, Meng-Yong Ng (Mark)

Introduction

Birds kept as pets has been an age long hobby of mankind, with Malaysians also engaging in it. Birds are often kept for their song or beautiful plumage. The bird pet trade in Malaysia is a complex issue with both legal and illegal components. There are two sources for the legal bird trade, i.e. wild and captive. For some species, regulated by the Wildlife Conservation Act, hunting seasons and quotas are set on an annual basis. There are legitimate bird breeders who deal in bird species that are bred in captivity for the pet trade. However, a portion of the trade involves the illegal capture and sale of wild, protected, endangered or even widespread, Least Concern species. Some smuggled into and out of Malaysia to meet demand.

TRAFFIC's data shows that at least 459,885 birds have been confiscated from illegal trade in South-east Asia in the past decade (Krishnasamy 2024). A survey and report from TRAFFIC (Chng, *et al.* 2017) showed the huge trade in Greater Green Leafbirds *Chloropsis sonnerati* in the Indonesian bird markets; it is important to note that some birds were reportedly supplied from Malaysia. For example, more than 20,000 Oriental Magpie-Robins *Copsychus saularis* exported from Malaysia to Indonesia were confiscated during the 2014-2023 period (Chng, *et al.* 2021; Krishnasamy & Wong 2024). A seizure of 337 birds in 2023 at the Malaysia-Singapore border led to the authorities tracking eight previous trafficking incidents involving 900 more birds (Krishnasamy 2024), including the White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* which is Near Threatened in Peninsular Malaysia. Many do not realise that the mortality rate in smuggled birds is high, often close to or higher than 50% (Krishnasamy 2024).

Birds are not traded in physical pet shops alone. Online marketplaces involving social media platforms are often used to facilitate the illegal trade in birds and may involve large numbers of birds as they are harder to monitor by the authorities (Krishnasamy & Stoner 2016; Cannon 2019). The illegal and legal bird pet trade is a lucrative business with recent media reports quoting astronomical prices for bird species in demand (Mohd Jamilul Anbia 2024). A seizure of 40 Oriental Magpie-Robins this year was valued at RM1 million (New Straits Times 2024).

The aim of this survey was to get a snapshot view of birds that are currently being traded through pet shops and also attempt to look at sales on online sites.

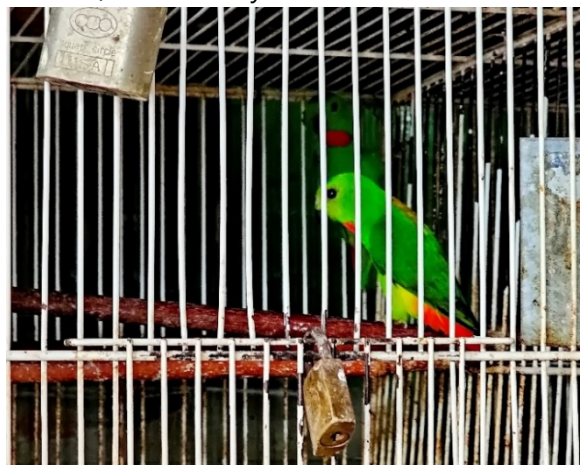


Plate 1: Wild Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrots held captive for sale, August 2024.

Method

Bird watchers in Malaysia were invited to participate in a survey on the bird trade in Malaysia via selected bird groups. Those that supported the survey were encouraged to visit pet shops and document the birds being sold there. For Peninsular Malaysia a list of registered pet shops by state from PERHILITAN (Department of Wildlife Protection and National Parks) was used as a guide. But we were not restricted to the list and both in Peninsular and Bornean Malaysia pet shops that sold birds were preferentially selected.

A data capture sheet was designed to assist in the survey of bird pet shops (see Appendix 1). Participants were requested to visit at least one pet shop in their area/state in August 2024 but were encouraged to visit more shops if possible. They were asked to estimate the total number of birds on sale in that shop. Participants were requested to document what species were on sale, their numbers and price. The focus was on 10 Malaysian birds that were in high demand locally (Mohd Jamilul Anbia 2024) and for the Indonesian market (see Appendix 1). In addition, information on all other birds sold was documented, including exotic (not from Malaysia). Where possible the price of each species was documented and the pet shop owner/staff asked which bird species are most preferred for sale/purchase. Where possible hand phone images were taken to aid in bird counts and identification. We were careful in doing this survey as pet shops may be wary of our questions and presence and may realize we are not there to purchase birds but to investigate the bird trade. Survey forms were requested to be completed only after leaving the shop. Data on pricing was based on what was not displayed, if available.

Surveyors did an online search on 27 August 2024 of sites and groups on social media (Facebook) and commercial trade platforms (Mudah.my) using keywords ('birds for sale Malaysia'). There was no engagement with online sellers. We did not survey social media messaging apps e.g. Telegram, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.



Plate 2: Red-whiskered Bulbuls kept in unsanitary conditions, August 2024.

Results of Bird Pet Shop Assessments

Over a period of five weeks in August and early September, 31 pet shops were visited and assessed throughout the country: Perlis 4, Pulau Pinang 2, Perak 13, Selangor (including WPKL & Putrajaya) 4, Negeri Sembilan 1, Johor 2, Pahang 1 and Sarawak 4.

Of the 27 pet shops in Peninsular Malaysia selling birds, 21 were not on the list of registered pet shops by state from PERHILITAN and feedback will be given to the agency.

The total number of birds on sale in the 31 pet shops was estimated at 4,579. Not all birds were identified to a species level. Birds identified are listed in Table 1. There were quite a number of shops selling White-rumped Shamas, Oriental Magpie-Robins and Red-whiskered Bulbuls. None were openly selling leafbird species but a few indicated a possibility to supply them. Jungle Fowl (domesticated hens) and quail species were common.

Many shops had a large number of munia and dove species said to be used for religious events where they are 'set free' by individuals. This practice of 'merit release' in East and Southeast Asia is a Buddhist practice of liberating animals from captivity as a way to earn spiritual merit (Eaton *et al.*, 2017). Since 2006 the Singapore National Parks Board has carried out 'Operation No Release' to remind people not to release animals into the wild and have had significant results with a marked reduction in the practice (Yu 2024).

There were a fair number of exotic birds on sale, in particular parrots, and the commonest was Budgerigar. The larger parrots that were traded at high prices.

Table 1: Summary data on birds in pet shops assessed

	No. of shops with species	Total No. of birds	Price Range (RM) & Comments
Presence of high demand Malaysian bird species for sale			
Blue-rumped Parrot <i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>	0	0	Not on sale in the shops evaluated.
Red-whiskered Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	13	121	160-600 adult (higher for a good songster; 200 for a juvenile)
Stripe-throated Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus finlaysoni</i>	0	0	Not on sale in the shops evaluated.
Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot <i>Loriculus galgulus</i>	4	19	60-250 (females cheaper)
White-rumped Shama <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	9	48	180-2,000
White-crowned Shama <i>Copsychus stricklandii</i>	0	0	Not on sale in the shops evaluated.
Oriental Magpie-Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	12	93	50-400, price depends on singing ability & plumage; female & wild birds cheaper.
White-eye (Hume's White-eye <i>Zosterops auriventer</i> & Swinhoe's White-eye <i>Zosterops simplex</i>)	3	14	35-150
Greater Green Leafbird <i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>	0	0	Available on demand
Other leafbird species <i>Chloropsis</i> sp.	0	0	Available on demand
Asian Fairy-bluebird <i>Irena puella</i>	0	0	Not on sale in the shops evaluated.

