

Bird & Mammal Trip Report
Thailand (Jan-Feb 2024)



Rob Jansen
photography

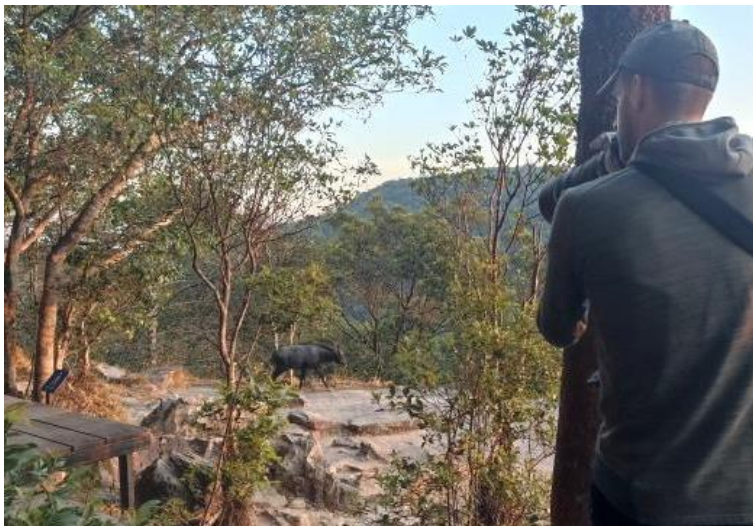
Introduction

About us

We are two enthusiastic nature lovers who travel the world together to search for stunning birds, fascinating mammals, and incredible nature. Our world travel started in October 2021 in South America. In January 2024 we went to Southeast Asia to continue our search for birds and mammals.

Rob Jansen is a biologist and wildlife photographer, and thus he has lots of knowledge about species and ecology. He's enthusiastic about all that's in nature, but mainly photographs birds and mammals.

Romy Jansen-Houtzager is a marketing professional. Our social media accounts, the look and feel of this report and the website are her work. In the field, she is an excellent spotter and very patient (give me some of her patience ...and hurry!).



Rob with Indochinese Serow



Romy with Asian Elephant skeleton

Information and how to use this trip report

This trip report covers our trip to Thailand. We travelled there from the 3rd of January – 18th of February 2024. For all photos of our Thailand trip, comments, compliments, and any specific questions, you can visit and/or contact us via our website. We would love to hear from you!

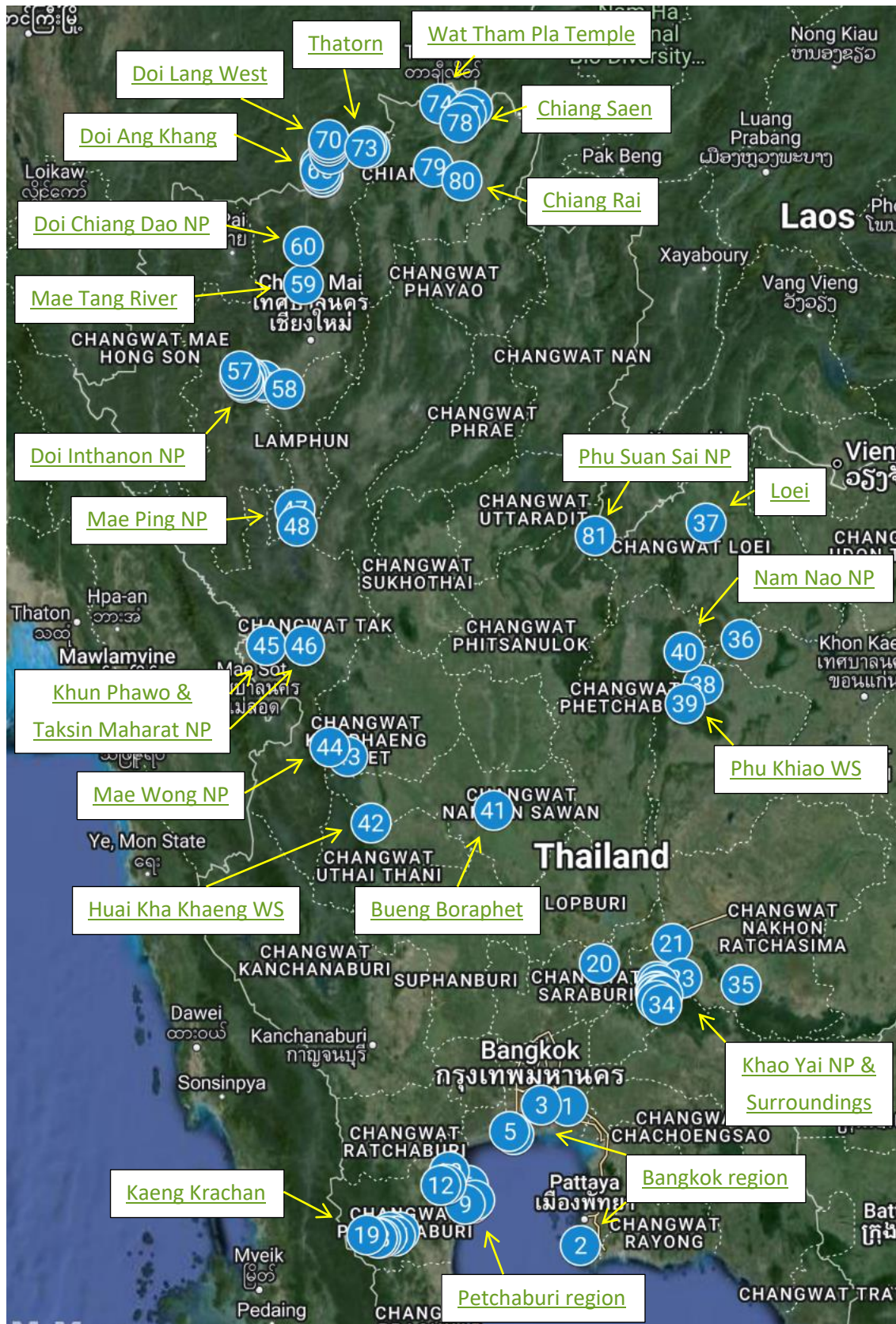
 www.robjansenphotography.com/thailand

 www.instagram.com/robjansenphotography

Species are highlighted in this trip report as such: **blue for birds**, **red for mammals** and **green for herpetofauna**. Target species which we missed at a specific spot are in *italic*. This gives you an idea which species to pay extra attention to. All observations made by us in Thailand can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 521 bird species and 48 mammal species in Thailand. Click here for the: [bird list](#), [mammal list](#) or the [total species list](#).

For more trip reports see our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/trip-reports

Map and specific locations



After bird-/mammalwatching a big part of South America (see previous trip reports) we went to Southeast Asia, beginning in Thailand. The map on the previous page shows places we visited in Thailand. You can click on the heading to go to that specific section in this trip report if you are only planning on visiting a certain part of the country during your vacation.

We made a [map in Google My Maps](#) with pointers of interesting trails, places, and specific bird and mammal locations. You can view this map, download the points and add them to your own map (click on the three dots above the legend and download the KML file and drag this to your own map), or add them in the app 'Maps.me'. Maps.me has most walking trails on it and is usable offline. Route navigation by car doesn't always work great and it's better to use Google Maps for that purpose.

Weather and timing

Generally, winter is considered a good time for birding in Thailand, with many migrants present (including most birders' main target; Spoon-billed Sandpiper). We did have some days with rain, but generally weather was good. A little bit later might have resulted in more species migrating through the country but this might result in other species being missed as some leave early in the year. More birds start singing later in the season, which might be an advantage. We picked fruits from other birders already discovering a Hodgson's Frogmouth for example, which wouldn't have been possible much earlier in the season.

Accommodation & Camping

We mostly slept in national parks and camped in a tent. If you plan to camp only a few nights, then renting gear in the parks is a good option. Prices were about 250 ฿ for a 2-person tent and 60 ฿ for a very thin sleeping pad + thin sleeping bag + pillow. Sometimes these tents were already set up, but more often this is not the case. As you can see, it is worth bringing your own tent if you plan on more than a couple of nights camping. As nights were surprisingly cold throughout most of the country, we were happy we brought good sleeping bags with us as the ones from the NP's wouldn't have served us well. Our tent and sleeping mats were bought at Decathlon in Bangkok and given to Thai people at our last campsite. If you are not continuing backpacking style after your Thailand visit, it makes more sense bringing the equipment from home. All campsites have (squat) toilets, cold showers, and often a small restaurant. Bringing a thermos is a good idea as hot water is available for free at all the restaurants. If restaurants were closed, the rangers provided hot water for us.

Accommodations in cities and towns are widely available and often not advertised on Booking.com (or the (in Asia) more commonly used Agoda, from the same company). Prices start from as low as 350/400 ฿ for a room per night, including AC, electric-heated shower and WiFi. At least in the cheaper hotels in Thailand beds are often quite firm.

Transportation

We reserved a car via the Dutch company 'Sunnycars'. They have a no-nonsense business and include all-risk insurance, but you actually get the car from a local company (they provide the service and insurance). The car – a Hyundai City – was rented from Budget in Bangkok on the 4th of January for 30 days, one-way to Chiang Mai included. When we got to our hotel in Chiang Mai on the 3rd of February we had the reception call them 30 minutes before drop-off and they came to pick it up for free. We again rented a car from the 6th of February in Chiang Mai (brought to our hotel free of charge upon asking them) and dropped it off in Udon Thani to make our transfer to Laos as easy as possible. The car was generally good enough for the places we visited, except for the drive up at Kaeng Krachan NP. At some places it would have been more comfortable to have high clearance or to be able to shift to lower gear when driving up or down mountains.

Literature

- Treesucon, U. & Limparungpatthanakij, W. (2018). Birds of Thailand. Lynx & Birdlife International Field Guides. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. *After the Colombia version I was fan of the Lynx bird books. They pay attention to ssp. and possible splits with clear distribution maps on the same page as the bird description; this was missing in the other bird books of SE Asia. The drawings are good, although sometimes I wished for a bit more (e.g., drawings of both bottom and upper sides of birds that are often encountered flying).*
- Francis, C. (2019). Field guide to the mammals of South-east Asia. Bloomsbury Publishing. *Just an amazing mammal guide and so happy it came out just before our travel. It's available digitally as well if you are travelling lightweight. It has distribution maps and short descriptions opposite to the drawings and more extensive information in the back of the book.*
- [ThaiNationalParks](#); a nice website with general information and good info about the species that can be found in the parks
- BirdNet app for recording the bird sounds. *If you don't know all the bird sounds, BirdNet can give a possible ID but it doesn't work very great in SE-Asia*

Equipment

Photography: Sony A9 II + 200-600mm + 1.4x converter + Sony 24-105mm, GoPro Hero 9

Binoculars and telescope: Swarovski EL 8x32 WB, Eden 8x32 XP, Swarovski 65HD + 25-50mm

Heat scope/Thermal imager: Lahoux Spotter NL 625 (lahouxbirding.com). We got to test this new and improved thermal camera from a company in The Netherlands. I owned other brands, but we are super happy with the sharpness, modes and light weight of this heat scope! More here: robjansenphotography.com/lahouxbirding

Spotlighting: Fenix HT18 Long Distance Flashlight (powerful, very focussed, and my preferred choice for open areas), Fenix FD41 Focus Flashlight.

Money in Thailand

We mostly paid in cash, as our debit cards didn't seem to work at any store or gas stations. We didn't find an ATM where we were able to withdraw without a fee. As many ATM's didn't even work for our card we ended up going to ATM's from the Kasikorn bank, which had a 20.000 THB withdrawal limit and charged a fee of 220 THB per withdrawal. We heard later from other travellers that they went into the bank and were able to withdraw money at the counter without a limit or withdrawal fee.

Exchange rate at the time of our visit was roughly 1 EUR = 38 THB or 1 USD = 35.5 THB. In this report we will only mention prices in THB / ฿.

Use of cell phones in Thailand

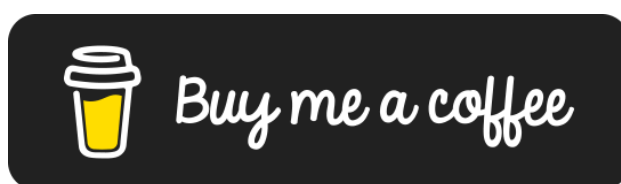
We got a SIM card from AIS on the airport. They activated it and we paid 1k ฿ for 30 days unlimited 4G data, 10 mb/s speed. At other locations we later saw they also have the same package (700 ฿) but with lower speeds (4mb/s). These packages still work great, but are way cheaper. Ask specifically at the airport for that one if you are on a budget. The AIS SIM worked surprisingly well, and we got good signal in most of the country, including at the campsites of most national parks, with the exception of Mae Wong (upper campsite).

