Best of Southern &
Northern Vietnam Birding

16 Days: Cat Tien National Park ♦ Di Linh ♦ Dalat
Tam Dao ♦ Van Long Nature Reserve
Cuc Phuong National Park

Day 1: Arrive Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City to Cat Tien National Park
Arrive at Ho Chi Minh City’s Tan Son Nhat International Airport 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 days of birding at Cat Tien National Park. There are excellent trails starting right at the park headquarters and for areas further afield such as Crocodile Lake park jeeps are used. The 5 km walk through semi-evergreen forest to Crocodile Lake can be good for the near-endemic Germain’s Peacock-pheasant and Blue-rumped & Bar-bellied pittas while the beautiful Siamese Fireback can often be seen on an early morning drive to the start of the Crocodile Lake trail. Among the many other avian treats to be found at Cat Tien are Scaly-breasted Partridge, Woolly-necked Stork, Lesser Adjutant, White-bellied, Great Slaty, Pale-headed, Black-and-buff & Heart-spotted woodpeckers, three species of broadbill and the Indochinese-endemic Grey-faced Tit-Babbler. 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 Di Linh. A short drive from Di Linh town a forested mountain pass known locally as Deo Suoi Lanh is an excellent site to look for several Dalat Plateau specialities including Black-hooded, White-cheeked & Orange-breasted Laughingthrushes and the near-endemic Black-crowned
Parrotbill. After an afternoon’s birding at Deo Suoi Lanh return to Di Linh for the night. Overnight at Di Linh.

**Day 6: Di Linh to Dalat**
An early morning visit to Deo Suoi Lanh to look for other exciting possibilities that could include Blue Pitta, Indochinese Green Magpie, Spotted Forktail and Green Cochoa, before continuing along Highway 20 to the cooler climes of 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 7, 8 & 9: Dalat**
A full three days of birding includes visits to Mount Lang Bian, a 2,169 m high peak 20 minutes from Dalat, and the shores of Ho Tuyen Lam, a man-made lake just outside the town. Vietnamese endemics found at Dalat include Dalat Shrike-babbler, Vietnamese Greenfinch, Black-crowned Fulvetta, Orange-breasted & Collared laughingthrushes and Grey-crowned Crocias. Near endemics here include Grey-crowned Tit, Black-crowned Parrotbill, White-cheeked and Black-hooded laughingthrushes, and Vietnamese Cutia. Other target birds in this bird-rich area are the elusive Blue & Rusty-naped pittas, Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike, Slender-billed Oriole, Hume’s Treecreeper, Yellow-billed Nuthatch and a very distinctive race of Red Crossbill. Overnight at Dalat.

**Day 10: Dalat to Tam Dao via Hanoi**
A final morning of birding around Dalat before transferring to Dalat Airport for the late afternoon flight to Hanoi. On arrival in Hanoi transfer directly to Tam Dao, around an hour’s drive to the north. Overnight at Tam Dao.

**Days 11 & 12: Tam Dao**
Two days to explore the montane evergreen, bamboo and pine forests around Tam Dao town. Tam Dao’s specialities include several species that are more usually associated with China and cannot be seen elsewhere in South-East Asia such as the attractive Chestnut Bulbul and Grey Laughingthrush. Resident species here include Red-billed Blue Magpie, Grey Treepie, Coral-billed 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, Eye-browed and Black-breasted thrushes, as well as Fujian Niltava. Overnight at Tam Dao.

**Day 13: Tam Dao to Cuc Phuong National Park**
A final morning of birding at Tam Dao before heading to Hanoi for a lunch stop and on to Cuc Phuong National Park, stopping off at Van Long Nature Reserve en route. Take a sampan through flooded rice fields 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 can be seen here as well as a raptor or two. Continue from here to Cuc Phuong. 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 14 & 15: Cuc Phuong National Park**
Two full days of birding at Cuc Phuong where specialities include Pied Falconet, Bar-bellied, Blue-rumped & Eared pittas, Silver-breasted Broadbill, White-winged Magpie, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava, Limestone Warbler and Limestone Wren-babbler. Overnight at Cuc Phuong National Park.

**Day 16: Cuc Phuong National Park to Hanoi. Depart Hanoi**
A final morning of birding at Cuc Phuong National Park before heading back to Hanoi’s Noi Bai International Airport for departure flight.