

Thailand 3.2.-18.2.2008

Thailand is a terrific place to go birding with a great variety of birds, a good infrastructure and friendly people. Getting around is fairly easy if you have a rented car, roads signs include English in most cases. However, some of the spots visited require a 4WD.

The parks can be crowded with (foreign and local) tourists especially on weekends. Except for Kaeng Krachan there always were other birders to share information (or even photo hides) with, thanks to valuable hints I could boast my tally to 326 species.

Due to a shortage of time, I had to take two inland flights (Bangkok ↔ Chiang Mai), a bigger amount of time would have been desirable to lower costs.

Helpful references were:

1. Books

Craig Robson (2002): Birds of Thailand.

Boonsong Lekagul & Philip D. Round (1991): Birds of Thailand

2. Trip Reports and other internet sources

Thailand Nov 26th – Dec 17th by Christoph Moning & Christian Wagner.

(<http://www.birdinggermany.de/thailand02.htm>)

Thaibirding-Site by Nick Upton with descriptions of the important birding sites in Thailand. Includes maps, target birds, Checklists and Links to other trip reports. Absolutely essential!!

(http://www.thaibirding.com/locations/locations_map.htm)

The Sites visited:

North:

1. Doi Chiang Dao - Temple area
2. Doi Chiang Dao - Den Ya Kat
3. Doi Chiang Dao - Rice Paddies
4. Mae Hia Agricultural Center
5. Doi Inthanon National Park

Centre/ east:

6. Khao Yai NP
7. Khok Kham salt pans

West:

8. Kaeng Krachan NP



Khok Kham saltpans (3.2.2008; 38 species)

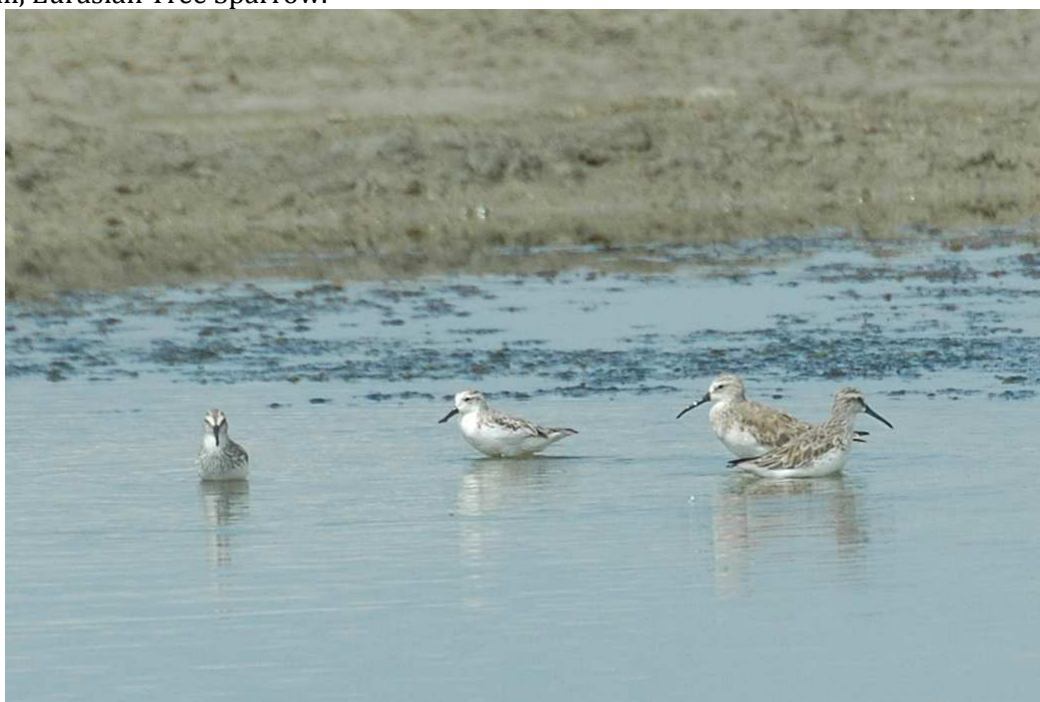
General information: Khok Kham Saltpans is a legendary site, known for many wader-species such as Long-toed Stints, Broad-billed Sandpipers, Great Knots and others. But the star of the area is Spoon-billed Sandpipers that overwinters in small numbers. The area is large and the birds frequently change the pools due to water levels and food availability, so the best strategy of finding this bird is finding Mr. Ti. He knows the area and frequently guides birders. He has a small café which I couldn't find despite good descriptions. Fortunately I ran into a guy wearing a Spoon-billed-Sandpiper-T-Shirt. After asking him, if he was Mr. Ti, he grabbed his cell, made a call and 10 minutes later Mr. Ti picked me up. After a search of about 1h we found one bird. Mr. Ti charges no money, but you may buy a drink in his café and make a donation.

