Birding in Taman Negara, Peninsular Malaysia

2019.8.21 – 2019.8.28

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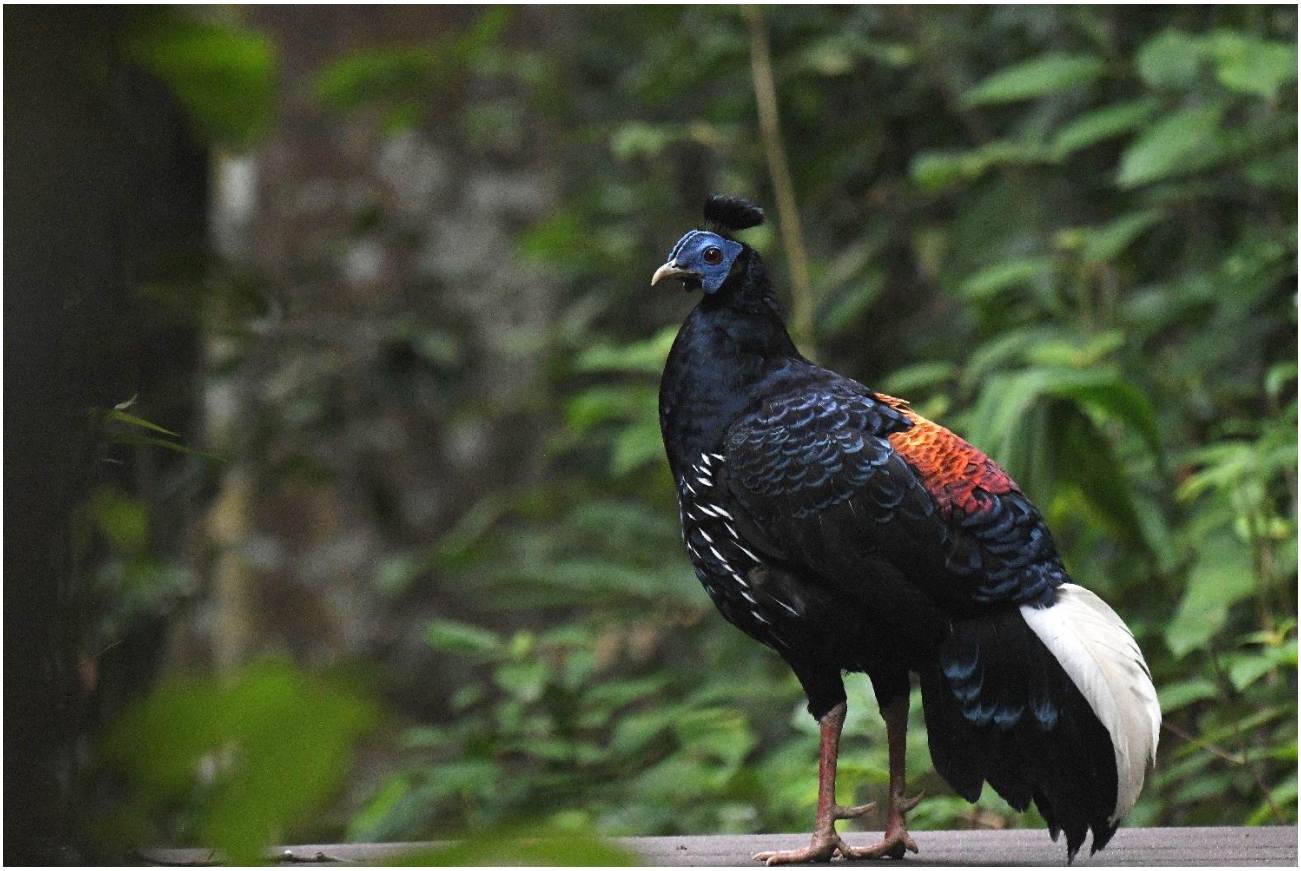

Figure 1 Crested Fireback (*Lophura ignita*)

Introduction

This trip was happened all of a sudden that we didn't fully review enough birding information. The main reason I wrote this report is due to lack of birding information of Taman Negara after we arrive and found the map was quite incorrect. The forest loop near park center is not exist at all (please contact me if I'm wrong) but still have a eBird hotspot called forest loop with plenty of records, the length of most trails and loops also felt incorrect, and the shape and entrances of swamp loop was not correctly drawn on the map, either. Taking a bus from Kuala Lumpur (KL) is strongly recommended rather than renting a car because most of hotspots are inside the national park which could only enter through boats crossing Tembeling River every day, and the transportation to other hotspots (e.g. Fraser's Hill) were also easily available. This place was pretty safe and convenient, and internet signal was also strong (both 4G and wifi in living area). All you can to do here is eat, sleep, and enjoy bird watching.

