

CAMBODIA

15 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2009

TOUR REPORT

LEADER: DAVE FARROW

Once again, this year's Birdquest to Cambodia was a very enjoyable affair. We recorded 283 species, a very rich bird-list that included many spectacular birds. In the few short years since we first began visiting this fascinating country, the roads have improved dramatically and the accommodations become more comfortable, all adding to the efficiency and enjoyment of birding here. Of course the main draw on this tour is without a doubt the Giant Ibis, and once again we were not disappointed. In the dry woodlands of Preah Vihear province we began our search for this goliath before dawn, led in darkness to wait near a roosting place. With the first lightening of the sky, we could here the eerie bugling of these birds, and then three of them flew into view and alighted on top of a large bare tree nearby, waking up to another day and surveying their kingdom. What a thrill! We saw maybe seven birds in total, and what is even more remarkable is that only as recently as early 2001 was this majestic bird re-discovered, by camera-traps set up to record mammals coming to remote forest pools. That was the first proof of its existence since 1962, and now this is the sixth Birdquest trip to see it!

Of course this tour has many other thrills, such as the equally rare White-shouldered Ibis that we watched at length as he balanced on a treetop. Milky Storks were seen well this year, with a single at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and three among the busy waterbird colonies of Prek Toal, where we also enjoyed the mighty Greater and Lesser Adjutants. We also found Sarus Cranes of the endangered *sharpii* race, and three Bengal Floricans, one of which treated us to fantastic performance of its display. Other great birds came in the shape of both Spotted and Brown Wood Owls in the daytime, a perched Pale-capped Pigeon, a female White-rumped Falcon, and a wide variety of stunning Woodpeckers that included Black-headed, Spot-breasted, Yellow-crowned, Great Slaty and White-bellied. We also found Small Buttonquails, Pied Harriers and Greater Spotted Eagles, and we even found time to visit some of the finest temples at Angkor Wat, such as the tree-root festooned Ta Phrom with its many Red-breasted Parakeets. We also had to take in our stride a last minute change to our itinerary. Prevented from visiting Bokor, we instead enjoyed an exploratory visit to the forests of Keo Seima in Mondolkiri, close to the border with Vietnam. Here we found Indochinese endemics and specialities such as Bar-bellied Pitta, Pale-headed Woodpecker, Green Peafowl, Wreathed Hornbill, Grey-faced Tit Babbler, Golden-crested Myna, a pair of Banded Kingfishers, and Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons. Our final stop was Kratie on the Mekong River, where we enjoyed a relaxing boat ride among Irrawaddy Dolphins, Small Pratincoles and the recently discovered

Mekong Wagtail - a bird that shows real character, as it clammers about in the bushes on mid-stream islands of this mighty waterway.

Once all had gathered, we began our tour in Siem Reap, and commenced our birding with a gentle amble around some of the finer sites on offer at Angkor Wat. We viewed the many faces of the Bayon temple, and at the Ta Phrom temple with its crumbling masonry adorned with snaking tree roots we found plenty of vocal Red-breasted Parakeets. Also present were the rather more stately Alexandrines Parakeets, Lineated and Coppersmith Barbets, Shikra, Common Hill Myna, Hainan Blue and Asian Paradise Flycatchers, Black-headed and Black-crested Bulbuls.

Our first full day saw us exploring the fascinating area of Ang Trapaeng Thmor, a man-made water body surrounded by rich wetlands, woodland and arable country. A stop for an al-fresco breakfast soon after dawn yielded our first Oriental Pratincoles, several Eastern Marsh Harriers plus a splendid male Pied Harrier, Spotted Redshanks, Peaceful Doves, Red-throated Pipits and Oriental Reed Warbler. Further scanning of dry rice paddies produced the main prize, Sarus Cranes of the race *sharpii* that is much reduced in number, and mostly restricted to Cambodia. A flock of Painted Storks dropped onto a pool among the fields, among which lurked the prize of a single Milky Stork! Wet paddies and the margins of the lake teemed with both Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Black-backed Swampheens, Lesser Whistling Ducks, Cotton Pygmy Geese and Comb Ducks, Pintail Snipe, plus we saw our first Spot-billed Pelicans, Black-headed Ibis, Pied Kingfishers and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters. Three White-browed Crakes were a surprise, and in drier areas we flushed several Small Buttonquails and Lanceolated Warblers, while Australasian Bushlarks sang overhead. Dry woodland and scrub produced Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Plaintive Cuckoo, Rufous-winged Buzzard, Black and Black-shouldered Kites, Racket-tailed Treepie, Baya Weaver, Plain-backed Sparrow, Purple Sunbird and Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker.

The following day we set out on an expedition across the Tonle Sap to the Prek Toal waterbird sanctuary. In the first light of dawn, we ate our breakfasts on board our boat as we sped across the lake, past numerous Whiskered Terns and Indian Cormorants. We reached a floating village where we boarded small canoes for the final leg of the journey, penetrating up ever-narrower creeks to where the waterbird colony is located. Small outboard motors meant that journey times were slashed in comparison to previous years, and we sped towards the viewing platform past large concentrations of Oriental Darters and Asian Openbill Storks, hordes of Egrets, while Little Herons plus Yellow, Cinnamon and Black Bitterns fled the approach of our small craft. In the creek side bushes were Green-billed Malkoha and Yellow-bellied Prinias, while Grey-headed Fish Eagles perched on prominent trees. On reaching the precarious viewing platform in a tall tree, we took turns to look out over the noisy colonies of Painted Storks that hosted at least two Milky Storks, while Greater Adjutants sat out on treetops, or soared in the air showing off their huge size and bold plumage to full effect. Airborne Lesser Adjutants circled with Spot-billed Pelicans, dwarfing nearby Black-headed Ibises and Brahminy Kites. After lunch aboard our canoes (dry land was far away!) we enjoyed a languid journey back to the lake where our launch was parked, and returned across the Tonle Sap as the day drew to a close, adding a few Brown-headed Gulls as we went.

A final morning at Siem Reap saw us gathered for the sunrise over the main Angkor Wat temple, and after this photogenic dawning we set off for a stroll through the woods that line the temple site. We saw Brown-backed Needletail and House Swift, Hainan Blue Flycatcher, Blue Rock Thrushes sitting upon the temple itself, while in the tall trees we saw a large flock of Black-naped Orioles and Shikra, and some elusive Ashy Minivets zipped overhead. As we returned for our breakfast, I was informed that we could not now travel to Bokor as it was *completely* closed to visitors, so it was time to concoct a new plan...

Our onward journey took us northwards into the forests of Preah Vihear province, a journey that gets easier each year as roads improve, however the planned asphaltting of the road that passes Tmatboey is rather worrying. We paused along the way, finding Black Bazas that swooped low over the road,

Changeable Hawk Eagles, Rufous-winged Buzzards, Crested Treeswifts, Rufous Treepies, some Chestnut-tailed Starlings and a fleeting glimpse of a White-shouldered Starling. As we reached the forests of Tmatboey we strolled under the trees as the heat abated slightly, and soon enjoyed a flurry of excitement as our first Black-headed Woodpeckers appeared, cackling away in a threesome. Before the day was out we had also found Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Neglected and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, and Brown and Rufescent Prinias. We reached our comfortable accommodation, no longer in a village house but in rooms purpose-built for birders, such is the level of interest that these rare Ibises generate.

