



# CENTRAL THAILAND TOUR REPORT

9<sup>th</sup> Jan to 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Either for rarity value, excellent views or simply a group favourite.

- Bar-backed Partridge
- Scaly-breasted Partridge
- Siamese Fireback
- Grey Peacock-Pheasant
- Black-and-buff Woodpecker
- Wreathed Hornbill
- Southern Brown Hornbill
- Red-headed Trogon
- Banded Kingfisher
- Brown-backed Needletail
- Great Eared Nightjar
- Watercock
- Ruddy-breasted Crake
- Asian Dowitcher
- Nordmann's Greenshank
- Spoon-billed Sandpiper
- White-faced Plover
- Black-thighed Falconet
- Chinese Egret
- Blue Pitta
- Black-and-red Broadbill
- Long-tailed Broadbill
- Black-and-yellow Broadbill
- Ratchet-tailed Treepie
- White-throated Rock-thrush
- Orange-headed Thrush
- Naumann's Thrush
- Mugimaki Flycatcher
- Siberian Rubythroat
- Siberian Blue Robin
- Golden-crested Myna
- Thick-billed Warbler
- Pale-legged Leaf-warbler
- Sulphur-breasted Warbler
- Black-throated Laughingthrush
- Limestone Wren-babbler
- Blyth's Shrike-babbler
- Collared Babbler
- Van Hasselt's Sunbird
- Yellow-eared Spiderhunter
- Asian Golden Weaver
- Malayan Porcupine
- White-handed Gibbon
- Lesser Mouse Deer
- Gaur
- Leopard

## SUMMARY:

Central Thailand is the perfect destination for a short winter break, as it is home to a wide selection of mouth-watering Asian species and some of the rarest birds in the world. Each year our Thailand tours seem to exceed expectations and the first of two central tours we ran this year even had the added bonus of finding only the second record of Naumann's Thrush for this amazing country. Beginning amidst the forested hills of Khao Yai we got off to a great start with several Siamese Firebacks patrolling the back roads and a stunning Blue Pitta. The wader-fest at Petchaburi is always mind-blowing to the first-time visitor and a fine trio of Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Nordmann's Greenshank and Asiatic Dowitcher were duly logged. Kaeng Krachen is always kept until the end as there is just so much to see and we were lucky to watch a superb Grey Peacock-pheasant patrolling along the road, and also had a surprising sighting of Gaur and a Black Leopard. As usual an exceptional afternoon staking out a small drinking pool from a hide provided extremely close views of numerous birds. By the end of the tour we had seen 302 species in only 8 days birding.

## Days 1 - 2 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> January

Following a direct overnight flight we touched down in Bangkok around 3.15pm and after the usual formalities of immigration and baggage reclaim, took a taxi to the more than adequate Amari Don Muang Hotel located in the north-east of this huge city. So Phil, Mike and myself were eager to see a few birds, despite there being just half an hour of daylight left once we had finally checked into the hotel. So a quick walk around the rear of the buildings led us to a bridge over a canal where we notched up **Streak-eared Bulbul**, **Pied Fantail**, **Coppersmith Barbet**, **Olive-backed Sunbird**, **Oriental Magpie-robin**, **Zebra Dove** and a flyby **Java Sparrow**. All common species, apart from the sparrow, but it was nice to have a relaxing walk and get a few lifers before the light faded. The hotel restaurant was closed so we had to make do with spare ribs and pasta in the bar tonight – and nice cold beer as well.

