

VIETNAM 2023

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Well.....I would be less than honest if I didn't say that this was one of the more difficult trips I've done over the years. Between the long drives, hard beds, rain and mud, heat and humidity, strenuous hikes and secretive birds it's a wonder there was anyone still standing at the finish. Oh....I almost forgot to mention the leeches, which I would like to forget, but they are and will forever remain etched in my psyche. Given all of that, it's perfectly understandable that everyone had their moments of emotional and temperamental weakness during our 3 weeks together. I think I probably had more of those than anyone else, but after all is said and done I have to say that it really was an amazing trip to a beautiful country filled with lovely people, excellent food and lots and lots of good birds. Sometimes our most difficult experiences in life are the things we remember most fondly and I will always remember the very best things about Vietnam.....and there were many of those along the way.

We began our adventure in Hanoi with a morning trip to Banana Island where we saw our only Crested Serpent-Eagle, Eurasian Wryneck and Gray-throated Martins, as well as the Chinese race of White Wagtail. In the afternoon Minh led us on a walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter and provided an interesting historical backdrop about the Vietnamese people's long difficult struggle to free themselves from the yolk of foreign colonialism.

The next morning we headed south to Van Long Nature Reserve where we spent several delightful hours being paddled through the wetlands amidst the steep limestone outcrops. The birding here was a bit slow, but we did see many Yellow-bellied Prinias, a few Pheasant-tailed Jacanas and a soaring Mountain Hawk-Eagle before driving farther south for three nights at Cuc Phuong NP.

Unfortunately, the birding at Cuc Phuong was a bit slow. The weather didn't help us as high humidity and damp air is never a recipe for good birding. But despite less than favorable conditions, we worked at it and were able to squeeze out some good birds including Annam Limestone Babbler, Rufous-throated Fulvetta, a migrant Crow-billed Drongo and the yellow-crested form of Sultan Tit. Everyone was able to at least lay eyes on a Bar-bellied Pitta, but the views were less than satisfactory in the gloam engulfing the forest floor. But that disappointment was more than offset by getting really nice views of an Asian Stubtail during one of our walks.

Leaving Cuc Phuong, we drove about 8 hours south to Phong Nha Khe-Ba NP where we spent two nights at a pleasant hotel on the river. Unfortunately we were plagued by rain throughout our day here, but during intermittent breaks we had some surprisingly good birds. First and foremost among these was seeing flock of 15-20 Sooty Babblers feeding on the limestone rock faces very close to the road. This was one of our key targets and it didn't disappoint. We also had Cook's Swift, Indochinese Yuhina and a Besra that briefly perched for everyone to see. But perhaps the most memorable sighting at Phong Nha was a Pied Falconet lunching on an unfortunate Light-vented Bulbul! Much of our birding at Phong Nha was along the Ho Chi Minh trail which was used as a supply route by the North Vietnamese to move troops and supplies to the south during the war. This area was heavily bombed during the war and several monuments commemorating the lives lost reminded us of the terror that was unleashed by the American military on the Vietnamese people during this dark period in the history of both countries. Many Americans have made the pilgrimage to Washington DC to witness the Vietnam War Memorial and mourn the loss of nearly 60,000 American lives. But often lost and little spoken of is the fact that over 5 million Vietnamese died during the war, many of them innocent women, children and civilians who were caught in a crossfire they didn't understand or want to be part of. It is a sad and inescapable truth that more Vietnamese people were killed during what they call "the American war" than the entire number of people who died in World War II....something that all Americans should ponder when they consider our history.



Birding in the rain along the Ho Chi Minh Trail

The next morning we drove to Bach Ma with high hopes for many new birds, but instead we experienced an absolute deluge that completely washed away our optimism. Though the rain was incessant we did salvage the experience a bit as we drove down the mountain the next morning when two Slaty-backed Forktails appeared in the road for several minutes and a small group of Silver Pheasants put in a brief appearance.

From Bach Ma it was another lengthy drive south to the town of Dak To where we based for two nights. The primary reason for staying here was to have quick access to the mountain at Ngoc Linh, the only place to see many of Vietnam's specialty birds. We had



Trudging through the mud at Ngoc Linh

good weather here the birding was quite good with everybody seeing Indochinese Fulvetta, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Red-tailed Minla, Necklaced Barbet and Chestnut-crowned Warbler. Several people took on the physical challenge of the "boot camp" hike and saw Black-crowned Barwing, Black Eagle and heard Golden-breasted Fulvetta.

From Ngoc Linh we traveled farther south to Mang Den where on our first morning we had some of our best birding to date. An enormous mixed flock entertained us along the road for almost 2 hours during which we added Clicking Shrike-Babbler, Indochinese Green-Magpie, Rufous-faced Warbler,

Gray-headed Parrotbill, Golden Babbler, Black-throated Sunbird and many Mountain Fulvettas. However our best bird here may have been Yellow-billed Nuthatch, an extremely range restricted species that gave us great views at relatively close range.



White-rumped Falcon at Yok Don

Continuing south, we stopped for one night at Yok Don NP to bird the dry diptocarp forests that are more common to the west in Cambodia and Laos. Many birds barely enter Vietnam at Yok Don and we had good success with many of them including Burmese Nuthatch, Cinereous Tit, Small Minivet, Rufous Treepie, Crested Treeswift and Black-headed Woodpecker, not to mention seeing two White-rumped Falcons buzzed by a Rufous-winged Buzzard!

After too many long drives and short stays it was a welcome respite to roll into Dalat for a 4-night stand at a quaint hotel operated by a lovely proprietress who prepared the best breakfasts of the entire tour. The cool, dry weather here was also much appreciated and we made good use of it during our three full days of birding. We spent one entire day hiking on Mount Lang Bian where some of the highlights included Hume's Treecreeper, Red Crossbill, Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Vietnamese Greenfinch, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird and the iconic and endemic Collared Laughingthrush, a bird that has been decimated by trappers who can sell a single specimen to collectors for upwards of \$10,000. It is a sad but true fact of the world we live in that economic gain almost always outweighs environmental protection.

Our morning visit to the Ta Nung Valley was also very productive with the highlight being our encounter with Gray-crowned Crocias, a species once thought to be extinct and now known only from three sites in central Vietnam. What a treat it was to be added to the small group of birders who have seen this species! We also had nice views of the endemic Vietnamese Greenfinch as well both Black-headed and Rufous-backed Sibia, the gray-crowned form of Black-throated Tit, a flyover Ratchet-tailed Treepie and many colorful Indochinese Barbets.



Gray Bushchat

Elsewhere on the Dalat Plateau we added a nice collection of species found only in this part of Vietnam including Slender-billed Oriole, the endemic Vietnamese Cutia and the Dalat forms of White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird and Black-throated Sunbird. A garrulous flock of White-cheeked Laughingthrushes put on a show near Tuyen Lam Lake, a female Yellow-vented Green-Pigeon gorged herself in a fruiting tree at eye level, a cartoonish Black-headed Parrotbill was a definite crowd pleaser and who could possibly forget the striking White-faced form of the Eurasian Jay that was common in these forests. Finally our evening foray near the lake produced great views of several Gray Nightjars and a very cooperative Oriental Scops-Owl.