Location: Taman Negara, Kuala Tahan, Tembeling, Pahang, Peninsular Malaysia
Weather: Hot and no wind in daytime (about 30 – 32℃), cool at night (about 25 ℃)
Traffic to Kuala Tahan: By bus

We booked on the website of HAN travel, which provides transportation services by bus from KL to Kuala Tahan, a small village on the other river side of Taman Negara. Only one bus departure from HAN travel lodge in KL at 8:30 every day. There would be two stopovers (at gas station for 20 mins and transfer station for 1 hour at 12:00). Then divided into two ways to go to Kuala Tahan, by boat or by bus. It would be much earlier to go by bus (arrive at 14:00) than by boat (arrive at 17:00).

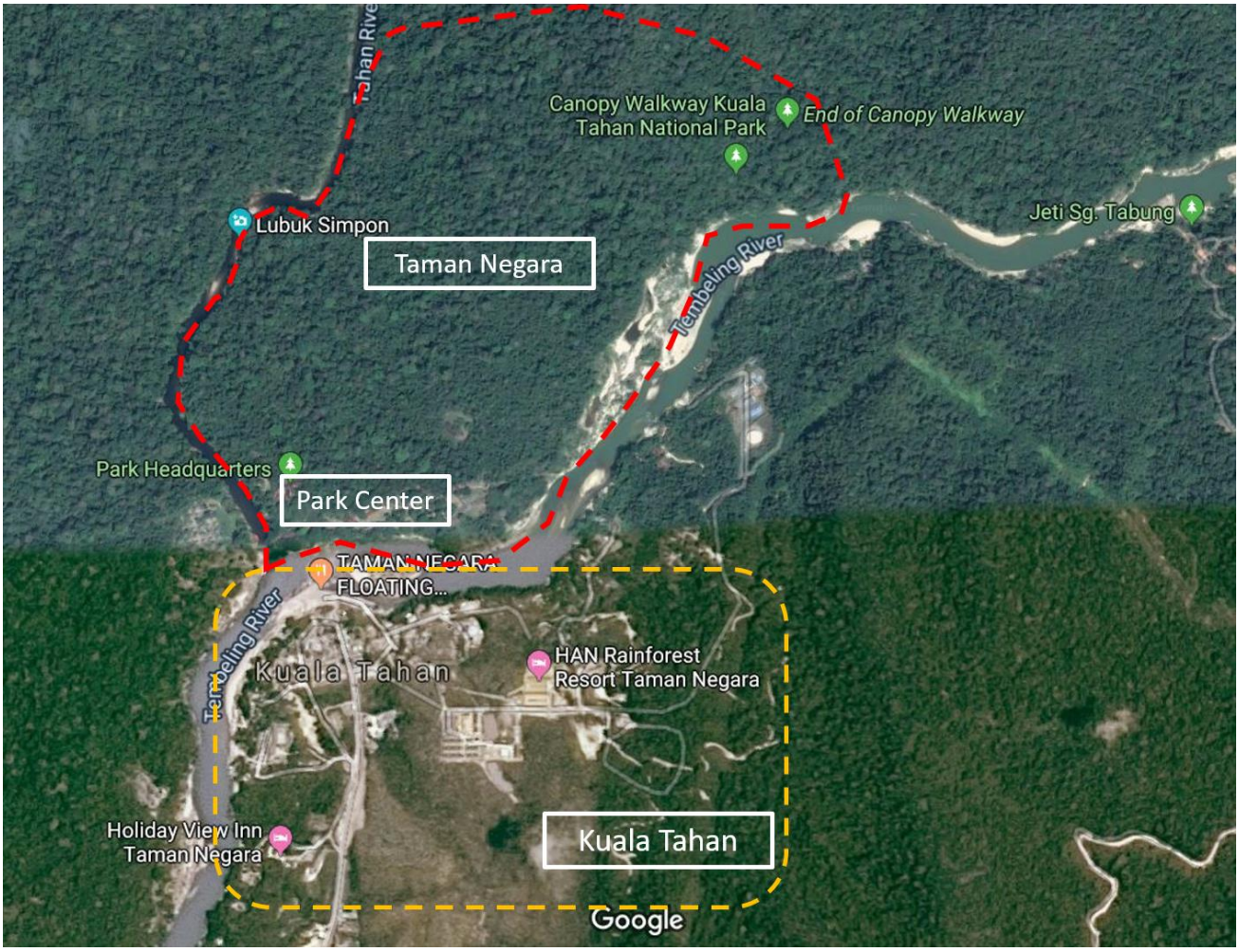

Figure 2 The bus dropped us at HAN, and we went into Taman Negara to go birding mostly. If you live in Kuala Tahan, you should pay 1 MYR/time*person for taking a boat to cross Tembeling River every day. The boat was available from 7:30 to 22:00. Most birds were seen in Taman Negara, while a small road (HAN drives customers to Night Jungle Safari) on the northeast of HAN is also recommended as a birding place with secondary forest containing some different species (e.g. Sooty Barbet) compared with Taman Negara.

Map of Taman Negara:

Figure 3 This is a board located at the park center. We couldn't find forest loop, and the length and location of Tabing Hide, Teresik Hill, and Jenut Muda trail were quite incorrect.

