

BUCKBIRD JOURNEYS LTD

SOUTHERN THAILAND

A quest for Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other specials south of Bangkok

Thursday 2 – Thursday 9 February 2012

Participants

Hugh Buck (HB), Robin Atherton (RA), Merilyn Browne (MB), Ken Cole (KC), Raymond Jeffers (RJ), Betty Power (BP)

Agent in Thailand

Nature and Bird Exploration Company, Phang Na, Thailand

When we were denied permission or access to Burmese Tenassarim and Mt Emawbon our group agreed this short look at Southern Thailand as a substitute. Although it was in some ways a mixed success and our local guides were perhaps not up to the required level we enjoyed some spectacular sightings including the huge shore and other bird spectacle at Pak Thale and Laem Pak Bia, an unusually good selection of Rails, 3 species of Pheasant, 3 of Hornbills and even a roadside Leopard at Kaeng Krachan and both Brown-winged Kingfisher and Mangrove Pitta at Krabi. Only a very hot and dry Khao Nor Chu Chi was a disappointment with Gurney's Pitta, perhaps predictably, silent and invisible but also not much else stirring in these good looking but alarmingly silent forests. Nevertheless our week produced in excess of 235 species including a variety of lifers for all

Day by day

Thursday 2 February

All have gathered from different parts of the globe at the Convenience Resort near Bangkok Airport the previous evening and Isara of Nature and Bird Exploration Company is there at 0515 with a comfortable enough minibus. He will prove an amiable and keen eyed guide for the next few days although his knowledge, especially of Kaeng Kracheng, is somewhat inadequate. We reach the hot salt pans of Pak Thale (PT) by 0645 and a couple of Spoon-billed Sandpipers and an awesome selection of other shorebirds have already been located by the numerous other birders there. We enjoy slightly distant scope views before departing for a tasty lunch by the mangrove sided river at Laem Pak Bia (LPB)

An afternoon boat trip is productive for more shorebirds and 4 different Chinese Egrets then the nearby “King’s Water Project” again boosts our list with an active quintet of Nordmann’s Greenshanks and , remarkably, 3 species of Rails out in the open. All are photographed and two, Slaty-breasted Rail and Ruddy-breasted Crake are easy. The third is less so but the good looks, including through the scope, and photographs seem to confirm it as the newly split Brown-cheeked Water Rail, a little known and probable winter visitor only to Thailand. Our evening is in a modern hotel at nearby Cha Am and dinner unmemorable “western” Thai cuisine. We will sort that out!

Friday 3 February

By mutual consent it is back by 0630 to Pak Thale and this time 3 Spoon-billed Sandpipers are more active and give better views. Our shorebird list grows with multitudes of very long-billed Eurasian Curlews, a few real Long-billed Curlews and even a trio of Red-necked Phalaropes. Then it is on to the A & B Resort and the scrub forest near the gateway to Kaeng Kracheng (KK) National Park to keep the lists ticking

Saturday 4 February

The superb hill forests of Kaeng Kracheng, alongside the border with Burma’s Tenassarim, are bisected by a 34km sealed road which gives access to the higher ridge forests of Bacheng Thung Mountain and it is this road that our truck takes today. Red Junglefowl and a typically sneaky Grey Peacock Pheasant squirming its way across the road are highlights on our early morning ascent and we spend much of the morning and afternoon at the restaurant and campsite at the summit where a couple of Ratchet-tailed Treepies, apart from here apparently confined to Vietnam and China’s Hainan Island, are the avian highlight. An afternoon walk down gives us Great and Wreathed (but alas none of the much wanted Plain-pouched) Hornbills and the evening driving descent is remarkable. The highlights are another reptilian Grey Peacock Pheasant, extraordinary and prolonged views of a male (even doing his wing whirring display) and female of the *lineata* ssp of Silver Pheasant and even a Leopard. The last named is notorious for, despite us driving within feet of it by the roadside in daylight, only our guide and MB get a look as it disappears over the steep bank and is lost to view. Apparently they are seen quite regularly in the evening on this stretch of road

Sunday 5 February

The lower reaches of KK today between the “3 streams” and some good sightings including two groups of unexpected Grey-headed Lapwings on the forest road, a couple of noisy Southern Brown Hornbills, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Plain-tailed Warbler and some delightful White-handed Gibbons. Incomparably best of all are a pair of daylight roosting White-faced Scops-owls previously located by Tony, owner of our agent Company. Rare and range restricted this one and a great privilege to get such superb looks. A good spicy Thai dinner tonight!