Eurasian Jay (White-faced form)



Oriental Scops-Owl

After four relaxing and productive days in Dalat it was time to head south to the tour's final destination, Cat Tien NP. The open tropical forests harbor a wealth of biological diversity and were a fitting conclusion to a what had been a grueling tour. Upon arrival we walked along the road in front of our accommodations and added Large Woodshrike, Laced Woodpecker, Blue-eared Barbet, Oriental Pied-Hornbill and Ashy Minivet to our burgeoning list, and as dusk settled, in the aerial foraging antics of Greater Racket-tailed Drongos were spectacular. Before retreating to our rooms to prepare for dinner several Great Eared Nightjars appeared to feast on the abundant flying insects, their harrier-like flight quite unlike what one expects from a nightjar.

A couple of visits to the grasslands at Cat Tien produced Green Peafowl, Chinese Francolin, Red Junglefowl, Red-collared Dove, Indochinese Roller and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater. But most surprising an unexpected was a sparrow sized Yellow-legged Buttonquail that darted across the road in front of our vehicle on our final morning. At Crocodile Lake we saw Bronze-winged Coursers, Gray-headed Swamphen, Stork-billed Kingfisher and White-browed Crake and on walks along the park road we saw Dusky and Banded broadbills, Red-breasted Parakeet, Abbott's Babbler, Vernal Hanging-Parrot, Lesser Yellownape and the bamboo obligate Pale-headed Woodpecker. But the spectacle here was not just visual, but auditory as well, and throughout our time we were frequently serenaded by the haunting calls of White-rumped Shama and Yellow-cheeked Gibbons. Upon arrival in Saigon, now known officially as Ho Chi Minh City, we made a quick visit to the Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens where our final bird was a migrant Mugimaki Flycatcher. A quick check of eBird revealed this to be just the 4th record ever in Sai Gon province! Saving the best for last is always a fitting end to a tour.

In today's world that is plagued by division and animosity, it has become vitally important to find ways to bring people together. For me birding is such a pursuit. Birding groups are always quite diverse in terms of the participant's philosophical perspectives, economic means and political views, but all of those divisions are laid aside and become inconsequential during our time together. In the truest sense, the thing that unites us becomes far more important than the things that divide us and I find that a refreshing change from what I most often see as I go through my daily life. Every group is special in its own way and made what it is by the blending of the unique qualities and contributions that each participant brings to the table. I thank all of you for being a part of this one and hope to see you again somewhere down the road.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO LE QUY MINH AND RICHARD CRAIK FROM VIETNAM BIRDING WHOSE LOGISTICAL AND BIRDING EXPERTISE MADE THIS TOUR POSSIBLE!



An elegant lunch setting at Buon Ma Thuot

Anataidae (Ducks & Geese)

GARGANEY (*Spatula querquedula*)

A pair was seen in a flooded field outside Phong Nha.

Phasianidae (Pheasants & Grouse)

SILVER PHEASANT (*Lophura nycthemera*)

Pheasants in the mist. 3 females were standing in the road as we drove down from Bach Ma in the incessant rain. The people in the front of the van were able to get reasonable views of this rare and beautiful bird.

SIAMESE FIREBACK (*Lophura diardi*)

A nice male was encountered along the roadside in Cat Tien, but it disappeared into the forest before everyone could lay eyes on it.

GREEN PEAFOWL (*Pavo muticus*)

Many were in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

SCALY-BREASTED PARTRIDGE (*Tropicoperdix chloropus*)

We certainly heard these and almost saw them at Cuc Phuong where they were calling just a few feet from us, but they managed to stay out of sight in the dense undergrowth.

GERMAIN'S PEACOCK-PHEASANT (*Polyplectron germaini*)

Everyone had great views of this extremely difficultly pheasant at Cat Tien.

RED JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus gallus*)

A drenched female was seen along the roadside in Phong Nha NP. Several more were seen at Cat Tien.

CHINESE FRANCOLIN (*Francolinus pintadeanus*)

Cat Tien grasslands.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Van Long, Tuyen Lam Lake and in a few flooded fields.

Columbidae (Pigeons & Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

Seen in many villages and towns.

RED-COLLARED DOVE (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)

Many were in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

SPOTTED DOVE (*Spilopelia chinensis*)

Fairly common throughout. We also saw several in cages.

BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia unchall*)

One flyover was seen in Dalat.

ASIAN EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*)

Jan saw one near the accommodations at Cat Tien.

ZEBRA DOVE (*Geopelia striata*)

Common at Cat Tien. An established, introduced species in this part of Vietnam.

THICK-BILLED GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron curvirostra*)

One was seen well in the scope at the Ta Nung Valley in Dalat. Many more were at Cat Tien. This is the most common Treron species in Vietnam.

YELLOW-VENTED GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron seimundi*)

Great eye level views of a young female gorging herself on fruit near Tuyen Lam Lake.

PIN-TAILED GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron apicauda*)

We had four in the scope at a roadside stop near Mang Den, but the best views were at the trailhead on Mount Langbian where one sat only 15 feet above the trail for several minutes.

WEDGE-TAILED GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron sphenurus*)

Scope views in the pine forest above Tuyen Lam Lake.

GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula aenea*)

Great looks at a pair on our afternoon walk at Yok Don. This is really a beautiful pigeon.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*)

Fairly common in the highlands around Dalat. There were also a few at Ngoc Linh.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER COUCAL (*Centropus sinensis*)

Common. Either seen or heard almost daily.

LESSER COUCAL (*Centropus bengalensis*)

A few were seen in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA (*Phaenicophaeus tristis*)

Scattered sightings here and there along the way.

VIOLET CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*)

Several on the hike to Crocodile Lake in Cat Tien.

BANDED BAY CUCKOO (*Cacomantis sonneratii*)

Good views at Mang Den and around Dalat. It was also heard everyday at Cat Tien.

PLAINTIVE CUCKOO (*Cacomantis merulinus*)

We had a female sitting on the wires on our morning walk at Banana Island near Hanoi.

SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*)

Great scope views at Cat Tien.

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

HODGSON'S FROGMOUTH (*Batrachostomus hodgsoni*)

We heard this one very well above Tuyen Lam Lake, but it refused to emerge from the dense tangles. The strong winds severely hampered our efforts.

BLYTH'S FROGMOUTH (*Batrachostomus affinis*)

Heard only on our owling night at Cat Tien.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars)

GREAT EARED NIGHTJAR (*Lyncornis macrotis*)

These harrier-like nightjars put on a spectacular show on our first evening at Cat Tien as they fed on the abundant aerial insects near our accommodations.

GRAY NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus jotaka*)

Great views perched and flying above Tuyen Lam Lake. Another was heard across from our hotel in Mang Den.

Apodidae (Swifts)

SILVER-BACKED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus cochinchienensis*)

A few people saw this species at Cat Tien. Needletails are rapid fliers that cover long distances while foraging, so they never hang around for very long

BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus giganteus*)

We had three of these large swifts make a brief appearance while we stood at the overlook near Mang Den.

HIMALAYAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus brevirostris*)

A single sighting as we waited in the parking lot for the jeeps to drive us up Mount Lang Bian.

GERMAIN'S SWIFTLLET (*Aerodramus germani*)

The most widespread and abundant swift of the tour. It was seen almost daily.

COOK'S SWIFT (*Apus cooki*)

Five of these large swifts were seen high in the misty sky at Phong Nha. This species is closely associated with limestone outcrops.

HOUSE SWIFT (*Apus nipalensis*)

Larger and darker than Germain's Swiftlet with a bright white rump patch. We saw these most days in the central highlands. There were also a few around Cat Tien.

ASIAN PALM-SWIFT (*Cysiurius balasiensis*)

Scattered sightings when we were in the vicinity of palms. We saw them several times from the roof of our hotel in Hanoi.