Our main target here, the Giant Ibis, is a wet season breeder, and during the dry season it feeds in an ever-decreasing number of forest pools. We began our hunt with a pre-dawn drive to near where they roost. As the sky turned from black to grey, we heard the waking birds bugling loudly, and then our first Giant Ibis came flying over the treetops to land in the very top of a bare tree, shortly followed by two others. Wow! They stood on the tops of the tree, preening and fidgeting until they decided it was time to fly down to some hidden pool. Hurrah! We've seen the Giant Ibis! As the sun came up, the forest came alive with other birds, and as we marched around hoping to catch an Ibis on the ground, we found Barred Buttonquail, Grey-capped, Yellow-crowned and White-bellied Woodpeckers, Asian Koel, Blossom-headed Parakeets, Yellow-footed Green Pigeons, Crested Serpent Eagle, Woolly-necked Storks, Lesser Adjutants, Burmese Shrikes, Indochinese and Large Cuckooshrikes, White-browed Fantail, Common Woodshrike, Black-collared and Vinous-breasted Starlings, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, a trio of obliging Chestnut-capped Babblers, and a couple of *Aquila* Eagles that looked suspiciously like Indian Spotted... We also had some good looks at a well-grown juvenile Brown Wood Owl juvenile in the daytime. We enjoyed a final showing by another three Giant Ibises, stood high in a leafy tree panting in the heat, rather unconcerned by how close we really were to them.

So having scored heavily on the main prize, it was time for the runner-up, the White-shouldered Ibis. These birds nest in the dry season, and our guides were careful that we shouldn't disturb the birds near the nest. We began with a taster view of a single bird that flew from a roadside trapaeng as we passed in the vehicles, then in the late afternoon we were taken to a place where we were told they would sit up on the trees as they headed home for the night. They were completely correct, and we saw two birds here, one of which posed well on a treetop as the crept towards the horizon. Only a little less rare than the Giant Ibis, we certainly had some great birds to celebrate that night!

Further explorations in these surprisingly rich forests resulted in the finding of a female White-rumped Falcon, sat in a tree bobbing her head as we watched appreciatively. Other birds we found were more Black-headed Woodpeckers (always a favourite!) Indian and Banded Bay Cuckoos, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Black-hooded Orioles, Hair-crested Drongo, Grey Tit, Olive-backed Pipit and Indochinese Bushlark. We only managed glimpses of secretive Chinese Francolins, and White-crested Laughingthrush were no showier either. A late afternoon foray into another area of forest yielded first an Asian Barred Owllet, then Spotted Wood Owls were found lurking in tall trees while the sun was still in the sky. They gave us a grand chorus of hooting once it had got dark, and in addition a vocal Brown Boobook emerged briefly, followed by a Collared Scops Owl, while more Asian Barred Owllets plus an Oriental Scops Owl called from hidden perches. Given that the habitat can appear rather open and lacking in cover, we were surprised to hear five species of Owls from one spot!

A final morning birding not far from the village was especially productive, with our main target of Pale-capped Pigeon being quickly spotted as it sat up on a treetop, offering fine views. We also found Vernal Hanging Parrot, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Radde's Warbler, some vocal Black Bazas and Green Imperial Pigeon. We saw our only Greater Flameback of the trip, more Racket-tailed Treepies and Red-throated Flycatcher, before it was time to pack up, bid farewell to our happy hosts and head back southwards. En-route we added a Great Slaty Woodpecker, then we headed out to the vast seasonally inundated plain of the Tonle Sap. Despite it still being very hot, we

quickly located our target of Bengal Florican, with a male that emerged from cover albeit rather distant in the heat haze. A short while later and we found another closer male Florican, and this one decided we were to be treated to the full display. He jumped into the air with all his black and white feathers puffed out, looking like he had been turned inside out, while pedalling frantically with his legs. Fantastic! This rich area that is rapidly being consumed by permanent rice paddies also yielded Red Avadavats and Streaked Weavers, noisy Striated Grassbirds, some Sarus Cranes in graceful flocks, Oriental Pratincoles, Pacific Golden Plovers and a male Pied Harrier.

After spending the night in Kompong Thom, we made an early excursion once more into the fields and grasslands. Rapid habitat changes here are not looking very favourable for the speciality birds, however we enjoyed some great looks at Lanceolated Warblers, Black-browed Reed Warbler, Bright-headed Cisticola, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Baya Weaver, Bluethroat and Asian Pied Starling. Numerous Eastern Marsh Harriers took to the morning air, as did a couple of Greater Spotted Eagles and Lesser Adjutants.

We returned to the main road to commence the next leg of our journey, a five hour drive to the province of Mondolkiri in the east of the country. We crossed the Mekong River, and before long reached the town of Snuol, our home for the next three nights and the closest town to where we would be birding, in the forests of Keo Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area. An early start was required, and we reached the HQ and office before sunrise, quickly eating our noodles before heading down narrow trails into the rich forest. We began with Scaly-crowned Babblers, White-rumped Shama and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, then two Orange-breasted Trogons appeared, and a pair of lively Pale-headed Woodpeckers gave us repeated flight views as they shot back and forward, though revealing little of themselves when they hid in dense bamboo thickets. A Black-and-Buff Woodpecker showed confidently, and we found that rather subtle Indochinese endemic, the Grey-faced Tit Babbler. Also we found Vernal Hanging Parrot, Blue-winged Leafbird, Bronzed Drongo and Verditer, plus Ochraceous, Black-crested and Stripe-throated Bulbuls. After pausing in the fierce midday temperatures, we ventured out once more, finding an elusive pair of Bar-bellied Pitta of which only the female showed for some of us. Yellow-bellied Warblers showed well and a Collared Falconet zipped past and perched in a clearing. Large-tailed Nightjars lifted off from the dirt road as we headed back to our hotel, satisfied with a good days' birding and eager to explore further.

The following day we explored different trails, beginning with a male Green Peafowl that was spotted sitting high in a tree as we drove along the main road! It stayed around long enough for some scope views, and later that morning we even saw another bird that we disturbed from its perch. Also along the dusty road were a flock of Golden-crested Mynas, a pair of Collared Falconets, and large numbers of Thick-billed Green Pigeons. Once we entered the forest, we could hear the cackling of Germain's Peacock Pheasants, but unfortunately they could not be lured closer. A Banded Broadbill was a little more forthcoming, and sat in a bare tree above our heads. We found both Green-eared and Blue-eared Barbets, and finally tracked down the Red-vented Barbets that were calling so splendidly. Also appearing were two Swinhoe's Minivet, Large and Black-winged Cuckooshrike, before the forest became drowned in cicada noise and sweat bees, signalling it was time to leave! In the afternoon once the heat had abated slightly, we explored some other forest patches where we found Red Junglefowl, Common Dollarbird, Purple-naped Sunbird and some Great Eared Nightjars flying about in the half-light of dusk.