	No. of shops with species	Total No. of birds	Price Range (RM) & Comments
Other local bird species on sale			
Red Junglefowl <i>Gallus gallus</i>	4	89	-
Blue-breasted Quail <i>Synoicus chinensis</i>	2	8	-
Barred Buttonquail <i>Turnix suscitator</i>	1	40	6
Unidentified quail species	3	47	-
Zebra Dove <i>Geopelia striata</i>	22	1,383	10-380 (priced by location & song)
Spotted Dove <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	18	333	10-280
Red Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	3	25	30
Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> (including variants & hybrids)	10	87	8-50 (price depended on features, higher if pure white or hybrid)
Long-tailed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	1	1	-
Yellow-bellied Prinia <i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	1	1	-
Yellow-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	1	2	-
Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	1	3	-
Jungle Myna <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	2	4	-
Javan Myna <i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	3	12	-
Common Hill Myna <i>Gracula religiosa</i>	3	60	800
Asian Glossy Starling <i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	1	3	-
White-headed Munia <i>Lonchura maja</i>	4	404	3-20
Scaly-breasted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	5	275	3-5
Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>	2	56	3-5
Unidentified munia species <i>Lonchura sp.</i>	2	114	3-5
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	3	106	3-5
Java Sparrow <i>Padda oryzivora</i>	2	21	75
Exotics on sale			
Indian Peafowl <i>Pavo cristatus</i>	1	2	-
Japanese Quail <i>Coturnix japonica</i>	3	24	5-28
Swan Goose <i>Anser cygnoides</i>	1	32	-
Diamond Dove <i>Geopelia cuneata</i>			48
Black-cheeked Lovebird <i>Agapornis nigrigenis</i>	1	5	300
Fischer's Lovebird <i>Agapornis fischeri</i>	3	5	150
Unidentified lovebird species <i>Agrapornis sp.</i>	1	10	-
Budgerigar <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	14	286	38-50
Cockatiel <i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	6	29	220-480
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo <i>Cacatua galerita</i>	1	1	-
Eastern Rosella <i>Platycercus eximius</i>	1	4	2,800
Blue-and-yellow Macaw <i>Ara ararauna</i>	1	1	-
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1	4	1950
Sun Parakeet <i>Aratinga solstitialis</i>	1	2	950
White-crested Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>	1	15	450
Siamese Pied Starling <i>Gracupica floweri</i>	2	13	-
Van Hasselt's Sunbird <i>Leptocoma brasiliiana</i>	1	1	-
Gouldian Finch <i>Chloebia gouldiae</i>	2	20	180-300

Often prices were not displayed on cages. Prices were highly variable and appeared to be higher for pet shops in more urban locations.

When asked what bird species are most preferred for purchase by customers, the common responses cited by pet shop staff were White-rumped Shama, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Oriental Magpie-Robin, white-eyes and exotic parrots. A number of shops appear to be 'specialised' in birds for merit release at religious festivals and mainly stocked munias, sparrows and a variety of doves/pigeons. The Zebra Dove and munia species were preferred.

Some pet shop owners appear to be aware of the legal regulations. Comments like "*the Murai-Hutan (White-rumped Shama) is not for sale as you need a license to keep*", even though the bird was displayed in the shop. When asked about availability of leafbirds the response was "*those are illegal to sell*". But others indicated that they could supply birds not seen in the shop. For example, when asked about leafbirds one response was "*we will soon receive a consignment of leafbirds from Thailand of all types, the fully green ones, the yellow and green ones and the ones with blue wings*". Some said they had more birds available "*at their home*". The worker at one shop informed that "*other species can be ordered, this included White-rumped Shammas, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Blue Whistling-Thrush, and others; prices were subject to the demand and supply of the bird at the specific time*". One shop owner stated that they "*helped their customer to sell a Barn Owl for ~ RM1,800*"; another shop had been known to sell pittas species.

Prized songsters were usually kept in individual cages (Plate 3). Most shops kept birds in crowded conditions; often in high density in cages, with cages stacked on top of each other (Plate 4). Occasionally injured or dead birds were seen. Generally, the conditions where the birds were kept was unsanitary.



Plate 3: Higher prized songsters, White-rumped Shama and Red-whiskered Bulbul, kept in individual cages, August 2024.



Plate 4: Most birds kept in very crowded, poor condition, stacked cages, August 2024.

Review of the Online Bird Pet Trade

Online bird pet sales were difficult to assess as some were closed groups. Appendix 2 provides a list of sites reviewed. Some Facebook sites appear dedicated to the rearing or care of a particular species, but often there were posts of various bird species on sale with contact details. For example, one Facebook Group focused on leafbirds had posts for the sale of the different leafbird species, White-rumped Shama, Oriental Magpie-Robins, different minivet species, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Sultan Tit, etc. Some sites carried many exotic parrots as well as Common Hill Mynas, Java Sparrows, etc for sale. These online sites are difficult to assess as you need to contact the seller to get an idea of numbers and price.

An assessment was conducted of the 'Mudah.my' site, which is claimed to be Malaysia's largest marketplace to buy and sell new items. Under the category 'pets' a search was conducted for 'bird' on 27 August 2024. 578 results were obtained of which 279 were for the sale of birds; the remaining posts were for bird cages, bird food and other miscellaneous bird related items. Table 2 summarises the list of birds on sale and their range of prices. It was not possible to determine the number of birds offered for sale.

Of the local birds the commonest was the Rock Pigeon but there were White-rumped Shammas, Oriental Magpie-Robins and a Greater Green Leafbird available for sale. There was a whole range of exotic parrots (Plate 5), some with notices that they came with a 'license' but we did not verify these. Budgerigars, macaws and lovebirds were popular, as were variants and hybrids

of the Indian Peafowl. The price range was occasionally very wide for the same species. Pure white birds were priced higher and juveniles lower.

Table 2: Summary of birds on sale at online site 'Mudah.my'

	Number of Posts	Price/Range of Price (RM)
Local Bird Species		
White-breasted Waterhen <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	1	300
Zebra Dove <i>Geopelia striata</i>	3	70-80
Zebra Dove (Burung Merbok class A)	1	1,850
Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> (including variants & hybrids)	40	10-400 (higher price if pure white & with selected features)
Spotted Dove <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	6	16-50
Unidentified Dove species	1	3
White-rumped Shama <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	3	750 (150-300 for juveniles)
Oriental Magpie-Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	7	160-250 (15-35 for juveniles)
Common Hill Myna <i>Gracula religiosa</i>	5	500
Great Myna <i>Acridotheres grandis</i>	1	98
Unidentified myna species	1	70
Unidentified crow species	1	70
Yellow-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	1	80
Asian Glossy Starling <i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	1	10
Greater Green Leafbird <i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>	1	150
Java Sparrow <i>Padda oryzivora</i>	4	30-800 (higher price if white)
Baya Weaver <i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	1	50
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	1	4
Exotic Parrots		
Fischer's Lovebird <i>Agapornis fischeri</i>	14	140-600
Rosy-faced Lovebird <i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>	3	150-400
Unidentified lovebird species	3	60-600 (higher price if sold as a pair)
Budgerigar <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	56	20-450 (very wide price range, higher price if pure white)
Cockatiel <i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	11	120-200
Sun Parakeet <i>Aratinga solstitialis</i>	11	1,200-2500 (750-850 for juveniles)
Green-cheeked Parakeet <i>Pyrrhura molinae</i>	3	750-1,500
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1	1,000
Alexandrine Parakeet <i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	2	1,400-3,300
Monk Parakeet <i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	3	1,400-3,800
Rainbow Lorikeet <i>Trichoglossus moluccanus</i>	7	1,050- 2,000
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo <i>Cacatua galerita</i>	7	5,000-12000
White Cockatoo <i>Cacatua alba</i>	5	5,800-7,000
Salmon-crested Cockatoo <i>Cacatua moluccensis</i>	1	8,000
Scarlet Macaw <i>Ara macao</i>	1	48,000 (juvenile)
Blue-and-yellow Macaw <i>Ara ararauna</i>	15	12,000-25,000 (7-9,000 for juveniles)
Red-and-green Macaw <i>Ara chloropterus</i>	3	28,000-35,000,
Red-shouldered Macaw <i>Diopsittaca nobilis</i>	2	5,500-6,400
Harlequin macaws (hybrid parrots)	1	35,000
Grey Parrot <i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	12	3,000-8,500 (lower price for juveniles)
Yellow-crowned Parrot <i>Amazona ochrocephala</i>	1	10,000
Orange-winged Parrot <i>Amazona amazonica</i>	1	5,800
Moluccan Eclectus <i>Eclectus roratus</i>	3	2,250-5000
Red Lory <i>Eos bornea</i>	1	4,500