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

CRESTED TREESWIFT (*Hemiprocne coronata*)

Seen well in flight at Yok Don

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules & Coots)

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinule chloropus*)

Van Long.

GRAY-HEADED SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio poliocephalus*)

A few people had brief views at Van Long, but everyone saw them well at Crocodile Lake.

WHITE-BROWED CRAKE (*Poliolimnus cinereus*)

Heard by everyone and seen by several people at Crocodile Lake.

Charadriidae (Plovers & Lapwings)

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*)

We saw about a dozen at our rainy lunch stop on the way to Phong Nha.

GRAY-HEADED LAPWING (*Vanellus cinereus*)

Three were spotted in a rice field near Phong Nha.

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*)

Cat Tien.

KENTISH PLOVER (*Anarhynchus alexandrinus*)

One was scoped during a bathroom break at Nguyen Van as we drove from Bach Ma to Mang Den.

WHITE-FACED PLOVER (*Anarhynchus dealbatus*)

We saw three at a coastal beach stop while driving from Bach Ma to Dak To.

Jacanidae (*Jacanas*)

PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)

Several were seen well in flight at Van Long.

BRONZE-WINGED JACANA (*Metopidius indicus*)

Crocodile Lake.

Scolopacidae (*Sandpipers*)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

A few scattered sightings. The only shorebird encountered multiple times during the tour.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*)

There were a few mingling with the Little Ringed Plovers in the wet fields across from our truck stop luncheon on the way to Phong Nha.

Turnicidae (*Buttonquails*)

YELLOW-LEGGED BUTTONQUAIL (*Turnix tanki*)

It was completely unexpected when one of these sparrow-sized quail ran across the road in front of our vehicle on our last morning at Cat Tien. Seconds later it popped out of the roadside brush and most people caught a glimpse before it darted into thick cover. Eventually Jan flushed it from the brush and everyone had decent flight views before it dropped into grass.

Glareolidae (*Pratincoles & Coursers*)

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE (*Glareola maldivarum*)

This was another unexpected surprise. While having lunch at a truck stop in the pouring rain, we scoped an adjacent field and found about 60. These were migrants on their way south to wintering grounds in Indonesia and Australia. We also saw a few high in the sky at Cat Tien. These were also migrants.

Ciconiidae (*Storks*)

ASIAN OPENBILL (*Anastomus oscitans*)

Nice looks in the rain in a rice field near Phong Nha.

Anhingidae (Anhingas & Darters)

ORIENTAL DARTER (*Anhinga melanogaster*)

Crocodile Lake.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets & Bitterns)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

This is a very cosmopolitan species that is found throughout the Old World. They were recorded flying along the river at Cat Tien and at the Saigon Botanical Gardens.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*)

Commonly seen in rice fields while driving.

STRIATED HERON (*Butoroides striata*)

Yok Don, Cat Tien and Saigon Botanical Gardens.

CHINESE POND-HERON (*Ardeola bacchus*)

Common throughout.

EASTERN CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus coromandus*)

Many were seen while driving and many others while scoping rice fields. This is a recent addition to the AOU checklist and a separate species from the Western Cattle Egrets in the U.S. and Central & South America.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

Fairly common in wetland situations.

MEDIUM EGRET (*Ardea intermedia*)

This is another recent addition to the Clements checklist. The species formerly known as Intermediate Egret has been split into three species and the ones occurring in Southeast Asia is now known as Medium Egret. We had several in a rice field near Bach Ma.

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*)

A group of seven was seen in flight at Phong Nha.

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*)

There were a few at Van Long and at Crocodile Lake.

Pandionidae (Ospreys)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

One flew past while we were scoping the fields from our lunch stop on the way from Cuc Phuong to Phong Nha. A few more were seen at Cat Tien.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles & Kites)

BLACK-WINGED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*)

Jan saw one from the bus as we drove from Phong Nha to Bach Ma.

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*)

One was seen well in the scope at our lunch break on the drive from Bach Ma to Dak To.

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*)

One was seen on our morning at Banana Island near Hanoi.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*)

A single bird soaring high in the sky above Van Long.

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*)

Ngoc Linh and Mount Lang Bian.

RUFIOUS-WINGED BUZZARD (*Butastur liventer*)

This was an unexpected bonus at Yok Don when one buzzed the White-rumped Falcons.

GRAY-FACED BUZZARD (*Butastur indicus*)

Ngoc Linh and Mount Lang Bian. This is a migratory buteo and those we saw were on their way to wintering grounds in Indonesia and Malaysia.

CRESTED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter trivirgatus*)

The most common raptor of the tour. Multiple sightings including one doing its fluttery display flight and flashing the white rump patches at Cuc Phuong.

BESRA (*Accipiter virgatus*)

One perched in the drizzle for several minutes at Phong Nha.

JAPANESE SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter gularis*)

A very nice flyover in the grasslands on our final morning at Cat Tien.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Ichthyophaga leucogaster*)

One was seen well soaring over the ridge above Tuyen Lam Lake. This is normally a coastal species, but there are a few resident birds at the lake on the Langbian Plateau.

Strigidae (Owls)

MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL (*Otus spilocephalus*)

Heard by everyone at Cuc Phuong. Jan and Tim had brief looks in flight.

COLLARED SCOPS-OWL (*Otus lettia*)

Heard at Cuc Phong and near Tuyen Lam Lake. Jan saw one while walking early one morning before breakfast at Cuc Phuong. It was also heard on the Langbian Plateau and at Cat Tien.

ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL (*Otus sunia*)

Everyone had excellent views near Tuyen Lam Lake.

ASIAN BARRED OWLET (*Glaucidium cuculoides*)

Heard often at Yok Don and Cat Tien and finally seen by everyone along the main park road at Cat Tien.

COLLARED OWLET (*Taeniopteryx brodie*)

This was the call we used most often to attract birds and we heard it respond several times, but it never put in an appearance.

BROWN BOOBOOK (*Ninox scutulata*)

Jan heard one while walking early in the morning at Yok Don.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

ORANGE-BREASTED TROGON (*Harpectes oreskios*)

After many unsuccessful efforts, we finally had scope views at Cat Tien thanks to Minh's sharp eyes and persistence.

RED-HEADED TROGON (*Harpactes erythrocephalus*)

Only fleeting glimpses at Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha. Jan had a good look at Tam Dao, but it quickly disappeared before anyone else could see it.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL (*Anthrcoeros albirostris*)

Cat Tien.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*)

Van Long, Phong Nha and in a rice field near Bach Ma.

BANDED KINGFISHER (*Lacedo pulchella*)

This canopy dwelling kingfisher was heard several times at Cat Tien, but it failed to respond to our vocal lures and remained out of sight. Perhaps it was trying to avoid the leech zone!

STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Pelargopsis capensis*)

This can be a difficult one, so it was nice to see a pair at Crocodile Lake.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

Recorded frequently along the way.

Meropidae (*Bee-eaters*)

BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER (*Nyctyornis athertoni*)

Nice scope views at a roadside stop near Mang Den.

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*)

Everyone had scope views at our lunch stop on the way from Bach Ma to Dak To. There were also a few in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

Coraciidae (*Rollers*)

INDOCHINESE ROLLER (*Caracas affinis*)

Fairly common at Cat Tien. This one always gets everyone excited.

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomis orientalis*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien. The name of this bird is derived from the large white patches on the underwing that resemble silver dollars and are visible in flight.