Further explorations the following morning were busy, with Puff-throated Babblers and Large Scimitar Babblers lurking in the bushes, while Grey-eyed Bulbuls, Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds and White-bellied Yuhinas flicked about in the trees. A mournful call from some denser trees heralded a splendid female Banded Kingfisher, interacting with a male that showed rather more briefly. A pair of Red-headed Trogons circled us angrily, then we were assaulted verbally by some irate Forest Dept guards, who made us return to our vehicle and leave the area, not having the 'right permits' to be here. Oh well, it was sad to leave behind such a busy forest, but the AK47 does tend to ensure compliance! We returned to Snuol, watched some Ashy Minivets outside the hotel, loaded up our luggage and headed

northwards towards the town of Kratie. We explored some more roadside forest, and indeed it is remarkable that so much forest remains at the roadside in eastern Cambodia, even if it is a little tatty and 'well-used'. We started off with Purple, Purple-naped, Crimson, and more Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds, and found a Bar-winged Flycatcher Shrike building a nest. We found Great Iora, Pale-legged Leaf Warbler, numerous White-rumped Shamans and Tickell's Blue Flycatchers, and a little further along the road a fine Rufous-bellied Eagle came cruising overhead.

Reaching the Mekong once again, in the afternoon we took to the water in small boats, and headed out across the deep-water pool where the Irrawaddy Dolphin play. They were in typical stealthy mode, only announcing their presence with a quiet huff of breath. We headed out among the bushy islets, and after some viewing of Small Pratincoles at point-blank range, we found our first Mekong Wagtail sat up in the bushes. We chugged around the rapids acquiring ever better views of these characters, also finding Osprey and Common Sandpiper, Grey-throated Sand Martins and hordes of Red-rumped Swallows, while large flocks of Little Cormorant flew southwards low over the surface of the river.

A final morning here saw us searching wet margins and paddyfields close to the town, where Rusty-rumped and Black-browed Reed Warblers jumped up for a viewing, and Dusky Warblers were calling and flitting everywhere. We also found Cinnamon Bittern, Lesser Whistling Duck, Collared Kingfisher, Plaintive Cuckoo, Black-shouldered Kites, some gorgeous Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Racket-tailed Treepies, Brown-throated Sunbird and Plain-backed Sparrows. Despite much searching we couldn't find any Weavers, and eventually the fierce midday heat forced us to disengage the hunt.

We concluded our trip with a night in a very pleasant Phnom Penh hotel, where we celebrated a successful journey around this pleasant land with some fine food and a little wine. This tour once again proved itself to be a rich and rewarding adventure, with improving roads and hotels that make accessing a fantastic suite of rare birds all the easier. Those same road improvements can only mean swifter degradation of the habitat, which must be under great threat as the population of this country increases dramatically. It may be wiser to travel sooner rather than later to this fine destination...

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL)

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H)

PHASIANIDAE

Chinese Francolin *Francolinus pintadeanus*: Despite hearing many around Tmatboey, we struggled to get views, and those we did have were of the briefest kind, of surprised birds making a dash for cover!

Scaly-breasted Partridge *Arborophila chloropus* (H): Heard in the forest at Keo Seima and near to Snuol.

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*: Heard at Tmatboey, then near to Snuol we saw a handsome cock strutting about on the dirt road, until run off the road by some mopeds!

Germain's Peacock Pheasant *Polyplectron germaini* (H): We forgot this one on the day-to-day list! At least two birds were heard cackling away in the forest on our second morning at Keo Seima, however they could not be lured closer in some rather impenetrable forest.

Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus*: A bonus of our unscheduled visit to Keo Seima. We saw two; the first was a splendid male sat up in roadside trees, hanging his long train of tail feathers from the high branches and remaining long enough for some scope views. Another, probably a female, was disturbed from its perch in the forest as we walked in the forest.

DENDROCYGNIDAE

Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*: We found 800+ in restless flocks at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, plus some smaller flocks were seen at Stung, Kompong Thom and Kratie.

ANATIDAE

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*: A total of 32 were counted at Ang Trapaeng Thmor. An extremely rare bird in Southeast Asia these days.

Cotton Pygmy-Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*: Some nice views of 60+ of these attractive little ducks at Ang Trapaeng Thmor. I still can't help calling them 'Quacky Ducks' though!

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*: A quartet were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then more were seen around Kompong Thom, and a couple on the Mekong river at Kratie.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: Just six were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

TURNACIDAE

Small Buttonquail *Turnix sylvatica*: A concerted group effort at Ang Trapaeng Thmor resulted in four of these tiny birds being booted from the rice stubble, not easy to see as they fled just because they are so small! The subspecies involved is *davidi*. The species has a wide range, but the variation in plumage seems great and the birds here should look very different to those in Africa.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*: Our only sighting was a brief look at two birds flushed at Tmatboey.

PICIDAE

Grey-capped Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*: Seen daily in the deciduous woodland at Tmatboey.

Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos analis*: Two rather furtive birds were seen in large trees alongside Ang Trapaeng Thmor. This is recently split from Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *D. macei*.

- Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Dendrocopos mahrattensis*: At least three were seen well at Tmatboey.
- Rufous Woodpecker *Celeus brachyurus*: Three seen at Tmatboey.
- White-bellied Woodpecker *Dryocopus javensis*: A couple of brief sightings at Tmatboey, never performing satisfactorily.
- Greater Yellownappe *Picus flavinucha*: Surprisingly a write-in on this tour, we saw one at Tmatboey, then another in roadside forest north of Snuol. Also several were heard in the forests of Keo Seima.
- Black-headed Woodpecker *Picus erythropygius*: This four-coloured fellow performed superbly well this year. We had multiple sightings in the dry forests around Tmatboey, a great place to see this wonderful woodpecker!
- Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* (H): Heard clearly at Keo Seima but never coming into view.
- Common Flameback *Dinopium javanense*: Three were seen in the dry forests at Tmatboey, then several more in the forests at Keo Seima and Snuol.
- Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*: Just a single bird seen, on our last morning at Tmatboey.
- Pale-headed Woodpecker *Gecinulus grantia*: A lively pair at Keo Seima kept us entertained for a while as they repeatedly gave us close flight views, but offering only the briefest of glimpses on hidden perches.
- Black-and-Buff Woodpecker *Meiglyptes jugularis*: Splendid looks at two rather obliging individuals at Keo Seima.
- Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*: One of a vocal pair at our camp at Tmatboey showed for some of us, then another was seen in flight as we headed south from there.

MEGALAIMIDAE

- Red-vented Barbet *Megalaima lagrandieri*: After much peering up into the trees at Keo Seima in search of calling birds, we were rewarded with good views of two. Another two were seen less well in roadside forest near Snuol. An Indochinese endemic restricted to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata*: We had good views of these at Angkor Wat, then heard many more in the dry forests around Tmatboey where they provided a continual backdrop of sound. A small number were also present in the Keo Seima forests.
- Green-eared Barbet *Megalaima faiostricta*: Heard calling in the Keo Seima forests where we eventually had some good views of several examples.
- Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*: Two seen at Keo Seima, with several others heard there.
- Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*: A couple were seen around Angkor Wat, with another three seen during the rest of the tour.

BUCEROTIDAE

- Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*: Our first were four seen along the road en-route to Tmatboey, then several more were seen around Keo Seima.
- Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulatus*: A single male flew in and landed above our heads at Keo Seima.

UPUPIDAE

- Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: A few were seen in the dry open forest at Tmatboey.

TROGONIDAE

- Orange-breasted Trogon *Harpactes oreskios*: Two individuals were seen at Keo Seima; one that called constantly from mostly hidden perches, followed by another that sat up and posed in the sunshine!