	Number of Posts	Price/Range of Price (RM)
Other Exotics		
Common Ostrich <i>Struthio camelus</i>	1	1,500 (juveniles)
Reeves's Pheasant <i>Syrnaticus reevesii</i>	1	2,500
Ring-necked Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	1	350
Golden Pheasant <i>Chrysolophus pictus</i>	2	500-800
Unidentified pheasant species	1	750
Indian Peafowl <i>Pavo cristatus</i> (including variants & hybrids)	12	1,500-5,500 (higher price if pure white; 500-800 for juveniles)
Unidentified ducks	1	130
Unidentified quail species	4	3-60
Diamond Dove <i>Geopelia cuneata</i>	2	10-35
Zebra Finch <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	5	30-70
Gouldian Finch <i>Chloebia gouldiae</i>	3	95-150
Red Avadavat <i>Amandava amandava</i>	1	35



Plate 5: A variety of exotic parrots for sale on the 'Mudah.my' site, August 2024.

Discussion

This was an emotionally difficult study to conduct for some of us; as birdwatchers we are used to seeing birds flying freely in nature. This survey offers a glimpse at the large, ongoing bird pet trade that is taking place in the country.

However, there are some limitations to the survey. It is a cross-sectional survey and not a longitudinal one; hence we are only aware of what is in the shop at one point of time. Popular species may be sold faster and hence not seen. In addition, the bird species and numbers in shops vary, depending on supply and demand. Pet shop owners may also have some birds kept in the back or at other sites (i.e. at home) and only offered them to trusted clients. The keeping of birds offsite makes assessment of pet shops harder (New Sarawak Tribune 2019). Our survey showed that some sellers also operated more covertly, based on their assertions that new supply for protected species will be available, or they had more birds stored in different locations.

Online bird pet sales were harder to evaluate than the physical pet shops. Some were closed Facebook groups. Most required you to contact the seller to get an idea of birds and prices.

The assessment of the 'Mudah.my' site offered a glimpse of the huge online of the bird trade locally.

Despite these limitations, this survey provides useful data and insight, and allows for repeat assessments to evaluate trends over time.

This survey has shown that the demand for birds as pets remains high and helps to drive the bird trade. How to best deal with the bird pet trade is uncertain as there are differing views. Some argue that it brings joy to many pet owners; others that birds kept in cages or restrained in any way is unethical. Whatever view we take, we must be concerned about bird welfare, habitat destruction, and the illegal trade of species. In addition, raising public awareness about the negative impacts of the whole bird trade is crucial.

Comprehensive legislation and enforcement are required to ensure that trade of wild-caught birds is regulated for threatened and nationally protected species. This requires increased efforts to combat poaching and illegal bird smuggling, trafficking and enforcement of Malaysian law. We should encourage the reporting of any suspected illegal bird trade to the relevant authorities. There is a need for consistent monitoring of the pet trade and strong enforcement against violators. Captive-bred birds are suggested as a more sustainable option, but it is important to ensure that they are bred ethically and in healthy conditions; we require strict regulations on breeders. In addition, it is important to ensure that wild birds are not laundering under the 'captive-bred' tag (Nijman & Shepherd 2015). A more transparent process for captive breeding is necessary, where both buyers and sellers have access to the right information about species, legally registered breeders, sources and licensing information. Note that many of the shops we visited are not on the official lists of our wildlife enforcement agency.

One approach to resolving the illegal trade in birds is to encourage a shift away from ownership of threatened and protected birds as a start. This could include supporting those who love birds by promoting activities like birdwatching, volunteering at wildlife sanctuaries, and creating home and community gardens that foster bird-friendly environments.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all the birdwatchers from a number of groups who supported this initiative. Wild Bird Club Malaysia, Perak Bird Group and others were kind enough to allow us to advertise the request and members from these groups were involved. We would like to specially thank James Eaton and Kanitha Krishnasamy, Director Southeast Asia TRAFFIC office for their kind editorial support.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Data Capture Sheet for Survey on Bird Pet Shops

Do **NOT** use or fill this sheet while in the shop. It is best to take mental notes and fill it once you have left the venue. Where possible use hand phone images to aid in bird counts and identification. Use a **different data capture sheet for EACH pet shop** you visit.

Person Reporting		
Date of visit		
State		
City/Town		
Name of Pet Shop (will not be disclosed in the report)		
Estimate the total number of birds on sale		
Did you see any of these Malaysian Bird Species for sale? (indicate numbers seen)	Numbers Seen	Price
1. White-rumped Shama <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>		
2. White-crowned Shama <i>Copsychus stricklandii</i>		
3. Blue-rumped Parrot <i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>		
4. Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot <i>Loriculus galgulus</i>		
5. Greater Green Leafbird <i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>		
6. Other Leafbirds (indicate species & numbers)		
7. Red-whiskered Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>		
8. Stripe-throated Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus finlaysoni</i>		
9. Asian Fairy-bluebird <i>Irena puella</i>		
10. White-eye (any species, indicate species if possible)		
Other Bird Species (including exotics) Seen & Number (add rows as needed)	Numbers Seen	Price
Ask the pet shop what bird species are most preferred for sale/purchase.		
Any comments or observations?		

Please list any online links you are aware of that sells Malaysian birds here:

Thank you for supporting this valuable initiative by the Malaysian Bird Report.

Appendix 2: List of some Online Pet Sale Sites

- Birds for sale in Malaysia - Buy & Sell Pets & Supplies - Mudah.my
- <https://www.mudah.my/malaysia/all-pets-for-sale?q=bird>
- Burung daun <https://www.facebook.com/groups/563934813708074>
- P3S Pet Shop Specialist & Studio <https://www.facebook.com/MacawPhong/>
- Malaysia Pet Birds Market <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MalaysiaPetBirds/>
- Canaries & Song finches breeding Club (Malaysia) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1396194817335736/>
- Finch Malaysia <https://www.facebook.com/groups/852947754734373/>
- Burung Helang Malaysia <https://www.facebook.com/groups/953778448670105>
- Spesis Burung Hantu (Owl) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/235906437919745>
- Geng peminat burung bara api\api-api <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1666953353578333>
- Peminat Pelbagai Burung Punai <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1617879915110996>

Rare Bird Reports

Reporting Rare Birds

MNS - Bird Conservation Council - Records Committee

All birdwatchers are encouraged to report new birds seen. See details at the Records Committee Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/mnsbccrecordscommittee/>

The species that are assessed by the Records Committee (species that you should submit) include:

1. All claims of potentially new species for Malaysia.
2. All claims of potentially new species for Bornean Malaysia.
3. All claims of potentially new species for Peninsular Malaysia.
4. All claims of wild species which are currently only in Category B, C or D (for either Bornean or Peninsular Malaysia)

B: Species recorded at least once in a wild state, but not since before 1963.