## Day 3 Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January

It's great to be back in Thailand once again and having met up with Nigel, Daryl, Jeff & Heather late last night we were all assembled at 5.30am and ready for the drive towards Khao Yai with our excellent guide, Nick Upton. We had a lovely clear blue sky to see us on our way and after an hour and a half pulled in to the famous site of Wat Praphuttahaht Noi, home of **Limestone Wren-babbler**. It is a nice little spot with a Buddhist temple surrounded by tall limestone crags and within a matter of just a few minutes we were watching a pair of wren-babblers clambering around the boulders at the base of the cliffs. These disappeared after a minute or so, but we then discovered another pair which were on view for around ten minutes. Superb! Other birds here are not numerous but we took our time and had nice views of a **Peregrine** carrying some prey, **Coppersmith Barbet**, **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**, both **Asian Brown** and **Taiga Flycatchers**, a female **Black-naped Monarch**, **Black-naped Oriole**, **Olive-backed Sunbird**, **Yellow-browed Warbler**, **Long-tailed Macaque**, **Variable Squirrel**, and just before we left a huge **Lineated Barbet** flew in to a tall tree right next to us.



Mugimaki Flycatcher at Khao Yai

So leaving here we drove on for another couple of hours to Khao Yai, seeing a group of **Red-breasted Parakeets** along the way, plus a fine male **Plain-backed Sparrow** near the entrance gate. Once inside the park we headed straight to a stake-out which was home to a stunning **White-throated Rock-thrush** and male **Mugimaki Flycatcher**. Both of these birds were extremely confiding and waiting for us to put some food down and flew in right beside us as soon as we arrived. There was also a bold **White-rumped Shama** hopping around the leaf litter right in front of us as well. A short walk from here only gave us **Black-crested Bulbul** and **White-bellied Erpornis** so we decided to head to the Park HQ for lunch. Food options are never great here and I think we had the best that was on offer!

Afterwards we drove deeper into the park, seeing **Bright-headed Cisticola** and a bonus find in a **Rufescent Prinia** along the way (a new bird for this tour), and walked along the road for a couple of hours. A **Grey-backed Shrike** was scoped before we found a large fruiting tree where a **Moustached Barbet** looked nice in the scope, whilst a **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker** was also seen and nearby we had perched views of **Mountain Imperial-pigeon** - a nice bonus. Next up, an **Orange-breasted Trogon** flew over Nigel and Jeff, whilst a little further along we had both **Puff-throated** and **Grey-eyed Bulbuls**, **Dark-necked Tailorbird**, **Thick-billed**, **Fire-breasted** and **Yellow-vented Flowerpeckers**, **Brown-rumped Minivet**, brief **Black-throated Sunbird** and a **Stripe-throated Bulbul**. Scope views of a female **Wreathed Hornbill** were also much appreciated by everyone.

Driving back we stopped for another walk and scored with two males and a female **Siamese Fireback** feeding beside the road. Then a cracking male **Red-headed Trogon** put in an appearance, followed by a reasonably close **Collared Owlet**, several **White-crested Laughingthrushes** and a brief **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush**. We then spent the last hour of daylight beside a large pool waiting for needletails to come down to drink – which they didn't, so had to console ourselves with plenty of **Asian Palm Swifts** and a few **Himalayan Swiftlets**. As dusk settled several **Great Eared-Nightjars** hawked for insects around us. They are simply stunning birds, looking for all the world like a harrier and boy did they give good close views. It was also nice to see **Large-tailed Nightjar** here, and a **Grey Nightjar** was a huge bonus as well.

## Day 4 Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January

Drove back into Khao Yai at 6am and went right the way across the park and headed up to the Army checkpoint, seeing an **Orange-headed Thrush** in the road before stopping at the top of Radar Road. We were almost the first people here and before we'd even finished parking saw a couple of **Black-throated Laughingthrushes** feeding on the road right in front of one of the Thai sentries! So we quickly hopped out and over the course of a good half an hour thoroughly enjoyed outstanding views of these usually secretive birds. There was a distinct chill in the air this morning but the constant appearance of new



**Black-throated Laughingthrush at Khao Yai**

birds meant we were rather distracted until the sun appeared over the hill. Next up was a beautiful **Common Green Magpie**, followed by perched views of **Barred Cuckoo-Dove**, **Black-throated Sunbird**, a close **Grey-backed Shrike** and stunning views of two **Radde's Warblers**.