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*: A vocal and rather angry pair circled us in the roadside forest near Snuol, with some flight views acquired prior to our rude ejection from the area!

CORACIIDAE

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*: Regularly encountered in dry country.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: A single bird was seen near Snuol, perched on a prominent snag.

ALCEDINIDAE

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: Often seen along our route, always close to water.

HALCYONIDAE

Banded Kingfisher *Lacedo pulchella*: A splendid look at a fine female, followed by a shorter look at the male, in roadside forest near Snuol. Both birds were calling frequently, and raising and flaring their crown feathers as they did so.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*: Just a scattering of sightings along our route.

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*: A single bird was seen along the creeks at Prek Toal.

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*: Two singles were seen close to the Mekong at Kratie.

CERYLIDAE

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: Small numbers were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Stung and Kratie.

MEROPIDAE

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni*: A single vocal bird was seen well on our last morning at Tmatboey, and another was seen briefly near Snuol.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*: Frequently seen in dry country, we found them rather commonly around Tmatboey where a nest hole was discovered in the ground, plus a few more were seen near Snuol.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*: Seen in good numbers in open country and near wetlands, with a nice show of several birds near Kratie.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*: Three birds were seen close to camp on our first evening at Tmatboey.

CUCULIDAE

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*: Several birds were in good voice around Tmatboey, with one bird seen perched for a short while.

Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*: One was seen in flight at Prek Toal, and another in the forest near Snuol. These birds are *probably* this species on range, now split from the Oriental Cuckoo *C. horsfieldi* and Sunda Cuckoo *C. lepidus*. It would however be impossible to tell them apart in the field unless they were calling, so this is a fairly speculative identification.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*: A single was seen at Tmatboey, then another at Keo Seima.

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus*: A single was seen in a hedge at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, another in flight at Prek Toal, and a hepatic bird seen perched at Kratie.

Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* (H): Heard at Keo Seima and near Snuol.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*: At least three seen at Tmatboey. Also heard at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis*: Several sightings of these unobtrusive birds at Prek Toal, Keo Seima and near Snuol.

CENTROPODIDAE

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*: Occasionally seen, their booming calls were frequently heard especially along the creeks at Prek Toal.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*: Singles were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Kompong Thom and en route to Tmatboey.

PSITTACIDAE

Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*: Several seen zipping around the forests of Keo Seima.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*: A handful were seen at Ta Phrom temple, then several of these big parrots were seen in the Tmatboey area.

Blossom-headed Parakeet *Psittacula roseata*: Seen daily around Tmatboey, often in flight but we did manage some good looks at perched birds.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*: Common and noisy at the Ta Phrom temple, then more were seen around Tmatboey and Keo Seima.

APODIDAE

Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*: Five were seen shooting over Angkor Wat, then a handful more were seen around Keo Seima – always moving quickly!

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*: Common throughout, except around Tmatboey.

House Swift *Apus affinis*: A single was seen at Angkor Wat, then not again until we saw several by the bridge where we entered Phnom Penh.

HEMIPROCINIDAE

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*: Commonly encountered in the woodlands of Tmatboey.

STRIGIDAE

Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* (H): Heard in the darkness at Tmatboey, and also in the late afternoon near Snuol.

Collared Scops Owl *Otus lettia*: A vocal bird was eventually tracked down for a view at Tmatboey, one of five species of owl calling around us on an aural 'Owl-fest!'

Spotted Wood Owl *Strix seloputo*: A great bird to find, we had a nice prolonged encounter with one that flew towards us in the late afternoon at Tmatboey. As dusk fell, another bird emerged, and we were treated to a wonderful vocal duet.

Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*: We disturbed an almost fully-grown juvenile from a dense patch of woodland at Tmatboey, and enjoyed a good long look at this surprised looking youngster that still showed some clumps of down. A 'write-in' for this tour.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*: Heard around Angkor Wat temple and often around Tmatboey where we finally saw one well. Also heard at Keo Seima.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*: A single bird seen at Tmatboey on our final morning there.

Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata*: One was calling well as it left its roost at Tmatboey, but only offered itself for brief view.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Great Eared Nightjar *Eurostopodus macrotis*: Good views at dusk of four birds near Snuol.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*: A single was glimpsed at Tmatboey, then at least three birds came off the road as we drove between Keo Seima and Snuol.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*: Available.

Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea*: Proper rare pigeon this one! We were lucky to find a single perched in a treetop at Tmatboey, only the third time the leader has ever seen this species! This is becoming a fairly reliable place to see the species.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*: Common and widespread.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*: Common around Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and also seen in the dry forests around Tmatboey and also at Kratie.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* (H): Heard on two occasions at Keo Seima.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*: Our first were seen around Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then two more were found at Kratie, a long way east as this recent colonist spreads from Thailand.

Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicincta*: This attractive fellow was seen at Tmatboey where they formed small flocks.

Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra*: A large number (50+) were perched up in the morning sunshine at Keo Seima.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*: Two were seen at Tmatboey.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*: A couple of singles were seen at Tmatboey, plus another single at Keo Seima.

OTIDIDAE

Bengal Florican *Eupodotis bengalensis*: Our first afternoon on the Tonle Sap floodplain quickly yielded a fine male Florican, distant across the hot plain before he slipped away into taller grass. As the sun dropped lower, another emerged closer to our position and gave us several fantastic display flights of leaping into the air with his black and white feathers puffed out, until he became a fuzzy ball with bicycling legs sticking out below. Awesome! The rediscovery of this globally threatened species in Indochina was one of Sam Veasna's major achievements in his all too short conservation career. Classified as 'Critically Endangered' in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category, with a rapidly declining world population that is estimated at just 250-1000, with up to 50% of the world population in Indochina, the rest surviving in India and Nepal. The habitat here is much reduced from what it was just five years ago, and we saw none at all closer to Kompong Thom. At current rates of habitat loss it is projected that they may become extinct in Cambodia by 2012! (source: BirdLife International website.)

GRUIDAE

Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*: We saw just seven in two separate groups at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, but at Stung we saw at least 36 feeding and flying over the vast plain. This form is the smallest and darkest and has a few minor plumage differences from the nominate race of South Asia and *gilliae* of Australia. Classified as 'Vulnerable' in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category with a declining world population which is estimated at just 20,000 individuals, with only 1300 – 1800 of this subspecies *sharpii* remaining in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar.

RALLIDAE

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (H): Heard near our camp at Tmatboey.

Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca* (H): At Prek Toal they were abundant on call, though all remained hidden from us. Another two were heard at Kratie.

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea*: A surprise write-in, we found three of these 'lily-trotting' at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*: Another write-in, with a single bird seen in flight at Prek Toal, and another one flushed at Kratie.

Black-backed Swamphen *Porphyrio indicus*: Very numerous and also noisy on the lake at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and also at Prek Toal where there were many around the lake 'shore' vegetation. Others were noted at Kompong Thom and Kratie. This is one of the species formed from the six-way split of Purple Swamphen *P. porphyrio*.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: A few were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then more commonly at Prek Toal.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*: Four birds seen on the lake at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*: Three were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, another two at Kompong Thom and a single at Kratie.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*: A single at Stung was the only sighting.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: Up to 20 were seen on ponds near to Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Just a couple seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and a single at Kompong Thom.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: A single sighting of this widespread migrant, at Stung.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: The only one of the tour was on an island in the Mekong at Kratie.