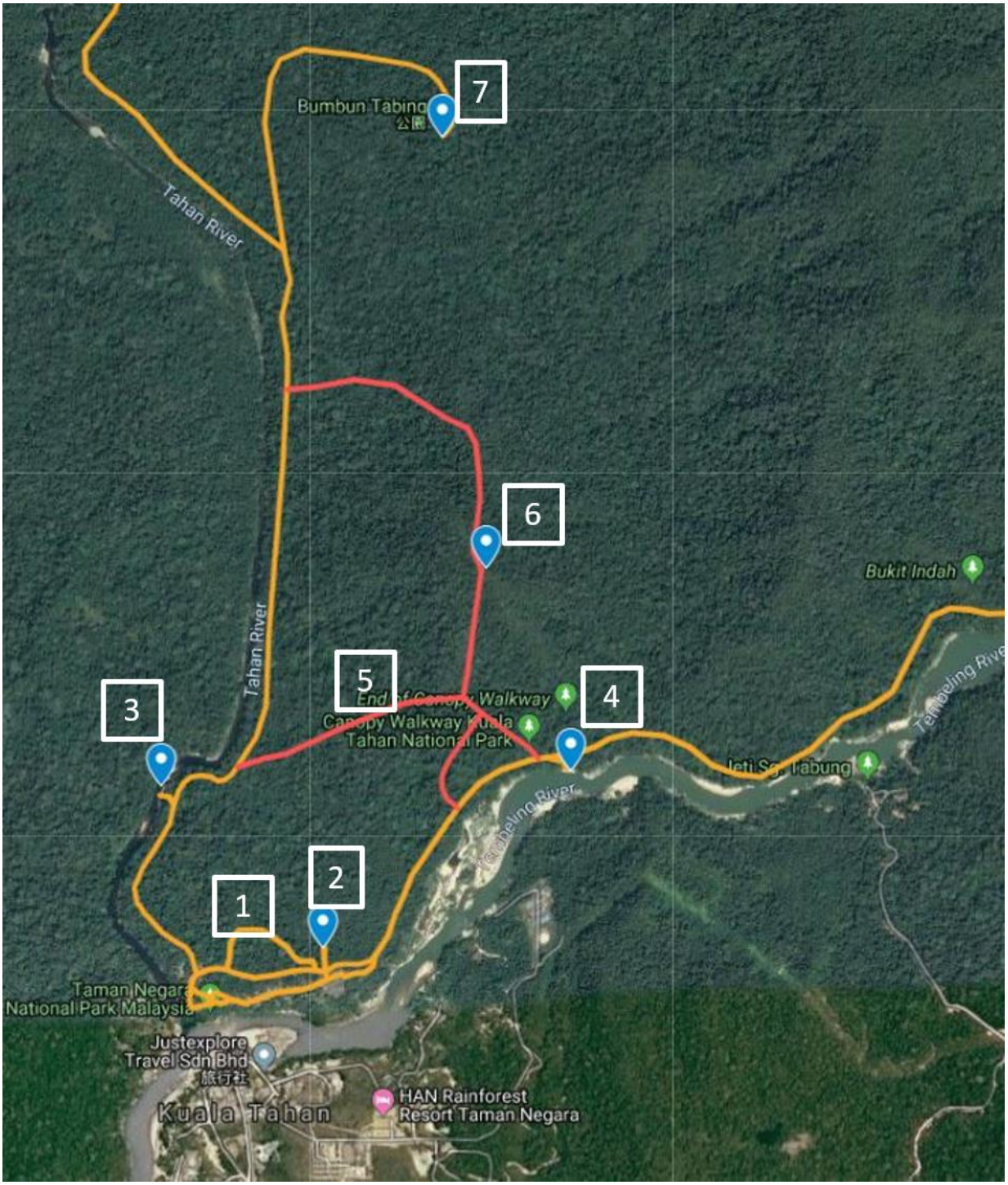

Figure 4 Yellow lines are easy to walk, and red lines are trails with highly steep slope (1: Swamp Loop; 2: Tahan Hide; 3: Lubuk Simpson; 4: Canopy Walkway jetty; 5: Jenut Muda; 6: Top of Teresek Hill; 7: Tabing Hide).

Itinerary:

1. 8/21-8/24 staying at HAN Rainforest Resort

8/21 ebird checklist

15:43 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59170739

In 8/21, we arrived at HAN at 14:00, so we plan not to go into Taman Negara. We spent 3 hours walking around the roads of Kuala Tahan, and finding some foods and drinks in this small village. I took a walk on the northeast road of HAN at night, but I didn't see any birds. We saw 9 Baya Weaver at a pond beside the road from HAN to the enter of village, a Rufous-bellied Eagle on the plaza near the village, and some Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot on the top of trees near HAN.

Figure 5 Rufous-bellied Eagle (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*)

8/22 ebird checklist

07:52 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59170742

10:07 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59170745

15:31 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59170527

Because of the time of boats, we couldn't go into Taman Negara in early morning. After finishing our breakfast, we went into Taman Negara at 08:00 (you could ask HAN to drive you to the jetty for free), and we watched bird on the trail to Tabing Hide along Tahan River. We took a rest at Lubuk Simpson jetty and saw Blue-banded Kingfisher. Walking in tropical rainforest was extremely

uncomfortable and exhausted, and most birds and their sounds were difficult to identify. We arrived at Tabing Hide at 10:00 and stayed for about 2 hours. It was a 15 m high place that provided us an awesome birding experience, and more upper-layer species could be found here. We found more species than walking on the trail