Monday 6 February

And a nice surprise this morning. The advertised feeders at the house of Mrs Aek are right at the forest edge and from the well situated blinds we enjoy outstanding views of more Jungle Fowl, an adult and a young male Silver Pheasant, Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes side by side out in the open, a Large Scimitar-babbler and a couple of immaculate male Siberian Blue Robins. We keep a sharp eye out for the regular Bar-backed Partridge but to no avail. Then the drive back to Bangkok and an evening flight to Krabi for new guide Sorayint and the cheerful Morakot Rest House where the Thai cuisine is outstanding

Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 February

The Thai cuisine has to compensate for a dearth of birds at Khao Nor Chu Chi (KNCC) during these two days. We try hard for Gurney's Pitta but several long waits produce little except mosquitoes and, of the few others, only a soaring Blyth's Hawk Eagle, some scoped Red-throated Barbets, a couple of Orange-headed Thrushes and a pair of nice Green Broadbills provide much excitement. We visit the Emerald Pool and the local hot springs but the returns are slender

Thursday 9 February

But things are much more visible from the boardwalk and boat trip around Krabi in the morning. A fine Mangrove Pitta is noisy in the early morning and, whilst he gives close but somewhat obscured views in the dense mangrove, he is still there in the early afternoon and this time poses right out in the open. From the boat the range restricted and large Brown-winged Kingfisher is noisy and conspicuous but the more skulking Ruddy Kingfisher less so. A pair of Smooth Otters are notable and a single Nordmann's Greenshank, amongst the many Terek Sandpipers and other things at their high tide roost on the many fishing traps, gives an outstanding close look. An excellent last Thai lunch, a revisit to the boardwalk then our afternoon flight has us back at the Convenience Resort in time for dinner after a busy few days

Birds

1. Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)
2. Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*)
3. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
4. Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*)
Confusion still seems to exist about the Pond Herons in this part of Thailand. If the grey wing tips in non breeding birds is a true identification point then we did identify a few of these amongst the many Javans in the PT area
5. Javan Pond Heron (*Ardeola speciosa*)
But most of the 00's seemed to be these
6. Eastern Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus*)
Not yet universally recognised as a true split
7. Pacific Reef Egret (*Egretta sacra*)
4 seen at LPB on 2/2

8. Chinese Egret (*Egretta eulophotes*)
4 of these threatened Herons identified at LPB on 2/2
9. Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
10. Intermediate Egret (*Mesophyx intermedia*)
Several at PT and LPB on 2/2
11. Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)
12. Little Heron (*Butorides striata*)
13. Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*)
2 near Bangkok Airport on 10/2
14. Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)
2 between LPB and KK on 3/2
15. Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*)
Several at PT / LPB 2/2 and 3/2 and 5 or so at Krabi 9/2
16. Black Baza (*Aviceda leuphotes*)
6 or so from the restaurant at KK on 4/2
17. Besra (*Accipiter virgatus*)
One near KK on 3/2
18. Crested Goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*)
A single in display flight at KK on 4/2
19. White-bellied Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)
A couple above the Krabi mangroves on 9/2
20. Crested Serpent-eagle (*Spilornis cheela*)
As ever the most commonly encountered raptor at KK and KNCC
21. Blyth's Hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus alboniger*)
A single soaring bird for some at KNCC 8/2
22. Eastern Marsh Harrier (*Circus spilonotus*)
4 birds in all at PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2
23. Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*)
Immaculate views at KK (including 9 together at Mrs Aek's feeders).
Heard elsewhere
24. Silver Pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera lineata*)
I confidently stated we would never get better views than the displaying cock and his hen on the KK road on 4/2 only to have this exploded with truly astonishing views of an adult and young cock feeding unconcernedly in front of us at Mrs Aek's feeders on 6/2. This dark, short tailed ssp *lineata* (not *crawdfurdi* as originally stated) was previously assigned to Kalij Pheasant but, following McGowan and Panchen (1994), is now recognised as a race of Silver
25. Grey Peacock –pheasant (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*)
Typical views of two individuals snaking across the upper KK road early morning and early evening on 4/2. One slightly prolonged the view by climbing up the bank. KK must be the best place in the world to see this legendarily tricky species
26. Brown-cheeked Water Rail (*Rallus indicus*)
Probably the biggest surprise of the trip was to see one out in the open at the King's Project on 2/2. Photographs appear to confirm the identity of this newly split species which is little known, and probably only a winter visitor, in Thailand
27. Slaty-breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*)
Several great looks (and photographs) of one in the same place as 24.

28. Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Porzana fusca*)
Great views of at least 5 in the same area 2/2
29. White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)
30. Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*)
Looks at our 5th evening species of Rail for some at LPB on 2/2
31. Grey-headed Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*)
A surprising 2 groups of 7 birds in total on the forest road at KK on 5/2.
Forced down to this unlikely habitat by mist
32. Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*)
ssp atronuchalis of a possible two way split of this species
33. Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)
34. Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*)
35. Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)
36. White-faced Plover (*Charadrius (alexandrinus) dealbatus*)
Excellent studies of a pair at LPB on 2/2 and particularly pleasing to be able to compare them directly with 35 and 37. Not yet fully recognised as a species but a sure fire bet – endemic to the coasts on Indochina, Thailand and Malaysia
37. Malaysian Plover (*Charadrius peroni*)
A nice pair at LPB 2/2
38. Lesser Sand Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*)
39. Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultia*)
40. Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius phaeopus*)
Several hundred of the very long billed *ssp orientalis* at PT on 3/2.
Originally misidentified as 41.
41. Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)
There were a few of these large, warmly buff species with the Easterns, notably 3 together on a nearby bund
42. Eurasian Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)
60 or so at the high tide roost at Krabi on 9/2
43. Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
A single at PT on 2/2 but 20+ there on 3/2
44. Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)
Singles at PT 2/2 and 3/2 and around 60 at Krabi on 9/2
45. Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)
Much commoner than 46 at PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2
46. Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
47. Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)
48. Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*)
Scope views of 5 actively feeding birds at LPB on 2/2 were overshadowed by wonderful views of a single amongst the roosting Tereks at Krabi on 9/2. Rare and threatened
49. Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatalis*)
50. Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)
51. Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)
52. Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*)
> 100 at the high tide roost at Krabi on 9/2
53. Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
A couple amongst the Tereks at Krabi on 9/2

54. Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)
Abundant at PT and LPB
55. Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*)
A few nicely plumaged birds at LPB 2/2 and 3/2
56. Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*)
This massively wanted and threatened special obliged with a couple at PT on 2/2 and better views of a more active trio on 3/2. This part of Thailand is probably now the most reliable site for this declining shorebird on earth although we learned later of flocks of 100+ not far from Yangon in Burma
57. Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)
58. Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)
59. Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limnicola falcinellus*)
5 amongst the other shorebirds from our boat at LPB on 2/2
60. Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)
A single partially plumaged bird amongst the Greats at LPB on 2/2
61. Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)
Surprisingly large (several 00's) numbers of this rare shorebird at PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2
62. Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)
63. Pintail Snipe (*Gallinago stenura*)
A couple at the King's Project LPB on 2/2
64. Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)
65. Greater Painted-snipe (*Tostratula benghalensis*)
A single flushed then visible on the ground at the King's Project LPB on 2/2
66. Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)
3 birds at PT 3/2
67. Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)
68. Brown-headed Gull (*Larus brunnicephalus*)
69. Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)
They were distant and the heat haze was not good but this would seem to be the identity of the 2 adults and three immatures at LPB on 3/2. Previously regarded as a rare vagrant to Thailand they are now recorded more regularly and had been seen around the area in the previous few days
70. Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)
Several at LPB 2/2 and 3/2
71. Great Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*)
A few at LPB 2/2 and a single giving nice comparative looks with 72 at Krabi 9/2
72. Lesser Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bengalensis*)
A few at LPB 2/2 and a hundred or so at Krabi on 9/2
73. Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)
74. Little Tern (*Sternula albifrons*)
Numerous at LPB and Krabi
75. Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
LPB 2/2 and Krabi 9/2
76. White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)
Only one positively identified at LPB 2/2

77. Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*)
Common at PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2
78. Pink-necked Pigeon (*Treron vernans*)
A distant dozen or so near the KK gate 3/2
79. Mountain Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula badia*)
4 or so KK 4/2
80. Red-collared Dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)
Common in the lowlands
81. Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)
82. Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia striata*)
83. Emerald Dove (*Chalchaps indica*)
A couple flushed from the road at KK 4/2
84. Vernal Hanging Parrot (*Loriculu vernalis*)
Up to a dozen on the upper reaches of KK on 4/2. Some unusually good perched views
85. Banded Bay Cuckoo (*Cocomantis sonneratii*)
Individuals seen at KK 4/2 and 6/2. Others heard
86. Asian Emerald Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx maculatus*)
A female near the restaurant at KK 4/2
87. Drongo Cuckoo (*Surniculus lugubris*)
A single at KK 5/2
88. Common Koel (*Eudynamis scolopacea*)
Common and very noisy throughout
89. Green-billed Malkoha (*Rhopodytes tristis*)
Singles at KK 4/2 and 5/2
90. Red-billed Malkoha (*Rhopodytes javanicus*)
A single at KNCC on 7/2
91. Chestnut-breasted Malkoha (*Rhopodytes curvirostris*)
A single at KNCC on 8/2
92. Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*)
Certainly heard of multiple occasions
93. White-fronted Scops-owl (*Otus sagittatus*)
What a privilege to be shown an immaculate pair of this rarely encountered forest Owl at their daytime roost at KK on 5/2. Tony certainly redeemed himself here!
94. Asian Barred Owlet (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)
A single at KK on 5/2
95. Large-tailed Nightjar (*Caprimulgus macrurus*)
Several pre-dawn and post dusk on the approach road to KK 3/2, 4/2 and 6/2
96. Germain's Swiftlet (*Aerodramus germani*)
Abundant in the lowlands
97. Himalayan Swiftlet (*Aerodramus brevirostris*)
Around 20 at the higher reaches of KK 4/2
98. Brown-backed Needletail (*Hirundapus giganteus*)
The putative identification of 3 birds that rocketed past at KK on 4/2
99. Asian Palm Swift (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*)
100. Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)
20 or so KK on 4/2
101. House Swift (*Apus nipalensis*)