JACANIDAE

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*: A good number of these around the lake at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, all in non-breeding plumage.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*: A little less numerous than the above species at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

CHARADRIIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A group of 15 at Ang Trapaeng Thmor were the only ones of the trip.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*: At least 15 of these were flying around over the short grass at Stung, with some observed feeding there.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: A single was seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, at least ten around ponds near Kompong Thom, and a pair on a sandy island in the Mekong at Kratie.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*: Never common on this trip, there were odd pairs in good voice around Tmatboey.

GLAREOLIDAE

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*: A very good number around the rice fields at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then we saw them again in smaller numbers at Stung and Kompong Thom.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*: Some great encounters with these cute fellows, standing on the mid-stream sand banks in the Mekong at Kratie while our boat nudging alongside for some splendid close views. There were many more that took to the air at dusk to feed close to the surface of the water.

LARIDAE

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*: A total of 26 seen on the Tonle Sap.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*: Numerous on the Tonle Sap where 100 or more were seen. Also seen over wet paddies at Stung

ACCIPITRIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: A single bird was seen over the Mekong at Kratie.

- Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*: One was seen at Angkor, we had a good view of three en route to Tmatboey, and a vocal quartet came low over our heads on the last morning there.
- Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*: A single bird was seen at Tmatboey.
- Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: Three were seen around Ang Trapaeng Thmor, another four around Kompong Thom and three more at Kratie.
- Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: Just a small number were seen around Ang Trapaeng Thmor. These would be resident birds of the race *govinda* which are quite uniform in comparison to the migrant Black-eared Kite *M. lineatus*.
- Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: Several were seen at Prek Toal, thereafter just a single at Kompong Thom.
- Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*: We had good views of up to four birds at Prek Toal, both perched and in the air. Classified as 'Near Threatened' in BirdLife's "Threatened Birds of the World" due to its localized and declining population.
- Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela*: A few of these were seen in the forests around Tmatboey, and noisy examples were heard at Keo Seima.
- Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*: We saw plenty of these over the rice paddies at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then at Stung we saw a further four. Near Kompong Thom they were rather numerous, as birds took to the morning air over the dry plain.
- Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*: Only males were identified, with a splendid first encounter at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, followed by another two in the Kompong Thom area.
- Shikra *Accipiter badius*: Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
- Rufous-winged Buzzard *Butastur liventer*: We saw our first in the woodlands around Ang Trapaeng Thmor, subsequently we found them to be common in the dry forests around Tmatboey.
- [Eagle sp. *Aquila sp.*: Two Eagles were seen soaring over the forest at Tmatboey, one of which showed very untidy and rather worn flight feathers that at first suggested Steppe Eagle *A. nipalensis*. However, closer views of that individual, plus another bird in smarter plumage that came and joined it, changed our thoughts on the identity. On a combination of size, jizz and plumage, they most resembled Indian Spotted Eagle *A. hastata*, but this is somewhat out of range and I am reluctant to make the jump to identify them as such without photographic evidence.]
- Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*: Three birds were seen soaring over the plain near Kompong Thom.
- Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii*: An adult came cruising straight overhead as we drove from Snuol to Kratie, slightly bothered by a Shikra as it did so.
- Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*: An adult and an immature were seen soaring over the forests en-route to Tmatboey.

FALCONIDAE

- White-rumped Falcon *Polihierax insignis*: An exciting find at Tmatboey, with a female coming in to observe us from an open perch. We were able to enjoy it at length, these birds are experts at sitting around for long periods which can make them difficult to find!
- Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens*: We had good views of three examples of these delightful midgets at Keo Seima.
- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: A pair were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, plus one more at Kompong Thom.
- Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: A quick and rather distant view of one at Ang Trapaeng Thmor that appeared to rob a Harrier of its prey, then another was seen over the creeks at Prek Toal.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: One at Ang Trapaeng Thmor plus two others at Prek Toal were the only ones of the trip.

ANHINGIDAE

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*: Difficult to estimate the numbers seen at Prek Toal, but 300 or more seems fair, a remarkable concentration of the species anywhere in the world let alone South-east Asia! We also saw four at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*: A small number only were with the other species at Prek Toal, then we saw hundreds heading downstream in the late afternoon at Kratie.

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*: We estimated 500 birds at Prek Toal on the Tonle Sap, representing a large component of the remarkable numbers of waterbirds here.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: A few were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then 50 or so at Prek Toal where they were outnumbered by the above species.

ARDEIDAE

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: A good number were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Prek Toal, and then not again until Kratie.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Good numbers at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Prek Toal, also seen around Kompong Thom.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: A few of these were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Prek Toal, plus singles at Kratie and Kompong Thom.

Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*: We saw many at Prek Toal, fewer at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and several along the Mekong at Kratie.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*: Fairly numerous at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, the only other sighting was at Stung.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*: Widespread and often encountered, particularly on journeys through farmland. This is now split from Western Cattle Egret *B. ibis*.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*: Common and widespread in suitable habitat, with all but one being in winter plumage, and therefore impossible to separate with certainty from Javan Pond Heron. However, on later tours that have encountered summer-plumaged birds we have only found them at Prek Toal, so I am sure the vast majority of birds seen refer to Chinese Pond Heron.

Little Heron *Butorides striatus*: Plentiful and noisy at Prek Toal, particularly for the lead canoe!

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Several small flocks and single birds seen at Prek Toal and Ang Trapaeng Thmor.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*: A single was seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, following which at least five were seen in the creeks of Prek Toal.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*: A good example showed well in the creeks of Prek Toal, plus we saw another two at Kratie.

Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*: A single of these was seen at Prek Toal, although only presented itself in escape-flight view.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*: Not so many seen, with four at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and 20+ at Prek Toal.

White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni*: As this is a dry season breeder, they are typically nesting at the time we visit, and a little trickier to find than the next species. Our first was flushed from a trapaeng as we drove up to it, then our redoubtable rangers took us close to a nest site where we were able to observe a pair as they came into large trees for the evening. Classified in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category as 'Critically Endangered', with a rapidly declining world population which is estimated at just 300 birds, so almost as rare as the Big One!

Giant Ibis *Pseudibis gigantea*: It was a magic moment on our first morning at Tmatboey, when after a pre-dawn trek through the deciduous woodland, as the light dawned behind the trees we could suddenly hear the loud bugling of these beasts. A bird came flying over us to perch in a large bare tree, followed by two others, sat and preened before eventually heading off to feed. We had two further sightings of a single bird in flight, then we found three hiding in a large leafy tree, panting in the heat. A minimum of three, or a maximum of seven? Either way, we were all very happy to get such great views of this great bird. I wonder though, how long will they remain undisturbed, now that the nearby main road is to be paved? Classified in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category as 'Critically Endangered', with a rapidly declining world population that is estimated at just 200 birds. There is a remarkable story to this bird, to underscore the value of our excellent observations. Having not been seen since 1962, the species was re-discovered by a camera-trap that was being used to record mammals coming to remote trapaengs in Preah Vihear province. That was only in December 2000, and this was the sixth Birdquest tour to see it! I visited Cambodia in March 2002 and saw 6 in Chhep district, a ghastly expedition that seemed akin to Coppola's 'Heart of Darkness' journey when compared to the comfort and ease of visiting Tmatboey!