such as Red-throated Barbet (using a tree hole and always feeding), Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher, and Buff-rumped Woodpecker, Pin-Striped Tit-Babbler, and Rufous-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher. We went back to the trail in the afternoon and accidentally ran into 2 Crested Partridge, then we turned into Jenut Muda. The steep slope and hot weather makes me really tired, and we find almost nothing! Most of birds we saw in 8/22 were all common species (e.g. Yellow-vented Bulbul, Olived-winged bulbul, Abbott's Babbler, Magpie Robin). Finally, we returned to park center through the trail to canopy walk.

Figure 6 Buff-rumped Woodpecker (*Meiglyptes grammithorax*)

Figure 7 Rufous-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher (*Ceyx rufidorsa*)

Figure 8 Red-throated Barbet (*Megalaima mystacophanos*)

8/23 ebird checklist

08:05 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59244140

Everything's gonna be difficult after a tired walk and poor birding experience yesterday, so we started from Tahan Hide next to the living area. Lots of green-pigeons (most were Little Green-Pigeon and Thick-billed Green-Pigeon) foraging on the Marabutan, and other birds were found such as Blue-winged Leafbird, Common Tailorbird, Red-eyed Bulbul, and Brush Cuckoo. Then we turned to walk on the trail to canopy walk along Tembeling River, and the species composition was a little different from the trail we walked yesterday. Except for common species, we saw Black-capped Babbler, Ochraceous Bulbul, Short-tailed Babbler, Rufous Piculet, and Hairy-backed Bulbul. After we passed by canopy walk jetty, the trail becomes rugged (no wooden trails) and hard to look for birds, so we decided to retrace to Tahan Hide, and found a Chestnut-breasted Malkoha and Buff-necked Woodpecker at the hide. Finally, we walked back to the restaurant through swamp loop, but still find nothing new.

