



# Best of Northern & Southern Vietnam Birding

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



Bar-bellied Pitta

Suppalak Klabdee

## **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 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 in 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 Silver Pheasant, Pied Falconet, Bar-bellied, Blue-rumped and Eared Pittas, Silver-breasted Broadbill, White-winged Magpie, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava and Limestone Wren-babbler. Overnight at Cuc Phuong National Park.

## **Day 4: Cuc Phuong National Park to Tam Dao**

Leave Cuc Phuong after breakfast for the journey back to Hanoi 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 on to Hanoi and Tam Dao, a hill resort 60 km by road from 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 such as the attractive Chestnut Bulbul and Grey Laughingthrush. Overnight at Tam Dao.

## **Days 5 & 6: Tam Dao**

Two full days to explore the montane evergreen, bamboo and pine forests around Tam Dao town. Resident species to look out for here include Red-billed Blue Magpie, Grey Treepie, Coral-billed and Streak-breasted Scimitar-babblers, Rufous-headed and Short-tailed Parrotbills and Collared

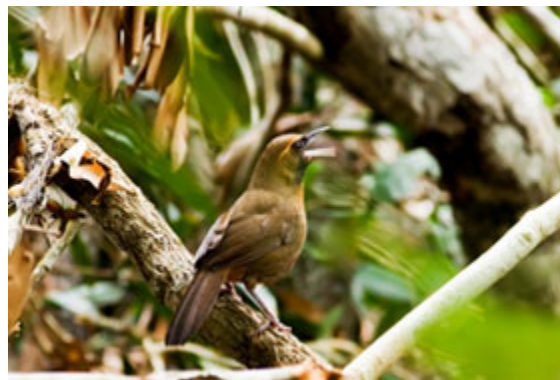
Babbler. Winter visitors that may turn up between November and March include White's, Grey-backed, Japanese, Eyebrowed and Black-breasted Thrushes, as well as Fujian Niltava. Overnight at Tam Dao.

#### **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 to catch the midday flight to Dalat. Arrive at Dalat in the early afternoon and transfer to the hotel. Later in the afternoon make the first of several visits to the Ta Nung Valley, a small but bird-filled area of remnant evergreen forest 10 km from Dalat. This is the most accessible site for the rare and endemic Grey-crowned Crocias and Orange-breasted Laughingthrush. In addition the very distinct local subspecies of Blue-winged Siva, Black-headed Sibia and Black-throated Sunbird are common here. Overnight at Dalat.

#### **Days 8, 9 & 10: Dalat**

There are several other excellent birding sites around Dalat. At Mount Lang Bian, a 2,169 m high peak 20 minutes from Dalat, Hume's Treecreeper, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Grey-crowned Tit, Vietnamese Cutia and Black-crowned Fulvetta can be found in the remaining evergreen forest below the summit. The most sought-after species here however is the beautiful and skulking endemic Collared Laughingthrush. Ho Tuyen Lam, a man-made lake just out of town, is a great place to look for some of the local pine specialists such as Indochinese Cuckooshrike, Slender-billed Oriole, Burmese Shrike, Red Crossbill and Vietnamese Greenfinch. Overnight at Dalat.



Orange-breasted Laughingthrush

#### **Day 11: Dalat to Di Linh**

Leave Dalat after a final morning of birding and head to a forested mountain pass near to the town of Di Linh a two-hour drive from Dalat. The pass, known as Deo Suoi Lanh, is an excellent site to look for several Dalat Plateau specialities including Black-hooded, White-cheeked and 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 12: Di Linh to Cat Tien National Park**

An early morning visit to Deo Suoi Lanh to look for other exciting possibilities such as Blue Pitta, Indochinese Green Magpie, Spotted Forktail and Green Cochoa before continuing along Highway 20 towards 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 very elusive Orange-necked Partridge while the mammal list includes Leopard Cat, Lesser Mousedeer, Sambar, Gaur and two endangered primates, Black-shanked Douc Langur and Buff-cheeked Gibbon. Overnight at Cat Tien National Park.



Siamese Fireback

**Days 13, 14 & 15: Cat Tien National Park**

Three days 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 jeeps are used. The 5 km walk through semi-evergreen forest to Crocodile Lake is a great place to look for the near-endemic Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Blue-rumped and Bar-bellied Pittas while Siamese Fireback can often be seen on an early morning drive through the park. 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 and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, 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 back to Ho Chi Minh City and transferring to Tan Son Nhat International Airport for departure flight.