Leaving here we drove back downhill and walked for a few hours along the road, which was pretty quiet to be honest despite calling in a pair of **Banded Broadbills** right next to us. They are such stunners and continuing the theme of this tour, we spent quite a while admiring their intricate plumage and simply enjoying the bird. Shortly after a **Blue Pitta** called and amazingly everyone

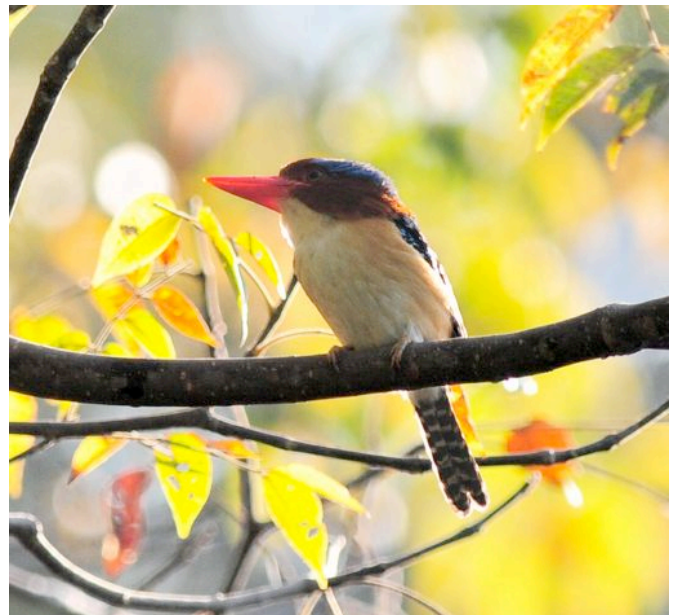
had nailed the beauty within a couple of minutes before it melted away again into the forest. Sounds easy doesn't it? Well we got lucky as the bird remained motionless in one spot for a couple of minutes – and that doesn't happen too often! I was also pleased to see a **Claudia's Warbler** clambering around a dense tangle by the road – this is one of a number of tricky *phylloscopus* warblers to be found in Thailand. Following this we walked a trail for half an hour and got lucky with a pair of **Black-and-buff Woodpeckers** perched overhead.

After lunch we drove to one of the campsites which was now empty and scoped a **Blue-eared Barbet** high up in a tree. There was also **Little Spiderhunter**, an **Arctic Warbler**, **Two-barred Warbler** and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** present, along with **Taiga Flycatcher**, **Fire-breasted**, **Thick-billed** and **Yellow-vented Flowerpeckers**. It was then that we got some news of a **Buffy Fish-owl** being seen earlier in the day and dashed to the area where the bird had been but there was nothing there. But we did get views of **Striated Heron** and **Oriental Pied Hornbill**. All rather frustrating really, so we returned to the campsite and found a small fruiting tree with a few **Thick-billed Green-pigeons** and **Blue-eared Barbets** in it. We had stunning views once again and I cannot remember being this close to these two species before. Then we spent the last hour and a half staking out the back of the restaurant in a half-hearted hope of seeing a ground-cuckoo which had allegedly been seen a week ago there. An **Orange-headed Thrush** was very nice, as was a male **Red Junglefowl**, and we also saw **Blue Whistling-thrush**, **Pale-legged Leaf-warbler** and **Siberian Blue Robin**. Heather also spotted a **Greater Flameback** in a large tree here as well.

At the end of the day, as we were driving to the hotel, Nick spotted 3 **Brown-backed Needletails** circling over one of the lakes and we watched them for several minutes as they came down to drink.