Megalaimidae (*Asian Barbets*)

COPPERSMITH BARBET (*Psilopogon haemacephalus*)

Scope views of a single bird at Cat Tien. There were 7 in a single tree at the Saigon Botanical Gardens.

BLUE-EARED BARBET (*Psilopogon cyanotic*)

Seen in the scope on our first afternoon at Cat Tien.

RED-VENTED BARBET (*Psilopogon lagrandieri*)

Several encounters at Cuc Phuong.

GREEN-EARED BARBET (*Psilopogon faiostriatus*)

A very cooperative individual sat at eye level for several minutes at Phong Nha.

LINEATED BARBET (*Psilopogon lineatus*)

Common at Yok Don and Cat Tien.

GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon franklinii*)

Seen well by those who made the day trip to Tam Dao.

NECKLACED BARBET (*Psilopogon auricularis*)

Very common around Mang Den and on the Langbian Plateau.

INDOCHINESE BARBET (*Psilopogon annamensis*) This species was commonly heard on the Langbian Plateau and we had good scope views on our walk at Ta Nung Valley.

Picidae (*Woodpeckers*)

EURASIAN WRYNECK (*Jynx torquilla*)

We had a nice scope view at Banana Island outside Hanoi.

SPECKLED PICULET (*Picumnus innominatus*)

Brief scope views on our morning walk in the Ta Nung Valley. Unfortunately it disappeared before everyone was able to take a look.

HEART-SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Hemicircus canente*)

A pair of these crested, tail-less woodpeckers put on a good show at Yok Don. We also saw them a few times at Cat Tien. These are not always easy to find!

GRAY-CAPPED PYGMY-WOODPECKER (*Yungipicus canicapillus*)

This is Southeast Asia's answer to our familiar Downy Woodpecker. We had encounters at Cuc Phuong, Yok Don and on the Langbian Plateau.

STRIPE-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos atratus*)

Great scope views along the road at Ngoc Linh.

BAY WOODPECKER (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*)

The maniacal laughing call of this species became familiar to all of us, but our only visual was a brief one at Cuc Phuong.

GREATER FLAMEBACK (*Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*)

This one put on a good auditory show at Cuc Phuong, but it was only seen briefly in flight.

BLACK-AND-BUFF WOODPECKER (*Meiglyptes jugularis*)

Like the Heart-spotted Woodpecker, this diminutive woodpecker can be very difficult to find, so we were quite lucky when Minh spotted one high in a tree at the Crocodile Lake trailhead.

PALE-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Gecinulus grantia*)

A bamboo obligate that is notoriously hard to lay eyes on, so we can count our multiple sightings at Cat Tien as a great success.

COMMON FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium javanense*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*)

Great scope views in the “green-pigeon tree” at Cat Tien.

LACED WOODPECKER (*Picus vittatus*)

This species was a frequent auditory backdrop at Cat Tien. We also saw it there on our first afternoon walk.

BLACK-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Picus erythropygius*)

Another Yok Don specialty. We saw them quite well on our afternoon walk there.

GREATER YELLOWNAPE (*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*)

Two were seen high in the canopy on the hike to Crocodile Lake.

WHITE-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus javensis*)

One made several passes over the road at Yok Don. Much like our familiar Pileated Woodpecker.

Falconidae (*Falcons & Caracaras*)

PIED FALCONET (*Microhierax melanoleucos*)

We watched this tiny falcon dining on an unfortunate Light-vented Bulbul in the rain at Phong Nha.

WHITE-RUMPED FALCON (*Neohierax insignia*)

We had great views of a pair at Yok Don, the only place they occur in Vietnam. These were formerly known as White-rumped Pygmy-Falcon.

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*)

A pair was performing aerial acrobatics in the heavy rain at Phong Nha.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

One was seen bucking gusty winds at a brief coastal stop on the way to Phong Nha.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

RED-BREASTED PARAKEET (*Psittacula alexandri*)

Great scope views at Cat Tien as well as a flyover flock at Yok Don.

VERNAL HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus vernalis*)

Seeing this tiny parrot is very difficult in the dense Vietnamese forests, so it was a real treat to have one in the scope at Cat Tien.

Eurylaimidae (Asian & Grauer's Broadbills)

DUSKY BROADBILL (*Corydon sumatranus*)

This was another great find by Minh who spotted one on an exposed snag high in the canopy. This is always a challenging bird to see due its proclivity for remaining hidden in the upper levels of the forest.

SILVER-BREASTED BROADBILL (*Serilophus lunatus*)

Heard distantly at Mang Den, but failed to respond to playback.

BLACK-AND-RED BROADBILL (*Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus*)

Great looks at these at Cat Tien where they are the easiest broadbill to see.

BANDED BROADBILL (*Eurylaimus javanicus*)

Scope views of a pair at the Crocodile Lake trailhead in Cat Tien.

Pittidae (Pittas)

BLUE-RUMPED PITTA (*Hydrornis soror*)

Mostly heard at Cuc Phuong, although several people had fleeting glimpses in the dark understory.

BAR-BELLIED PITTA (*Hydrornis elliotii*)

Heard frequently at Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien. Everyone finally laid eyes on one at Cuc Phong, but the views were less than stellar due to the heavy overcast that resulted in a very dark understory.

Acanthizidae (Thornbills & Allies)

GOLDEN-BELLIED GERYGONE (*Gerygone sulphurea*)

We saw this rather nondescript bird on our final afternoon at the Saigon Botanical Gardens. Though not much to look at, this species has a delightful song which it delivered aggressively in response to our playback. The name gerygone is derived from ancient Greek and means "one born of song," a fitting moniker in this case.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

SMALL MINIVET (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*)

Yok Don. This is the only place in Vietnam to see this species

GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus solaris*)

These put on a good show at Mang Den.

SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*)

Great scope views along the road at Ngoc Linh.

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus speciosus*)

The most widespread minivet in Vietnam. We saw it many times.

ASHY MINIVET (*Pericrocotus divaricates*)

Fairly common at Cat Tien. A small flock was feeding in the fruiting trees around our accommodations on our first afternoon there.

BROWN-RUMPED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus cantonensis*)

The only one was seen on our afternoon walk at Yok Don.

BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melaschistos*)

This is the most common of three cuckoo shrikes in Vietnam and we saw it well several times at Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien.

INDOCHINESE CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage polioptera*)

Everyone had a great view of a female from the deck of the restaurant at Cat Tien. Females can be difficult to separate from Black-winged Cuckooshrikes, but we saw the definitive extensive white markings on the underside of the tail.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers & Erpornis)

WHITE-BROWED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius aeralatus aeralatus*)

This subspecific form is known as Blyth's Shrike-Babbler and was seen with a mixed flock at Bach Ma.

WHITE-BROWED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius aeralatus annamensis*)

This subspecific form is known as Dalat Shrike-Babbler and occurs only on the Langbian Plateau. It was formerly considered a distinct species, but in the current eBird taxonomy has now now been lumped with all of the other White-browed Shrike-Babblers.

CLICKING SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius intermedius*)

Everyone had nice views of a pair in a mixed flock at Mang Den.

WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS (*Erpornis zantholeuca*)

A very common component of mixed flocks throughout the tour.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE (*Oriolus chinensis*)

Nice looks on our morning at Banana Island. We also had a few at Cat Tien.

SLENDER-BILLED ORIOLE (*Oriolus tenuirostris*)

A pair of these exquisite birds put on a nice show in the pine forests above Dalat. This oriole is rarely seen away from pines in Vietnam.

BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE (*Oriolus xanthornus*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien.

MAROON ORIOLE (*Oriolus trailii*)

A flyover at Mang Den showed off its reddish tail.

Artamidae (Woodswallows & Bellmagpies)

ASHY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus fuscus*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien. They were especially conspicuous in the grasslands at the latter site

Vangidae (Vangas & Helmetshrikes)

LARGE WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis virgatus*)

Seen well near our accommodations at Cat Tien.

COMMON WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*)

Yok Don.

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*)

Mang Den, Dalat Plateau and Cat Tien.

Aegithinidae (Ioras)

COMMON IORA (*Aegithina tiphia*)

Only a few were seen. The best views were with a mixed flock at Yok Don.

GREAT IORA (*Aegithina lafresnayeii*)

Many sightings of this species that is reminiscent of a female Summer Tanager.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

MALAYSIAN PIED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura javanica*)

This species replaces the widespread White-throated Fantail in southern Vietnam. Some people saw one on our visit to the Saigon Botanical Gardens. Tim had a photo to prove it.

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis*)

A fairly common bird that was surprisingly scarce although we did see them everyday on the Langbian Plateau.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocercus*)

Singles were seen at Banana Island and Yok Don. Others were noted on roadside wires during some of our drives.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*)

The most common and widespread drongo. We saw it daily.

ASHY DRONGO (CHINESE WHITE-FACED) (*Dicrurus leucophaeus leucogenis*)

We had nice looks at this distinctive subspecies at Cat Tien.

CROW-BILLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus annectens*)

A migrant drongo in Vietnam that we encountered at Banana Island and Cuc Phuong.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*)

Seen well at Mang Den and Cat Tien. It can be separated from other drongos by its smaller size and glossier black plumage.

HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO (*Dicrurus hottentottus*)

A few here and there. Ngoc Linh, Langbian Plateau and Yok Don.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus paradisius*)

What a spectacular bird this is with the long trailing tail streamers. It is also quite an accomplished mimic and its vocal repertoire woke us every morning at Cat Tien.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothesis azurea*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien. The male is really a striking bird.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

BROWN SHRIKE (*Lanius cristatus*)

Many sightings throughout the tour.

BURMESE SHRIKE (*Lanius colluriooides*)

A smartly plumaged shrike that was fairly common at Yok Don and on the Langbian Plateau.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*)

Common on roadside wires while driving. We took time to scope a few along the way.

Corvidae (*Crows, Jays & Magpies*)

EURASIAN JAY (WHITE-FACED) (*Garrulous grandarius leucotis*)

This race is quite different from the familiar Eurasian Jay in Europe and other parts of Asia. We had several great looks on the Langbian Plateau.

RED-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*Urocissa erythroryncha*)

Seen by those on the pre-trip to Tam Dao.

INDOCHINESE GREEN-MAGPIE (*Cissa hypoleuca*)

Despite its large size and brilliant colors this bird is incredibly hard to see, but our persistence finally paid off when one flew across the road giving everyone a wonderful look at Mang Den.

RUFOUS TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*)

Yok Don is the only place to see this species in Vietnam and they didn't disappoint this year.

RACKET-TAILED TREEPIE (*Crypsirina temia*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien. We saw them daily at the latter sight where they are quite common and less shy than they are farther north.

RATCHET-TAILED TREEPIE (*Temnurus temnurus*)

This species is unmistakable when seen well, but also very shy and secretive. We encountered it twice and both were flyovers....at Phong Nha and at Ta Nung Valley near Dalat. In both cases the jagged tail edges were very apparent.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

This is the only crow available on this tour route. Mostly uncommon, but there were 20-30 at the trash dump near Dalat.

Stenostiridae (*Fairy Flycatchers*)

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)

Widespread and very conspicuous.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees & Titmice)

SULTAN TIT (YELLOW-CRESTED) (*Melanochlora sultanea sultanea*)

We saw the yellow-crested form of this species at Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha.

SULTAN TIT (BLACK-CRESTED) (*Melanochlora sultanea gayeti*)

Though not seen well because of the rain, we did record the black-crested form of this huge parid at Bach Ma.

GREEN-BACKED TIT (*Parus monticolus*)

We had a couple in the rain at Phong Nha. Later they were abundant during our hike at Mount Lang Bian and also at a few others places on the Langbian Plateau.

CINEREOUS TIT (*Parus cinereus*)

This species barely creeps into Vietnam in the dry forests at Yok Don. We saw a few there on our afternoon walk.

YELLOW-CHEEKED TIT (*Machlolophus spilonotus*)

Surprisingly scarce. The only one was seen by Howie, Pat and Jan while the others did the “boot camp” hike at Ngoc Linh.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas & Allies)

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*)

Common in disturbed situations, parks and gardens. Everyone saw these well.

DARK-NECKED TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus atrogularis*)

Unlike the previous species, this one prefers forested areas. We had nice looks at Phong Nha and Cat Tien.

ASHY TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus ruficeps*)

This species is found only in southern Vietnam. We had several on our final afternoon at the Saigon Botanical Gardens.

HILL PRINIA (*Prinia superciliaris*)

Ngoc Linh and on the Langbian Plateau.

RUFESCENT PRINIA (*Prinia rufescens*)

Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien.

YELLOW-BELLIED PRINIA (*Prinia flaviventris*)

A wetland prinia that showed well on Banana Island and in the marshes at Van Long.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds & Allies)

DALAT BUSH WARBLER (*Locustella idonea*)

What a skulker! After multiple failed attempts, a few people finally saw this secretive endemic on our final morning in Dalat.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings)

PYGMY CUPWING (*Pnoepyga pusilla*)

Tiny, reclusive and dense foliage loving is a bad combination of characteristics for anyone trying to see this little guy. Though one called aggressively along the road at Ngoc Linh it remained hidden in the ferns.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

GRAY-THROATED MARTIN (*Riparia chinensis*)

Fairly common at Banana Island.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

Widespread. The only common swallow on the tour and recorded most days.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*)

A few were at Mang Den and Yok Don.

STRIATED SWALLOW (*Cecropis striolata*)

Peter and Minh had good looks on the drive up to Ngoc Linh. They escaped everyone else.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

OCHRACEOUS BULBUL (*Alophoixus ochraceus*)

A few sightings during the hike to Crocodile Lake.

PUFF-THROATED BULBUL (*Alophoixus pallidus*)

Very vocal and heard frequently at Cuc Phuong and Mang Den. Most of the time they remained hidden in the canopy, but everyone eventually had a look.

GRAY-EYED BULBUL (*Iole propinqua*)

Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha.

GRAY-EYED BULBUL (INNECTENS) (*Iole propinqua innectens*)

This race of Gray-eyed Bulbul is the one we saw at Cat Tien.

CHESTNUT BULBUL (*Hemixos castanonotus*)

A specialty of Tam Dao, so it was seen only by Howie, Tim, Rob and Jan on our morning there.

MOUNTAIN BULBUL (*Ixos mcclellandii*)

Mang Den and Mount Lang Bian.

BLACK BULBUL (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*)

Fairly common at higher elevations. They were frequent flyovers at Ngoc Linh, Mang Den and Dalat.

BLACK-HEADED BULBUL (*Microtarsus melanocephalus*)

This is a real toughie, so we were quite fortunate to have two in the scope on our final morning in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL (*Rubigula flaviventris*)

Quite a looker and fairly widespread. We saw it most days in small numbers.