Water-to-Go

To reduce plastic usage on our travels we bought Water-to-Go water bottles. Read about our experience with Water-to-Go on our website: www.robjansenphotography.com/water-to-go. The bottle and filters are not too expensive, and you will have your investment back within one holiday. If you order with the voucher **RJANSEN15** you will get **15% discount** as well! Check the website here: www.watertogousa.com (United States of America, Canada), www.watertogo.eu (United Kingdom) or www.watertogo.shop (most countries in the EU).

Acknowledgements

A big thanks to all the people who took the effort and time to write trip reports for both www.mammalwatching.com and www.cloudbirders.com. I would also like to express gratitude to many naturalists who I contacted via iNaturalist and other channels for specific information about species and who shared their knowledge and experiences. I am grateful that Canadian/Dutch birder Ben Pap was willing to edit this trip report!



If my trip report makes your trip more fun, time and cost efficient; think about supporting my creative journey by [buying me a coffee](#). Your generosity brings me closer to capturing impressive wildlife photos and untold stories

Visited sites

Bangkok region

[13.69312, 100.75106](#)

Visited dates: 4-6 January 2024

We arrived on the 3rd of January 2024 and went straight to hotel Oriole Residence to rest (13.65806, 100.715, the taxi from airport should be around 250THB, and be sure they turn on the meter). The next day we grabbed a taxi with the Grab app (like Uber) and picked up our rental car at the airport.

Chonburi - Sai Kaew

[12.74237, 100.84209](#)

After about 2hrs of driving we arrived at the entrance of Sai Kaew beach (12.74514, 100.89650). This area is controlled by the navy and thus only accessible for foreigners from 08.00-18.00. After leaving your passport with the officer at the entrance you get a tag. After another checkpoint you can buy a ticket at the office (12.75317, -100.8593; 100 ฿ p.p.). Yet another checkpoint later you can drive to the beach. At the water tanks on the right side of the road, just before the first parking lot, we encountered our first primates, **Long-tailed Macaque** (*Macaca fascicularis*). Looking around at the same spot we got our main target for this place, **Germain's Langur/Indochinese Silvered Langur** (*Trachypithecus germaini*). On and around the second parking lot the Langur was common, with multiple groups seen, up to 25 individuals in total. Walking around the first, smaller parking lot we noticed one solitary **Northern Pig-tailed Macaque** (*Macaca leonine*) in a tree. Once at the bigger, second parking lot this turned out to be the most common primate around, with at least 50 individuals present.



Long-tailed Macaque

Indochinese Silvered Langur

Sri Nakhon Khuean Khan Park

[Thaibirding](#)

[13.69699, 100.56338](#)

After a morning of not very productive birding at some salt pans on the southeast side of Bangkok we went to this park in the green lung of Bangkok. We mainly wanted to get familiar with some SE Asia

birds. The park is also good for **Stork-billed Kingfisher** and **Vinous-breasted Starling**, the latter not so common anywhere in Thailand. We walked around in the afternoon, but activity was low. Only when resting at the buildings at the end of the afternoon did we have the Starling fly over. The water pond behind these buildings is where we heard the Kingfisher. We didn't see **Laced Woodpecker** which is supposed to reside in the park too. We did get our first **Pink-necked Green-pigeon** along the entrance road. The only mammal observed was **Pallas's Squirrel**, with a tinge of red on the belly.

Whale Tour

[13.4937, 100.38718](tel:+66935587171)

We contacted Wild Encounter Thailand (+66 93 558 7171) a while before, but the schedule for tours in January was only known a month or so up front. They often go on Saturdays and the main target – Eden's Whale, split from Bryde's Whale– can be seen year-round. The trip includes breakfast and lunch and is 2000 ฿ p.p. We met in the morning between 07.00-07.30 and had a very small breakfast with way too much plastic waste (lots to improve on that front to make it more eco-friendly waste-wise). At 08.00 we left on a boat where one could rest inside or be on deck outside. With some spotters on the deck, it didn't take long before we encountered our first **Eden's Whales**. We were able to see two whales come up and they were surprisingly mottled. After a while we continued until they found four more, which were feeding. That was an amazing sight to see, them lunching through the water! Bird-wise it was pretty quiet with mostly terns: **Common Tern**, **White-whiskered Tern** and **Black-naped Tern**. We had about 5 **Pomarine Skuas** on the whole trip, which lasted until 15.00. **Irrawaddy Dolphins** are seen on about 60% of the trips close to the coast, more so in the rainy season. **Finless Porpoise** are seen about 20-30% of the trips. Just for info, they said that seeing any Dolphins from the red 'dolphin bridge' a bit more west is chanceless due to all the fishery going on there; we didn't go there for that reason.



Eden's Whale



The Whale Watching Boat

Khok Kham

[Thaibirding](https://www.thaibirding.com)

[13.51278, 100.35033](tel:+66935587171)

After the whale tour there was still time to go to the close-by Khok Kham, a small area of salt pans not too far from Bangkok. It seems that high tide is the best time to visit, as there will be more birds in the salt pans. We didn't have huge numbers of birds, so we might have picked the wrong time. We

birded until 18.00 but couldn't find either of the two **Spoon-billed Sandpipers** that turned up here this year despite there being another birding group with a local guide too. It is a great place to bird however, and at least here we felt we really scanned every bird present (unlike at Pak Thale). **Great Knots** were a nice addition to the more common species of shorebird that we found here.

Petchaburi region

Visited dates: 7-8 & 14 January 2024

Pak Thale – Wader Spot [Thaibirding](#) [13.14934, 100.05955](#)

Thai Birding has great maps and explanations on this spot (and all the following around Petchaburi). We parked the car and said good morning to other birders present. They answered with '*good morning, there is a **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** there*' and that is how we got to see that stunner! It flew up with all the **Red-necked Stints** and a few **Broad-billed Sandpipers** when a local ran past loudly shouting to someone. We subsequently focussed on finding **Nordmann's Greenshank**, **Asian Dowitcher** and **Terek Sandpiper**. We had Curlews fly by along the coastline, but no **Far Eastern Curlew**. Along the coastline we added **Greater Crested Tern** and **Lesser Crested Tern**. Other additions wandering around were **Little Tern**, **Gull-billed Tern**, **Caspian Tern** and **Red-necked Phalarope**. Even though we walked around quite a lot and searched big groups of Red-necked Stints foraging in very shallow water, we didn't re-find any Spoonbill anymore. We went back a week later, and it took 2.5h before (again) a local western birder found one in between Broad-billed Sandpipers on a small dyke. He confirmed what the other local birder had said a week before; one day they can be very easy and be one of the first birds you see, other mornings you don't find them at all. The second week we found one of the two **Chinese Egrets** that had been seen at Pak Thale (none had been seen for a couple of weeks on the Sandspit).

Laem Phak Bia – Sandspit [Thaibirding](#) [13.0559, 100.10305](#)

We arrived at Mr. Daeng's house (13.04059, 100.08831) at the end of the road and parked behind the gate (there is an obvious sign stating you are at the right place). Someone spoke English and explained that Mr. Daeng was occupied by another bird tour coming at 14.00 and we couldn't join that one. We had to go with another guide that could barely communicate the word 'plover', let alone miss-ID'ed some shorebirds that we saw on the sandspit. Luckily he did know the **White-faced Plover** and **Malaysian Plover** and we got good views of both!:) On the way through the mangroves, we observed **Long-tailed Macaque**, **Lyle's Flying Foxes**, **Collared Kingfisher** and **Black-capped Kingfisher**. We found it a bit overpriced for what it was and in hindsight we would have rather walked the 2km along the beach. Locals even go with motorbikes towards the sandspit.

Afterwards, we went to the 'abandoned building' but found it very quiet and decided to continue to the next spot.



Malaysian Plover

White-faced Plover

Hat Chao Samran – Reedbeds & Paddies

[13.02858, 100.03724](#)

We checked out this spot in the late afternoon. We had seen some good eBird lists, comparable in species to the Petchaburi Rice Fields location mentioned by Thai Birding. In a short time, we observed species like **Black-browed Reed Warbler**, **Oriental Reed Warbler**, **Asian Golden Weaver**, **Streaked Weaver**, **Chestnut Munia**, **Indochinese Bush Lark**, **Plain-backed Sparrow** and other birds of these habitats. At some reeds (13.02858, 100.03724) we flushed **Yellow Bittern**, **Ruddy-breasted Crake**, and then I observed **Baillon's Crake** standing in between the reeds. The best bird for us was a stunning adult male **Pied Harrier** flying over the fields.

Petchaburi Rice Fields

 [Thaibirding](#)

[13.16668, 99.91136](#)

We started early morning along the irrigation channel but quickly moved on as we didn't see too much nor did we like the birding here (lots of vegetation was cleared). We made the first stop at the Radio Tower. Birding some reeds away from the road (13.16668, 99.91136) we found **Ruddy-breasted Crake** (HO), **Chestnut-capped Babbler** and our first of many **White-breasted Waterhen**. Driving the road slowly eastwards we observed **Bronze-winged Jacana**, **Chestnut-tailed Starling**, **Asian Green Bee-eater**, and **Grey-headed Swamphen** amongst others. Turning off the main road (13.1799, 99.9412), we observed **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, **Glossy Ibis** and **Grey-headed Lapwing**. This should be a good part for **White-browed Crake** walking on the vegetation, but we found none.

We then went to Bang Tabun (13.248, 99.93184) where we quickly found **Spot-billed Pelican** and **Black-headed Ibis**. With the sunlight right ahead, we couldn't make out the far-away ducks, except for **Northern Pintail** and **Northern Shoveler**. On the way to the next spot, we observed plenty of **Ashy Woodswallow** on the wires and a troop of **Long-tailed Macaques**.

The next stop was for **Yellow-breasted Buntings** (13.14983, 99.87426). Even in the middle of the day there were 100's in the shrubs, often flying up when we walked past. We heard **Thick-billed Warbler** and had **Black-eared Kite** and **Greater Spotted Eagle** flying over.



Baillon's Crake



Yellow-breasted Bunting

Kaeng Krachan

[12.80979, 99.55587](#)

Visited dates: 8-14 January 2024

On the way to Kaeng Krachan we made a quick stop at the **Indian Thick-knee** spot (12.96889, -99.84688). More than 10 were easily found resting in the shade on the opposite side of the water.

Bird Hides

 [Thaibirding](#)

[12.84229, 99.5908](#)

According to the guides at Baan Maka the hides are best in the afternoon, when the birds come to bathe and drink. There are checklists on eBird with Pheasants and Partridges turning up in the morning too, so it might just depend on the weather and hide. Most people book them via Baan Maka, and they will make you show up physically and pay for the hides before they want to reserve anything (250 ฿ p.p.). If you're not staying at BM, I suggest going there before entering the park to see which hides are available for which mornings or afternoons you want. The locals put the food out at 08.00 and 14.00, so the recommended starting times are just before then. If you do stay at Baan Makaa, don't forget to try for the **Bengal Slow Loris** at night on the trails and in the garden.



Racket-tailed Treepie



Indochinese Ground-squirrel

Just outside the NP lies Samarn Bird Camp (12.81079, 99.56311). This might be a bit cheaper and better option if you don't want to camp inside the park, as you don't lose as much time driving outside the park every day. They should also be able to book you the hides.

NOTE: A friend later told us one can book privately using *Line*. As they only speak Thai, let someone else call for you. Bird's Hide (092-378-2703), Dab Toon (092-324-3664), Lung Sin (085-266-3447). He also said Dab Toon was 200 ฿ p.p. when booking directly instead of via Baan Maka.

(Nueng's) Bird's Hide ([12.84745, 99.52216](#))

We went to Bird's Hide one afternoon. The set-up is not very great for photos, but it does allow for great views of more common birds as well as some that are harder to see in the forest. Already there when we arrived were **Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush**, **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** and **White-crested Laughingthrush**. We didn't get **Grey Peacock-pheasant** or **Kalij Pheasant** which do show up here, but did see **Red Junglefowl**, **Green-legged (Scaly-breasted) Partridge** and **Bar-backed Partridge**. Besides that, it was fun to get prolonged and clear views of **Puff-throated Babbler**, **Abbott's Babbler**, **Siberian Blue Robin** and multiple species of Blue-flycatcher. Around 18.00 a **Slaty-legged Rail** showed up to bathe in the water. Mammal-wise it was quite worth it too, as we got **Northern Treeshrew**, **Grey-bellied Squirrel**, **Indochinese Ground-squirrel**, **Western Striped Squirrel** and best of all: **Lesser Mouse-deer**!