Figure 9 Little Green-Pigeon (*Treron alax*)

Figure 10 Ochraceous Bulbul (*Alophoixus ochraceous*)

Figure 11 Hairy-backed Bulbul (*Tricholestes criniger*)

2. 8/24-26 live in Mutiara inside the National Park

8/24 ebird checklist

08:21 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59213564

14:26 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59244130

In the morning of 8/24, we moved to Mutiara which was located at the other side of Tembeling River. After leaving our luggage at the lobby, we planned to go to Tabing Hide through Swamp Loop. A long whistling sound came from the foggy rainforest attracted our interests. We walked out of the trail to try to get closer (forget the leeches). I could only take a short glance but it's truly a Malaysian Rail-Babbler walking and singing in the deep rainforest! Still lots of green-pigeons, babblers, bulbuls, Oriental Magpie-robins, and White-rumped Shamas in the morning. This day we keep walking around Swamp Loop to search for Crested-fireback, but we could barely find anything new. At night, we got a Sunda Scops-Owl near the living area by tracking its song and a Large-tailed Nightjar on Swamp Loop.

Figure 12 Sunda Scops-Owl (*Otus lempiji*)

8/25 ebird checklist

06:15 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59244137

10:39 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59244168

15:14 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59244175

This day was started from a Crested-fireback family on the junction of Swamp Loop (closer to Tahan Hide) in the early morning. Unlike Crested Partridge, we had adequate time to carefully take a good look at them. Besides, the shrubs in front of Tahan Hide was recommended to see Common Tailorbird, Dark-necked Tailorbird, and Rufescent Prinia. In the afternoon, after seeing 2 noisy Great Slaty Woodpeckers, we leave the Hide and take a walk to the Lubuk Simpson jetty. Finally, this day was ended by a Rufou-collared Kingfisher and two Orange-backed Woodpeckers.

Figure 13 Crested Fireback (*Lophura ignita*) (Left: Male; Right: Female)

8/26-8/28 back to HAN Rainforest Resort

8/26 ebird checklist

07:15 https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59273075

We still waiting for the appearance of Great Argus and 2 kinds of Pitta. Unlike yesterday, this morning was a sad beginning because not many birds were found and we should leave Mutiara today. After finishing our breakfast and check out, we moved forward to Tabing Hide. Two Great Argus were walking on the trail of the junction to Lubuk Simpson jetty. It was so excited that I forgot to take out my camera, and they didn't give me second chance. Everything was going better after the big surprise, we additionally saw Red-beared Bee-eater, Purple-naped Spiderhunter, Little Spiderhunter, and a flock of Rufous-Chested Flycatcher was quietly moving under shrubs. It became crazy when we arrived

Tabing Hide, Crimson-winged Woodpecker, Rufous Woodpecker, Buff-rumped Woodpecker, Banded Woodpecker, Green Broadbill, Black Magpie, Finsch's Bulbul, Ruby-cheeked Sunbird, and my first trogon, Scarlet-rumped Trogon!!! We saw totally 73 species in a day!!!!

Figure 14 Red-beared Bee-eater (*Nyctyornis amictus*); Rufous-chested Flycatcher (*Ficedula dumetoria*)

Figure 15 Scarlet-rumped Trogon (*Harpactes duvaucelii*)

Figure 16 Green Broadbill (*Calyptomena viridis*)