## Day 5 Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January

Back into Khao Yai for a few hours this morning and after a picnic breakfast in one of the campgrounds (and guarding our food against a gang of **Pig-tailed Macaques** intent on mugging us) we walked along the road and into a beautiful valley. Well, we finally found some woodpeckers (where have they been..?) with **Heart-spotted Woodpecker**, **Lesser Yellownape** and a fine **Laced Woodpecker** showing well. Just a shame a **Greater Yellownape** didn't play ball. Undoubtedly bird of the morning was the stunning male **Banded Kingfisher** sitting over the road in the morning sunshine, totally oblivious to our presence. Things were going very well so far, with **Hainan Blue** and **Hill Blue Flycatchers** being seen, along with **Crested Goshawk**, **Crested Serpent-Eagle**, **Pin-striped Tit-babblers**, **Radde's Warbler** and **Green-billed Malkoha** also showing well. Leaving here we headed out of the park, stopping at our usual site to connect with **Van Hasselt's** and **Crimson Sunbirds** easily, and there was also our first **Black-capped Kingfisher** and a **Striated Heron** as well.



This Banded Kingfisher showed well at Khao Yai

We then set out on the long drive to Petchaburi, which took 5 hours with a lunch stop and spent the last couple of hours in the middle of the patchwork of drainage channels, rice-fields and marshes. We thoroughly enjoyed being out in this open country and at the first lake had 30+ **Grey-headed Lapwings**, **Purple Heron**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Marsh Sandpiper** and lots of other common species. Across the road Phil found a **Yellow Bittern**, whilst a tree full of **Pink-necked Green-pigeons** looked really nice in the lovely afternoon sunshine. We particularly liked the male **Siberian Rubythroat** that came right out into an opening in the vegetation in front of us, and then we got really stuck into lots of birds that favour this open habitat. We saw **Cotton Pygmy-Goose**, both **Bronze-winged** and **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas**, **Brahminy** and **Black-eared Kites**, **Stork-billed Kingfisher**, **Blue-throated** and **Little Green Bee-eaters**, **Germain's Swiftlet**, **Yellow-bellied Prinia**, **Oriental Reed** and **Black-browed Reed Warblers**, **Baya Weaver** and **Asian Pied Starling**. This is a simply wonderful area and time always passes way too quickly but with the sun setting we drove a short way to our hotel where we stayed for the next 2 nights.



Long-toed Stint at Laem Pak Bia

## Day 6 Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January

A brisk wind affected our birding at Pak Thale this morning and resulted in all of the waders being extremely 'flighty' and we spent a frustrating couple of hours chasing them as they settled briefly at various salt pans in the vicinity. We had an initially brief sighting of a **Spoon-billed Sandpiper** that landed right in front of us for mere seconds and only two of us managed to see that one. A couple of hours later after yomping around the area, Nigel found a different spoonie that fortunately remained on view amongst a huge congregation of other waders for quite a while – albeit distantly. However, everyone was extremely happy to get to grips with this much-wanted species. During our search we had seen a number of other good waders, such as **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Long-toed Stint**, many **Broad-billed Sandpipers**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, 30+ **Terek Sandpipers**, loads of **Red-necked Stints** and others, but we'd



A nice group of shorebirds - Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper & Broad-billed Sandpiper

see them all so much better and closer later in the day. Next up was a short drive along the road, and we had our second big target species of the day in the shape of 10 **Nordmann's Greenshanks** at another salt pan. They were also distant and we had to walk out along a narrow bund to get better views. We did achieve the slightly better views we wanted, and also managed to see a **Heuglin's Gull** as well that was loafing with a flock of **Brown-headed Gulls** and **Caspian Terns**.

We were booked in for lunch at Mr Daeng's house along the mangrove creek (sounds good right?) before hopping onto a couple of his small boats and taking a rather choppy ride out to the nearby sandspit. Once again the wind had affected things here and the **White-faced Plover** we located on another sandy area across a narrow channel cut off by the sea – but in the scope we could make out all of the salient features. This is currently 'lumped' in Kentish Plover but in my opinion (for what it's worth) shouldn't be as it is structurally different, is very distinctive and has certain behavioural traits making it a very different creature to a Kentish Plover. Apparently the DNA research and subsequent 'lumping' is based on one single feather sample...? That can't be right, can it? Anyway I digress, and there was also a few **Malaysian Plovers** present, a **Chinese Egret**, **Pacific Reef Egret**, plus 4 **Great Black-headed Gulls**, **Gull-billed Tern**, both **Great** and **Lesser Crested Terns**, and some other common stuff.