PELECANIDAE

Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*: A good hundred of these fantastic creatures were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then double that number in the Prek Toal core conservation area. Classified in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category as 'Near Threatened' with a world population estimated in 2006 at 13,000 – 18,000, the Tonle Sap hosts as much as 10% of the world population.

CICONIIDAE

Milky Stork *Mycteria cinerea*: At Ang Trapaeng Thmor we were fairly surprised to find one of these that dropped onto a pond with a flock of Painted Storks, before flying off once more. The following day we enjoyed a successful trip up the creeks at Prek Toal and saw another three examples, two of which were perched on the bushes visible from the observation platform, even if they are rumoured to be paired with Painted Storks! Classified in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category as 'Vulnerable' with a declining world population that is estimated at just 5,000.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*: Hundreds were seen at Prek Toal where we saw plenty of nests, plus a good number at Ang Trapaeng Thmor where many fed in paddyfield pools. At Kompong Thom we saw a couple of smaller flocks. Another large waterbird with a rapidly declining population...

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*: Several hundred were seen in the air over the Prek Toal area, one of the most numerous birds there.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*: At least seven sightings of these at Tmatboey, plus another six were seen on the plain at Kompong Thom.

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*: Just three were seen soaring over Prek Toal, then we saw another two at Tmatboey with some nice views of a perched bird. Another five were seen distantly at Kompong Thom.

Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*: Some distant views of three birds perched on treetops from the observation platform at Prek Toal, and at least another five birds seen in the air where they actually offered the best viewing. Classified in the 2008 IUCN Red List Category as 'Endangered', with a rapidly declining world population which is estimated at just 800 - 1000 birds, with as many as 75 pairs estimated in the Tonle Sap area.

PITTIDAE

Bar-bellied Pitta *Pitta ellioti*: A little bonus of our revised programme, at least it would have been had all of us seen it! Subsequent to hearing a calling male at Keo Seima, a female scuttled past us on the forest floor but didn't linger for further viewing. A South-east Asian endemic.

EURYLAIMIDAE

Banded Broadbill *Eurylaimus javanicus*: A vocal bird showed well at Keo Seima.

IRENIDAE

Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*: A handful were seen at Keo Seima, of the very yellow nominate subspecies.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*: Several made appearances in the dry forests of the Tmatboey area.

LANIIDAE

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*: A scattering of sightings, mostly in open country.

Burmese Shrike *Lanius colluriooides*: We had some good looks at several of these attractive and localised birds around Tmatboey.

CORVIDAE

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*: Just two seen around Tmatboey, with one giving a good view on our first evening there.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*: Several good sightings in the Tmatboey area, even within the grounds of our lodgings.

Racket-tailed Treepie *Crypsirina temia*: Multiple encounters and some good looks at these this year. Our first two were at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then two more were seen at Tmatboey on our last morning there, two more pairs were seen in the Keo Seima area and a final pair showed at Kratie.

Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus leuillanti*: Scattered sightings along our route, but never common. This is split out of Large-billed Crow *C. macrorhynchos* complex.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*: Five or so were seen over the HQ at Keo Seima.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*: A remarkable flock of 20 birds were seen at Angkor Wat temple, then more typically singles were seen at Tmatboey, Keo Seima and Snuol.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*: Not uncommon in the dry deciduous forests around Tmatboey.

Large Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina macei*: Seen regularly around Tmatboey, and also at Keo Seima.

Indochinese Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina polioptera*: A few were seen in the dry forests around Tmatboey, and also one was singing at Keo Seima. The form concerned is the nominate one, the palest subspecies and thereby less confusable with Black-winged.

Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina melaschistos*: A pair were found in the forests at Keo Seima.

Swinhoe's Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis*: Often missed on this tour, we enjoyed a good look at two in some busy trees at Keo Seima.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus*: Several were seen at Angkor Wat temple but only in flight, another airborne flock were seen en-route from Tmatboey, then a small party showed quite well outside our hotel at Snuol as we waited for our feckless driver to show up!

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*: Numerous in the dry forests of Tmatboey, yet not seen elsewhere.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*: Just a few odd ones and twos along seen at Tmatboey and Keo Seima.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike *Hemipus picatus*: A couple of singles were seen with bird-flocks at Keo Seima, then in forest north of Snuol we found several birds, one of which was constructed a small cup nest on a bare branch.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*: Seen regularly in the dry woodland around Tmatboey, with multiple sightings.

Pied Fantail *Rhipidura javanica*: Odd ones were encountered in bushy wet habitats such as at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Kompong Thom and Kratie.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*: Common and conspicuous in open country, also present in the Tmatboey woodlands.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*: A small number were seen, often in wetter forest, and some very pale *leucogenis* race birds were seen near Snuol.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*: Some vocal examples were encountered in the forest at Keo Seima.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*: Singles were seen at Angkor Wat and at Tmatboey.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*: Regularly seen, this noisy showman was most numerous at Keo Seima and Snuol.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*: A few furtive singles were seen along the route, usually where there was a thicket of wetter forest.

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*: A single bird made a brief appearance at the Ta Phrom temple, Angkor Wat.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*: Common in the woodlands around Tmatboey at least by voice, and also seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Kratie.

Great Iora *Aegithina lafresnayei*: A single was seen at Keo Seima, then we had leisurely views of three in forest north of Snuol.

Large Wood-Shrike *Tephrodornis gularis*: Two were seen in forest en-route to Tmatboey, then another two appeared in the tops of tall trees at Keo Seima.

Common Wood-Shrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*: A feature of the dry woodlands around Tmatboey where we found them daily.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*: Some nice looks at some of the red-bellied *philippensis* race sitting on Angkor Wat temple.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*: Regularly seen along our route, its presence usually indicated by call in both deciduous and evergreen forests.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*: Just a handful were encountered, usually singles lurking under hedges or similar. Formerly lumped in Red-breasted Flycatcher *F. parva*.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*: A single bird was seen in the forest at Keo Seima.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*: A single male was glimpsed at Tmatboey, then good views of a couple more were acquired at Keo Seima, and finally in roadside forest near Snuol both sexes were positively showy.

Hainan Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis hainanus*: We had a couple of good looks at males singing from thickets bordering Angkor Wat temples.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*: Calling birds at Kompong Thom and Kratie were only glimpsed as they lurked in dense hedges.

- Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*: One seen hopping around in a paddyfield at Kompong Thom was the only one of the tour.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*: Seen and heard at various locations.
- White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*: Rather commonly encountered in the forests of Keo Seima and around Snuol, with multiple views of several birds singing wildly and flying about in the open.
- Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maura*: Not uncommon in open country, and positively numerous at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Kompong Thom. Most if not all of would be referable to the subspecies *stejnegeri*.
- Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*: Most often seen in dry paddyfields, with some vocal songsters heard clearly in the pre-dawn at Tmatboey.