STREAK-EARED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus conradi*)

Very common at Cat Tien.

STRIPE-THROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus finlaysoni*)

Fairly widespread, but most common at Cat Tien where everyone finally saw it well. The Merlin description of this species reads “it looks as though a chrysanthemum exploded and plastered itself to its face.” Not sure that is the way I would describe it, but who am I to say.

FLAVESCENT BULBUL (*Pycnonotus flavescens*)

A rather nondescript bulbul that we encountered at Ngoc Linh, Mang Den and Dalat.

LIGHT-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus sinensis*)

A migrant in Vietnam that we saw at Banana Island and on the drive to Cuc Phong. We also saw one being eaten by the Pied Falconet at Phong Nha.

SOOTY-HEADED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*)

Both the yellow-vented and red-vented races of this common species were seen.

Phylloscopidae (*Leaf Warblers*)

ASHY-THROATED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*)

Ngoc Linh and Mount Lang Bian.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

A common wintering species in Vietnam. We saw it most days although it became less numerous as we moved south.

PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)

A kinglet-like leaf warbler that continually flicks its wings while foraging. It was seen only at Tam Dao by those who made the trip there.

WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus intermedius*)

Ngoc Linh and Mount Lang Bian.

GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus poliogenys*)

Ngoc Linh where it managed to stay mostly out of sight.

BIANCHI'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus valentini*)

Jan was the only one to catch this one in a mixed flock at Cuc Phuong.

PALE-LEGGED LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus tenellipes*)

We heard the high pitched call note of this species several times at Cat Tien, but it never showed itself.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus castaniceps*)

Good looks by everyone at Ngoc Linh.

KLOSS'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus ogilviegranti*)

These were common at Mang Den and on Mount Lang Bian. At the latter site they were the predominate species in every mixed flock we encountered. Much more brightly colored below than the very similar Yellow-browed Warbler.

Scotocercidae (*Bush Warblers & Allies*)

ASIAN STUBTAIL (*Urosphena squameiceps*)

This is a notorious skulker that winters in Vietnam. We can count it as a great success that most people had good views at Cuc Phuong. These are never easy to see!

GRAY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia cyaniventer*)

Those who did the "boot camp" hike at Ngoc Linh saw this skulker. For the others it was heard only at Mount Lang Bian.

YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER (*Abroscopus superciliaris*)

Very common at Tam Dao for those who made the trip there.

RUFIOUS-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus albogularis*)

What a stunning warbler this one is and we had excellent views of one in a mixed flock at Mang Den.

MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD (*Phyllergates cucullatus*)

Common at Tam Dao and also during our hike at Ta Nung Valley on the Langbian Plateau. It took some time, but eventually everyone had a glimpse.

Aegithalidae (*Long-tailed Tits*)

BLACK-THROATED TIT (GRAY-CROWNED) (*Aegithalos concinnus*)

This is another potential future split. We saw many at Ngoc Linh, Mount Lang Bian and on the Langbian Plateau.

Sylviidae (*Sylviid Warblers & Allies*)

GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA (*Lioparus chrysotis*)

Those who did the “boot camp” hike at Ngoc Linh heard these, but they remained out of view.

INDOCHINESE FULVETTA (*Fulvetta danisi*)

Excellent views of this range restricted species along the road at Ngoc Linh. This species is known only from a few places in Vietnam and Laos.

GRAY-HEADED PARROTBILL (*Psittiparus gularis*)

We were really lucky with this species at Mang Den where we saw a huge roadside flock of 25-30 of these cartoonish creatures.

BLACK-HEADED PARROTBILL (*Psittiparus margaritae*)

This is a Vietnamese near endemic occurring only the Langbian Plateau and in the dry forests near Yok Don where it barely extends into neighboring Cambodia. It took some effort, but everyone had a good look near Tuyen Lam Lake.

SHORT-TAILED PARROTBILL (*Suthora davidiana*)

This is a Tam Dao specialty, so it was only seen by Tim, Howie, Rob and Jan during our morning there.

Zosteropidae (*White-eyes, Yuhinas & Allies*)

INDOCHINESE YUHINA (*Staphida torqueola*)

A frenzied flock of these birds was seen along the road at Phong Nha. The primary range of this species is in southeastern China, but they are also locally distributed in central and northern Vietnam and Laos.

SWINHOE'S WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops simplex*)

Common around Hanoi. We saw many at Banana Island and sadly, many in cages around the city.

INDIAN WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*)

A small flock was seen feeding in the trees at the edge of the parking lot while we waited for the jeeps to drive us up to Mount Lang Bian.

Timaliidae (*Tree-Babblers, Scimitar-Babblers & Allies*)

CHESTNUT-CAPPED BABBLER (*Timalia pileata*)

Those who braved the leeches and walked into the pasture at the Cat Tien grasslands had nice views of this handsome babbler. Those who stayed on the road had only an auditory experience.

GRAY-FACED TIT-BABBLER (*Mixornis kelleyi*)

Abundant at Cat Tien.

PIN-STRIPED TIT-BABBLER (*Mixornis gularis*)

Very common at Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha, but becoming less so as we moved south. This is generally an easy species to see as they forage at and just above eye level.

GOLDEN BABBLER (*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*)

Those who made the trip to Tam Dao saw many of these. Later we also had nice looks along the road at Mang Den.

RUFIOUS-CAPPED BABBLER (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*)

This one was heard only as we birded the pines above Tuyen Lam Lake. While trying to call it in we stumbled upon a Lesser Shortwing which quickly caused us to redirect our focus.

BROWN-CROWNED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus phayrei*)

Seen only by those who chose to do the “boot camp hike” at Ngoc Linh.

STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*)

Tam Dao only where it was one of the the first birds that we saw.

WHITE-BROWED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*)

Heard at Mang Den where it remained hidden. Later on our final morning at Dalat we saw a pair aggressively responding to playback.

LARGE SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Erythrogonys hypoleucos*)

Heard only at Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha. The bird at Cuc Phong was tantalizingly close to the trail, but never gave itself up. It is amazing that such a large, noisy bird can be so difficult to see.

GRAY-THROATED BABBLER (*Stachyris nigriceps*)

The best views of this species were at Cuc Phuong.

SOOTY BABBLER (*Stachyris herberti*)

This very habitat specific babbler is found only on steep, limestone outcrops and occurs only in western Vietnam and Laos. It was our primary target at Phong Nha and though it was raining quite hard when we stepped out of the bus, we saw at least 20 foraging on the slopes next to the road. A great experience with an often tough-to-see bird.

SPOT-NECKED BABBLER (*Stachyris striolata*)

This one played hide and seek with us along the road at Phong Nha. In the end it was better at hiding than we were at seeking.

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers & Allies)

RUFIOUS-WINGED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*)

Nice views for everyone at Ngoc Linh.

RUFIOUS-THROATED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus rufularis*)

We had several nice encounters with this forest skulker at Cuc Phuong. It took some time, but over the course of two days everyone finally saw it well.

PUFF-THROATED BABBLER (*Pellorneum ruficeps*)

Another skulky babbler that we saw well along the road at Cat Tien. This species always reminds me of an Ovenbird in appearance and behavior.

SPOT-THROATED BABBLER (*Pellorneum albiventre*)

We tried really hard to pull this little devil into view along the road at Ngoc Linh and again near Dalat, but the best anyone could do was a shadowy silhouette in the undergrowth. We took solace in getting an A for effort.