So following some very welcome cold drinks we drove around some more salt pans in search of dowitchers, but we got held up looking at **Richard's** and **Paddyfield Pipits** and plenty of very close waders along the way, including a few **Greater Sandplovers** amongst loads of **Lesser Sandplovers**, and a few nice **Temminck's Stints**. Eventually we closed in on a flock of **Eastern Black-tailed Godwits** (a dodgy split if ever there was one) and ended up finding at least 10 **Asiatic**

**Dowitchers**. What a great bird and we spent ages watching them, with one individual getting closer and closer to us. Using the minivan as a hide is brilliant here, as you just wouldn't get such close views as we were privileged to get if you were walking. Also in the area was a number of close **Marsh Sandpipers**, and further on 52 **Red-necked Phalaropes** was quite a sighting.



Asiatic Dowitcher, Eastern Black-tailed Godwit & Marsh Sandpiper

Leaving here we went to the Royal Project and drove around the lagoons where a number of **White-winged Terns** were seen amongst the more numerous **Whiskered Terns**. We also had both **Common** and **Pintail Snipes**, a **Slaty-breasted Rail** and a brief **Ruddy-breasted Crake** for some of us. As dusk descended, thousands of **Lyle's Flying Foxes** streamed overhead and we also spotlighted an **Indian Nightjar**. As we did this a female **Greater**

**Painted Snipe** flew into the torch beam and landed in front of us – and that has never happened before!

## Day 7 Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January

Spent a couple of hours looking for **Black-headed Woodpeckers** unsuccessfully this morning at a site that it seems has become too well known, with just too many people blasting the call out and spoiling it for everyone else! A few other nice birds were around such as **Red-breasted Parakeets**, lots of **Asian Barred** and **Spotted Owlets**, **Purple Sunbird** and **Rufous Treepie**. So we left here and drove to a nice lodge close to the entrance of Kaeng Krachen National Park where we had lunch before driving the short distance to a very special site.



Bar-backed Partridge at Kaeng Krachen

I like the fact that we can visit a small photo hide situated overlooking a little pond in the middle of some dry forest and actually get to watch birds coming down to drink and bathe. And the emphasis is on watching birds, rather than racing around trying to build your list up. In fact, you get to see some of the forests shyer inhabitants and some species that you just don't see usually and this afternoon's 5 hour vigil again proved that point. We had amazingly good and close views of everything and everyone felt it was a privilege to be able to witness such a

spectacle. We began with a pair of **White-rumped Shamans** that loitered the whole afternoon, and one of them actually had a penchant for coming inside the hide! A brief **White-bellied Erpornis** appeared, but was totally overshadowed by the appearance of 6 **Bar-backed Partridges** that walked in and began to disrupt the leaf litter in a curious feeding motion. In fact they reappeared a couple of times this afternoon. A couple of **Pale-legged Leaf-warblers** were more or less on constant view as well, whilst **Chinese Blue Flycatcher**, **Black-naped Monarch** and **Tickell's Blue Flycatchers** only appeared a few times. There were just a few lulls in proceedings, but we never really had to wait too long before species such as **Brown-cheeked Fulvetta**, **Puff-throated Babbler**, **Greater** and **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes** and towards the end of the day, an **Abbott's Babbler** flew in to entertain us. Other birds present from time to time included **Siberian Blue Robin**, both **Stripe-throated** and **Streak-eared Bulbuls** and **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** to add to the fun. Non avian interest was provided by **Indo-Chinese Ground Squirrel**, **Grey-bellied Squirrel** and 2 **Lesser Mouse Deer**. The final icing on the cake was a group of 3 superb **Scaly-breasted Partridges** and was a species we didn't really expect as it has been seen only intermittently here the past month or so. And that was our lot and we retired to the lodge and some of the best food of the tour so far.