102. Grey-rumped Treeswift (*Hemiprocne longipennis*)
KK and KNCC 5/2, 7/2 and 8/2
103. Orange-breasted Trogon (*Harpactes oreskios*)
A responsive male at KK 5/2
104. Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
105. Brown-winged Kingfisher (*Halcyon amauroptera*)
A least a dozen of this spectacular and noisy beast at Krabi on 9/2
106. Ruddy Kingfisher (*Halcyon coromanda*)
Frequently heard amongst the mangroves at Krabi but difficult to see and only a few got any view at all
107. White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)
108. Black-capped Kingfisher (*Halcyon pileata*)
LPB and Krabi. Several encounters
109. Collared Kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*)
Common at PT and LPB
110. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (*Merops leschenaulti*)
Common in the lowlands
111. Green Bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*)
Ditto. This wide ranging species comes in a variety of (splittable?) forms. This one *ferrugeiceps*
112. Blue-bearded Bee-eater (*Nictyornis athertoni*)
A nice pair around a tree hive at KK 5/2. These forest *Nictyornis* Bee-eaters are considered the primitive stock from which all others evolved
113. Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*)
114. Dollarbird (*Eurystomus orientalis*)
Only one, at Krabi 9/2, and even then it was uncooperative
115. Common Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
Several around the KK gate 3/2
116. Southern Brown Hornbill (*Ptilolaemus tickelli*)
Almost a KK special . Two noisy birds on 5/2
117. Wreathed Hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*)
Numerous at KK but not many allowing critical separation from the much rarer and very similar Plain-pouched, also known from this park
118. Oriental Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*)
Noisy pairs at KK 3/2 and 5/2
119. Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*)
This daddy of them all gave views at KK of 4 on 4/2 and a pair on 5/2
120. Great Barbet (*Megalaima virens*)
One of several species common by voice at KK and a couple seen on 4/2
121. Lineated Barbet (*Megalaima lineata*)
Heard only but we would catch up in Burma
122. Red-crowned Barbet (*Megalaima rafflesii*)
Again , and more sadly, only heard at KNCC on 7/2 and 8/2
123. Red-throated Barbet (*Megalaima mystacophanus*)
After hearing it at KNCC on 7/2 we eventually tracked a feeding trio for scope views on 8/2
124. Blue-throated Barbet (*Megalaima asiatica*)
Up to 6 seen on the upper reaches of KK 4/2

125. Moustached Barbet (*Megalaima incognita*)
Close views of 3 at KK on 4/2
126. Blue-eared Barbet (*Megalaima australis*)
The commonest Barbet by voice at KK and KNCC. Several seen at KK
127. Coppersmith Barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala*)
A distant calling bird miraculously picked out by RA near the KK gate on 3/2
128. White-browed Piculet (*Sasia ochracea*)
A pair drumming loudly on bamboo at KK on 5/2 gave hopes of something bigger and rarer!
129. Rufous Piculet (*Sasia abnormis*)
A single claimed by some at KK on 5/2 may be a bit north of this bird's range
130. Common Flameback (*Dinopium javanense*)
Heard only at KK 6/2
131. Streak-breasted Woodpecker (*Picus viridanus*)
One bird perched briefly above the mangroves. Seen from our boat at Krabi on 9/2
132. Greater Yellownape (*Picus flavinuchus*)
A single distant bird at KK on 5/2
133. Grey-capped Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos canicapillus*)
One at KNCC 7/2
134. Green Broadbill (*Calyptomena viridis*)
A couple coming in overhead relieved some the tedium of one of our Pitta dips at KNCC on 7/2
135. Long-tailed Broadbill (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*)
A calling bird at KK on 4/2 sadly could not be meaningfully located and views were fleeting at best
136. Black-and-yellow Broadbill (*Eurylaimus ochromatus*)
Better luck with this one with three at KK on 5/2 and a pair at KNCC on 8/2
137. Mangrove Pitta (*Pitta megarhyncha*)
Partially obscured views of a calling bird from the Krabi boardwalk on the morning of 9/2 were followed by out in the open ones in the early afternoon
138. Blue Pitta (*Pitta cyanea*)
Nothing much to work on for this elusive sneak with a single call only, at KK on 4/2
139. Golden-bellied Gerygone (*Gerygone sulphurea*)
Frequently heard at LPB and one seen by some 2/2
140. White-browed Shrike-babbler (*Pteruthius flaviscapis*)
One at KK 4/2. With the splitting of this species into three this remains the nominate form
141. Ashy Minivet (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)
Of the several black and white Minivets at KK the only one examined in the scope on 5/2 was this and not Swinhoe's
142. Rosy Minivet (*Pericrocotus roseus*)
A flock of 6 of these at KK on 4/2 was a nice surprise
143. Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus speciosus*)
4 at KK on 5/2

144. Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)
Only one, at Krabi 9/2. Heard elsewhere
145. Black-hooded Oriole (*Oriolus xanthornus*)
One at KK 4/2
146. Blue-winged Leafbird (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*)
A nice pair from the restaurant at KK on 4/2
147. Orange-bellied Leafbird (*Chloropsis hardwickii*)
A pair at KK 4/2
148. Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina melaschistos*)
Common at KK 4/2 and 5/2
149. Large Woodshrike (*Tephrodornis gularis*)
2 on the higher reaches of KK 4/2
150. Ashy Wood Swallow (*Artamus fuscus*)
10+ LPB 3/2
151. Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike (*Hemipus picatus*)
Several on the higher reaches of KK 4/2
152. Great Iora (*Aegithina lafresnayei*)
A couple at KK 5/2
153. Pied Fantail (*Rhipidura javanica*)
Several at LPB 2/2 and 3/2
154. Ashy Drongo (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)
Common and conspicuous at KK and KNCC. Many were the white
spectacled *leucogenis*, some the darker greyer *salangensis* and some
the darker *nigrescens*
155. Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)
Common in the lowlands
156. Bronzed Drongo (*Dicrurus aeneus*)
Common at KK
157. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*)
Encountered at KK and KNCC
158. Hair-crested Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentotus*)
Common and conspicuous at KK
159. Crow-billed Drongo (*Dicrurus annectans*)
One appeared all too briefly in a rare flock at KNCC on 8/2
160. Black-naped Monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*)
161. Asian Paradise Flycatcher (*Tersiphone paradisi*)
A single at KK on 6/2
162. Hainan Blue Flycatcher (*Cyornis hainanus*)
A male seen and photographed by some KK 4/2
163. Verditer Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*)
Always a pleasure
164. Taiga Flycatcher (*Ficedula albicilla*)
A couple at KK. Now split from Red-throated (*F. parva*)
165. Asian Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa daurica*)
166. Siberian Blue Robin (*Luscinia cyane*)
An outstanding couple of brilliant males out in the open at Mrs Aek's
feeders 6/2 and a couple of more usual views at KNCC 7/2
167. Oriental Magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*)
168. White-rumped Shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*)
Again our best views at Mrs Aek's feeders

169. Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)
A couple of females KK 4/2
170. Orange-headed Thrush (*Zoothera citrina*)
One on the main road at dawn at KNCC 7/2 and another in the second of the Pitta gullies
170. Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)
1 at KK on 5/2
171. Asian Fairy Bluebird (*Irena puella*)
Always a favourite and common enough at KK and KNCC
171. Sultan Tit (*Melanochlora sultanea*)
One at KK 5/2
172. Eastern Jungle Crow (*Corvus (macrorhynchus) levaillantii*)
Part of a not fully recognised three way split of this species
173. Common Green Magpie (*Cissa chinensis*)
A single noisy bird gave good views at KK on 5/2
174. Grey Treepie (*Dendrocitta formosae*)
3 birds from the restaurant at KK on 4/2
175. Racket-tailed Treepie (*Cypselurus temia*)
A pair at the King's Project LPB for some on 2/2
176. Ratchet-tailed Treepie (*Temnurus temnurus*)
A pair succumbed at lunch time at the KK restaurant 4/2. This is a strange isolated outpost for this bird which is otherwise mostly known from Vietnam and Hainan Island in China
177. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*)
KK, a single on 5/2
178. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
179. Pacific Swallow (*Hirundo tahitica*)
Numbers around PT 2/2 and Krabi 9/2
180. Rufous-bellied Swallow (*Cecropis badia*)
This newly recognised split from *C. striata* is virtually confined to South Thailand and Malaysia. Several at the end of the Krabi boardwalk 9/2
181. Asian House Martin (*Delichon dasypus*)
A few birds high above the ridge at KK 4/2
182. Black-headed Bulbul (*Pycnonotus atriceps*)
Regularly encountered at KK and KNCC
183. Black-crested Bulbul (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*)
Ditto
184. Stripe-throated Bulbul (*Pycnonotus finlayson*)
A single at KK 5/2
185. Flavescent Bulbul (*Pycnonotus flavescens*)
Several of the duller ssp *flavescens* on the higher reaches of KK 4/2
186. Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus goiavier*)
Common at lower altitudes
187. Olive-winged Bulbul (*Pycnonotus plumosus*)
A nesting bird at the Morakot Resort 7/2 and 8/2
188. Streak-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus blanfordi*)
Again common at lower altitudes
189. Sooty-headed Bulbul (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)
Several near the KK gate 3/2. The red vented ssp *klossi*