8/27 ebird checklist

07:20 **https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59305775**

This is our last day in Taman Negara, we planned to focus on Pittas and Peacock-pheasant on the ground, but it was still another crazy day in Tabing Hide, we saw 75 species in this day. The first lifer today was a Long-billed Spiderhunter when we were eating breakfast at HAN! We saw a Red-naped Trogon soon after we arrived at Tabing Hide. It was much bigger than Scarlet-rumped Trogon we saw yesterday. Still lots of Bulbuls, Woodpeckers, Babblers forging around the Hide, and we heard a Banded Broadbill. We tried two times to find out Garnet Pitta singing behind the Hide, but we failed. We heard a Peacock-Pheasant right in front of us in 10 m when we were crouching in the forest, but we failed both species again; however, we saw a Crested Jay when we went back to the Hide! On the way back to Mutiara, we saw Cinnamon-rumped Trogon and Dark-throated Oriole. At last, we returned to Mutiara through Teresek Hill, and got a flock of Wreathed Hornbill on the top of the Hill.

Figure 17 Crested Jay (*Platylophus galericulatus*)

Figure 18 Red-naped Trogon (*Harpactes kasumba*)

Figure 19 Cinnamon-rumped Trogon (*Harpactes orrhophaeus*)

8/28 ebird checklist

07:28 **https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59322510**

Before breakfast, we walked to the road behind HAN in the early morning and found Sooty Barbet in a secondary forest. Finally, our trip ended by a Plain Flowerpecker on the treein front of our room.

Figure 20 Plain Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum minullum*)

Species List (131 species)

Common name (English)	Scientific name	abundance
Crested Partridge	*Rollulus rouloul*	4
Great Argus	*Argusianus argus*	2
Malayan Peacock-Pheasant	*Polyplectron malacense*	1 heard only
Red Junglefowl	*Gallus gallus*	9
Crested Fireback	*Lophura ignita*	5
Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	2
Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	8
Asian Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*	2
Zebra Dove	*Geopelia striata*	4
Little Green-Pigeon	*Treron olax*	30
Pink-necked Green-Pigeon	*Treron vernans*	2
Thick-billed Green-Pigeon	*Treron curvirostra*	30
Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	5
Raffles's Malkoha	*Rhinortha chlorophaea*	12
Chestnut-breasted Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus curvirostris*	2
Black-bellied Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus diardi*	4
Brush Cuckoo	*Cacomantis variolosus*	3
Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	*Surniculus lugubris*	10
Large-tailed Nightjar	*Caprimulgus macrurus*	1
Silver-rumped Needletail	*Rhaphidura leucopygialis*	5
Brown-backed Needletail	*Hirundapus giganteus*	4
Plume-toed Swiftlet	*Collocalia affinis*	15
Black-nest Swiftlet	*Aerodramus maximus*	1
Germain's Swiftlet	*Aerodramus germani*	7
House Swift	*Apus nipalensis*	26
White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	5
Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*	1
Rufous-bellied Eagle	*Lophotriorchis kienerii*	1
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucogaster*	1
Sunda Scops-Owl	*Otus lempiji*	1
Red-naped Trogon	*Harpactes kasumba*	2
Cinnamon-rumped Trogon	*Harpactes orrhophaeus*	1
Scarlet-rumped Trogon	*Harpactes duvaucelii*	3
Oriental Pied-Hornbill	*Anthracoceros albirostris*	7
Wreathed Hornbill	*Rhyticeros undulatus*	2

Wrinkled Hornbill	*Rhabdotorrhinus corrugatus*	2
Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	1
Blue-banded Kingfisher	*Alcedo euryzona*	4
Rufous-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher	*Ceyx rufidorsa*	3
Stork-billed Kingfisher	*Pelargopsis capensis*	2
Rufous-collared Kingfisher	*Actenoides concretus*	1
Red-bearded Bee-eater	*Nyctyornis amictus*	1
Blue-throated Bee-eater	*Merops viridis*	7
Red-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon mystacophanos*	7
Gold-whiskered Barbet	*Psilopogon chrysopogon*	2
Rufous Piculet	*Sasia abnormis*	2
Orange-backed Woodpecker	*Reinwardtipicus validus*	4
Rufous Woodpecker	*Micropternus brachyurus*	3
Buff-necked Woodpecker	*Meiglyptes tukki*	11
Buff-rumped Woodpecker	*Meiglyptes tristis*	4
Crimson-winged Woodpecker	*Picus puniceus*	3
Banded Woodpecker	*Chrysophlegma miniaceum*	1
Great Slaty Woodpecker	*Mulleripicus pulverulentus*	2
Blue-crowned Hanging-Parrot	*Loriculus galgulus*	11
Green Broadbill	*Calyptomena viridis*	3
Black-and-red Broadbill	*Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos*	6
Banded Broadbill	*Eurylaimus javanicus*	1 heard only
Black-and-yellow Broadbill	*Eurylaimus ochromalus*	3
Garnet Pitta	*Erythropitta granatina*	1 heard only
Malayan Banded-Pitta	*Hydrornis irena*	1 heard only
White-bellied Erpornis	*Erpornis zantholeuca*	8
Dark-throated Oriole	*Oriolus xanthonotus*	1
Rufous-winged Philentoma	*Philentoma pyrhoptera*	4
Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*	4
Spotted Fantail	*Rhipidura perlata*	6
Crow-billed Drongo	*Dicrurus annectens*	3
Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*	2
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus remifer*	1
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*	7
Black-naped Monarch	*Hypothymis azurea*	15
Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone affinis*	2
Crested Shrikejay	*Platylophus galericulatus*	1
Black Magpie	*Platysmurus leucopterus*	5