BUFF-BREASTED BABBLER (*Pellorneum tickelli*)

One was seen well feeding near the trail on the hike to Crocodile Lake.

ABBOTT'S BABBLER (*Malacocincla abbotti*)

Excellent views along the road at Cat Tien. A nice surprise as these can be quite reticent to show themselves.

ANNAM LIMESTONE BABBLER (*Gypsophila annamensis*)

These were definitely challenging, but everyone finally had a good look in Cuc Phuong where they are fairly common in the limestone forests.

SHORT-TAILED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Napothera danjoui*)

We finally coaxed this one into view at Mang Den. Despite the name, this species is more closely related to wren-babblers.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes & Allies)

BLACK-BROWED FULVETTA (*Alcippe grotei*)

Cuc Phuong and Phong Nha.

DAVID'S FULVETTA (*Alcippe davidi*)

Jan, Tim, Rob and Howie only on the morning at Tam Dao.

MOUNTAIN FULVETTA (*Alcippe peracensis*)

Very common in mixed flocks at Mang Den and on the Langbian Plateau.

VIETNAMESE CUTIA (*Cutia legalleni*)

A Vietnamese endemic! A flock of about 6 put on a nice show in the pine forests above Tuyen Lam Lake near Dalat. Cutia is the Nepalese word for hut and the bird's common name is derived from its domed hut-like nest.

GRAY-CROWNED CROCIAS (*Laniellus langbiansis*)

Another Vietnamese endemic that was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in the late 90's. It is now known only from three sites in Vietnam and we were fortunate to become members of the small group of birders who have seen it!

COLLARED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron yersini*)

This was a memorable experience on Mount Lang Bian where we had resigned ourselves to having missed it. But in the 11th hour one started calling near the end of the trail and thanks to Minh's dogged persistence it eventually was seen by everyone! This is another of Vietnam's iconic endemics and we were fortunate to be able to see it.

BLACK-HEADED SIBIA (*Heterophasia desgodinsi kingi*)

Everyone has really nice looks at this difficult bird along the road at Ngoc Linh.

BLACK-HEADED SIBIA (LANG BIAN) (*Heterophasia desgodinsi robinsoni*)

Good views by everyone at Ta Nung Valley of this distinctive race of Black-headed Sibia. This is another species that is being heavily persecuted by bird trappers as its pleasing vocalization makes it a prime target of collectors.

BLUE-WINGED MINLA (BLUE-WINGED) (*Actinodura cyanouroptera wingatei*)

We saw several of these around Mang Den. This race has distinct blue edgings on the primaries and is quite different from the following race which lacks any blue color in the wings. This is a strong candidate for a future split, but at this point western taxonomies are still lumping the two forms.

BLUE-WINGED MINLA (PLAIN) (*Actinodura cyanouroptera orientalis*)

This race is endemic to the Langbian Plateau and we saw several near Tuyen Lam Lake.

BLACK-CROWNED BARWING (*Actinodura sodangorum*)

Seen only by those who did the “boot camp hike” at Ngoc Linh. This is a newly described species found only at Ngoc Linh.

RED-TAILED MINLA (*Minla ignotincta*)

A beautiful bird that appeared with a mixed flock several times at Ngoc Linh.

RUFOUS-BACKED SIBIA (*Leioptila annectens*)

Patchily distributed throughout Southeast Asia, but always hard to see. Some people had acceptable views at Ta Nung Valley and near Tuyen Lam Lake.

WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax leucolophus*)

Everyone heard these chortling from the forest on our first afternoon at Cat Tien. Later those who went to the Saigon Botanical Gardens had stunning close up views.

BLACK-HOODED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax milleti*)

Loud but shy. We had a couple of close encounters at Mang Den, but they mostly remained shadowy apparitions darting through the forest. These are nearly endemic to Vietnam’s central highlands.

GRAY LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax maesi*)

Seen well by those who went to Tam Dao.

WHITE-CHEEKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Pterorhinus vassali*)

This is one of the easier laughingthrushes to see as they inhabit more open areas and move about in large congregations. We all had good looks of a noisy flock near Tuyen Lam Lake.

BLACK-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Pterorhinus chinensis*)

This one put in a surprise appearance in the bamboo outside of the restaurant at Cat Tien and though it remained about 20 feet above us, it was seen by most people.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta frontalis*)

A real beauty that showed well at Yok Don and Cat Tien.

YELLOW-BILLED NUTHATCH (*Sitta solangiae*)

This was high on the list of priorities as it is quite range restricted. Fortunately they proved to be fairly easy at Mang Den where we had at least five in a mixed flock. Definitely one you don't want to miss on a visit to Vietnam!

BURMESE NUTHATCH (*Sitta neglecta*)

Though fairly common in other parts of Asia, in Vietnam this bird is only available at Yok Don and we had great looks on our afternoon walk there.

CHESTNUT-VENTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta nagaensis*)

Very common on Mount Lang Bian and in the pines above Tuyen Lam Lake.

Certhiidae (*Treecreepers*)

HUME'S TREECREEPER (*Certhia manipurensis*)

This tiny treecreeper is easy to miss, so we were pleased to have very close views of a couple on Mount Lang Bian.

Sturnidae (*Starlings*)

BLACK-COLLARED STARLING (*Gracupica nigricollis*)

We had a pair in the scope as we waited for the jeeps to carry us up Mount Lang Bian.

WHITE-SHOULDERED STARLING (*Sturnia sinensis*)

A small flock was seen as we scanned a flooded rice field after leaving Bach Ma.

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*)

Surprisingly uncommon which can probably be attributed to the bird trappers, but we did see them several places along the way. Many of the sightings were in villages while driving.

VINOUS-BREASTED MYNA (*Acridotheres leucocephalus*)

There was a large flock seen in a pasture outside Mang Den and a few others in the grasslands at Cat Tien.

GREAT MYNA (*Acridotheres grandis*) Fairly common around Phong Nha. We had several in the scope as we scanned rice fields in that area.

CRESTED MYNA (*Acridotheres cristatellus*)

A few were seen in the villages as we neared Phong Nha.

Turdidae (Thrushes)

ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH (BUFF-THROATED) (*Geokichla citrina aurimacula*)

Several were seen along the road at Cuc Phuong.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa dauurica*)

Fairly common through much of the tour.

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*)

Seen first at Banana Island. It was also seen daily at breakfast at the restaurant in Cat Tien.

WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA (*Copsychus malabaricus*)

A beautiful songster that is heavily persecuted by the caged bird trade. It was seen daily at the restaurant in Cat Tien at breakfast and heard frequently while walking there.

LARGE NILTAVA (*Niltava grandis*)

Seen by most people at Ngoc Linh and on Mount Lang Bian.

VERDITER FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias thalassinus*)

This is a real beauty and happily widespread and generally easy to see.

HAINAN BLUE FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis hainanus*)

Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien.

INDOCHINESE BLUE FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis sumatrensis*)

Great views one morning outside the restaurant at Cat Tien.

LESSER SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx leucophris*)

A very shy bird that is heard more often than seen, but we were able to get good looks at one in the pine forest above Tuyen Lam Lake near Dalat. We came upon it by accident while trying to call in a Rufous-capped Babbler!

SIBERIAN BLUE ROBIN (*Larvivora cyane*)

Mount Lan Bian and Cat Tien. This is a winter visitor to Vietnam.

BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH (YELLOW-BILLED) (*Myophonus caeruleus eugenei*)

Along the road at Cat Tien and Phong Nha.