190. Hairy-backed Bulbul (*Tricholestes criniger*)
A couple at KNCC 7/2
191. Yellow-bellied Bulbul (*Alophoixus phaecocephalus*)
A single at KNCC 7/2
192. Grey-cheeked Bulbul (*Alophoixus bres*)
And a couple of these at KNCC 7/2 as well
193. Ochraceous Bulbul (*Alophoixus ochraceous*)
Common and noisy at KK and KNCC
194. Puff-throated Bulbul (*Alophoixus pallidus*)
As for 192.
195. Buff-vented Bulbul (*Iole olivacea*)
Several on the upper reaches of KK 4/2
196. Ashy Tailorbid (*Orthotomus ruficeps*)
Common by voice at Krabi 9/2 and a couple lured in for close views
197. Common Tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*)
Often heard and occasionally seen in the lowlands
198. Dark-necked Tailorbird (*Orthotomus atrogularis*)
Ditto but in more forested habitat
199. Plain Prinia (*Prinia inornata*)
A single at LPB 2/2
200. Yellow-bellied Prinia (*Prinia flaviventris*)
A singing pair at PT 2/2
201. Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)
3 birds identified KK 4/2 and 6/2
202. Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)
Singles at LPB 3/2 and 4/2
203. Two-barred Warbler (*Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*)
A single at KNCC 7/2
204. Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)
A single at LPB 2/2
205. Plain-tailed Warbler (*Seicercus soror*)
A single at KK 5/2
206. Rusty-rumped Warbler (*Locustella certhiola*)
A bird flushed several times from the low scrub at LPB on 3/2 sadly
only offered poor views. A horrible skulker
207. Oriental Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orientalis*)
Occasionally heard at LPB on 3/2 and one briefly glimpsed
208. Oriental White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosus*)
A couple at KNCC 6/2
209. Everett's White-eye (*Zosterops everetti*)
A trio on the upper reaches of KK 4/2
210. Brown-cheeked Fulvetta (*Alcippe poioicephala*)
A couple at Mrs Aek's feeders 6/2
211. Spot-necked Babbler (*Stachyris striolata*)
A single at KK 5/2
212. Golden Babbler (*Stachyris chrysea*)
Only heard at KK. We would have to wait until late in the day in
Burma to see this one!

213. White-browed Scimitar-babbler (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*)
A couple at KK 4/2 gave good views. Mark this as ssp *fastidiosus* for when this species starts to get split
214. Large Scimitar-babbler (*Pomatorhinus hypoleucos*)
Excellent looks at a single of this notorious forest sneak at Mrs Aek's feeders on 6/2. ssp *tickelli*
215. Rufous-fronted Babbler (*Stachydopsis rufufrons*)
Singles at KK 5/2 and 6/2
216. Pin-striped Tit-babbler (*Macronus gularis*)
Common by voice and a few seen at KK 4/2 and 5/2
216. Moustached Babbler (*Malacopteron magnirostre*)
Common by voice at KNCC 7/2 and 8/2
217. Abbott's Babbler (*Malcocinla abbotti*)
As for 216. but 2 seen 8/2
218. Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush (*Garrulax pectoralis*)
Yet another difficult forest skulker seen brilliantly at Mrs Aek's feeders on 6/2. A large flock, often together with 219.
219. Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush (*Garrulax monileger*)
220. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
A single at KK 5/2
221. Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*)
Several at LPB 2/2 and 3/2
222. Richard's Pipit (*Antyhus richardi*)
At least one at LPB 3/2
223. Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*)
Common in the lowlands
224. Brown-throated Sunbird (*Anthreptes malacensis*)
Along with 225 the common Sunbird in the lowlands
225. Olive-backed Sunbird (*Cinnyris jugularis*)
226. Ruby-cheeked Sunbird (*Cjalcoparia singalensis*)
A pair at KK 5/2
227. Purple-throated Sunbird (*Nectarinia sperata*)
One at the Morakot Resort 7/2
228. Streaked Spiderhunter (*Araschnothera magna*)
Common along the ridge at KK 4/2
229. Little Spiderhunter (*Araschnothera longistrostris*)
Heard several times in the lower areas of KK
230. Thick-billed Spiderhunter (*Araschnothera crassirostris*)
One (MB) at the Morakot Resort 8/2
231. Yellow-vented Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum chrysorheum*)
A pair giving repeated views from the restaurant at KK on 4/2
232. Orange-bellied Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum trigonostigma*)
A pair frequenting the Morakot Resort gardens 7/2 and 8/2
233. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum cruentatum*)
Singles KK gate 3/2 and KNCC 7/2
234. White-vented Myna (*Acridotheres grandis*)
Abundant in the lowlands
235. Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
Ditto