C: Species believed to occur only as a result of human introduction. The population is considered self-sustaining.

D: Species believed to occur (or to have occurred) only as a result of human introduction. Continued existence in the wild is considered dependent upon repeat introductions.

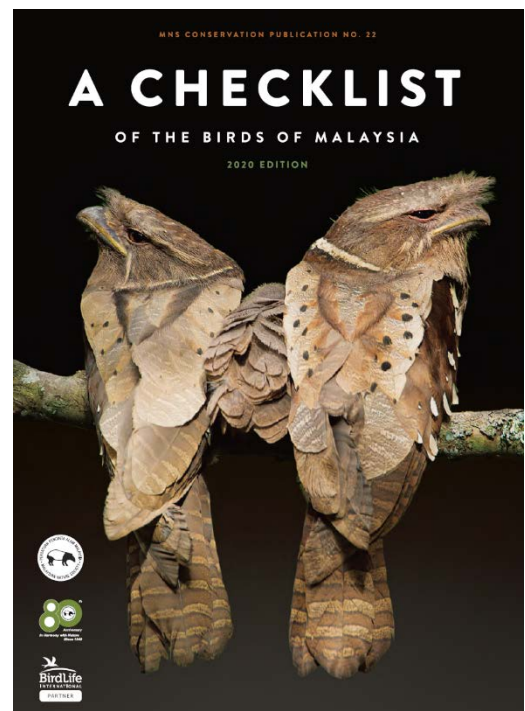
You can download the latest (2020) Malaysia Checklist of birds in pdf format at this link:

https://malaysianbird.report/wp-content/uploads/Checklist_Birds-of-Msia-2020.pdf

1. Rare & New Records submission form
2. Rare & New Records submission form (shortened version for submissions with photos attached)

<https://sites.google.com/site/mnsbccrecordscommittee/home/rare-and-new-record-submission-form?authuser=0>

The Records Committee encourages observers to submit all observations of wild birds in Malaysia to eBird. Claims of rare and scarce species will be assessed by a team of eBird reviewers on that site.



Articles

Birdwatching Hotspots Series: Sabah Birding Routes 2024

Ron Pudín, Sabah Bird Watchers Association

Sabah, North Borneo, Malaysia, is a birdwatcher's dream destination. With its diverse habitats, ranging from pristine lowland and montane rainforests, peat swamps and mangrove forests, to stunning coastal areas and islands, Sabah offers a unique and unforgettable experience for bird enthusiasts. Sabah is renowned for its incredible biodiversity, and birds play a significant role in this ecological richness. The diverse environments support a staggering array of bird species, more than 600 species with an excess of 30 endemics.

There are numerous opportunities for birdwatching in Sabah. Visitors can explore the state's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, where they can embark on guided nature walks and birdwatching tours. These guided excursions offer a chance to learn about the local bird species and their habitats, while also enjoying the stunning scenery. Recently the Sabah Birdwatchers Association together with the Sabah Tourism Board published the Sabah Birding Routes 2024 (Plate 1). It was launched in July at the Global Birdfair 2024 in the United Kingdom. It offers a number routes and additional information as to possible species to see at each site.

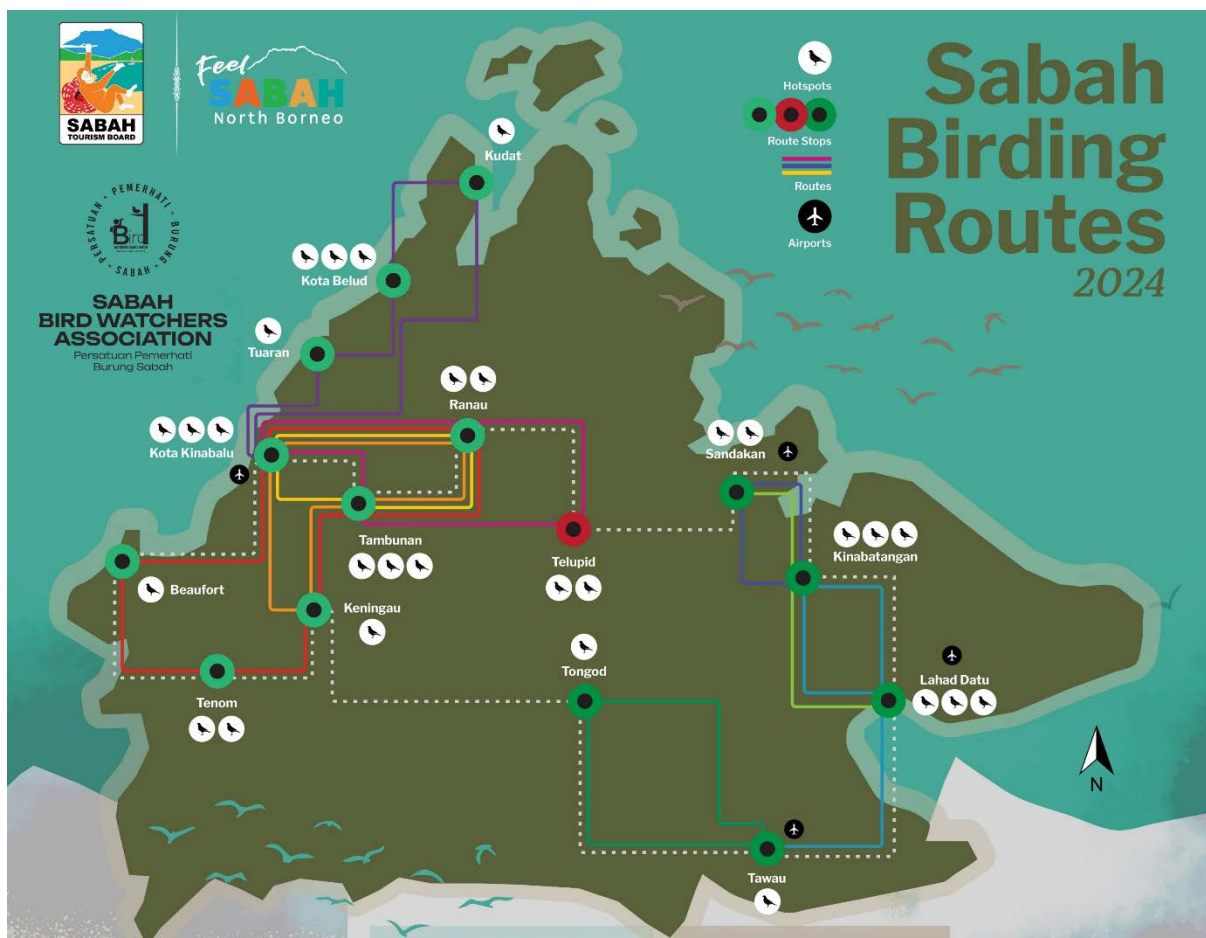


Plate 1: West & East Coast, Central and all of Sabah Birding Routes.