SLATY-BACKED FORKTAIL (*Enicurus schistaceus*)

Despite the heavy rain we followed two of these down the road from the summit parking area at Bach Ma. This is a very good bird on tis tour route.

WHITE-TAILED ROBIN (*Myiomela leucura*)

A female landed briefly on the handlebars of a parked motorcycle at the Mount Lang Bian trailhead.

MUGIMAKI FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula mugimaki*)

What a surprise this was to see at the Saigon Botanical Gardens. It was only the 4th record for Sai Gon province! Talk about saving the best for last!

SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hyperythra*)

Seen by a few people at Ngoc Linh.

LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula westermanni*)

Along the road at Ngoc Linh and at Tuyen Lam Lake near Dalat.

TAIGA FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula albicilla*)

Seen only a couple of times. The best views were at Ta Nung Valley near Dalat. This is another wintering species in Vietnam.

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH (PANDOO) (*Monticola solitarius pandoo*)

A nice male was seen well on a karst outcrop at Van Long and another on some roadside wires while we drove to Ngoc Linh.

AMUR STONECHAT (*Saxicola stejnegeri*)

Common at Banana Island, Van Long and Cuc Phuong.

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*)

We stopped for one perched on the wires as we drove to Dalat.

GRAY BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola ferreus*)

Common in open areas around Dalat.

Dicaeidae (*Flowerpeckers*)

THICK-BILLED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum agile*)

A pair was seen well at Ta Nung Valley near Dalat.

YELLOW-VENTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum chrysorrheum*)

Nice looks on Mount Lang Bian.

PLAIN FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum minullum*)

A couple were seen at Mang Den.

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum ignipectus*)

Tam Dao, Mang Den and Mount Lang Bian.

SCARLET-BACKED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum cruentatum*)

Fantastic views at Yok Don and Cat Tien. Unlike most flowerpecker encounters, these were at eye level.

Nectariidae (*Sunbirds & Spiderhunters*)

RUBY-CHEEKED SUNBIRD (*Chalcoparia singalensis*)

Several sightings at Cat Tien.

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (BLACK-THROATED) (*Aethopyga saturata ochre*)

We saw the nominate race at Mang Den.

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (DALAT) (*Aethopyga saturata johnsi*)

This subspecific form of Black-throated Sunbird is endemic to the Langbian Plateau and we saw one quite well feeding in some low flowers at Ta Nung Valley.

MRS. GOULD'S SUNBIRD (PURPLE-RUMPED) (*Aethopyga gouldiae annamensis*)

Another subspecies that is endemic to the Dalat Plateau. We saw it at Mount Lang Bian and Ta Nung Valley.

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga nipalensis*)

Several were seen with mixed flocks at Ngoc Linh.

CRIMSON SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga siparaja*)

Cuc Phuong and Cat Tien.

FORK-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga christinae*)

Many nice sightings at Cuc Phuong where it is the most commonly seen sunbird.

PURPLE-NAPED SPIDERHUNTER (*Kurochkinogramma hypogrammicum*)

Good views on the hike to Crocodile Lake.

LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera longirostra*)

Heard at several places, but seen well at Cat Tien.

STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera magna*)

This species was also heard many places but most of the time stayed out of sight. Everyone finally had great views at Ta Nung Valley near Dalat where there were many cooperative individuals feeding in open situations.

Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)

ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD (*Irena puella*)

A pair was seen in a fruiting tree near the accommodations at Cat Tien. This is quite an exquisite species when seen well.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

BLUE-WINGED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis moluccensis*)

This was the most common leafbird of the tour and we had many sightings throughout the tour.

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis aurifrons*)

A few people had great close up views after lunch at Crocodile Lake.

ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis hardwickii*)

This was only seen by those who went to Tam Dao.

Estrildidae (Waxbills & Allies)

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*)

There were many in the roadside brush at Ta Nung Valley near Dalat.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*)

Just one during the tour at that was when we stopped for photos at the bridge at Phong Nha. There were also some around the hotel in Ho Chi Minh City.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*)

Abundant.

Motacillidae (Wagtails & Pipits)

FOREST WAGTAIL (*Dendronanthus indicus*)

Several flushed off of the road between our accommodations and the Crocodile Lake trailhead at Cat Tien.

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*)

The most common wagtail of the tour. It was frequently seen flushing from roadsides.

EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla tschutschensis*)

Just a single sighting while scoping the fields across from the lunch stop on the way from Cuc Phuong to Phong Nha.

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*)

Only seen on our morning outing to Banana Island outside Hanoi.

PADDYFIELD PIPIT (*Anthus rufulus*)

A few sightings in flooded fields early in the tour.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*)

Surprisingly just a single sighting at Phong Nha. This is a wintering species in Vietnam and perhaps we were just a bit early for them.

RED-THROATED PIPIT (*Anthus cervinus*)

Jan had one in the scope in a flooded rice field near Bach Ma, but it disappeared before anyone else could get on it.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias & Allies)

VIETNAMESE GREENFINCH (*Chloris monguilloti*)

A Vietnamese endemic found only on the Langbian Plateau that turned out to be easy this time around. We had nice looks at several places during our outings there.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*)

Nice looks at a female that was with a mixed flock on Mount Lang Bian.

Total for the tour: 322 species

MAMMALS

DEVIL-NOSED BAT (*Murina beelzebub*)

Minh had this one staked out in tree cavity at Cat Tien.

PIG-TAILED MACAQUE (*Macaca nemestrina*)

A few along the road at Cat Tien.

STUB-TAILED MACAQUE (*Macaca arctoides*)

RED-SHANKED DOUC LANGUR (*Pygathrix nemaeus*)

One of the world's most colorful primates. We saw these well from the restaurant at Bach Ma. They appeared not to be bothered by the rain as much as we were.

YELLOW-CHEEKED GIBBON (*Nomascus gabriellae*)

One of nature's most amazing vocalists. We heard them every morning at Cat Tien and also had some nice looks as they moved through the trees.

PALLAS'S RED-BELLIED SQUIRREL (*Callosciurus erythraeus*)

These are quite variable in appearance and the ones we saw at Cat Tien looked much like our Eastern grass Squirrels at home.

CAMBODIAN STRIPED SQUIRREL (*Tamiops rodolphii*)

Yok Don and Cat Tien.

FORMOSAN STRIPED SQUIRREL (*Tamiops maritimus*)

Cuc Phuong and Dalat Plateau.

CRAB-EATING MONGOOSE (*Urva urva*)

Seen on our evening owl excursion at Cat Tien by Jan, Tim and Minh.

MUNTJAC (*Muntiacus muntjak*)

Several in the grasslands at Cat Tien

SAMBAR (*Cervus unicolor*)

Cat Tien grasslands.

GAUR (*Bos gaurus*)

Cat Tien grasslands.

Total for the tour: 12 species

HERPS

COMMON HOUSE GECKO (*Hemidactylus frenatus*)

These were pretty much everywhere. I counted 34 on the walls outside my room at Cat Tien.

TOKAY GECKO (*Gekko gekko*)

What an amazing auditory performer this species is. We heard them often as we walked in forested habitats and were able to see one in the restaurant our first evening at cat Tien.

SIAMESE CROCODILE (*Crocodylus siamensis*)

At one time these had been extirpated from Vietnam, but have been reintroduced at Crocodile Lake.

OTHER CREATURES OF INTEREST

BROWN LEECH (*Haemadipsa zuelanica*)

We certainly didn't have to look for these.....they found us.