236. Asian Pied Starling (*Sturnus contra*)
Numerous PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2 and Krabi 9/2
237. White-shouldered Starling (*Sturnus sinensis*)
A flock of 30 or so going to roost at the King's Project LPB on 2/2
238. House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
This species has at last "invaded" Bangkok. A pair at our breakfast stop near PT on 2/2
239. Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)
Still the dominant "House" Sparrow in this part of the world
240. Plain-backed Sparrow (*Passer flaveolus*)
A few of this attractive Sparrow at PT and LPB 2/2 and 3/2

Mammals

1. Black Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*)
Several of this cat sized rodent seen at KK 4/2 and 5/2
2. Pallas's Squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*)
A couple at KK on 5/2
3. Western Striped Squirrel (*Tamiops mccllellandii*)
Regularly encountered at KK 4/2, 5/2 and 6/2
4. Indochinese Ground Squirrel (*Menetes berdmorei*)
One seen well at Mrs Aek's feeders 6/2
5. Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)
Amazing to see one in daylight (in an Asian rainforest to boot) but even more amazing that most of us managed to miss it by the roadside at KK on 4/2. Only MB and our guide saw it disappear over the verge
6. Smooth Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*)
A nice, relatively unconcerned pair from our Krabi boat ride on 9/2
7. Banded Leaf Monkey (*Presbytes femoralis*)
A group near the restaurant at KK on 4/2
8. Dusky Leaf Monkey (*Trachypithecus obscurus*)
This attractive "non Dusky" primate was common in the lower reaches of KK 4/2 and 5/2
9. Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*)
Several near PT 2/2 and at Krabi 9/2
10. White-handed Gibbon (*Hylobates lar*)
Commonly heard at KK and a nice troupe of around 10 animals seen well on 5/2
11. Indian Muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjac*)
One crossing the road at KNCC on 7/2

LAOS POST TOUR EXTENSION

To seek the world's most bizarre Bulbul

Friday 24 – Sunday 26 February 2012

Participants

Hugh Buck (HB), Robin Atherton (RA), Merilyn Browne (MB)

Agent in Laos

Green Discovery, Vientiane

This short post tour extension (after Burma) was set up single mindedly to seek out the newly discovered Bare-faced Bulbul and other limestone specials of southern Laos. It proved very successful with even a bit of culture thrown in on our final morning

Friday 24 February

Our Lao Airlines flight from Bangkok has us safely at Vientiane (V) by mid morning and Ola of Green Discovery is there to meet us. Our comfortable enough mini bus takes us through Vientiane and along the hot lowlands of the Mekong River for our 1st Lao lunch and then onwards to the strange, eroded limestone bluffs of the Nam Kading National Park (NK). The transition is sudden and extraordinary and we enjoy the panorama of these “badlands” from the pass and viewpoint near our destination of Na Hin. A km or so over the pass the first bluffs come close to the road and here we commence our search in the relative cool of the evening. Success is not long in coming with the first Bulbul in a roadside tree showing off his bald face and punk hairdo. He is joined by several others as they appear to go to roost on the cliffs themselves. The light is poor however and against us so we will return tomorrow morning. The Saynamhai Resort at Na Hin is attractive enough but a loud Lao wedding reverberates until after midnight!