West Coast Routes

Birding routes that start & ends in Kota Kinabalu, 3 to 14 days recommended.

KOTA KINABALU - RANAU - TAMBUNAN - KOTA KINABALU

Montane Endemic Route, 3-5 days

Endemics Highlights: Whitehead's Trogon, Whitehead's Broadbill, Whitehead's Spiderhunter, Red-breasted Partridge, Crimson-headed Partridge, Bulwer's Pheasant, Bornean Banded Pitta.

Notable Species: Blue-naped Parrot, Banded Kingfisher, Sunda Frogmouth.

KOTA KINABALU - RANAU - TAMBUNAN - TENOM - KENINGAU - KOTA KINABALU

Montane & Submontane Endemic Route, 8-11 days

Endemics Highlights: Blue-banded Pitta, Black Partridge, Mountain Serpent Eagle, Bornean Frogmouth.

Notable Species: Mountain Barbet, Bornean Bulbul, Pygmy White-eye, Philippine Cuckoo Dove.

KOTA KINABALU - RANAU - TAMBUNAN - KENINGAU - TENOM - BEAUFORT - KOTA KINABALU

Complete West Coast Route, 14-16 days

Endemics Highlights: White-fronted Falconet.

Notable Species: Hook-billed Bulbul, Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker.

KOTA KINABALU - TUARAN - KOTA BELUD - KUDAT - KOTA KINABALU

Migration Season Route, 6-8 days

Note: North East Migratory Season in Sabah starts from October to March bringing plenty of migratory birds from the north to Sabah. Birding in this route is best during these months.

Notable Species: Philippine Megapode, Mantanani Scops Owl, Black-naped Fruit Dove, Nicobar Pigeon.

Central Routes

KOTA KINABALU - TAMBUNAN - TELUPID - RANAU - KOTA KINABALU

Partridges & Pheasant Route, 6-8 days

Endemics Highlights: Bornean Peacock-pheasant.

Notable Species: Straw-headed Bulbul, Helmeted Hornbill

East Coast Routes

Birding routes that start from Sandakan, Lahad Datu or Tawau, 3 to 14 days recommended.

SANDAKAN - KINABATANGAN - SANDAKAN

Lowland & Riverine Route, 3-5 days

Endemics Highlights: Bornean Bristlehead, Sabah Partridge, Black-crowned Pitta'

Notable Species: Storm's Stork, White-crowned Hornbill, Jerdon's Baza.



SANDAKAN - KINABATANGAN - LAHAD DATU

Lowland Endemic Route, 7-14 days

Endemics Highlights: Bornean Ground-Cuckoo, Blue-headed Pitta, Blue-banded Pitta.

Notable Species: Bornean Blue Flycatcher, Large Green Pigeon.

TAWAU-LAHAD DATU - KINABATANGAN - LAHAD DATU

Pitta Route, 7-14 days

Notable Species Highlights: Black-crowned Pitta, Blue-headed Pitta, Blue-banded Pitta, Bornean Banded Pitta, Giant Pitta.

TAWAU - TONGOD - TAWAU

South Route, 5-7 days

Notable Species: Helmeted Hornbill, Bulwer's Pheasant.

Sabah Birding Loop Route

KOTA KINABALU - TAMBUNAN - RANAU - TELUPID - SANDAKAN - KINABATANGAN - LAHAD DATU - TAWAU - TONGOD - KENINGAU - TENOM - BEAUFORT - KOTA KINABALU
Sabah Loop Route 21-30 DAYS

Note that we will recommend the use of reputable bird guides in Sabah for the routes above
<https://www.sabahbirdwatchers.com/> or <https://www.sabahbirdguide.com/>

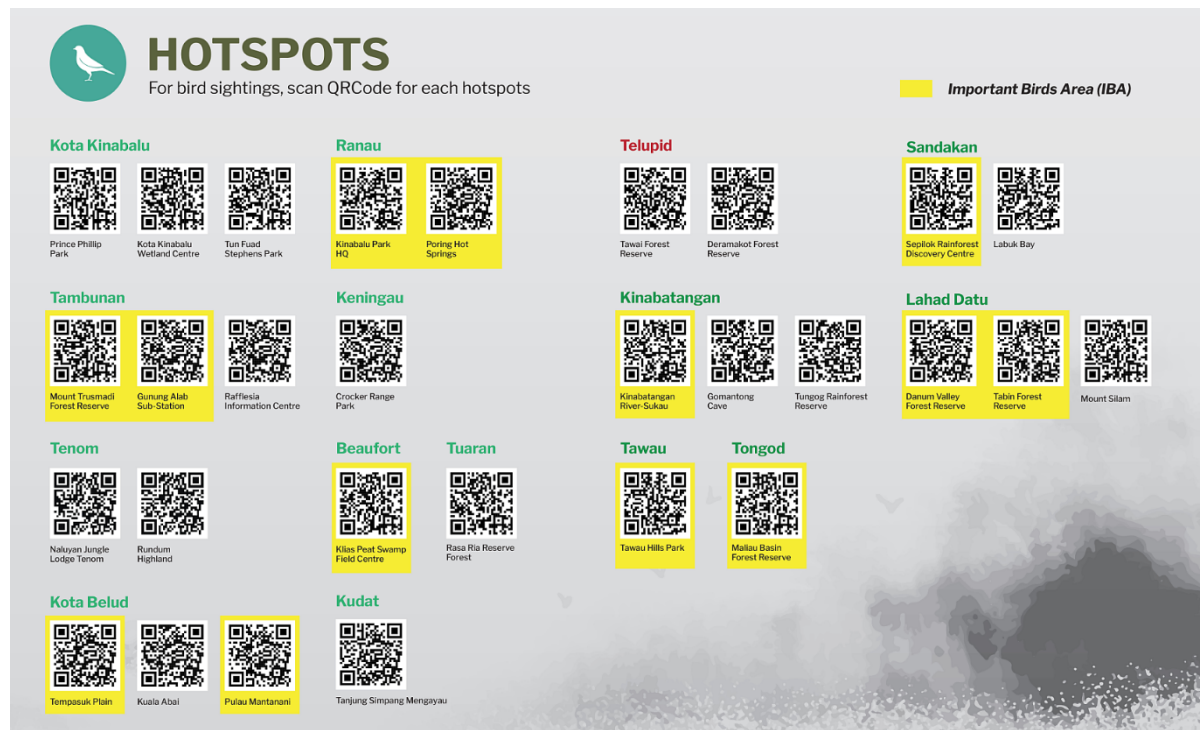
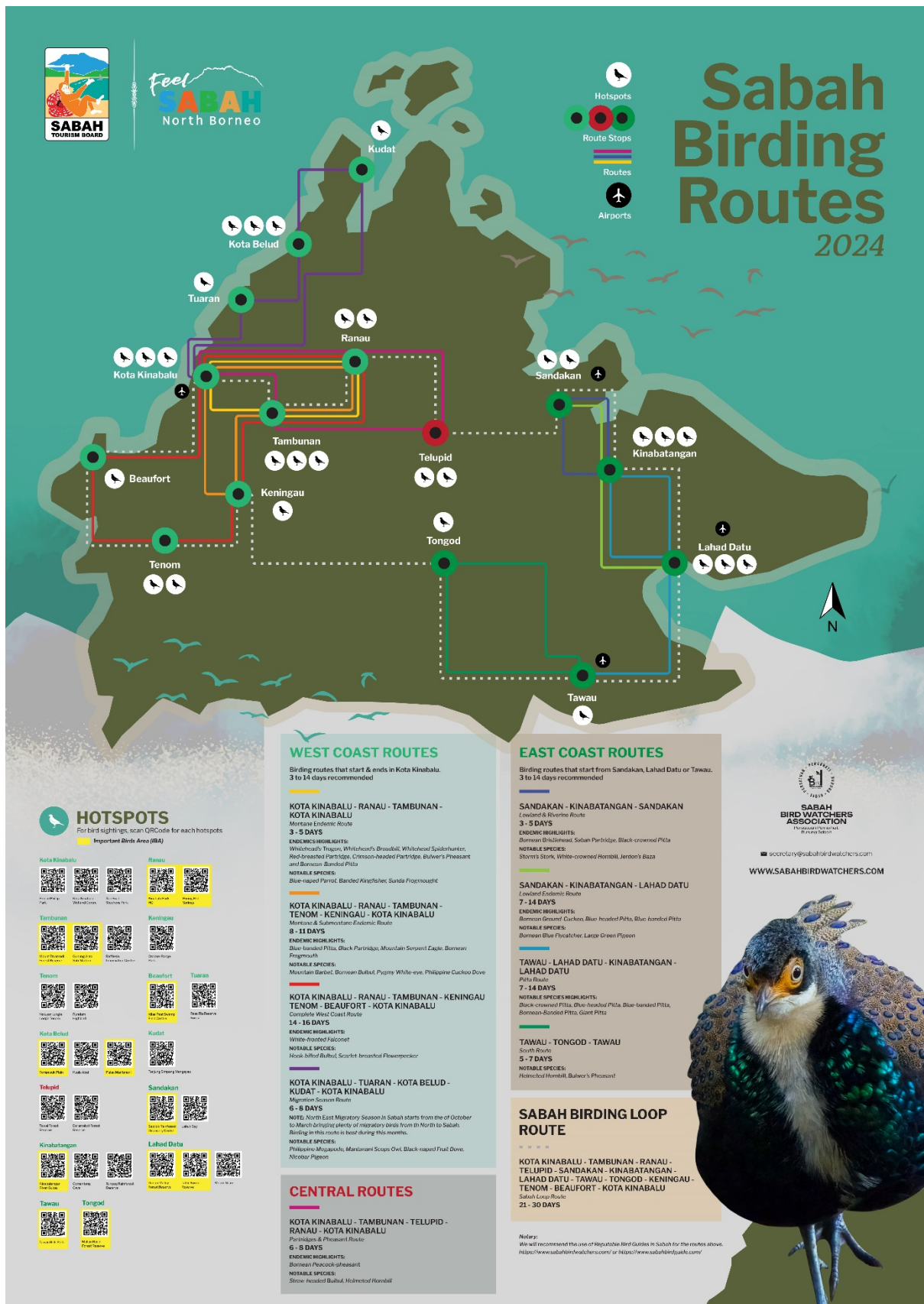