Slender-billed Crow	*Corvus enca*	2
Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	1
Malaysian Rail-babbler	*Eupetes macrocerus*	3
Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*	7
Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*	9
Dark-necked Tailorbird	*Orthotomus atrogularis*	1
Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sericeus*	2
Rufescent Prinia	*Prinia rufescens*	4
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	2
Pacific Swallow	*Hirundo tahitica*	12
Rufous-bellied Swallow	*Cecropis badia*	1
Puff-backed Bulbul	*Brachypodius eutilotus*	3
Spectacled Bulbul	*Rubigula erythropthalmos*	3
Stripe-throated Bulbul	*Pycnonotus finlaysoni*	17
Yellow-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus goiavier*	12
Olive-winged Bulbul	*Pycnonotus plumosus*	9
Cream-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus simplex*	3
Red-eyed Bulbul	*Pycnonotus brunneus*	7
Hairy-backed Bulbul	*Tricholestes criniger*	1
Finsch's Bulbul	*Alophoixus finschii*	5
Ochraceous Bulbul	*Alophoixus ochraceus*	1
Yellow-bellied Bulbul	*Alophoixus phaeocephalus*	4
Buff-vented Bulbul	*Iole crypta*	3
Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	*Mixornis gularis*	7
Chestnut-winged Babbler	*Cyanoderma erythropterum*	4
Gray-headed Babbler	*Stachyris poliocephala*	3
Moustached Babbler	*Malacopteron magnirostre*	8
Sooty-capped Babbler	*Malacopteron affine*	4
Scaly-crowned Babbler	*Malacopteron cinereum*	22
Black-capped Babbler	*Pellorneum capistratum*	3
Short-tailed Babbler	*Pellorneum malaccense*	2
White-chested Babbler	*Pellorneum rostratum*	6
Abbott's Babbler	*Turdinus abbotti*	12
Horsfield's Babbler	*Turdinus sepiarius*	3
Asian Glossy Starling	*Aplonis panayensis*	23
Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	9
Javan Myna	*Acridotheres javanicus*	3
Oriental Magpie-Robin	*Copsychus saularis*	39

White-rumped Shama	*Copsychus malabaricus*	15
Malaysian Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis turcosus*	3
White-crowned Forktail	*Enicurus leschenaulti*	3
Rufous-chested Flycatcher	*Ficedula dumetoria*	2
Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker	*Prionochilus maculatus*	6
Ruby-cheeked Sunbird	*Chalcoparia singalensis*	5
Plain Sunbird	*Anthreptes simplex*	1
Olive-backed Sunbird	*Cinnyris jugularis*	1
Purple-naped Spiderhunter	*Kurochkinegramma hypogrammicum*	3
Long-billed Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera robusta*	1
Little Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera longirostra*	1
Gray-breasted Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera modesta*	1
Asian Fairy-bluebird	*Irena puella*	8
Greater Green Leafbird	*Chloropsis sonnerati*	1
Lesser Green Leafbird	*Chloropsis cyanopogon*	2
Blue-winged Leafbird	*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*	7
Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*	9
White-rumped Munia	*Lonchura striata*	3
Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*	14
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	27