## Day 8 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January

A full day in the national park began quite early and the sun hadn't yet risen over the surrounding hills as we drove along the dirt road towards Bang Kram Campsite. With the recent freakily cold weather it took a while for anything to happen, but when it did I don't think anybody could have foreseen us finding such a big bird for Thailand..... It all started innocuously enough when Phil mentioned he had a bird feeding in a little grassy area at the end of the track we were walking along. On raising the binoculars, we could see it was a



The second ever Naumann's Thrush for Thailand

thrush and expected it to be an **Eye-browed Thrush** which it initially looked like as it was back on. Then it turned to reveal a startling face pattern and mottled rufous underparts which took a few seconds to compute but then the gears started working and it clicked – **Naumann's Thrush**...!!! A stunningly rare bird for Thailand and apparently only the second sighting ever. Wow! We watched it for a while before it flew off for some reason and then birded another open area close by, when all of a sudden the thrush flew into the treetops right next to us before flying down in front of us, and that's where I managed to get these photos.... There was also a few **Eye-browed Thrushes** flying around as well, but these never settled at all.

Well, after that everything was a little bit of a let down really and it was rather quiet but we had a few little flocks with common birds in, plus our first **Sultan Tits**, **Ochraceous** and **Black-headed Bulbuls**, **Common** and **Greater Flamebacks**, **Brown-backed Needletail**, **Asian House Martin**, **Blue-winged Leafbird**, **Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker**, and a few other common species.

We then birded the area between the streams and scoped a **Tickell's Brown Hornbill** and a **Green-eared Barbet** at the top of a large tree. A reasonably close **Black-and-yellow Broadbill** was a nice find as well and we were able to watch it for several minutes, followed shortly after by **Brown-rumped Minivet**, **Large Woodshrike**, and a **Hainan Blue Flycatcher**.

After lunch we drove up the hill and luck was definitely on our side as a **Grey Peacock-pheasant** scuttled across the road in front of us. So we waited in the minibus for several minutes and played the call a few times and amazingly the bird came back on to the road and proceeded to walk sedately across it once again. Wow again! There were also half a dozen **Common Emerald Doves** on the drive up as well. At the top we had a fine time with **Everett's White-eye**, several **Streaked Spiderhunters**, **Lucionensis Brown Shrike**, **Flavescent** and **Mountain Bulbuls**, **Blyth's Shrike-babbler**, **Collared Owlet**, **Blue-throated** and **Great Barbets**, **White-browed Scimitar-babbler**, **Yellow-eared Spiderhunter**, and a **Black-throated Sunbird**. Coming back down the hill a short way we managed to connect with **Collared Babbler** and an obliging **Alstrom's Warbler**. I think the cold beer tasted just that little bit better tonight than usual!



## Day 9 Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January

Wasn't sure what to expect from today but as it turned out, we did very well and managed to fill quite a few holes in our list. A slightly later start was much appreciated by everyone and meant we got to our first stop at just the right time. Patrolling the road and scanning from a decent viewpoint resulted in a cracking **Black-thighed Falconet**, a smart **Besra**, two fly pasts from a **Merlin** (a scarce Thai bird), a pair of **Great Hornbills**, 3 **Wreathed Hornbills**, **Wedge-tailed Green-pigeon**, **Thick-billed Warbler**, **Ruby-cheeked Sunbird** and the much-wanted **Golden-crested Myna**.

Driving towards the campsite a thrush flew up from the side of the road, so we killed the engine and waited. Nothing was happening so a random play from the ipod got a response (finally) from a **Black-and-red Broadbill** and we ended up seeing 6 of these brightly coloured beauties. Moving on to the streams and 'Little Nick' quickly found us an **Orange-breasted Trogon**, with an **Asian Paradise-flycatcher** nearby. As the day warmed up, bird activity decreased but we still saw several **Sultan Tits**, **Grey-capped Woodpecker** and **Greater Flameback**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**, **Rufous-fronted Babbler**, and a few **Sulphur-breasted Warblers**.