Plate 2: QR code links to eBird observations and bird list for the locality.

Whether you are a seasoned birdwatcher or simply looking for a new adventure, Sabah is sure to exceed your expectations.



Full page of the guide for easy use.

Bird Tree Series:

***Macaranga bancana* – the Ice Cream of the Forest**

Amar-Singh HSS

I call the *Macaranga bancana* (Common Mahang) the 'ice cream' of the forest as it attracts a wide and large range of birds and mammals. It fruits twice a year, usually in July and December but at times outside these months. During the December fruiting season many migrant birds will also be found feeding at the tree. For bird watchers and photographers this is a 'prince among trees' for birds and they should be alert as to its presence and fruiting.

M. bancana is native to Thailand, West Malaysia, Borneo and Sumatra. It is a light-demanding, fast-growing tree reaching seven to eight meters in height (Plate 1). It is often found in secondary forest or along open trails or recent open spaces within primary forest. The tree is nondescript but you can identify it by the tri-lobed leaves (Plate 2) with a palmate venation – this is a leaf venation pattern where the main veins radiate from a common point, similar to how fingers branch out from the palm of a hand.

The flowers are unisexual with male and female flowers found in separate trees. The tiny fruits found in female trees are in clusters. The flowers are ~ one mm in diameter, green-whitish and clustered together on branched inflorescences. The best identification of the *M. bancana* is the fruits which are deep purple-red when ripe, 10–11 mm in size (Plate 2). They have a thin layer of lipid-rich pulp, which attracts many species of birds (Yeow-Chin Wee 2014). The twigs are hollow and inhabited by ants, making them of interest to Rufous Piculets *Sasia abnormis* (Amar-Singh HSS 2016) and other woodpeckers who come to feed.

The tree has a short life span and often dies out after three to six fruiting seasons. Fruits are usually produced after two to three years when the tree reaches about three meters in height.



© Amar-Singh HSS

Plate 1: *M. bancana* (Common Mahang) with fruit.



Plate 2: Close up of *M. bancana* (Common Mahang) leaves and ripe fruit (right).

Birds that I have personally observed, over many years, feeding on the *Macaranga bancana* fruit include (Amar-Singh HSS 2015; Yeow-Chin Wee 2014) (Plate 3):

1. Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
2. Gold-whiskered Barbet *Megalaima chrysopogon*
3. Sooty Barbet *Caloramphus hayii*
4. Checker-throated Woodpecker *Chrysophlegma mentale*
5. Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus*
6. Green Iora *Aegithina viridissima*
7. Cream-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus simplex*
8. Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus brunneus*
9. Spectacled Bulbul *Pycnonotus erythrophthalmus*
10. Hairy-backed Bulbul *Tricholestes criniger*
11. Buff-vented Bulbul *Iole charlottae*
12. Scaly-Breasted Bulbul *Pycnonotus squamatus*
13. Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus atriceps*
14. Stripe-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus finlaysoni*
15. Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier*
16. Hume's White-eye *Zosterops auriventer*
17. Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis*
18. One Thrush, ID unknown
19. Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki*
20. Green-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula elisae*
21. Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*
22. Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*
23. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*
24. Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*
25. Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*
26. Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*

27. Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati*
28. Lesser Green Leafbird *Chloropsis cyanopogon*
29. Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker *Prionochilus percussus*
30. Grey-breasted Spiderhunter *Arachnothera modesta*
31. Yellow-eared Spiderhunter *Arachnothera chrysogenys*
32. Spectacled Spiderhunter *Arachnothera flavigaster*
33. Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*
34. Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis*
35. Red-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes rhodolaemus*
36. Plain Sunbird *Anthreptes simplex*
37. Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis*
38. Brown-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes malacensis*
39. Purple-naped Spiderhunter *Kurochkinogramma hypogrammicum*



Plate 3: A selection of birds feeding on *M. bancana* fruit - From top left Checker-throated Woodpecker, Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot, Hairy-backed Bulbul, Hume's White-eye, Mugimaki Flycatcher, Grey-breasted Spiderhunter, Yellow-eared Spiderhunter, Spectacled Spiderhunter, Red-throated Sunbird.

Diverse bird species will come in large numbers to a fruiting *M. bancana* and there is often intraspecific and interspecific competitive feeding. The Spectacled Spiderhunter is the most 'troublesome' and will attempt to chase other birds away (Amar-Singh HSS 2013) (Plate 4). Spiderhunters will have to 'juggle' the ripe fruit to manoeuvre it down the long beak. The fruit

is not always easily accessible and many birds will hover to reach it. The Emerald Dove will often feed on fruit fallen to the ground but the lure of the fruit is such that they will perch on branches to gain access to fruit (Plate 4).