Northern Treeshrew

Lesser Mouse-deer

Lung Sin waterhole

This hide turned out to be a waste of time. Contrary to what was advertised, they didn't feed birds, so the only birds that showed up drank or bathed shortly. They were quite shy and skittish because less people visit this hide nowadays. We got many of the same species as at the other hide, but the experience wasn't the same. It was a lot of waiting and swift one-time views for most species.

Kaeng Krachan NP

 [Thaibirding](#)

[12.80979, 99.55587](#)

Logistics: At the gate (12.80979, 99.55587) we were surprised they didn't speak any English at all and communicated via Google Translate. We bought our entrance tickets (300 ฿ p.p. + 30 ฿ for the car, a one-time fee if you stay inside the park) and 4 nights of camping (30 ฿ p.p.). They told us to come back if we wanted to stay more than 3 nights, but once at the camp site they didn't care, and we

didn't bother driving back. We spent our time inside the park from the 8th late afternoon until the 14th in the morning. We did go out for the hide one afternoon and were able to come back for free with our camping ticket (but we heard others that had to pay again).

Opening hours are from 05.00 – 19.00 (you can't enter after 17.00, but you can leave until 19.00). Officially you can't leave the campsite between 06.00-18.00, but the gate was open when we were there and more than once we stayed on the road, coming back later. Leaving the campgrounds at 05.30 was also not a problem and allowed for some spotlighting before sunrise.

KM9 – KM10 (12.80674, 99.49846)

One often reads KM-markers in trip reports. To a reader it seems there are signs everywhere, but it's only obvious when driving out of the park that there are some white signs with the KM on them. KM9 is a more open area which gives good opportunities to scan the high treetops. We went here quite often for birding and mammalwatching. **Black-thighed Falconet** is known to hang out around here, but we only observed it one afternoon out of quite a few visits. Our first **Grey-rumped Treeswifts** were observed here. This area is also known to be good for Woodpeckers, and on our visits we found **Greater Flameback**, **Common Flameback**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, **Heart-spotted Woodpecker** and two targets; **Great Slaty Woodpecker** and **Streak-breasted Woodpecker**.

Around the next two corners on the road one passes a waterhole. We observed one **Dhole** here, lying near the water. Others had seen black **Leopard** come and drink around 18.30 one night. We had the black morph Leopard cross the street at night nearby. Other tourists had followed us and blinded me with their high beams, so I unfortunately only saw a black silhouette and bright cat-eyeshine.



Dhole



Stump-tailed Macaque

Before KM9 and towards KM10 there were some fruiting trees along the road. These were great places to watch birds throughout the morning. **Oriental Pied-hornbill** (very common throughout the park), **Great Hornbill** and **Rusty-cheeked Hornbills** came to feed on these trees besides many Bulbuls, **Blue-winged Leafbird**, **Thick-billed Flowerpecker**, **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker** and many other birds. We followed a small trail underneath one of the fruiting trees and found **Orange-headed Thrush** and **Eye-browed Thrush** foraging on the fallen fruits. A troop of **Stump-tailed Macaques**

foraged both in the trees and on the ground one morning. Just after KM10 is a more open area where there used to be a check point. This is where we had **Northern Red Muntjac** in the middle of the day. At night the fruiting trees are interesting for mammals and **Common Palm Civet** was in one of them all the time. We also found **Asiatic Black Bear** in one of the fruiting trees, after another group that I'd recommended to spotlight those trees for wildlife had found it there the night before.

On this stretch of road (KM8-10) is where we heard **Oriental Scops Owl**, **Collared Scops Owl**, **Asian Barred Owlet**, **White-fronted Scops Owl** and actually observed **Great-eared Nightjar**, **Large-tailed Nightjar**, **Brown Boobook** and **Oriental Bay Owl**.



Asiatic Black Bear



Oriental Bay Owl

Ban Krang Campsite (12.79876, 99.45425)

We camped here 4 nights. The camping has squat toilets and cold showers. Electricity is available at the reception and restaurant when the generator is on at night only (19.00-21.30 or so). Luckily the rangers were so friendly as to allow us to charge using their solar panels -ask them where to find the battery and plugs for that-

Birding the campsite allows for better views of the canopy, but mostly yielded some more common species for us like **Green-eared Barbet**, **Brown-rumped Minivet**, and **Large Woodshrike**. Our first **Giant Black Squirrel** was observed right in camp and **Dusky Leaf Langur/Spectacled Langur** (*Trachypithecus obscurus*) are a common sight. One morning we located **White-handed Gibbon/Lar Gibbon** (*Hylobates lar*) near the campsite. We birded the Vanilla Trail once and besides a cool plant *Rafflesia* – *Sapria ram*, a cool insect *Pyrops karenius* we only found one bird of note; a juvenile **Pin-tailed Parrotfinch** drinking water at the stream. We don't recommend looping around the Youth Hostel as the trail was not maintained. On this trail we got 15 ticks, the annoying ones, not lifers. Others had **Black-and-red Broadbill** and **Dusky Broadbill** near the campsite.

At night (mostly late night and early mornings) we sometimes heard **Great-eared Nightjar**, **Collared Scops Owl** and **White-faced Scops Owl**. **Malayan Porcupine** was common and was seen every night behind the restaurant feeding on leftovers. The best mammal was of course the **Malayan Sun Bear**. It often showed up at the end of lunch (13.30-14.30) for the leftovers and sometimes at night. We even had it walk past our table while we were sitting in the restaurant at night.

**Malayan Porcupine****Malayan Sun Bear****Streams 1-3** (12.80253, 99.44272)

About 1.7km from the campsite you arrive at the first of three streams. This can be a birdy area, so we went here two mornings. Mostly thanks to people we met, we observed **White-fronted Scops-owl** on a roost (between streams 1-2) and our first **Red-bearded Bee-eater**. Besides more common species like **Ochraceous Bulbul**, **Baker's Bulbul**, **Rufous-fronted Babbler** and **Puff-throated Babbler** we heard **Grey Peacock-pheasant**. We sighted **White-handed Gibbon** along this stretch multiple times. A guide showed us very small **Hardwicke's Woolly Bats** (*Kerivoula hardwickii*) roosting in the end of a downwards hanging bamboo stick (12.80509, 99.43519). Thanks to Canadian birders we met we were very close to seeing **Banded Kingfisher** up the very steep hill, 200m into the trail on the left after the first stream. We heard two and had one right above our head, but it flew off before we could locate it.

**White-fronted Scops-owl****Hardwicke's Woolly Bats****Upper elevation** (12.82437, 99.36546)

With a normal sedan you are allowed to drive until the road climbs (12.80379, 99.42758), if your car even makes it through the streams. After that you are only allowed up with a 4x4 (although a high clearance 2x4 and some driving experience should be enough in dry season), going up 05.00-08.00/13.00-15.00 and down from 09.00-11.00/16.00-17.00. Our car had very low clearance, so we went up with 4 other people and a guide from Baan Maka. The price seemed pretty steep for Thai standards; 6000 ฿ for 1-4 people + 500 ฿ for every extra person, including the car and guide. Value

wasn't returned either as the guide didn't seem very motivated or very knowledgeable. Most of the good stuff was spotted and heard by one of the Canadian birders. We would recommend just getting a car to drive you up for the day (2000 ฿ for 1-4 people for the full day). You could probably even hitch a ride or arrange something with the rangers at the campground. They left Baan Makaa at 06.00, only arriving at the lower campground at 07.00, reaching the top of the mountain only just before 09.00!

**White-handed Gibbon****Oriental Pied Hornbill**

Driving slowly, we did see **Grey Peacock-pheasant** on the road. As we were new to Thailand and this altitude, most birds near the summit were still new for us including **Flavescent Bulbul**, **Ashy Bulbul**, **Mountain Bulbul**, **Rufous-browed Flycatcher** (HO), **Slender-billed Oriole**, **Mountain Imperial Pigeon** and **Blue-eared Barbet**. Walking down from the viewpoint we had good looks at **White-browed Scimitar-babbler** and the Canadian birder spotted **Little Cuckoo-dove** quite in the open. Around lunch we had **Yellow-throated Marten** behind the restaurant, but no **Malayan Sun Bears** (3 different individuals show up here). **Wreathed Hornbills** were seen flying by from the restaurant and **Brown-backed Needletail** flew over our heads. The swiftlets here are assumed to be **Himalayan Swiftlets**.

In the open area at the top, we did observe **Blyth's Shrike-babbler** and **Red-bearded Bee-eater**. Another individual Red-bearded was observed on a trail branching off the main road (12.82068, 99.37083). In that corner we also had **Forest Crested Lizard** (*Calotes emma*).

**Red-bearded Bee-eater****Spectacled Langur**

Walking down the road we mostly searched for the **Ratchet-tailed Treepie**, which we dipped (the best place is between KM27-29). The higher elevations (KM24 and up) are the places to search for **Robinson's Banded Langur** (*Presbytis robinsoni*), which we dipped as well.

Nice birds observed walking down were **Striated Yuhina**, **Banded Kingfisher** (HO), **Spot-necked Babbler**, **Grey-throated Babbler** and **Golden Babbler**. Driving back down we had a car in front of us, which is why they got good views of **Kalij Pheasant** and I had to do with the butt and tail.

Khao Yai NP & surroundings

Visited dates: 14-18 January 2024

Wat Phra Phutthabat Noi [🌐 Thaibirding](#) [🌐 Birding2Asia](#) [14.652278, 100.97960](#)

This temple is the known hotspot for the endemic **Rufous Limestone Babbler**. It's logistically best combined on route to or from Khao Yai NP. We arrived at noon and parked in front of the temple. The stairs were closed off so we just roamed as close to the rocks as we could get, eventually finding one pair a bit further in (14.65092, 100.97656). Mammals observed are **Long-tailed Macaque**, **Indochinese Ground Squirrel** and a totally creamy-white morph of **Finlayson's Squirrel**.

Lam Takhong Dam – Chan Tuek side [14.78368, 101.48358](#)

We had some time to kill and decided to go to Lam Takhong Dam (turn-off 14.78536, 101.480613). We soon found **Yellow-eyed Babbler** while walking north along the unpaved road. **Freckle-breasted Woodpeckers** were in the trees, male **Pied Bushchats** in the field, and a female **Pied Harrier** foraged over the fields. A stunning male **Long-tailed Shrike** (*ssp. tricolor*; **Himalayan Long-tailed Shrike**) was a treat to the eye! Coming towards us was a **Javan Mongoose**, which quickly retreated to the shrubby borders after noticing us.



Rufous Limestone Babbler

Yellow-eyed Babbler

Local Government Compound [Thaibirding](#)

[14.53333, 101.37609](#)

Very close to the entrance of Khao Yai NP, this is an easy place to tick **Red-breasted Parakeet**. We found it immediately after parking lot in the high bare tree (14.53333, 101.37609).

Khao Yai Bat Cave

[14.549, 101.54671](#)

We arrived at 17.30 and sat down our chairs to watch the cave on the adjacent hill. It took until 18.00 to see the first groups of bats fly high over and until 18.10 until the stream out of the nearby cave began. It was absolutely incredible to see a stream of 10,000's **Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bats** (*Mops plicatus*) fly out continuously. The only raptors present were **Common Kestrel** and **Grey-faced Hawk**.



Wrinkle-lipped Free-tailed Bats

Vogel's Pit Viper

Khao Yai National Park [Thaibirding](#)

[14.50781, 101.37902](#)

Logistics: The reserve is open daily between 06.00-18.00. Entrance fee 400 ฿ p.p./30 ฿ per car. As with other NPs, if you camp you only pay once and if you get your ticket stamped when leaving, you can return the same day for free. Camping tickets (30 ฿ p.p.) can be bought at the campground.

We stayed in the park for 3 nights and found it very busy, even outside the weekend/holiday. Night drives are available, but we chose not to (600 ฿ per car for 50 minutes). It seemed they weren't as strict with us entering the campground after 18.00, mainly because people doing the late-night drive until 20.30 also need to drive back from HQ to there. We just followed one of the first cars at 18.30, but after only **Sambar Deer** for 30 minutes we trailed off to the campsite. The gate at the campground was locked until 06.00 in the morning, so no chance for getting out earlier. We did hear people doing the whole loop and seeing **Malayan Porcupine** and **Small Indian Civet**.

Names refer to the map on ThaiBirding website/Trail names on the map from the NP.

