



Grand Vietnam Birding (25 Days)

Ho Chi Minh City ♦ Cat Tien National Park ♦ Di Linh Dalat ♦ Yok Don
National Park ♦ Mang Den ♦ Tu Mo Rong ♦ Bach Ma National Park ♦ Sa Mu
Pass ♦ Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park ♦ Cuc Phuong National Park
Tam Dao ♦ Ba Be National Park ♦ Hanoi



Indochinese Green Magpie

Day 1: Ho Chi Minh City to Cat Tien National Park

Pick up at Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat International Airport or from your hotel and transfer by road to Cat Tien National Park, 150 km to the north. 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, Lesser Mousedeer, Gaur and three beautiful primates, Black-shanked Douc Langur, Silvered Langur and Buff-cheeked Gibbon. Overnight at Cat Tien National Park.

Days 2, 3 & 4: Cat Tien National Park

Three full days of birding at Cat Tien National Park. There are excellent trails starting right at the park headquarters while areas further afield such as Crocodile Lake can be reached by park jeeps. Spectacular avian delights to be found in Cat Tien's semi-evergreen forest include Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Siamese Fireback, Blue-rumped and Bar-bellied Pittas, Dusky, Black-and-red and Banded Broadbills, Orange-breasted Trogon, Great, Oriental Pied and Wreathed Hornbills. Cat Tien

is woodpecker heaven with 17 species on the park list including Heart-spotted, Pale-headed, Black-and-buff, Great Slaty and White-bellied. Lesser Adjutant, Asian Woollyneck and Crested Serpent-eagle can often be seen circling over the forest. Overnight at Cat Tien National Park.

Day 5: Cat Tien National Park to Di Linh

There is time for some final early morning birding at Cat Tien National Park before heading up Highway 20 to the cooler climes of the Dalat Plateau. The afternoon is spent birding at a forested mountain pass known locally as Deo Suoi Lanh, a short drive from the town of Di Linh. The montane evergreen forest at Deo Suoi Lanh is a great place to become acquainted with some of the Dalat Plateau specialities including Black-headed Parrotbill, Orange-breasted, Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes. Overnight at Di Linh.

Day 6: Di Linh to Dalat

Return to Deo Suoi Lanh after breakfast for a full morning of birding. Other exciting possibilities to look out for here include Bar-backed Partridge, Blue Pitta, Indochinese Green Magpie, Green Cochoa and Spotted Forktail. After lunch continue north along Highway 20 to the bustling hill resort of Dalat and start exploring some of the exciting birding sites around town. Overnight at Dalat.

Days 7, 8 & 9: 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, Orange-breasted and Collared Laughingthrushes, 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. Overnight at Dalat.

Day 10: Dalat to Yok Don National Park

Depart Dalat after an early breakfast for the drive north to Yok Don National Park arriving around lunchtime. The afternoon is spent exploring the banks of the Srepok River and the dry deciduous forests of Yok Don. Due to the habitat which has the more in common with adjoining north-western Cambodia than the rest of the country there are a number of bird species found here that are rarely seen elsewhere in Vietnam including Yellow-footed Green-pigeon, Black-headed, Yellow-crowned, Fulvous-breasted and Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers, White-rumped Pygmy-falcon, Blossom-headed and Alexandrine Parakeets, Small Minivet, Rufous Treepie and Burmese Nuthatch. Overnight at Yok Don National Park.

Day 11: Yok Don National Park to Mang Den

There is time for some early morning birding at Yok Don before the scenic drive north to Mang Den with a lunch stop en route. Arrive at Mang Den in the early afternoon and after dropping of luggage at the hotel set-out to explore the surrounding areas of montane evergreen forest. Overnight at Mang Den.

Day 12: Mang Den

A full day's birding at Mang Den where the recently discovered and near-endemic Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush, is one of the main targets. Other specialities of the forests around Mang Den include the scarce Pale-capped Pigeon, Austen's Brown Hornbill, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Black-hooded Laughingthrush and Indochinese Wren-babbler. Overnight at Mang Den.

Day 13: Mang Den to Tu Mo Rong

A final early morning of birding at Mang Den where some other species that are uncommon elsewhere in Vietnam can be found including Rufous-faced Warbler, Pale Blue Flycatcher and Grey-headed Parrotbill. Leave Mang Den mid-morning for the remote town of Tu Mo Rong, a few hours' drive north. Late afternoon birding in the montane evergreen forest surrounding Mount Ngoc Linh. Overnight at Tu Mo Rong.