Plate 4: Left - Spectacled Spiderhunter attempting to chase away a Checker-throated Woodpecker. Right – immature Emerald Dove checking to see if the fruit is ripe.

Birds are willing to tolerate human presence at close distances, perhaps because *M. bancana* fruit is a preferred food being competed for and not to be abandoned readily. Fruiting usually lasts about seven to eight days. Note that peak feeding times are from sunrise until about 1000 hrs, after which ripe fruits for the day have been nearly exhausted and there is a marked drop in the number of birds. The smaller birds often forage till later, gleaning what is left over.

I am always amused to see many birds, like the Emerald Dove, spiderhunters and sunbirds, visit the tree to check on whether it is fruiting or ripe (Plate 4). I am certain there are more birds to add to the list, including other woodpeckers, babblers and migratory thrushes.

M. bancana has all the biological attributes of a top-class component of any parkland planting scheme designed to attract and support frugivorous birds. Trees will have to be selected to ensure we have both male and female plants and regrown every few years.

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Citation: Amar-Singh HSS. (2024). *Macaranga bancana* – the Ice Cream of the Forest. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 3/2024, Sept 2024: pg. 64-68.

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.

Common Garden Bird 2: Oriental Magpie-Robin (Murai-Kampung Biasa) *Copsychus saularis*

Amar-Singh HSS

The Oriental Magpie-Robin is a handsome bluish-black and white bird who is one of our best songsters in the garden. Females have a duller colour compared to males and note that males in Sabah have more black plumage. They have a large repertoire of songs and love to sing. They often sing early in the mornings and at various times during the day. Often you can mimic their songs back to them and they will take this up as a challenge to sing back to you or even scold you. Magpie Robins use their songs for many reasons but an important one is to win a mate.

Magpie Robins are one of the most intelligent birds in the garden. We consider them the 'intelligentsia' of the garden. Nothing happens without them being aware of it. They like to eat worms, caterpillars and even some fruit. Nests are not that easy to find, often tucked in a niche at the road side or in rotten tree stump; occasionally they will use an old letter box.

Sadly, they are diminishing due to the illegal bird trade. Some Malaysians like to cage them to hear their songs and Indonesia has a thriving bird trade. See [this report from](#) TRAFFIC Southeast Asia Regional Office. There is no need to cage them. If you keep a green garden with a water feature, you'd easily see and hear them sing many times in the day.



A male from Sabah (left) & a pair checking out an unused mailbox as potential nesting site

Recent Publications & Research

Research/Review Articles Relevant to Malaysia

Kim-Chye Lim

Dramatic loss of forest-dependent bird species from Semenggoh Forest, Sarawak, over 60 years

Hanis D.E. Lit, Jayasilan Mohd-Azlan & Richard A. Noske. (2023). *Journal Of Asian Ornithology*, 39: 43–53.

Summary: Results from mist-netting of birds carried out at Semenggoh Nature Reserve, Sarawak over 14 months in 2015-2016 was compared with results of species composition and abundance obtained in a similar survey there by Fogden in 1964-1965. The authors recorded 55 species, of which 9 were not recorded by Fogden, these being species that colonised disturbed habitats. In contrast, Fogden recorded 139 species, of which 93 (62.8%) were not recorded in this present study. Results from the two studies combined with eBird data up to 2021, yielded a total of 223 species for Semenggoh, of which 75 species were recorded only in eBird and 47 were not forest species. Overall, up to 39 forest-dependent species, including raptors, babblers and woodpeckers, may have disappeared from Semenggoh since 1965. Although differences in study methods and bias in eBird lists may have swayed results, it seems certain that the species loss in Semenggoh is partly due to development around the reserve and the resulting increase in isolation from pristine forests.

Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publications/377491286>

Climate change leads to range contraction for Japanese population of the Oriental Honey-Buzzards: Implications for future conservation strategies

Aryo A. Condro, Syartinilia, Hiroyoshi Higuchi, Yeni A. Mulyani, Rika Raffiudin, Lufthi Rusniarsyah, Yudi Setiawan & Lilik B. Prasetyo. (2022). *Global Ecology and Conservation* 34.

Summary: Satellite-tracking data from 30 birds were used to determine the current Oriental Honey-Buzzard (OHB) breeding areas in Japan and wintering areas in South-east Asia. Data incorporating current and future climatic variables and land use changes were used to generate species range models to evaluate the redistribution of OHB breeding and wintering sites under mitigation and business-as-usual scenarios. The findings predict an overall contraction in the breeding and wintering areas of OHB across all scenarios by 2050 and 2100, with increased migration distance that would entail increased migration energy and effort. Habitat restoration and developing new protected areas are among the conservation strategies suggested to tackle the threats of climate change and human activities to OHB survival.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2022.e02044>

Birding and Avitourism: Potential analysis of birds in the buffer villages around conservation area

Dian Iswandaru, Hariyono & Fathur Rohman. (2023). *Jurnal Sylva Lestari*, Vol. 11(2): 247-269.

Summary: Avitourism (or birding tourism), besides providing economic benefits for communities living adjacent to national parks, can also support conservation by reducing bird trapping and hunting in these areas. This study was carried out to investigate the potential for developing avitourism in two villages in the buffer zone of Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra. Data from bird surveys in the study area and information from interviews with bird guides, communities and visitors were analysed to determine the species with avitourism attraction. Results showed that 55 out of the 87 species recorded in the villages fulfilled at least one or more of the selected nine avitourism criteria for "birding attraction". Nocturnal species, parrots and the top 50 species of Way Kambas NP scored highest as avitourism attractions; colourful species, raptors and protected species were also favourite attractions while endemic, migratory and songbird species were the least favoured. An interesting study that can be replicated in other similar situations in the region to promote avitourism to support bird conservation.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.23960/jsl.v11i2.681>

The effects of peat swamp forest patches and riparian areas within large scale oil palm plantations on bird species richness

Bettycopa Amit, Wauter Ralph Klok, Peter J. Van Der Meer, Nik Sasha Khatrina Khairuddin, Ivan Chiron Yaman & Kho Lip Khoon. (2023). *Tropical Life Sciences Research*, 34(2).

Summary: Oil palm (OP) planting has been responsible for large scale deforestation, leading to biodiversity loss, including birds. This study investigated how areas set aside as natural reserves within an OP landscape affect bird diversity. Point count surveys were carried out at two set-aside areas of peat swamp forest (PSF) and riparian reserve (RP) in an OP plantation in Sarawak, East Malaysia. Results showed that the PSF site, with 77 species, had higher bird diversity compared to OP (31 species) and RP (45 species) but less bird abundance. This study demonstrated that set-aside natural areas within an OP landscape have value as refuges for threatened bird species. However, habitat connectivity with adjacent forests (as in this study) is important in order that such areas can maintain their role as conservation sites.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.21315/tlsr2023.34.2.7>

Avifauna recovers faster in areas less accessible to trapping in regenerating tropical forests

H.S. Sathya Chandra Sagar, James J. Gilroy, Tom Swinfield, Zuzana Burivalova, Ding Li Yong, Elva Gemita, Novriyanti Novriyanti, David C. Lee, Muhammad Nazri Janra, Andrew Balmford & Fangyuan Hua. (2023). *Biological Conservation*, Volume 279, 109901.