KM33/Trail 3 (14.46370, 101.37138)

We only walked this trail for an hour in the afternoon. It seems like an interesting trail, comparable to Trail B/Trail 5. We heard some rustling and observed **Green-legged (Scaly-breasted) Partridge** foraging. Walking back, we thought we flushed a Pitta close to the entrance. After playing tape we got a faraway response of **Eared Pitta** but couldn't find the bird that had hopped away close to us.

Nong Phak Chi Observation Tower (14.45097, 101.36744)

This tower is a 1km walk from the parking lot, or can be reached by following the trail from KM33/3 or trail B/5 near the HQ. We went to this observation tower two times late afternoon and once early morning and mammal-wise turned up empty handed all times. We did see **Golden-headed Cisticola**, **Amur Stonechat** and **Paddyfield Pipit**.

HQ (14.43873, 101.37200)

At the HQ we took a short walk through the museum, wondering where the taxidermist got his degree. We checked the basement for bats and found only **Andersen's Leaf-nosed Bat** (*Hipposideros pomona*), but not the **Great Himalayan Leaf-nosed Bats**. We checked all the surrounding waters for **Smooth-coated Otter** every time we passed but didn't locate any. We did see **Common Sun Skink** (*Eutropis multifasciata*) and **Common Kingfisher** next to the water. The **Buffy Fish Owls** were still at the nesting site (14.43770, 101.37047). A giant **Southeast Asian Water Monitor** (*Varanus salvator ssp. macromaculatus*) dashed into the shrubs while walking back to the road. In front of the restaurant suddenly sat a stunning **Long-tailed Broadbill** on a wire with a messy nest!



Long-tailed Broadbill

Buffy Fish Owl

Thanks to local guides we observed **Vogel's Pit Viper** (*Trimeresurus vogeli*) and **Reticulated Python** (*Malayopython reticulatus*). **Northern Pig-tailed Macaques** are common, as everywhere in the park.

Trail B/Trail 5 (14.43677, 101.37239)

We focussed one morning and one afternoon on the trail starting a bit uphill from the HQ, but found the first part to be a bit unclear and overgrown. We would recommend entering from the west of the HQ at the sign that says 'No Entry' (14.43724, 101.37030).

**Northern Pig-tailed Macaque****Northern Pig-tailed Macaque**

We quickly added the geographical counterparts of bird species already seen in KK; **Grey-eyed Bulbul** and **Puff-throated Bulbul**. Birding in the morning was quite slow and besides **Red-headed Trogon** and **Banded Kingfisher** (HO) we didn't have anything of note until the big fig tree (14.43571, 101.36408). We took the trail up, flushed our only **Northern Red Muntjac** in KY, but turned around immediately when **Coral-billed Ground-cuckoo** started calling below. We waited a long time, trying to lure it in. It didn't show, but we did get our first **Silver Pheasants** walking by. We had extended views of **White-handed Gibbons**, **Finlayson's Squirrel** and **Grey-bellied Squirrel** (with a bright red back) feeding in the fig tree in the afternoon. In the afternoon the trail was birdier. We had **Green-legged (Scaly-breasted) Partridge** and multiple groups of **White-crested Laughingthrush**, some mixed with **Common Green Magpie**, **Laced Woodpecker**, and **Large Scimitar-babbler**.

**White-handed Gibbon male****White-handed Gibbon female**

The real prize came when halfway back a bird hopped away near my feet. Luckily this female **Eared Pitta** stood still 2m from us, allowing Romy to see it and for a blurry record shot. Immediately after, a Ground-cuckoo started to call. We sat down and tried to lure it in. It didn't seem to get closer, but after some quiet moments from both sides we heard some rustling on the other side of a ditch. We then saw a bluish tail sticking out from behind a tree and then the **Coral-billed Ground-cuckoo** walked into view! Soon after it disappeared again. Despite some stealth-mode crawling on the crispy-leaf forest floor, it only moved away further and further.

Mo Sing To – Sai Sorn Reservoir/Trail 4 (14.43363, 101.37114)

Except for **Ashy Woodswallows** and some funny looking lizard hiding in burrows we didn't see anything of note. We tried for **Eared Pitta** on the trail after the dam, but only observed **Rufous Woodpecker**. The trail is a bit more open, but the forest seems to be quite young. It connects to Trail B/Trail 5 at the fig tree.

Lam Ta Khong Campground (14.42273, 101.38848)

We drove past the TAT pond to look for **Needletails** (14.41308, 101.37251) many times, but found none. Driving from there to the campground around noon we had our only **Siamese Fireback** in KY foraging along the road! Despite many passing cars it kept foraging there for a while, allowing prolonged views.

The campground is quite big and busy. Tickets can be bought at reception after a couple of 100m. There is a restaurant as well as a charging station, both only open certain hours of the day.

Except for the many **Sambar Deer**, we only observed **Common Palm Civets** while spotlighting at night. We heard **Large-tailed Nightjar**, **Great-eared Nightjar** and **Oriental Scops Owl**.

Pha Kluai Mai Camping (14.43164, 101.40021) & **Haew Suwat Waterfall** (14.43565, 101.41416)

This is now known as the old campground, as camping here is not allowed anymore. The stake-out for the CBGC is long gone too, just FYI. It is still a good spot for **Cambodian Flowerpecker** (ne), of which we found several feeding in the trees on the open campgrounds. It's also a good place to actually see **Moustached Barbet**. Other birds of note seen on the campgrounds are **Black-crested Bulbul** (*ssp. johnsoni* with the red throat) and **Blue Rock Thrush**.

**Blue-bearded Bee-eater****Cambodian Flowerpecker**

This old camping is also the starting point for the trail towards Haew Suwat Waterfall (Trail A/Trail 2). We did part of the trail one afternoon but found it relatively quiet. We checked in vain for **Slaty-backed Forktail**, regularly observed by others in the stream. Near the small waterfall halfway we observed **Wreathed Hornbills** fly by.

One can also drive or walk towards Haew Suwat Waterfall via the road (and combine it with the aforementioned trail on the way back). The gate opens only at 07.00, so you have the road to yourself from 06.00 in the morning. Spotlighting yielded nothing during the first half hour. We got a nice amount of Woodpeckers, as the road goes through open country; **Greater Flameback**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Greater Yellownape**, **Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Rufous Woodpecker** (HO) and **Great Slaty Woodpeckers**. **Red Junglefowl** was feeding on the side of the road together with **White-crested Laughingthrushes**. Checking the group members in the shrubs revealed two **Black-throated Laughingthrushes** in between. Once at the parking area near the waterfall we had our first **Blue Whistling-thrush** (*ssp. flavirostris*; Yellow-billed Whistling-thrush). In a tree we noticed two cool-looking **Blue-bearded Bee-eaters**. On the way back we got very good views of **Pileated Gibbons**, a species we had already heard calling most of the morning. They kept singing until at least 10.00, and they can be differentiated from White-handed Gibbon by the melodious bubbling sound in the song.



Pileated Gibbon male

Pileated Gibbon female

Khao Khieo Road (14.40744, 101.37031)

One morning we waited at the camping gate before 06.00 to be the first one out and drive straight to the Khao Khieo road. It turned out there weren't any cars heading up there, but we wanted to be first for spotlighting. This turned out to be the right choice, as in one grassland we encountered a group of at least 6 **Gaur** (14.38800, 101.38723). We also wanted to be the first at the boardwalk (14.36679, 101.40557). Arriving at the cliffs at the end of the boardwalk we wondered how people ever spotted the Serows here. Crawling to the edge to glimpse over it revealed only dense vegetation and my fear of heights. When we almost wanted to leave around 06.55 we saw three **Indochinese Serow** walking through the forest, coming right to the viewpoint. The mother and young weren't bothered by our presence at all, the other fled immediately. Admiring them for a while we walked back and had a party of 3 male **Silver Pheasants** next to the boardwalk. Driving down the mountain we saw 3 more groups with, in total, at least 10 individuals.

We then started birding where the road begins to ascend (14.38215, 101.39080) and observed both **Banded Broadbill** as well as **Banded Kingfisher** (finally some views!). As we heard **Pileated Gibbon** everywhere, we tried to locate them (not having seen them yet on the road to Haew Suwat waterfall, which we like better for this species as it is more open), which turned out to be more difficult than

thought. They seem surprisingly good at hiding and the tall trees easily obscure any apes in the trees a bit farther from the road. We finally succeeded after a while and had two of them swinging by through the treetops. At that moment we had 7 **Austen's Brown Hornbills** flying over.

**Indochinese Serow****Silver Pheasant**

Sakaerat Biosphere Reserve

[Birding2Asia](#)[14.50904, 101.954](#)

Logistics: This reserve is \pm 1.5-2h drive from KY NP (entrance 14.50904, 101.95400). We arrived at 20.00 and found the gate open and drove in. Arriving at the HQ we met the manager who told us there is no camping, but we could stay in a room for 300 ฿ p.p., excluding meals. Better reserve up front via [Facebook](#). In case of no response try the private email provided by a staff member who speaks English (k.nithina@kkumail.com). Meals can be provided. As they often have schools coming for a night there is often a buffet (120 ฿). It's a relaxed place with a clear research station vibe.

**Finlayson's Squirrel (white morph)****Siamese Fireback vent**

When asked about Lorises the manager laughed and pointed to a nearby tree with an orange ribbon around it. A researcher marked all the trees where one had been seen. Walking the path going southwest it was an orange-ribbon festival. It took only 10 minutes to find the first **Bengal Slow Loris!** After some photos we went on and in 10 minutes more found the next individual. Back at the HQ we found our third Loris feeding on flowers in a high tree. Three Lorises in 1 hour seems like

pretty decent chances here, and it's nice to have a place where one is allowed to spotlight. We heard **Brown Wood Owl** in the distance.

We came here for the Fireback. Leaving our room in the morning we were taken directly by car to a spot on the trail where they often hang out early morning and late afternoon (14.50415, 101.92626). The **Siamese Fireback** were as tame as chickens, coming really close. The **Red Junglefowl** were as tame as Firebacks I guess, but still easy to see. The Firebacks sometimes come in groups of up to 20+, but we had 7, of which 3 males. They are sometimes fed by the rangers in the dry season.



Siamese Fireback



Siamese Fireback

West Thailand

Visited dates: 23-29 January 2024

This section includes Bueng Boraphet (which is more central Thailand, but doesn't warrant its own section^^) and different parks and locations in west Thailand; from Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, Mae Wong NP up until two lesser-known national parks west of Tak.

Bueng Boraphet

 [Thaibirding](#)  [N-Thailand-B](#)

[15.6717, 100.24298](#)

This is a popular location on route to amass some good numbers for the trip list. Every now and then some rarer species of waterfowl show up (like **Baikal Teal** and **Baer's Pochard**). We planned on doing a boat tour but skipped that when we saw some recent eBird lists lacking any special species and the associated cost (we heard more than 500 \$ per hour). We opted for a quick afternoon visit for some species we had missed so far during the trip. After parking the car we were surprised to see the destruction that had taken place by new construction, and there were barely any shrubs left to search for some skulkers. Some scanning with the telescope did yield some species like **Striated Grassbird**, **Watercock**, **Cotton Pygmy Goose**, **Black-winged Kite** and **Eastern Marsh Harrier**. Despite only adding a few species and most of them being quite far away, we enjoyed sightings of **Bronze-**

winged Jacana, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Pied Harrier (female only) and a whole range of species we'd only had a few sightings of before in the trip. The only mammal we observed was **Pallas's Squirrel**.

Huai Kha Khaeng WS

[15.58851, 99.38793](https://www.facebook.com/huaithainationalpark)

Logistics: The park is open from 08.00-16.30. Entrance fee 200 ฿ p.p. & 30 ฿ per car. All the trails have to be walked with one of the many, many rangers.

Accommodation: We stayed two nights in a small local homestay called Baan Pai Homestay (15.59957, 99.39951), which we can highly recommend. The people are lovely and it's a nice experience. Reservations can be made via [Facebook](#) in English.



Pallas's Squirrel

Grey-bellied Squirrel

Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary is often described as 'off-the-beaten-path', but it actually gets more and more international tourists nowadays. The big attraction is the large number of mammals that are resident in the park. However, we didn't fancy the park particularly; the opening hours are very restrictive, they don't allow camping, and officially you can't walk any of the trails alone. We tried to enter one alone and within 2 minutes we had a ranger accompanying us. Thus, seeing some of the more special mammals seems near-impossible during a 1 or 2 day visit.



Green Peafowl

White-bellied Woodpecker

It seemed that walking the road is semi-allowed, so that is what we did most of the morning. We picked up **Red-breasted Parakeet**, **White-bellied Woodpecker** and **Black-headed Woodpecker** this way. Behind the HQ we had our first **Green Peafowl**, our first sighting of **Asian Barred Owlet** and our first mammals of the park: **Pallas's Squirrel** and **Grey-bellied Squirrel**.