STURNIDAE

- White-shouldered Starling *Sturnus sinensis*: Some rather unsatisfactory views of these, with a couple of flocks seen distantly at Prek Toal, and a single seen coming off the roadside en-route to Tmatboey.
- Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*: Four were seen at the roadside en-route to Tmatboey
- Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra*: Just two seen, in the fields at Kompong Thom.
- Black-collared Starling *Sturnus nigricollis*: We met these first at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then they were seen regularly in the Tmatboey area, their bell-like calls usually preceding their appearance.
- Vinous-breasted Starling *Sturnus burmannicus*: Rather good numbers this year, with several groups encountered in the Tmatboey forests, and also at Keo Seima. This *leucocephalus* form is rather different to the red-billed nominate form one sees in Burma, but no-one appears to have split it yet!
- Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*: Common and widespread, although not in forest.
- White-vented Myna *Acridotheres grandis*: Most were seen in the Siem Reap area, with a handful more noted at Kratie. More localised than the above, and absent in more heavily-forested areas.
- Golden-crested Myna *Ampeliceps coronatus*: A flock of five greeted us at Keo Seima when we jumped out to look at the Green Peafowl.
- Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*: A single appeared at Ta Phrom, then two more were seen flying by at Keo Seima.

SITTIDAE

- Neglected Nuthatch *Sitta neglecta*: Some fine views and close encounters with several birds in the Tmatboey area. These birds have recently been raised to species level, separating it from Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *S. cinnamoventris*, which is the one that typically occur at higher elevations from the Himalayas to southern China.
- Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*: Seen on several occasions at Tmatboey, and often seeming to enjoy the company of the above species.

PARIDAE

- Grey Tit *Parus cinereus*: A couple of these monochrome fellows at Tmatboey. Note that this recently split from Great Tit *P. major*, all the grey races being put together in this species.

HIRUNDINIDAE

- Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: Fairly numerous around the Kompong Thom area, also seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and over the surface of the Tonle Sap.

Grey-throated Sand Martin *Riparia chinensis*: At least five were seen hawking over the Mekong at Kratie. Rasmussen & Anderton in 'Birds of South Asia' split Plain Martin *R. paludicola* into this Asian species, and Brown-throated Sand Martin *R. paludicola* of Africa.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Seen throughout, particularly in open country, although absent from heavily-forested areas.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: Seen regularly, often over forests, with a very large concentration at Kratie. None were *truly* identified to species, it is assumed that they are. It is a winter visitor here, whereas the similar Striated Swallow is a resident.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus atriceps*: Five at the Ta Phrom temple were the only ones of the tour.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*: A couple were seen at the Ta Phrom temple, then they were rather common around Keo Seima.

Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster*: Common in the dry woodland around Tmatboey, yet found nowhere else.

Stripe-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus finlaysoni*: Singles were seen at Tmatboey and Keo Seima.

Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier*: First encountered at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then odd ones were seen elsewhere such as in Siem Reap and around Kratie.

Streak-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus blanfordi*: Not uncommon in the Siem Reap area, with odd individuals encountered elsewhere. Not the most memorable of birds!

Ochraceous Bulbul *Alophoixus ochraceus*: A handful of these raucous fellows were seen at Keo Seima.

Grey-eyed Bulbul *Iole propinqua*: A small number were seen at Keo Seima and Snuol, rather demure and unassuming!

CISTICOLIDAE

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*: We found odd ones of these at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Stung and Kratie.

Bright-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*: At least three of these were making their bleating calls in the grass at Kompong Thom.

Brown Prinia *Prinia polychroa*: Regularly heard, with several examples seen in grassy understorey in the Tmatboey forests.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens*: Just a small number encountered in the dry deciduous forests at Tmatboey.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*: Regularly seen and heard in grassy understorey around Tmatboey.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*: Two were seen along the Prek Toal waterways, and then more were encountered in the grass around Kompong Thom.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*: A few of these unspectacular fellows were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Kompong Thom and Kratie.

SYLVIIDAE

Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata*: Always very sneaky, yet we had some superb close views of obliging birds at Kompong Thom. At Ang Trapaeng Thmor we had views of several in flight as we disturbed them from stubble, plus another single was seen at Kratie.

Rusty-rumped Warbler (Pallas's Grasshopper W) *Locustella certhiola*: Commonly heard along the waterways at Prek Toal yet remaining invisible, we enjoyed some good views of two at Kratie.

- Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*: Several were seen along the Prek Toal waterways, then several more were pushed out of the grass at Kompong Thom, and a further single showed at Kratie.
- Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*: Numerous examples showed at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, then a few more were seen at Kompong Thom and Kratie.
- Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* (H): Heard only, at our hotel in Siem Reap.
- Dark-necked Tailorbird *Orthotomus atrogularis*: At Prek Toal we saw one of several songsters, then at Keo Seima and Snuol we found several more.
- Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*: The 'tacking' call is usually the first sign of this fellow that seems very common in Cambodia. We found them at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Prek Toal, Kompong Thom, and at Kratie where they were abundant.
- Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*: A great look at a very confiding individual on our last morning at Tmatboey.
- Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*: Often heard, yet rather infrequently seen.
- Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*: Two birds were seen at Tmatboey, others were heard in the forest at Keo Seima.
- Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes*: Always a devil to see, one zipped past us in the forest near Snuol, but never hung around for a proper look.
- Yellow-bellied Warbler *Abroscopus superciliosus*: A nice show by two of these in the bamboo at Keo Seima.
- Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris*: A pleasing addition to the swampy edges around Kompong Thom and Kratie, sitting up and singing their loud abrupt song.
- White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*: Several small noisy parties were encountered, with some brief looks at these furtive birds at Tmatboey and Keo Seima.
- Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax monileger*: A single bird passed us as we were trying to sneak up on Ibises at Tmatboey.
- Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*: A vocal pair popped out for a viewing in the forest near Snuol.
- Scaly-crowned Babbler *Malacopteron cinereum*: Several good looks at these sweet-voiced Babblers at Keo Seima and Snuol. The race involved is *indochinense*, which lacks black on the rear crown.
- Large Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus hypoleucos*: A vocal bird in the forest near Snuol was glimpsed as he shot across the trail, just before he went silent!
- Striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis* (H): Heard at Ta Phrom, and also at Keo Seima.
- Grey-faced Tit Babbler *Macronous kelleyi*: Another bonus of our visit to Keo Seima. We had a good look at one bird, and several others were heard calling there. An Indochinese endemic restricted to eastern Cambodia, southern Vietnam and parts of Laos.
- Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata*: Great looks at three vocal birds in the grass at Tmatboey.
- White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zantholeuca*: Several of these tit-like birds were seen in the forests near Snuol.

ALAUDIDAE

- Australasian Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*: Several were singing in the dry grasslands around Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and we managed to see two or three. At least one other was heard in the Kompong Thom grasslands. They have a more 'skylark-type' song and show white outer-tail feathers in contrast to the next species.
- Indochinese Bushlark *Mirafra marionae*: Just one example seen, singing and perching in trees in the open woodlands of Tmatboey. One of the recent splits out of 'Rufous-winged' Bushlark.
- Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* (H): Heard over the grassy plains around Kompong Thom.

NECTARINIIDAE

- Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*: A brief sighting of a single bird at Keo Seima.
- Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum*: Remarkably few, with a sighting at Ang Trapaeng Thmor plus another around camp at Tmatboey.
- Brown-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes malacensis*: Four birds busied themselves in a large bamboo at Kratie.
- Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Anthreptes singalensis*: We found these twice in one morning, in two different forests in the Snuol area.
- Purple-naped Sunbird *Hypogramma hypogrammicum*: Like the above, these made an appearance in the forest near Snuol, and then we saw them twice in rapid succession. Their subdued tones (no purple visible) confused us initially, but we had good views eventually.
- Olive-backed Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis*: A few scattered sightings, mostly in the Siem Reap area.
- Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*: Common in the dry deciduous forests around Tmatboey where they were in good voice. Also seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and near Snuol.
- Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*: A nice view of a male on a busy morning for Sunbirds in roadside forest near Snuol.
- Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*: At Keo Seima they were frequently heard, with several views of them in rapid flight.