Summary: Large scale deforestation in South-east Asia have caused significant declines in avian diversity and abundance across the region. Restoration of degraded forests can result in

the recovery of bird species impacted by habitat loss and destruction. However, the capacity for recovery depends on the extent to which the site is exposed to threats. In this study carried out in Harapan Forest, a restoration site in Sumatra, the authors used data derived from changes in forest condition, wildlife trade species, habitat association and survey points accessibility to analyse the recovery rates and abundance of 122 selected species over a decade of forest regeneration. Results show that 43.8 % of these species experienced abundance increases. However, there were indications of the impacts of bird trapping due to increased human accessibility - 14% of species did not recover as predicted based on the forest regeneration observed and the proportion of species dependent on very remote forests increased threefold during the study period.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.109901>

Book & Site Reviews

The Hornbill Specialist Group Website

Swee-Yian Lim

Dr. Alan Kemp (Transvaal Museum, Republic of South Africa), the 'Father of Hornbills' formed the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Hornbill Specialist Group (HSG) in the early 1980s with a number of international zoo professionals. In the early days, communication and dissemination of knowledge was difficult.



With the advent of internet, this group has set up an open-source website. Their aim is to share their combined knowledge and skills for evidence-based conservation action for hornbills and their habitats.

The resources made available to researchers, conservationists, policymakers and enthusiasts are:

- HSG Journals – latest (Vol. 5, September 2024) and past issues.
- Manual to the conservation of Asian Hornbills.
- 3rd and 4th International Hornbill Conference proceeding.
- The Asian Hornbill Bibliography offers a compilation of over 700 publications, including books, book chapters, journal articles, reports, conference proceedings, magazine articles and media reports about Asian hornbills. It is regularly updated by the IUCN SSC Hornbill Specialist Group.

All are in downloadable pdf format.

Besides the list above there are many other invaluable posts. For example, the Sulu Hornbill Action Plan, 8th IHC abstracts, workshop reports, ecology and status of African and Asian Hornbills.

For more information and to download the pdfs: <https://iucnhornbills.org/>

Upcoming & Recent Bird Activities

Swee-Yian Lim

October Big Day 2024: 12 October 2024

Mark 12 October 2024 on your calendar and start planning for October Big Day 2024. Anyone can participate, regardless of whether you are a seasoned birdwatcher or a beginner. You can do it from your bedroom window or your taman or in a dense jungle, i.e. wherever you are. It takes only a few minutes but your contribution to science is invaluable. Every year the number of participants increases so help to set a new record for 2024.



Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus* © Tim Emmerzaal Macaulay Library

With just a few days left to the big day, here's how you can prepare for the celebration:

- **Take the free [eBird Essentials course](#)** for an introduction to eBird or learn how to make your checklists more valuable for science and conservation,
- **Use [eBird Mobile Explore](#)** to plan your route by locating nearby places to go birding and recently reported species.
- **Explore [Birds of the World](#)** to discover new things about your favourite species — **FREE ACCESS** starting 8am ET Friday, October 11th through 9am ET Monday, October 14th.
- **Download the free [Merlin Bird ID app](#)** to help you to identify the birds you see and hear on October Big Day. [Upload your recordings](#) to your eBird checklists to help Merlin identify more birds by sound.

How to participate

- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's contributions into a single massive



October Big Day list—while at the same time gathering data to help scientists better understand birds. [Sign up here](#). It's 100% free from start to finish.

- **Watch birds on 12 Oct:** It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert or go out all day long, even 10 minutes of birding from home counts. October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report what you find from anywhere in the world.
- **Enter what you see and hear in eBird:** You can enter your observations [via our website](#) or download the [free eBird Mobile app](#) to make submitting lists even easier. Please **enter your checklists no later than 15 Oct** to be included in the results announcement.
- **Watch the results roll in:** During the day, follow along with bird reports from more than 180 countries in real-time on our [October Big Day page](#).

eBird Trip Reports are a great way to share where you went and the birds you found on October Big Day. Simply [create an eBird Trip Report](#) for 12 October 2024. As you submit lists and upload media throughout the big day, they'll be added to your report automatically. Send the trip report link to friends and family so they can follow along. ([Learn more about eBird Trip Reports](#))

October Big Day Pro Tips

- **Make your observations more valuable:** [submit complete checklists](#), [keep counts of the birds that you see](#), and keep multiple checklists throughout the day.
- **Bring a Friend:** Birding with others can be more enjoyable and can help with spotting and identifying birds.
- **Share what you're seeing** on social media with **#OctoberBigDay!**

Your checklists will help us better understand global bird populations through products like these [animated abundance maps](#) brought to you by eBird Science. Most important of all, have fun.



Sony Bird Race 2024: 19 - 20 October 2024



Location : Fraser's Hill, Pahang

For more information :

<https://birdwatching.asia/sony-bird-race-2024/#:~:text=The%20first%20Sony%20Bird%20Race,race%20to%20promote%20its%20products.>

14th Borneo Bird Festival: 26 - 27 October 2024

Venue: Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sepilok, Sandakan, Malaysian Borneo

Web: <https://www.borneobirdfestival.com/festival-programs>

email: borneobirdclub@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BorneoBirdFestival>



Singapore Bird Race: 9 - 10 November 2024



The theme of the 40th Singapore Bird Race is "Migratory Land Birds".

For more information:

https://nss.org.sg/events.aspx?id=SiKzOmTkItdvKzOmTkaM4=&group_id=yclleUod3WM=#

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=singapore%20bird%20race>



13th Asian Bird Fair: 22 - 23 November 2024



Venue : The Tent, Las Pinas City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Web : <https://asianbirdfair.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/www.asianbirdfair.org?mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Contributions to the Malaysian Bird Report

Editorial Team, Malaysian Bird Report

The Malaysian Bird Report is intended to be an inclusive publication, one that offers a vehicle for established and young birdwatchers, and bird photographers, to share their field observations and expertise.

We welcome articles that help the birdwatching community to grow its understanding of bird behaviour, social interactions, identification, nesting, etc.

We hope to encourage all of us to go beyond capturing images and try to document and write-up our observations, especially of uncommon and unusual bird ecology, nesting behaviour, etc. The editor is committed to helping birdwatchers to write up their observations.

We welcome you to share the publication freely with all interested birdwatchers and bird photographers, as well as with the general public.

Guidelines for Submission of Articles:

1. All written contributions should be sent to the editor at: malaysianbirdreport@gmail.com using a Microsoft Word or Google Docs file. Articles submitted can be in English, Malay and Chinese. Malay and Chinese articles should contain an abstract in English.
2. Images submitted should be in JPEG (.jpg) format. As this is an electronic publication, we recommend images either 1000 pixels wide or 1000 pixels high. There should be no borders to the image. We will ensure that images submitted contain a watermark/copyright to identify the photographer; this will not obstruct the image in any way.
3. Images chosen for the cover page, back page, or other pages, to illustrate the publication, should be of higher resolution (2500 x 3500 pixels, 300dpi or higher) and not contain any watermark/copyright.
4. Copyright of images submitted will remain that of the photographer.
5. Any maps or other illustrative images should be sent as high-resolution JPEG or TIFF files.
6. Please use this reference for all bird names: MNS Bird Conservation Council. 2021. A Checklist of the Birds of Malaysia. 2020 Edition. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Nature Society. (MNS Conservation Publication No. 22).

We encourage collaborative work and hope that birdwatchers and bird photographers will combine observations to produce reports of interest to all of us.

We would like to thank all individuals who have contributed to the Malaysian Bird Report with articles, data, reports and images.