The real attraction is the observation tower. The gate (15.60093, 99.36424) was not locked, and we followed the road to the right and parked there. After this it was ± 200 m walking towards the tower (15.5979, 99.36152). **Green Peafowl** and **Banteng** were already on the open field, as was one lone **Eurasian Wild Boar**. We occupied the hide from 13.00-17.30 and observed **Yellow-legged Green-pigeon**, **Black Giant Squirrel**, **Northern Red Muntjac** and **Sambar Deer**. When we wanted to leave at 17.00, I spotted an **Asian Elephant** in the far right corner crossing the river. After about half an hour it had made its way through the bush and walked onto the field! We wished we could camp just there on the first level of the tower; that would make for an interesting night. If you have a Thai guide, check if they can arrange a stay in the tower until 21.00 or so and get a ranger to pick you up (as it seems safety is the main reason for all the strict rules in the park). Staying up in the tower should be safe enough, so it's worth a try!

**Banteng****Asian Elephant**

Just before the park entrance, there is a little road towards the north (15.58995, 99.39434). Walk or drive this for a few 100 meters to get to a viewpoint (15.59298, 99.39166). From here we observed even more **Banteng** than from the observation tower inside the park! At night we observed **Large-tailed Nightjar** (HO), **Savanna Nightjar** and **Indian Nightjar**.

Mae Wong NP

[🌐 Thaibirding](#) [🌐 N-Thailand-B](#)

[16.03906, 99.23342](#)

Logistics: The park is open from 06.00-18.00 (but the checkpoint just behind HQ might be closed until 08.00). Entrance fee 200 ฿ p.p. & 30 ฿ per car. There are 3 camping sites (30 ฿ p.p.p.n), one down near HQ, 1 very small and inclined one at the top (Chong Yen; 16.10039, 99.10778) and a big one 4km before the top (Kun Namyen). There is only a small shop with hot water at the top, so get your chicken fried rice at HQ.



Chong Yen campsite view



Chong Yen campsite

The main bird targets are found at the top, so we didn't bird much around HQ and towards the top. Driving up/down early or late could yield **Kalij Pheasant**, of which we had two groups on our way down. Multiple **Crested Serpent Eagles** were resting in trees in the early morning along the road. A couple of viewpoints are potentially interesting for raptor watching, but we only found **Shikra** and **Crested Goshawk** this way. A few stops along the way at shrub/grassy vegetation produced **Grey-breasted Prinia** and at one location (16.11075, 99.14707) **Hill Prinia**, **Chestnut Bunting**, **Siberian Rubythroat** and **Thick-billed Warbler** (HO).



Kalij Pheasant



Hill Prinia

We stayed three nights. The first afternoon it rained, causing thick fog until late the next morning. This impeded scanning the valley for **Rufous-necked Hornbills**, that other birders had seen flying in the valley not long before our visit. It took two afternoons and two mornings before I had very bad and distant views of two Hornbills flying from left to right through the valley at 06.45. Other birds observed from the upper campsite are **Golden-throated Barbet** (*ssp. ramsayi*; Malay GtB), **Great Barbet**, **Davison's Leaf Warbler**, **Orange-bellied Leafbird**, **Streaked Spiderhunter** (common), **White-necked Laughingthrush** and a whole range of Minivets: **Grey-chinned Minivet**, **Brown-rumped Minivet**, **Rosy Minivet** and **Scarlet Minivet**. At one time we had a group of ± 50 **Eyebrowed Thrushes** fly over! **Grey Peacock-pheasant** and **Bar-backed Partridge** were often heard, but not seen. With the scope we even found **Indochinese Grey Langurs** feeding on a faraway tree.

A trail goes up the hill from behind the ranger's house. Even a 5-minute climb allows for way better viewing of the valley (16.10069, 99.10702).

There is a small feeder before the trail, behind the ranger's house (16.10035, 99.10741). This feeder attracted the same birds as the other feeders at the beginning of the trail south of the camping area (16.09916, 99.10769). Species observed at the feeder include **Northern Treeshrew**, **White-necked Laughingthrush**, **Silver-eared Laughingthrush** and **Silver-eared Mesia**. The trail is only pleasantly walkable for 300m or so, after which you have to work your way through the vegetation to get any further. On that short trail we still observed **Red-billed Scimitar-babbler** (check for **Brown-crowned Scimitar-babbler** that is sometimes seen here together with this species), **Burmese Streaked Wren-babbler** (HO) and **White-throated Fantail**.



Silver-eared Mesia



White-necked Laughingthrush

Walking the roadside down for ± 2 km we added **Bay Woodpecker** (HO) and **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker** to our trip list. We lured in a female **Maroon Oriole**, saw **Blue-bearded Bee-eater** and observed quite some mixed flocks. These were often high up, but could be lured in with pishing and Collared Owlet recordings. Besides the many (leaf) warblers, flocks contained **Chestnut-flanked White-eye**, **Gould's Sunbird**, **Black-throated Sunbird**, **Speckled Piculet**, **Striated Yuhina**, **Yunnan Fulvetta**, **Golden Babbler** and **Grey-throated Babbler**.



Striated Yuhina



Red-billed Scimitar-babbler

Some flocks seemed to consist of the larger species; **Silver-eared Mesia**, **Western Grey Treepie**, **Long-tailed Broadbill** and **White-browed Shrike-babbler**. Other birds of note while roadside birding were **Red-billed Scimitar-babbler** together with **Hooded Babblers** and a heard-only **Burmese Streaked Wren-babbler**. **Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel** was seen multiple times, but often only glimpsed crossing the road or over an open patch of vegetation.

A walk around the Kun Namyen campsite 4km from the top produced **Barred Cuckoo-dove**, a whole range of Bulbuls as well as **Pale-blue Flycatcher** and **White-browed Scimitar-babbler**.

At the top of the road we enticed **Rufous-throated Partridge** (HO) to call at dusk around 18.20. Spotlighting at night was mainly done on foot and bit of driving. During two evenings -both 2h of spotlighting- we observed **Masked Palm Civet**, **Small-toothed Palm Civet** and **Bengal Slow Loris**. We had a mammal crossing the road far in front of us which seemed like a cat, possibly **Asian Golden Cat**. However, it was too far and too quick to be certain. We hoped for **Phayre's Flying Squirrel** that has been observed here, but we didn't have our thermal scope yet and they can hide well! **Mountain Scops-owl** was very common from the top towards the other camping area, where we eventually observed one. There we heard **Brown Wood-owl** and had **Large-tailed Nightjar** resting on the road.



Mountain Scops-owl

Bengal Slow Loris

Khun Phawo & Taksin Maharat NP

 [N-Thailand-B](#)

[16.7759, 98.92854](#)

Both of these parks lie west of the city Tak and are easily combined.

Khun Phawo NP (16.77723, 98.66722)

Logistics:

We went here during the middle of the day, entered through the gate (we didn't have to pay) and turned left towards the big rock. Within minutes we had our first pair of **Variable Limestone Babblers** and another pair was quickly found after that. High up on the east side of the rock **Dusky Crag Martins** were seen flying and a **Peregrine Falcon** called loudly. Then it started to rain; good thing they have decent coffee here.

**Variable Limestone Babbler****Variable Limestone Babbler**

We had some time left and tried for *Ayeyarwady Bulbul* by walking the road towards a gate (16.75749, 98.93803). Possibly because of the rain we didn't find any and didn't get a response. We did add **Violet Cuckoo** to our trip list and observed big flocks of **Rosy Minivets**.

Taksin Maharat NP (16.77590, 98.92854)

Logistics: The park is open from 08.30-16.30. Entrance fee 200 ฿ p.p. & 30 ฿ per car. There is plenty of space to camp (30 ฿ p.p.p.n) and there are cabins for rent. There is also a small restaurant.

Once at Taksin Maharat NP it kept raining the whole night and the next morning was very foggy. Despite the mist we decided to walk from the last parking lot (16.79265, 98.92244) and walk the steep stairs down towards the big 700-year-old Krabak (*Anisoptera costata*) tree. On the way we succeeded in finding our main target in the park: **White-throated Bulbul**. Besides **Buff-breasted Babbler** we didn't see much else.

**Camping at Taksin Maharat NP****Foggy at the entrance of the trail**

Northwest Thailand

Visited dates: 30 January - 15 February 2024

This section includes Mae Ping NP and Doi Inthanon NP, just south of Chiang Mai, and parks/areas in the very north: Doi Ang Kang, Doi Lang & Chiang Saen amongst others.

Mae Ping NP

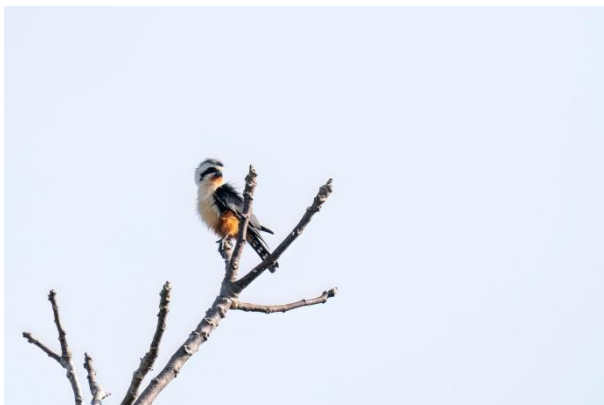
🌐 [N-Thailand-B](#)

[17.67144, 98.86921](#)

Logistics: The park is open from 08.00-16.30. Entrance fee 100 ฿ p.p. There is plenty of space to camp (30 ฿ p.p.p.n). At the Thung Kik campsite (17.56113, 98.87686) is no restaurant, only a small shop which was closed when we were there.

This time we arrived in the rain, which stopped when it got dark. **Eld's Deer** (reintroduced) was very common around the campsite Thung Kik and eyeshine was seen constantly. We decided to try on the main road and soon found our first **Small Indian Civet**. Back near camp we encountered **Masked Palm Civet**. No owls or **Blyth's Frogmouth**, which has been found in the park.

This park doesn't add much to an itinerary like ours, as it's comparable bird-wise to species found at Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary and the lower elevations of Doi Inthanon NP. Still, we added our first **Burmese Shrike**, **Rufous Treepie** and **Collared Falconet** around the campsite. **Black-headed Woodpecker** was a delight to see again, and we found this species along the road as well. We hoped for **White-rumped Falcon**, which is sometimes seen along the road (according to eBird and associated pictures that have it in bare trees), but also on the campsite according to the ranger. Going up and down the road by car intermitted with walking delivered **White-bellied Woodpecker**, another **Collared Falconet**, **Black Baza**, **Grey-headed Parakeets**, but no Falcon.



Collared Falconet



Small Indian Civet

Doi Inthanon NP🌐 [Thaibirding](#) 🌐 [N-Thailand-B](#)[18.50634, 98.66186](#)

Logistics: The park is open from 05.30-18.30. Entrance fee 300 ฿ p.p., & 30 ฿ per car. There is plenty of space to camp (30 ฿ p.p.n) at the official camping, although we weren't particularly fond of the set-up (lots of sloping spots), the loud dogs, and village noises. There are plenty of other options available for both camping and more luxurious accommodation in the NP. There are shops, local restaurants and even a small gas station in the town.

This is probably one of our favourite parks in Thailand, mostly due to the high number of birds seen. Like the websites and other trips reports, we will divide this section from the entrance (440m) to the summit (high; 2570m).

On Route Chiang Mai - Doi Noi Scrublands (18.46399, 98.79388)

Not far from the main route towards Doi Inthanon NP there are some scrublands that might make for an interesting stop. Walking along the scrubs we flushed some **Savanna Nightjars** and **Pin-tailed Snipes**. At the water **Scaly-breasted Munia** and **Red Avadavat** came to drink. Unfortunately, we also found a mist net (subsequently destroyed by us) with dead birds and fruit bats in there.

KM13 (18.52554, 98.65154)

This is probably the first and last stop people make when visiting the park. From the bridge **Black-backed Forktail** can be seen, and it took us 3 visits before we actually observed them a bit upstream. One afternoon we drove up the road after the bridge and got views of **Collared Falconet**, but no **White-rumped Falcon**. As far as we understood mornings are better, but even then they are far from guaranteed. From the road we got good views of **Cook's Swift** flying quite low at the end of the day.