PASSERIDAE

- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (NL): This 'humble-fellow' is invading Cambodia from its western borders; two were seen near Prek Toal.
- Plain-backed Sparrow *Passer flaveolus*: A very handsome Sparrow, we saw plenty at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, and then once again in the Kratie area.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: The urban Sparrow here in Cambodia, we saw many.
- Mekong Wagtail *Motacilla samveasnae*: Another great Cambodian bird, with lots of charisma. We had good looks at least six on the mid-stream islands of the Mekong River at Kratie, eschewing the waters edge to perch up in the bushes. Only recently discovered, it is nice to see such a clearly defined species.
- Amur Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis*: Two were seen on sandy islands in the Mekong River at Kratie.
- Eastern Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla [flava] macronyx*: Small flocks were seen in wetter parts of Kompong Thom plain.
- Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*: Two were seen in rice stubble at Ang Trapaeng Thmor.
- Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*: A few scattered sightings in open country.
- Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*: Our only encounter was with five birds foraging on recently-burnt ground at Tmatboey.
- Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*: Rather numerous in the fields around Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Kompong Thom, with a couple more seen at Kratie.
- Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*: A flock of 20 or more was busy around the grass at Stung.
- Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*: Small flocks were seen at Ang Trapaeng Thmor and Kompong Thom, all in non-breeding dress.
- Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*: Several small flighty parties were seen on two dates around Kompong Thom, though none were in full red dress.
- White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*: Small restless flocks were seen at Tmatboey and at Kratie.
- Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*: Small family parties were encountered at Ang Trapaeng Thmor, Tmatboey and Kompong Thom.

FRINGILLIDAE

- Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*: We saw four flying over at Kompong Thom, then another was seen briefly perched.

MAMMALS

Black Giant Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor* (NL): One was seen at Keo Seima.

Finlayson's Squirrel (Variable S) *Callosciurus finlaysoni*: The deep rufescent squirrel with a white tail-ring at Angkor Wat and Tmatboey was of the race *annelatus*.

Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erthraeus*: The greyish squirrels with 'toilet-brush' tails that we saw in the forests near Snuol are of this species, not Irrawaddy Squirrel as I proposed at the time.

Cambodian Striped Squirrel *Tamias rodolphei*: These tiny things were seen at Tmatboey and again at Keo Seima.

Rice-field Rat *Rattus argentiventer* (NL): Presumably this species was up to its old tricks again at Tmatboey, stealing soap etc. Seen by some of our group in private!

[Flying Fox sp. *Pteropus* sp: A treeful of roosting bats at Ang Trapaeng Thmor *probably* refers to Lyle's Flying Fox *P. lylei*.]

Long-tailed Macaque (Crab-eating M) *Macaca fascicularis*: Several were seen along the roadsides at Angkor Wat.

Buff-cheeked Gibbon *Nomascus gabriellae* (H): The loud song we heard in the forest near Snuol refers to this species.

Northern Tree-Shrew *Tupaia belangeri*: A single beastie was seen at Keo Seima. This species has a very wide distribution across Southern and South-Eastern Asia and is also referred to as the Malay Tree-Shrew.

Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris*: Up to five seen in the deep water pools in the Mekong at Kratie, but all being rather stealthy. Apparently just 70 survive in the Mekong and this population is sadly declining, largely due to by-catch from gill-netting, and collisions with fast boats.



Shikra



Blue Rock Thrush



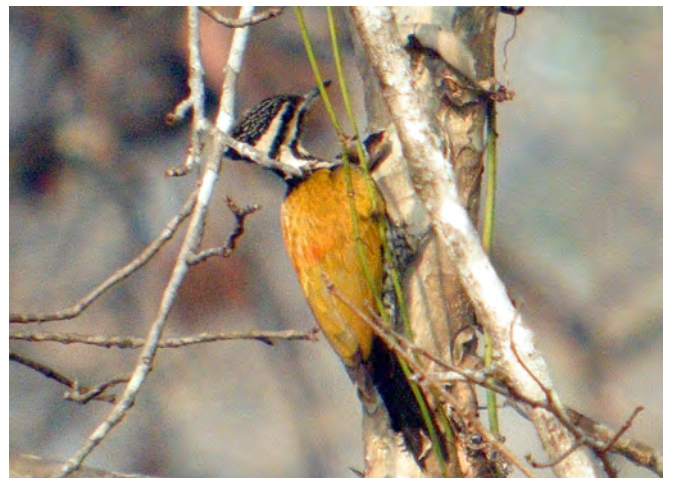
Giant Ibis



Giant Ibis



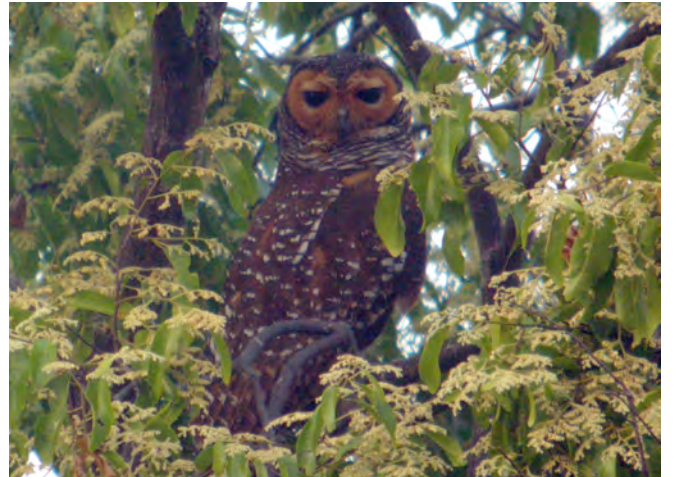
Blossom-headed Parakeet



Common Flameback



Brown Wood Owl juvenile



Spotted Wood Owl



Neglected Nuthatch



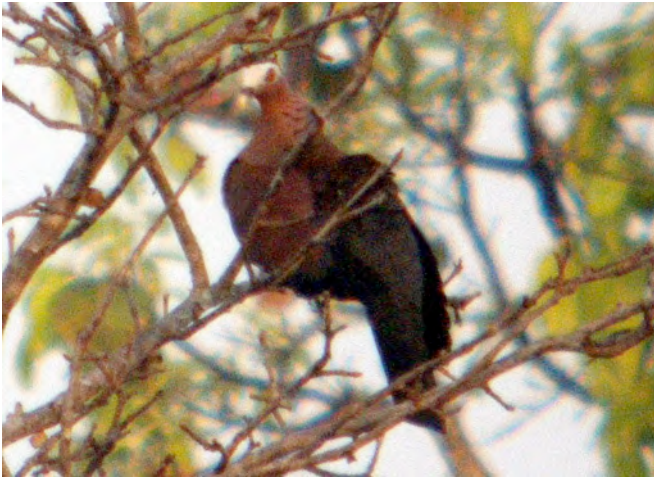
Lesser Adjutant



White-rumped Falcon



White-rumped Falcon



Pale-capped Pigeon



Tickell's Blue Flycatcher



Lizard, Kratie



The Mekong at Kampi



Bayon Temple



Angkor Wat