



Best of Northern & Southern Vietnam Birding (16 Days)

16 Days: Hanoi ♦ Cuc Phuong National Park
Van Long Nature Reserve ♦ Tam Dao ♦ Dalat
Di Linh ♦ Cat Tien National Park
Ho Chi Minh City



Bar-bellied Pitta

Day 1: Arrive Hanoi. Hanoi to Cuc Phuong National Park

Arrive at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport and transfer directly to Cuc Phuong National Park, a three-hour drive to the south of Hanoi. The first national park to be established in Vietnam, Cuc Phuong is an area of limestone hills covered in primary rainforest. The best birding is at the centre of the park where there are several excellent trails including the Loop Trail and the Valley Trail. The main road through the park can also be very productive especially for over-wintering thrushes early in the morning. Overnight at Cuc Phuong National Park.

Days 2 & 3: Cuc Phuong National Park

Two full days of birding at Cuc Phuong where specialities include Tonkin Partridge, Red-collared Woodpecker, Pied Falconet, Bar-bellied, Blue-rumped and Eared Pittas, Silver-breasted Broadbill, White-winged Magpie, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava, Limestone Warbler and Greyish Limestone-babbler. Overnight at Cuc Phuong National Park.

Day 4: Cuc Phuong National Park to Tam Dao

Leave Cuc Phuong after breakfast and drive back to Hanoi stopping off at Van Long Nature Reserve en route. Take a sampan through flooded rice fields here to the dramatic limestone cliffs that are home to the largest population of one of Vietnam's critically endangered primates, Delacour's Langur. During the winter months large numbers of waterfowl may be seen here as well as a raptor or two. Continue to Hanoi and on to Tam Dao, a hill resort 60 km north of the capital. Tam Dao's specialities include several species that are more usually associated with China and cannot be seen elsewhere in South-East Asia including the attractive Chestnut Bulbul and Grey Laughingthrush. Overnight at Tam Dao.

Days 5 & 6: Tam Dao

Two days to explore the montane evergreen, bamboo and pine forests around Tam Dao. Resident species here include Red-billed Blue Magpie, Grey Treepie, White-throated and Streak-breasted Scimitar-babblers, Rufous-headed and Short-tailed Parrotbills and Collared Babbler. Winter visitors that may turn up between November and March include White's, Grey-backed, Japanese, Eyebrowed and Black-breasted Thrushes and Fujian Niltava. Overnight at Tam Dao.

Day 7: Tam Dao to Dalat via Hanoi

There is time for some early morning birding at Tam Dao before transferring to Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport for the flight to Dalat. Arrive at Dalat in the early afternoon and transfer to the hotel. The Dalat Plateau is home to several of Vietnam's endemic bird species as well as many distinctive local subspecies. In the afternoon start exploring some of the exciting birding sites around Dalat. Overnight at Dalat.

Days 8, 9 & 10: Dalat

Three days of birding in the montane evergreen and coniferous forests around Dalat includes visits to Mount Lang Bian, the shores of Ho Tuyen Lam and the Ta Nung Valley. The Dalat Plateau is one of the endemic hotspots of South-East Asia and is home to many unique species and subspecies including Dalat Shrike-babbler, Annam Minivet, Annam Prinia, Annam Grasshopper-warbler, Black-crowned Fulvetta, Collared Laughingthrush, Grey-crowned Crocias, Langbian and Annam Sunbirds and Vietnamese Greenfinch. Other local specialities include Lowe's Green-pigeon, Red-vented, Necklaced and Annam Barbets, Rusty-naped and Blue Pittas, Slender-billed Oriole, Yellow-crowned Green Magpie, Langbian Tit, Brown-backed Bulbul, Grey-crowned Tit, Black-headed Parrotbill, Vietnamese Cutia, Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes, White-spectacled Sibia, Plain Minla, Manipur Treecreeper, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Langbian Lesser Shortwing and Red Crossbill. Overnights at Dalat.

Day 11: Dalat to Di Linh

Leave Dalat after a final morning of birding for Di Linh, a two-hour drive south. A forested mountain pass near Di Linh, known locally as Deo Suoi Lanh, is an excellent place to look for several Dalat Plateau specialities that may have been missed at Dalat including Maroon Oriole, Grey-crowned Tit, Black-headed Parrotbill, Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes and Yellow-billed Nuthatch. After an afternoon's birding at Deo Suoi Lanh return to Di Linh for the night. Overnight at Di Linh.

Day 12: Di Linh to Cat Tien National Park

An early morning visit to Deo Suoi Lanh where other exciting possibilities include Bar-backed Partridge, Blue Pitta, Indochinese Green Magpie, Green Cochoa and Spotted Forktail, before continuing to Cat Tien National Park. Cat Tien National Park contains the largest remaining area of lowland tropical forest in southern Vietnam and an incredible diversity of birds and mammals. Endangered birds found at Cat Tien include Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Green Peafowl and the elusive Orange-necked Partridge while the mammal list includes Leopard Cat, Gaur and two endangered primates, Black-shanked Douc Langur and Buff-cheeked Gibbon. Overnight at Cat Tien National Park.

Days 13, 14 & 15: Cat Tien National Park

Three days of birding at Cat Tien National Park. There are excellent trails starting right at the park headquarters and for areas further afield jeeps are used. Among the many other avian treats to be found at Cat Tien are Green-legged Partridge, Siamese Fireback, Asian Woollyneck, Lesser Adjutant, White-bellied, Great Slaty, Pale-headed, Black-and-buff and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, Bar-bellied

and Blue-rumped Pittas, three species of broadbill and the Indochinese-endemic Grey-faced Tit-Babbler. Overnight at Cat Tien National Park.

Day 16: Cat Tien National Park to Ho Chi Minh City. Depart Ho Chi Minh City

There is time for some final early morning birding at Cat Tien National Park before driving to Ho Chi Minh City and transferring to Tan Son Nhat International Airport for departure flights.