**White-tailed Robin****Buff-breasted Babbler****Rang Bon Doi Resort & Hides (18.53888, 98.55046)**

We didn't reserve and just showed up and asked if we could visit the hide. They apparently have two hides, of which one is only good in the morning. The price was 200 ฿ p.p., which was a bit steep for what it was. As they mainly put out meal worms the show is over quite quickly, and some species only showed up in the beginning and didn't return when another person joined later and added new

food. But it was a great way to get good views of **White-tailed Robins**, **Buff-breasted Babbler**, **Grey-throated Babbler** and a male **Snowy-browed Flycatcher**.

Ban Khun Klang

The only official NP campsite (18.54221, 98.52343) is one of our least favourite of all NPs, and we even decided to wild camp the last night as a better option. Even outside the weekend it was quite crowded, especially around the few flat areas. The dogs here can be a nuisance as well. This campsite used to be the spot for **Black-tailed Crake**, which to our knowledge hasn't been observed in years anymore. At night we did hear **Asian Barred Owlet**, **Collared Scops-owl** and **Mountain Scops-owl**.

A short stop around noon at Rong Fai Fa Restaurant (18.54189, 98.51769) yielded **White-capped Redstart** and **Plumbeous Redstart** in the small stream behind the restaurant.



White-capped Redstart

Orange-bellied Leafbird

KM34.5 (18.50830, 98.51061)

Passing through the gap in the traffic barrier one can park on the left side of the road. A short steep section and the road flattens out. Somewhere hidden there was a local feeding/photography station along this road, which allowed great views of many more elusive species; **White-gorgeted Flycatcher**, **Slaty-bellied Tesia**, **Himalayan Shortwing**, **Pygmy Cupwing** and more¹. Walking the road we encountered species like **Yellow-bellied Fantail**, **Grey-throated Babbler** and **Little Pied Flycatcher**. Towards the gate there are more pine trees. **Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** and **Hume's Treecreeper** were mostly seen there. Right before the gate a small trail goes left (18.50689, 98.50303). A small fruiting tree along here yielded our first **Rufous-backed Sibias**. Continuing along here the habitat gets more open, and this is where we heard **Russet Bush Warbler**, glimpsed **Mountain Tailorbird** and got views of **Oriental Turtle Dove**.

¹ Mealworms can be bought at [Petz World in Chiang Mai](#)

**White-gorgeted Flycatcher****Pygmy Cupwing**

This is probably one of the better places to go if you like spotlighting. There is barely any traffic and no noise like in the village. Spotlighting two nights we heard **Brown Wood-owl**, **Mountain Scops-owl**, **Oriental Scops-owl** and **Collared Scops-owl**. The first night we observed 2 and later glimpsed another probable **Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel**; adorable little mammals. After we picked up our new Lahoux Spotter NL 625 thermal camera in Chiang Mai we went another night and found another individual, allowing for better views and photos!

**Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel****Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel**

KM37 (18.52600, 98.49904)

The old jeep-trail, as KM37 is known, is nothing more nowadays than a small trail into the forest with many dry leaves on it and every now and then a fallen tree. I have to see the first jeep that can work its way through there! That's a good thing though, as after 100m or so the car noises from the road disappear and one can properly bird. We heard **Green Cochoa** right from the parking lot opposite of the entrance of the trail, but getting views or a decent recording was impossible with all the traffic. Inside the trail many birds had to be found by sound, so I'm pretty sure with more experience or a guide this trail will bring you more than it did for us. Still, we had **Slaty-backed Flycatcher** (HO), **Large Niltava**, **Rufous-bellied Niltava** (HO), **Slaty-bellied Tesia** (HO) and after hearing it we got decent views of **Asian Stubtail** in some low vegetation. Most birds however were seen in passing flocks, which included **Yellow-cheeked Tit**, **Clicking Shrike-babbler** and **Blue-winged Minla**.



Small Niltava



Asian Stubtail

Kew Mae Pan Trail & Roadside (18.55575, 98.48250)

One morning we decided to walk the Kew Mae Pan trail, which costs 200 ฿ per group, including the guide. We didn't like the fact that we had to pay another time after entering the park to walk a trail and that none of the guides spoke English and thus added nothing, but rules are rules. We went in around 07.00 when we saw that the sky was clear (and thus sunny). After a surprisingly more intense walk than we expected we arrived at Pha Ngaem Noi rock (nr. 11 on maps.me; 18.56053, 98.47472). The wind was roaring, and it was very cold with the sun still behind the mountains. We scanned the surrounding rocky outcrops and grassy areas with binoculars and the telescope for 2 hours, only finding **White-headed Bulbul**. Different guides said it was too windy and we were freezing cold so decided to go. A bit further along the trail (18.55964, 98.47552) I did one more scan with binoculars and observed a mother **Chinese Goral** with a youngster on a rock that had just been hit by the sun (and was just out of view from the previous point). If we were to do it again we would probably go into the trail around 09.00 and bring warm coffee in a thermos. Bring a scope if you have one!



Viewpoint (yellow) and location of Goral (red) Chinese Goral

A bit further up on the main road there is a known spot for **Speckled Wood-pigeon**. We parked on the west side of the road and scanned in the afternoon from 16.30. We thought the pigeons would come to the trees on the east side of the road, but only one came and landed in a tree on the west side. It was quite high up and the scope helped to get better views.

Summit (18.58830, 98.48624)

We found that the summit only became more interesting a little later in the morning, as it takes the sun quite some time to hit the shrubs here (08.30-09.00 when we were there). As we were there way too early we enjoyed a warm coffee and a savoury breakfast from the little shops at the top. The boardwalk (18.58831, 98.48622) is short, but walking it multiple times gave different species every time. Going down the steps we encountered **Himalayan Bluetail** and the first of many **Blue Whistling-thrushes**. Both **Green-tailed Sunbird** (*ssp. angkanensis*; **Doi Inthanon Sunbird**) and **Mrs. Gould's Sunbird** were abundant.

**Green-tailed Sunbird****Mrs. Gould's Sunbird**

Warblers were plentiful; **Ash-throated Warbler** and **Buff-barred Warbler** were nice additions to the trip list. The bulk seemed to be **Davison's Warbler** and **Blyth's Warbler**, which were commonly heard singing. From the boardwalk we observed **Eyebrowed Thrush**, **Silver-eared Laughingthrush** (quite common around the summit), **Himalayan Shortwing** and even **Dark-sided Thrush** foraging on the ground. The boardwalk is also the place where we got our best sighting of **Rufous-throated Partridges**. Every now and then a small flock of **Rufous-winged Fulvetta**s passed by. The boardwalk is where we had our only encounter with **Ashy Wood-pigeon**, which foraged on some berries in the trees.

**Grey-sided Thrush****Dark-backed Sibia**

Opposite of the boardwalk entrance, stairs lead up to the ranger's house, toilets and some shops. This was another good place to see both Sunbird species, as well as **Dark-backed Sibia**. **Grey-sided**

Thrushes and **Rufous-throated Partridges** foraged underneath the shrubs behind the toilet block. The roadside yielded many of the same species as above, with the addition of **Bar-throated Minla**.

Mae Tang River

[19.1574, 98.91997](#)

We just made a short stop here as three **Long-billed Plovers** had been recorded here for a couple of weeks already. Walking on the canal gates they were soon observed, as well as **Pin-tailed Snipe**, **Common Snipe** and some other waders. Many **Small Pratincoles** were a delight to see as well!



Small Pratincole



Long-billed Plover

Doi Chiang Dao NP



[Thaibirding](#)



[N-Thailand-B](#)

[19.40358, 98.92147](#)

Logistics: It seems that the temple is open day and night. As we only went to the temple there was no entrance fee.

We didn't visit the higher parts of the park and just visited for the afternoon and evening. Walking the stairs up until the temple we didn't encounter much, except that we finally got views of **Silver-breasted Broadbill** just before the little bridge. Some stairs lead down to the gully on the right just after the bridge (19.40278, 98.91785; the trail is in *Maps.me*). This gully trail is probably the most interesting for birders, with Eyebrowed Wren-babbler being one of the targets. Two brownish birds hopping on the forest floor underneath the tangles turned out to be **Burmese Streaked Wren-babblers**. We got a response from **Rusty-naped Pitta**, but actually observing it turned out to be too much to ask. We tried to entice **Eyebrowed Wren-babbler** to respond, and eventually we only heard it when we came back on the bridge! Going down the stairs gave good views of the trees, and this way **Pin-tailed Green-pigeons** were easily spotted.

At night we heard **Mountain Scops-owl** from the temple parking lot. Near a patch of bamboo (19.403, 98.92102) we heard loud gnawing, quite possibly from a **Bamboo Rat spec**. Despite trying hard we couldn't get anything into view (the location impeded climbing down). **Blyth's Frogmouth** responded a couple of times from the other parking lot (19.40426, 98.92247). We tried multiple spots along the main road for **Spot-bellied Eagle-owl**. We thought we heard it distantly a few times but couldn't be 100% sure.

Doi Ang Khang

🌐 [Thaibirding](#) 🌐 [N-Thailand-B](#)

[19.85898, 99.04743](#)

Logistics: There are probably official opening hours, but it seemed traffic went in and out of the park day and night. We were only asked to pay the entrance fee (300 ฿ p.p.) once we stayed one night at the campground (30 ฿ p.p.p.n). Again, with lots of stray dogs and lots of people we decided to wild camp. There are some food stalls next to the camping.

Chinese Cemetery, Fields & Dump (19.84744, 99.04915)

Turning left just before the barrier of the park leads to the Chinese cemetery, fields, and dump. We birded this area one time early morning, and another day later in the morning. Park along the road and walk from there. The dirt road leading from the main road leads to a small rubbish dump, which mostly attracted birds when the sun had hit the garbage around 09.30-10.30 and after. Others have seen *White-browed Laughingthrush* here, but a male *Daurian Redstart*, *Grey Bushchat* and *Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babblers* is what we got here. *Crested Finchbill* was seen on top of the bushes in the field, as were *Western Grey Treepies* and *Long-tailed Shrike*. *Aberrant Bush Warbler* was glimpsed, but mostly heard in the vegetation along this road. A flock of *Brown-breasted Bulbuls* hung around the area and were often seen, amongst others in a fruiting tree. The fallen fruits attracted *Black-breasted Thrushes*, *Indochinese Ground-squirrel* and *Northern Treeshrew*. Birding along the main road delivered our first clown-like, big-headed *Spot-breasted Parrotbills*. The Chinese cemetery wasn't too birdy, but gave our first good views of *Slaty-backed Flycatcher*. We missed the *Common Rosefinches* that were regularly seen in the area in the weeks before.



Grey Bushchat male



Daurian Redstart male

Campground vicinity (19.86309, 99.05124)

As we stayed on the campground one night, we birded around here in the early morning. *Giant Nuthatch* and *Mountain Bamboo-partridges* can be found around here. The former is probably easier at Doi Lang and driving the road in the early morning probably gives better chances for the latter. Birding the roadside we encountered quite some *Little Pied Flycatchers*, our first *Spectacled Barwings*, and *Long-tailed Minivets*. At the barrier both *Buff-throated Warbler* and *Yellow-streaked Warbler* were found. *White-headed Bulbuls* had been reported mostly in December and January from the campground. It appears they feed on the flowering trees, sometimes in staggering numbers.

KM21 Trail (19.87541, 99.05274)

We only went into the KM21.3 Trail shortly. Park at the road and walk in for 75m, after which a small trail turns right (19.87566, 99.05349). We finally got views of **Bay Woodpecker** here. We didn't really try to bird the trail as it was quite overgrown, but we did walk to the area where **Chestnut-headed Tesia** has been found in recent years. It didn't take long before we got a response and after some waiting we observed it feeding on the small trail (19.87481, 99.05483).

**Spot-breasted Parrotbill****Spot-breasted Parrotbill****Viewpoint & Ridge-trail** (19.90902, 99.05279)

Reading about this in North Thailand Birding it sounded interesting. We just want to share that it's quite a long steep way uphill and only stays flat there for 200m, after which it descends steeply again. Not recommended based on our experience.

Viewpoint towards Myanmar & Ban Nor Lae Army Camp

Just before the border we turned left and drove up to a small coffee shop, serving decent coffee (19.930046, 99.04074). From here the views of Myanmar were great. Both the Canadian birders we met in KK and a group of Dutch birders had **Black-headed Greenfinch** flying by here, but besides 100's of **Cook's Swifts** and one **Crested Finchbill** sitting right on the very border we didn't observe much. We didn't go to the army camp because we heard it was closed, but later we heard it was not. So our advice is to just try, no matter what you hear ;-)

King's Project (19.90073, 99.04000)

For us this place can be skipped; it's not much more than a busy touristy place for overpriced food, where you have to pay entrance (50 ฿ p.p., & 50 ฿ per car) just to be able to look at the menu. Yes, there is a garden with flowers attracting **Gould's Sunbird** and some common birds. The only reason for us to go were the **Spot-winged Grosbeaks** that had been seen in the garden. We eventually found them very high up in a bare tree. As we were there, we checked out the stake-out behind the restaurant (19.91015, 99.04281). We scooped some of the rancid leftovers from the sinks onto the ground below and came back later to find at least 7 **Black-breasted Thrushes** feeding on it. The other

feeding spot behind the bamboo farm (19.91153, 99.04428) only attracted **White-rumped Shama**, **Slaty-backed Flycatcher** and **White-tailed Robin** lately².