Black-and-red Broadbill at Kaeng Krachen

After lunch we headed back up the hill, seeing a perched **Japanese Sparrowhawk** on the way, and spent a couple of hours around the summit but didn't see anything new. It is a little frustrating to say the least that you cannot start driving back downhill until 4pm and we really could have done with some extra time at a slightly lower elevation. However, as soon as we arrived we could hear the distinctive call of a **Long-tailed Broadbill** from the hillside above us. Try as we might we couldn't entice these much-wanted birds to come into view, but did find a couple a little later as we walked lower. A large mixed-species flock was just around the corner and it was nice to experience such a big group of birds including our first **Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo**. But we couldn't locate the right flock which would hold the key species here - **Ratchet-tailed Treepie**. But a flyover **Rufous-bellied Eagle** was a welcome addition to our lists. So we walked back up to the minibus and had what we thought was our last new bird here, **Ashy Bulbul**. Driving down I was a bit dejected, but just then Nick slammed on the breaks and we could hear some **Black-throated Laughingthrushes**, so jumped out and quickly found a **Ratchet-tailed Treepie** feeding above us. Everyone was thoroughly elated with this as it is such a rare bird and one we would have hated to miss. It was an incredibly jovial ride back down the bumpy road, and to cap things off Heather and I had a brief glimpse of a black **Leopard** disappearing into the undergrowth and a herd of **Gaur** were also seen beside one of the small ponds.

## Day 10 Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January

So we left the lodge early doors and spent the rest of the day around Petchaburi. Our first port of call was an open area of dry fields, marsh and reeds where we found numerous **Ruddy-**

**breasted Crakes**, along with a couple of **Eurasian Wrynecks**, 8 **Greater Painted Snipe**, **Black-browed Reed-warbler** and a brief **Watercock**. Walking along the road to another open area, we found a **Paddyfield Pipit** and then had superb views of an **Indochinese Bushlark** that actually landed about an inch from my speaker that was placed on the ground a few metres in front of us! Leaving here, the lure of Laem Pak Bia was too much and we decided to march out into the salt pans to try and find a **Far Eastern Curlew** amongst the several hundred **Eurasian Curlews** present. This we did and managed to find a single bird which we saw in flight initially before scoping it when the flock settled down. There was also **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Chinese Egret**, and plenty of previously seen waders. Amongst some mangroves we nailed **Golden-bellied Gerygone** and **Mangrove Whistler**, plus I counted 39 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** along the shoreline. And boy was it rough out in the Gulf of Thailand as a strong easterly wind was whipping the waves into a frenzy and made our task very difficult today. From here we checked out a place for **Black-faced Spoonbill** without any joy, but did find **Painted Storks** and **Black-headed Ibis** before having lunch in a nearby restaurant.

The afternoon was spent driving around the ricefields in search of weavers and Nick knew a good place where we saw **Baya** and, more importantly, **Asiatic Golden Weaver** very well. A fine **Eastern Imperial Eagle** and a female **Eastern Marsh Harrier** were next up as we drove along a side road. Leaving here, a different set of fields was alive with birds and we saw a couple of **Greater Spotted Eagles**, an **Osprey**, male **Eastern Marsh Harrier**, lots of **Red-throated Pipits** and a **Bluethroat**.

So that was our birding done and we had seen 302 species this week, including many of the most-wanted birds during a central Thailand tour. But not only that, it had been a rather jovial affair and I have to thank our lovely group for making it such a fun tour. And without the guidance of Nick Upton we would not have seen so many superb birds and a special thanks to him for looking after us so well and showing us the birds of his adopted homeland.

By 3pm it was time to leave and head back to Bangkok, where we said our goodbyes to Jeff, Heather and Phil who had all been excellent company and meet 3 new members of our team to head into the northern mountains tomorrow.



Great views of Grey Peacock-Pheasant at Kaeng Krachen on this tour.