Saturday 25 February

Breakfast at 0600 and, with the sun behind us, we enjoy better scope views of several Bulbuls even if they never come close enough for a really good photographic opportunity. But they are noisy and conspicuous and the mystery remains as to why they remained undiscovered for so long. A pair of Green-eared Barbets, a noisy and visible Long-tailed Broadbill, a nice confiding pair of Sooty Babblers and what is presumably a Limestone Warbler in a small mixed flock make up a good return for our 3 morning hours here. Perhaps best of all is a trio of the rare white-faced Laotian Leaf Monkey atop the roadside pinnacles who effectively steal the show.

After a good Lao lunch we are back in a hot Vientiane and the quirky (and Australian run) Beau Rivage Hotel by mid afternoon. The mighty Mekong outside is largely dry, a power cut until almost dark cuts into our rest time and dinner at the hotel restaurant is something short of memorable. We sleep well enough though without any wedding noises!

Sunday 26 February

The differing pagodas of Vat Sisaket and Vat Prakeo, the impressive but slightly run down stupas of That Luang and the “Arc de Triomphe” Patuxay Monument take up our morning before a last lunch and Thai International back to Bangkok with all objectives achieved

Birds

1. Eastern Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus coromandus*)
2. Red-collared Dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)
3. Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia striata*)
4. Green-billed Malkoha (*Rhopodytes tristis*)
One at NK 25/2
5. Asian Barred Owlet (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)
Heard at Syanamhai 253/2
6. Asian Palm Swift (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*)
7. House Swift (*Apus nipalensis*)
8. Green-eared Barbet (*Megalaima faiostricta*)
A nice pair at NK 25/2
9. Red-vented Barbet (*Megalaima lagrandieri*)
The loud “hoops” of this Indochinese endemic were heard at NK in the early morning of 25/2 but the bird could not be located
10. Long-tailed Broadbill (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*)
A noisy individual located in the morning at NK on 25/2
11. Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus speciosus*)
12. Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike (*Hemipus picatus*)
13. Pied Fantail (*Rhipidura javanica*)
14. Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)
15. Oriental Magpie-robin (*Copsychus saularis*)
16. Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)
17. Eastern Jungle Crow (*Corvus levaillantii*)
18. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
19. Black-crested Bulbul (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*)
20. Stripe-throated Bulbul (*Pycnonotus finlaysoni*)
2 at NK 25/2
21. Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus goiavier*)
22. Streak-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus blanfordi*)
23. **Bare-faced Bulbul (*Pycnonotus hualon*)**
What a weird face and hair do combination! At least 6 going to roost at NK 24/2 and a further dozen or so next day. Only finally described in 2008, this bird seems totally endemic to the limestone “karst” country of south and east Laos although it probably occurs in similar habitats in extreme western Vietnam. Hualon is a Lao word meaning “bald-headed” and the bird’s largely bare limestone habitat is often referred to in Lao as “phou hualon”
24. Dark-necked Tailorbird (*Orthotomus atrogularis*)
25. Common Tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

26. **Limestone Warbler (*Phylloscopus calciatilis*)**
Now split from Sulphur-breasted Warbler (*P. ricketii*) and endemic to limestone karst in Indochina. One probable candidate in a small flock of (unidentified) Warblers at NK on 25/2
27. Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)
28. Rufescent Prinia (*Prinia rufescens*)
A bird photographed by MB from our hotel in V on 26/2
29. Oriental White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosus*)
30. Pin-striped Tit-babbler (*Macronus gularis*)
31. **Sooty Babbler (*Stachyris herberti*)**
A cooperative pair at NK on 25/2. Again a limestone specialist, for a long time thought to be endemic to Laos but now well known from western Vietnam as well
32. Buff-breasted Babbler (*Pellorneum tickelli*)
One noisy individual by the roadside at NK on 25/2 eluded most people
33. White-browed Laughingthrush (*Garrulax sannio*)
Around our hotel in Vientiane
34. Black-throated Laughingthrush (*Dryonastes chinensis*)
Well its identity is in no doubt but the scrubby hotel garden of the Beau Rivage seems an unlikely habitat and its habit of coming onto bedroom verandas perhaps casts some doubts on its origin! Anyway a single bird on 25/2 and 26/2
35. Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*)
36. Plain Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum concolor*)
Several at NK 24/2 and 25/2
37. White-vented Myna (*Acridotheres grandis*)
38. Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
39. Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)
40. Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)
Including many trapped ones offered for sale at That Luang

Mammals

1. **Laotian Leaf Monkey (*Trachypithecus laotum*)**
A superb trio on the limestone pinnacles at NK morning of 25/2. One more endangered primate of Indochina, in this case solidly endemic to the limestone country of central and south Laos

Hugh Buck

**Buckbird Journeys Ltd
Scaurbank
Keir
Thornhill
Dumfriesshire DG3 4DD
Scotland**

Tel: 44 1848 330093

E mail: bigbuck44@btinternet.com