Striated Bulbul



Black-breasted Thrush

Doi Lang West

 [Thaibirding](#)  [N-Thailand-B](#)

[20.00728, 99.10642](#)

Logistics: Although the park probably has official opening hours, birders came in very early and left sometimes very late. There is no official accommodation along the road in the park. We camped at the Pheasant stake-out for three nights, but there are two better options further along the road (20.07209, 99.09563 or 20.08269, 99.09850). Although probably not officially allowed, we weren't bothered at all and only once one army truck passed at night at 01.00.

Drive up

We drove up in the afternoon and found it very quiet. Except for **Chestnut Bunting** and **Short-billed Minivets** we didn't see much until the ridge. Driving with the windows open I heard some rustling and quickly reversed. Two **Mountain Bamboo-partridges** foraged in the gully on the side of the road and then came beautifully in to view as they made their way up the slope (20.04923, 99.10194).



Mountain Bamboo-partridge



Oriental Turtle-dove

² Mealworms can be bought at [Petz World in Chiang Mai](#)

Hume's Pheasant stake-out (20.06100, 99.09833)

If you drive in for one day birding, make sure you arrive at the stake-out early enough. Normally the Pheasants arrive anytime between 07.00-09.00, if they show up at all. For us they showed up all three mornings at 07.00/07.30/07.50. The first two mornings were very foggy, the last one sunny.

**Mrs. Hume's Pheasant****Mrs. Hume's Pheasant**

Besides one male and two female **Mrs. Hume's Pheasant** the cast consisted of **Oriental Turtle Dove**, **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler** and **Japanese Tit** besides more common birds. Even **Ultramarine Flycatcher** showed up! At night we heard **Mountain Scops-owl** and **Hodgson's Frogmouth**, of which a female was eventually found with the Lahoux Spotter NL 625 thermal camera.

**Hodgson's Frogmouth****Ultramarine Flycatcher****Feeding Stations & surrounding area** (20.07477, 99.09844)

After driving through pine forest one arrives at a broadleaf forest area. The pine area just before this is good for **Giant Nuthatch**. Others had seen **Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush** in the weeks before, which we dipped.

You can easily park along the road here as it's quite broad. Two signs indicating not to feed birds indicate you arrived in the feeding area. Lots of different little feeding stations have been set up by

Thai birders³. The attendants differ per feeding station, but for us included **Silver-eared Laughingthrush**, **Rufous-bellied Niltava**, **Slaty-blue Flycatcher**, **Hill Blue-flycatcher**, **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** and **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler**.



Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher

Silver-eared Laughingthrush

In one tree leading to a feeding station, right next to the road, was a nest of **Hodgson's Frogmouth**! The forest itself can be quite good for birds and flocks. We encountered **White-spectacled Warbler**, which was travelling with a flock here for a while already. **Long-tailed Broadbill**, **Rufous-backed Sibia**, **Grey-headed Parrotbill** are among the best birds we encountered while birding here.



Hodgson's Frogmouth

Hodgson's Frogmouth

Roadside birding between feeding stations & summit

Beyond the broadleaf forest is an open field. **Mountain Bamboo-partridge** can be found very early morning along this part of the road. We didn't try for those here, but did encounter **Aberrant Bush-warbler**, **White-browed Laughingthrush** (HO), **Hill Prinia**, **Sapphire Flycatcher**, and **Long-tailed Shrike**. At dusk we heard **Grey Nightjar**.

After this, one again encounters broadleaf forest where the road descends and then ascends towards the top. At the very bottom is a broad parking lot (20.08553, 99.09746) around which we had quite

³ Mealworms can be bought at [Petz World in Chiang Mai](#)

some activity. A flowering tree attracted **Long-tailed Sibias** multiple times. A flock contained **Long-tailed Broadbills**, **Rufous-backed Sibia**, **Grey-capped Pygmy-woodpecker**, **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker** and more. While drinking coffee **Necklaced Woodpecker** made an appearance in a dead tree. A little bit uphill **Spot-breasted Parrotbills** were feeding on some bamboo along the road. We observed **Giant Nuthatches** at the very bottom as well as a bit uphill.



Rufous-bellied Niltava



Grey-headed Parrotbill

Summit/Army Station (20.09729, 99.09472)

At the summit you find the end of the road, for birders at least. You're not allowed to go beyond the gate anymore. The main attraction at the summit is the feeding station in the bamboo on the left side of the road. This normally attracts **Scarlet-faced Liochicla**, as long as they have not been overfed with mealworms. **Crested Finchbills** made an appearance in one of the high trees during one of our visits.



Scarlet-faced Liochicla



Scarlet-faced Liochicla

Thaton

[🌐 Thaibirding](#) [🌐 N-Thailand-B](#)

[20.06101, 99.36195](#)

Logistics: No opening hours or entrance fees. Accommodation is widely available in Thaton. We stayed at Garden Home Guest House (20.06314, 99.360548) and negotiated 400 ฿ for a bungalow. These were pretty decent and included AC. A sedan can make it to all the places below, but a high clearance car will make the birding more pleasant.

Thaton - Riverside (20.04804, 99.38115)

As other birders had seen **Cinnamon Bittern**, we checked a very small reed patch (20.0461, 99.3722) in the early morning. The Lahoux Spotter NL 625 thermal camera immediately revealed a Bittern, but unfortunately it was **Yellow Bittern**.

Once at the water tower we weren't sure precisely how to proceed to the river. We parked at the coordinates above and walked eastwards, encountering multiple **Eurasian Wryneck**. The best tactic seems to be to walk as far on the dirt road as possible, then walk along the edge of the agricultural fields and take the different small trails in and out to the riverside. From there we scanned for the Bushchat with a telescope. The search delivered **Small Pratincoles** on the river islands, as well as **Chestnut-capped Babbler** in the reeds. After some time, we found a male **Jerdon's Bushchat**. It seems they prefer the high reed with the typical reed plumes from what we've seen from photos.

Thaton - Bridge (20.06101, 99.36195)

One can park on the bridge. From here we easily observed **House Swifts** between 18.00-18.30. **Barn Owl** should be possible at night, but despite an hour waiting we only heard it from our bungalow.

Shrubby wetland (20.04702, 99.34944)

One morning we went to a small pond with nice vegetation thanks to a recent eBird list with coordinates in there. The turn off from the main road is quite sharp and easily missed. The road after is a bit tricky with a saloon car, but the distance to the pool is short and can easily be walked. There we had **Greater Painted Snipes** (incl. female), **Lanceolated Warbler** (seen on top of the reed), **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** (HO) and 2 **Brown-cheeked Rails** foraging in the open.

**Ashy Woodswallow****Brown-cheeked Rail****Rice fields**

The rice fields consist of a network of roads, most of which can be driven with a saloon car, but for comfort high clearance would be nice. At one point we went to the location where others had found **Rosy Pipits** in the last few weeks (20.039162, 99.349022). Sure enough they were still present, besides **Red-throated Pipit** and **Richard's Pipit**. **Citrine Wagtails** were the most common Wagtail in

the rice fields. The road going further south (20.02422, 99.33423) seems interesting and we had 2 **Baikal Bush Warblers** before we had to turn around because of road works.

Wat Tham Pla Temple

[20.33004, 99.86331](#)

Logistics: The temple is open from 06.00-18.00. There is no entrance fee.



Assamese Macaque



Assamese Macaque

We came here to see **Assamese Macaque**, which turned out to be incredibly easy to observe here. At least 100 Macaques live in and around the temple. All visitors walked around armed with bamboo sticks (there is a stack on the right side just after the entrance). Signs in Thai warned for biting monkeys and told not to feed them. Interestingly there are two shops selling food for the monkeys, which had quite some customers during the few hours we visited. No wonder the monkeys are so tame, some of them fat (ok, plus-sized) and sometimes quite aggressive.



Assamese Macaque



Assamese Macaque

Chiang Saen

[🌐 Thaibirding](#) [🌐 N-Thailand-B](#)

[20.2588, 100.0506](#)

Logistics: No opening hours or entrance fees applicable to the locations we visited. We stayed at the [‘A Hotel Cozy’](#), booked via Agoda, it was great value for the money, ±400 ฿. Even though the hotel

looks closed from the outside, the rooms are actually quite cozy, the beds comfy, AC working properly and free coffee available at reception.

Mekong River – Rim Khong Restaurant (20.30327, 100.09212)

We visited this place in the afternoon and walked directly to the back and went down the stairs to the riverside. **Grey-throated Martin** was easily found foraging low over the water, besides **Bank Swallows** and **Barn Swallows**. One female **Red Avadavat** was seen, but the Red-bellied ssp.



Grey-throated Martin

Wiang Nong Lom – Harrier Roost (20.23116, 100.01499)

The watch tower is not safe to ascend anymore, and we weren't sure why there were hides; as the Harriers flew far and wide over our heads. It was cool to see many Harriers come to roost, but as the bulk came when it was already really dark only the male **Pied Harriers** could really be admired for what they are. Thanks to some early arrivers we still appreciated **Eastern Marsh Harriers** as well. **Ruddy-breasted Crake** was heard and **Striated Grassbird** sang on top of the reeds. We didn't hear the **Barred Buttonquail** others had observed here.

Nong Bong Kai Non-Hunting Area (20.2588, 100.0506)

This lake held one new species for the trip list; **Eurasian Coot** was abundant. Around 07.00 we didn't see much else than these, plus **Lesser Whistling Ducks** and **Little Grebes**. When we later returned we did observe **Ferruginous Ducks** and **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas**. We hoped for the **Baer's Pochard** that had been found between the Ferruginous Ducks in the days before, but didn't find it here.

Nonglom Monkey Cheeks (20.2073, 100.0046)

Yes, you read the name right. This area is most easily reached via the Harrier roost, as the roads between Nong Bong Kai lake and here were not the best for our rental car. Someone had found 2 **Greater White-fronted Goose**. Driving our car to the edge of the water bodies luckily kept the ducks in place. Scanning these revealed mostly **Indian Spot-billed Ducks**, **Garganey** and **Northern Pintails**, with some **Eurasian Teals**, **Tufted Ducks** and **Gadwalls** in between. We also refound some of the **Falcated Ducks**, including the male, which other Dutch birders had found before us. We didn't find the **Ruddy Shelduck** they observed there. Driving back via the harrier roost we regularly made stops

to check the waterbed behind the small dyke for ducks. At one moment there was a small group of **Ferruginous Ducks**, with one in between them with light flanks and a dark head; a male **Baer's Pochard**! Unfortunately, they all took flight right away not to be found again.

Chiang Rai

Logistics: No opening hours or entrance fees applicable to the locations we visited.

Besides the white-and-silver kitsch temples in Chiang Rai we visited two locations that might be of interest to birders.

Chiang Rai – Kok Riverside ([19.92247, 99.81647](#))

We went here to have another chance for the other ssp of Red Avadavat. A trail (starting at 19.92062, 99.81665) surprisingly led to a small makeshift hide (19.91961, 99.81666). Even in the middle of the day some of the leftover seeds and our mealworms attracted a pair of **Red Avadavat** (*ssp. flavidiventris*; Yellow-bellied), as well as a stunning male **Siberian Rubythroat**. We again didn't find **White-rumped Munias**.



Siberian Rubythroat



Red Avadavat

Pha Chang Park ([19.83374, 100.01916](#))

East of Chiang Rai lies a 1km x 0.2km big limestone wart in the landscape. A walk around resulted in only finding one pair of **Annam Limestone Babblers**. **Blue Rock-thrushes** were very abundant as well.

North East Thailand

Visited dates: 18-23 January 2024

Phu Pha Man NP

[16.81523, 101.95389](#)

Logistics: As we had some time before dark we headed towards this location. We just made it towards the bamboo forest in our low sedan; something we wouldn't recommend this in the wet season. With a better car one can drive towards the parking lot, which could serve as a nice wild camping spot.

The entrance road and trails are going through some nice bamboo forest. We first walked the right trail towards the Phaya Narakad Cave but came back empty handed (although the cave was cool!).