Day 14: Tu Mo Rong

A full day birding in the vicinity of Mount Ngoc Linh where specialities include the recently discovered and very localised endemic Golden-winged Laughingthrush, near-endemics Black-crowned Barwing and Indochinese Fulvetta, Ashy Woodpigeon, Eye-ringed Shrike-babbler, Annam Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Black-eared Parrotbill and Red-tailed Laughingthrush. Overnight at Tu Mo Rong.

Day 15: Tu Mo Rong to Bach Ma National Park

Depart after an early breakfast for the journey north to Bach Ma National Park, arriving around lunchtime. After checking in at the accommodation, the afternoon is spent birding the spectacular montane evergreen forest below the summit of Mount Bach Ma. Overnight at Bach Ma National Park.

Day 16: Bach Ma National Park to Sa Mu Pass

A full morning birding at Bach Ma National Park where the specialities include Rufous-throated and Green-legged Partridges, Silver Pheasant, Hodgson's Frogmouth, Blue-rumped and Bar-bellied Pittas, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, White-winged Magpie, Indochinese Green Magpie, Annam Sultan Tit, Indochinese Wren-babler, Lesser-necklaced and Black-throated Laughingthrushes. Depart Bach Ma after lunch for the drive north to Sa Mu Pass, close to the Lao border. The main target here is the very localised Rufous-cheeked Laughingthrush along with Great and Moustached Barbets and Collared Babbler. Overnight at Khe Sanh.

Day 17: Sa Mu Pass to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

There is time for some final early morning birding at Sa Mu Pass before continuing north to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. On arrival start exploring the limestone forest of Phong Nha-Ke Bang where two of the main targets are limestone specialists, the Indochinese endemic Sooty Babbler and the recently split Limestone Leaf-warbler. Overnight at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park.

Day 18: Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

A full day of birding at Phong Nha-Ke Bang to look for other local specialities such as Tonkin Partridge, Austen's Brown Hornbill and Red-collared Woodpecker as well as two endangered primates, the Ha Tinh Langur and the beautiful, Red-shanked Douc Langur. Overnight at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park.

Day 19: Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park to Cuc Phuong National Park

Leave Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park after breakfast for the long day's drive north to Cuc Phuong National Park. There may be some time for a little afternoon birding on arrival. Overnight at Cuc Phuong National Park.

Days 20 & 21: Cuc Phuong National Park

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

Day 22: Cuc Phuong National Park to Tam Dao via Van Long Nature Reserve

Depart Cuc Phuong after breakfast for Tam Dao, a hill resort 60 km of north Hanoi, stopping en route at Van Long Nature Reserve to take a sampan through flooded rice fields to the dramatic limestone cliffs that are home to a critically endangered endemic primate, Delacour's Langur. Several interesting bird species can also be found here including White-browed Crane and during the winter months there are often large numbers of storks, herons and waterfowl. There should be for some late afternoon birding on arrival at Tam Dao. Overnight at Tam Dao.

Day 23: Tam Dao

A full day to explore the Tam Dao where specialities include several species that are seldom seen elsewhere in Vietnam such as the attractive Chestnut Bulbul, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Streak-breasted Scimitar-babbler and Grey Laughingthrush. Overnight at Tam Dao.

Day 24: Tam Dao to Ba Be National Park

There is time for some early morning birding in the pine forests at lower elevations where Red-billed Blue Magpie and Grey Treepie are found before continuing north to Ba Be National Park. The main attraction at Ba Be is the extremely rare White-eared Night-heron, which until the discovery of this

important breeding site, was an almost mythical species for birders. Arriving mid-afternoon gives the first opportunity to search for the heron as the birds leave their day roost for their nocturnal feeding site. Overnight at Ba Be National Park.

Day 25: Ba Be National Park to Hanoi

An early start to look for White-eared Night-heron as birds return to their day roost in the pre-dawn half-light. Other species too look out for at Ba Be include Mandarin and Tufted Duck, Limestone Leaf-warbler, White-winged Magpie and Tonkin Streaked Wren-babbler. Depart Ba Be after lunch and transfer to Hanoi.