We then took the trail to Kled Kaew Cave and soon found **Bamboo Woodpecker** (ne).

Loei - Wat Tham Pha Pu

[17.57842, 101.71083](#)

Logistics: The temple is open between 06.00-18.00; entrance is free. Accommodation is best arranged in the nearby town Loei.

This temple is a great place to observe **Indochinese Grey Langur** (*Trachypitecus crepusculus*). We arrived around 07.00 and besides some monks and a large pack of somewhat aggressive dogs, there was nobody there. It took until 08.00 before we found the primates feeding on some bananas that locals apparently put out daily near the temple (17.57828, 101.71159). Other mammals seen were **Himalayan Striped Squirrel** and **Finlayson's Squirrel** (white morph with black from the neck to the tail).



Indochinese Grey Langur

Indochinese Grey Langur

The cave in the mountain had at least three species of bats in there; **Great Himalayan Leaf-nosed Bat** (*Hipposideros armiger*), **Least Horseshoe** (*Rhinolophus pusillus*) and a probable **Bent-winged Bat sp.**

Phu Khiao Wildlife Sanctuary [Birding2Asia](#)

[16.50641, 101.6894](#)

Logistics: The park is open from 06.00-16.00. Entrance fee 400 ฿ p.p. If you stay in the park you only pay once. You can camp and there are cabins, as well as a little shop and cafeteria. Better to take food with you instead of relying on that last one being open. It's probably more a park for mammalwatchers or general naturalists than die-hard birders.

We stayed in the park for two nights, but in hindsight we would have opted for 3 nights to fully explore the park. The 23km long entrance road is very interesting and was birdy in the afternoon when we drove in and later in the morning when we drove out. It even seemed that birds were more active after 08.00 (sunrise ±06.45) and before 16.00 (sunset ±18.00) somehow. Bird-wise we mostly observed the more common birds in flocks, although we had a pair of **Siamese Fireback** foraging along the road early morning. Primates were surprisingly shy, and both groups of **Rhesus Macaques** as well as the **Indochinese Grey Langurs** observed next to the road fled quickly. Driving in we heard loud crashing of branches and trees and realized something big was walking there. We waited for a while to get it into view when we heard more crashing on the other side of the road. Then an **Asian Elephant** crossed the road about 50m from us! We heard the crashing sound of trees relatively often during our stay in the park, but didn't get to see more of them. In a muddy ditch next to the road is where we saw **Eurasian Wild Boar**.



Sambar Deer with the 'sore spot'

Common Commander - *Moduza procris procri*

Closer towards the accommodation/campgrounds is an interesting trail to walk. We walked this route twice, starting at the main road (16.39641, 101.5771) and ending either at the accommodations or the road towards there (16.38958, 101.57319) depending on which route is taken at the only intersection on the trail. One late morning we observed a group of 7 **Long-tailed Broadbills**, as well as **Banded Kingfisher** sitting quite low! We added both **Ashy Minivet** and **Rosy Minivet** to our trip list here. Another flock brought **Plain Flowerpecker** and **Speckled Piculet** as new species. Other Woodpeckers seen are **Black-and-buff Woodpecker** and **Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**. One has to walk back to the car along the road, which is where we observed **Red-billed Blue-magpie**. Checking one tunnel underneath the road revealed one Bat, possibly **Great Woolly Horseshoe Bat** *Rhinolophus luctus* (16.39324, 101.57322). The same walk in the late afternoon

turned out to be very quiet, although we did manage to see **Black Giant Squirrel** and another group of **Indochinese Grey Langurs**. After some effort we managed to see **Blue Pitta** next to the trail, quite close to the main road. Some pools along the trail could make for a good stake-out during the warm hours of the day. Close to sunset we heard **Rufous-throated Partridge** along the side road to the accommodations at the end of the trail.



Banded Kingfisher female



Finlayson's Squirrel

Most of our time and effort was put into spotlighting around the accommodations/camping area. During the day **Green Peafowl** (reintroduced), **Hog Deer** (reintroduced) and **Sambar Deer** can easily be observed. Other day-active mammals seen are **Indochinese Ground Squirrel** and **Finlayson's Squirrel** (beautiful white, with a clear black path on the back, tail and upper side of legs). The rangers didn't seem to mind us spotlighting, not even when we walked the roads going off the campgrounds. The first mammal was **Golden Jackal** of which we saw at least 3, but heard many more. Our first **Small-toothed Palm Civet** was seen in a small fruiting tree. When it went out, I thought I refound it high up in another tree. This turned out to be a **Red Giant Flying Squirrel**, and it was absolutely spectacular to see it going from tree to tree! FYI: the roost behind the shop/restaurant for this species was not active.



Small-toothed Palm Civet



Hog Deer

We hoped to see Leopard Cat, of which 2-3 were said to reside around the wooden cabins. With loud school kids up until 22.00 we had little hope of finding one. Bright eyeshine behind the restaurant (near where another mammalwatcher had seen it) was only seen fleetingly when said kids stomped

around that area. Later we found that eyeshine again and it turned out to be the **Leopard Cat** indeed, hiding within the shrubs. Unfortunately it didn't stay long and we had to do with crappy and fleeting views. We tried to find it again until after 00.00 and again the second night, but didn't. The shop owners are familiar with the cat and even sometimes see it during the day!

Nam Nao National Park

 [Thaibirding](#)

[16.73035, 101.56103](#)

Logistics: The park is open from 06.00-18.00. Entrance fee 200 ฿ p.p. (no foreigner tax) & 30 ฿ per car. You can leave and enter as you like as the tickets are valid for a couple of days. You can camp (30 ฿ p.p.) and there are cabins (starting from 1000 ฿ per cabin). There are multiple shops and small restaurants. Despite its location in the NE of Thailand it was less than 4h drive to Bueng Boraphet.

We really liked this park as it has good infrastructure (trails were better maintained than at Khao Yai NP for example) and it has less tourists. There are a couple of trails behind the HQ and some other trails starting from the main road.

Spotlighting the campsite only yielded 1 **Red Giant Flying Squirrel** during two nights. Along the entrance road we only heard **Large-tailed Nightjar** and **Great-eared Nightjar**. **Asian Barred Owlets** woke us up twice in the early morning at the campsite.



Red Giant Flying Squirrel



Red-billed Blue-magpie

HQ Trail 1 (16.73952, 101.57386, turning left)

Right when we walked into the trail system we observed **Bamboo Woodpecker** and heard **Collared Babbler**. Going left goes to Trail 1. This semi-paved 1km loop trail goes partly along a stream, through deciduous and bamboo forest. Quite soon we heard **Red-billed Scimitar-babbler**, but couldn't get it to come closer.

HQ Trail 2-4 (16.73952, 101.57386, turning right)

Turning right when entering you enter trails 2, 3, and 4. They all have the same beginning through deciduous forest and bamboo. They also all have the same end number, 3 and 4 just loop around a

bit longer. They all climb up steeply and once reaching the 'viewpoint' (which was totally obscured by bamboo) you walk back to the other side of the campsite through pine forest. We walked trail 3 one afternoon and observed mostly the more common species in flocks. Higher up we flushed **Blue Pitta** and then heard two more from the same spot (16.73729, 101.57895). From this spot we finally got views of **Banded Bay Cuckoo**, a species we had heard many times before.

**White-crested Laughingthrush****Bamboo Woodpecker**

Trail Ban Paek (starting from main road; 16.73692, 101.55119)

We walked this trail one morning for about 3.3km one way. Officially this trail is only open during certain hours, but the gate only stops vehicles from passing through. We very much liked this trail as it's quite open for the first kilometres with some good species. One could easily bird this trail for the whole day if they take enough food and drinks with them, and you can even walk a big loop back to the main road.

We observed quite some species that were new for us, amongst which **Indochinese Cuckooshrike**, **Large-billed Cuckooshrike**, **Chinese Francolin** (HO) and **Golden-fronted Leafbird**. Besides those we observed **Slender-billed Oriole**, **Black-and-buff Woodpecker** and a whole range of nice-looking species. The whole area is good for **Blossom-headed Parakeet**, of which we had a group of 6 and even more fly by. Even better species came at a more open area with pines (16.73275, 101.53831) where we had both **White-bellied Woodpecker** and **Burmese Nuthatch**. The grass/shrubby sides of the road are good for Prinias, amongst which we saw the more difficult **Brown Prinia** (16.7366, 101.54524).

Further into the trail one gets to denser forest, which consists of pine and deciduous trees. With a 4x4 one might even get a key for the gate at HQ and drive until the good forest. At one moment we had **Asian Elephant** on the path in front of us. After some record shots we of course made sure we were out of his way and behind a thick tree. It then continued walking on the road, but made its way into the forest when seeing us behind that tree. We heard several more Elephants, so we waited it out for 5 minutes. We walked until a small pool and had 2 **Crab-eating Mongoose** crossing the trail.



Asian Elephant

Black-and-buff Woodpecker

Phu Suan Sai NP

🌐 [Thaibirding](#) 🌐 [N-Thailand-B](#)

[17.5019, 100.93914](#)

Logistics: It seems that the park is officially open 24/7, although the restaurant for example is only open from 08.30-16.00. Entrance fee is 100 ฿ p.p. & 30 ฿ per car. You can leave and enter as you like as the tickets are valid for a couple of days. You can camp (30 ฿ p.p.) and there are cabins. This is the only park we encountered with warm showers!

As we had some days to fill before we had to return our car, this NP seemed like a good option where we could up our trip list with a few more birds. We hoped to see Short-tailed Parrotbill here on day 1 and then go to Phu Luang Wildlife Sanctuary for one day for Black-faced Parrotbill. As we found out the latter had an entrance fee of 400 ฿ p.p. for foreigners and we still hadn't found our targets on day 1 in this NP, we decided to spend all our remaining time here.

We arrived just after noon and spend our afternoon in the culvert hide, located underneath the road. To get to the hide, park the car (17.50684, 100.94079) and walk northwards until a small trail on the west side of the road (17.50867, 100.94155). There are plastic chairs already in the hide. It is a first-come-first-serve system, so you might be unlucky if there are too many birders in the park. For a park that is not very well known it was quite busy with birders. Luckily for us the culvert has enough space for about 2x3 people (the culvert consists of two parts) to watch the small waterhole.



White-throated Fantail

Ashy Bulbul

In between the parking lot and the hide is a good place to try for **Rufous-throated Fulvetta**. Thai birders have made a feeding station on the left side of the road (17.50798, 100.94110). We only heard it there, but once at the culvert hide they did come for mealworms. A very cool reptile was coincidentally observed when at the Fulvetta feeder; **Barred Flying Dragon (*Draco taeniopterus*)** flew from a tree nearby the road when we neared the feeding spot.

Most of the targets in this park have been seen at this waterhole, including **Short-tailed Parrotbill**. The first afternoon we observed **White-rumped Munia**, **White-throated Fantail**, **Buff-breasted Babbler** and a whole range of nice birds coming to bathe.

The second day we did some roadside birding and observed **White-browed Piculet** in a flock. We thought we heard **Blue-rumped Pitta** once, but didn't hear it again unfortunately so we can't be sure. The Parrotbill is observed along the road as well, so it's well worth walking along the road if the hide is full.

From about 10.00-17.00 we again spend our time in the hide. Most of the birds observed were the same as the day before, but a new addition to the trip list was **Purple-naped Sunbird**. Again we didn't see the Parrotbills, but this time two gorgeous-looking **Rufous-throated Fulvettas** showed up!



Rufous-throated Fulvetta

Black-naped Monarch

You made it! Thank you for reading 😊

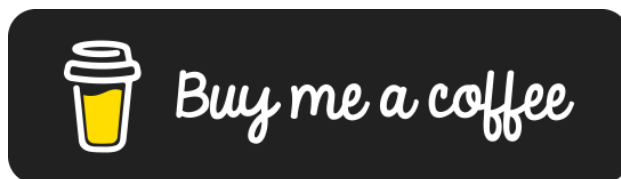
For all photos of our trip, comments, compliments, any specific questions, visit and/or contact us via our website. We would love to hear from you!

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All observations made by us in Thailand can be found on Observation.org. We observed a total of about 521 bird species and 48 mammal species in Thailand. Click here for the: [bird list](#), [mammal list](#) or the [total species list](#)

Our Top 5	Birds	Mammals
1	Spoon-billed Sandpiper	Sun Bear
2	Coral-billed Ground-cuckoo	Pileated Gibbon
3	Siamese Fireback	Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel
4	Hodgon's Frogmouth	Bengal Slow Loris
5	Mrs. Hume's Pheasant	Mainland Serow



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Bengal Slow Loris



Mrs. Hume's Pheasant