Access: Get onto Rama 2 road towards Samut Sakorn. Approaching Samut Sakorn look out for signs to Mahachai Samut Sakorn, one needs to keep to the left to avoid missing the turning. If exit 1 is missed there is a second exit a little further up the road.

Having found the way to Samut Sakorn one must get to the salt farms. If coming from exit 1 take the first major left hand turn after entering the town and follow the road to Mr Tii's birding centre. If taking the second exit then continue straight over the traffic lights and follow the road out towards Mr Tii's birding centre. The birding centre is easily missed but two large bridges over a canal are very obvious landmarks.

Where to go: The saltpans are more or less the only place to go, however there seems to be a more coastal site nearby that offers chances for Nordmann's Greenshank. I was pretty much in a rush, as I wanted to get to Kkaeng Krachan before the gates closed, so most of what I noted sort of dropped off while searching Spoon-billed Sandpiper.

Species encountered: Collared Kingfisher, Himalayan Swiftlet, Rock Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Red Knot, Great Knot, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Little Stint, Red-necked Stint, Long-toed Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, Brown-headed Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Little Tern, Whiskered Tern, Little Cormorant, Indian Cormorant, Little Egret, Great Egret, Grey Heron, Chinese Pond Heron, Little Heron, Large-billed Crow, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Common Myna, White-vented Myna, Barn Swallow, Streak-eared Bulbul, Plain Prinia, Yellow Wagtail, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.



from left to right: Broad-billed Sandpiper, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpipers

Kaeng Krachan (3.2. - 6.2.2008; 132 species)

General information: Thailand's largest National Park with large areas of evergreen forest at different altitudes. The park is said to be busy during holidays and on weekends, during my stay it was nearly deserted. Birding has to be done mainly from the road, as there are few tracks. The park has two camp-sites: Ban Krang and Panoen Tong near the summit (30 km from the entrance). I paid 320 Bht for 3 nights at Ban Krang campsite, which can easily be reached with a regular car. However, the road between Ban Krang and Panoen Tong near the summit, requires a 4WD. The road is narrow, steep and often wet, therefore directions to go uphill/downhill are scheduled. Uphill hours are 5:30 - 7:30 am and 1-3 pm. Food is usually (but not reliably) available at the camp sites. Mammals and butterflies are big attractions as well, leopard occurs in fair numbers, elephants sometimes cross the camp-site at night - be aware, they can get quite aggressive when approached.

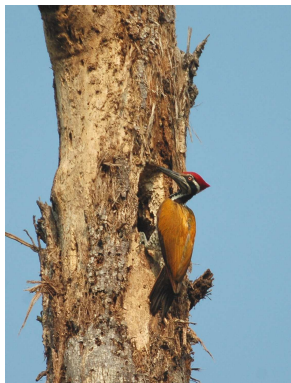
Access: From Bangkok, Kaeng Krachan is a drive of about three hours. Get onto Rama 2 road in the southwest and join the Petkasem Highway heading towards Petchaburi for about two hours; continue through Petchaburi until the town of Tha Yang where there are signposts to Panoen Tung in Kaeng Krachan National Park. Follow this road to a strangely angled junction - bear right here and continue until reaching the dam. Ban Krang camp and Panoen Tung are signposted here.

What to see: There are numerous species worth visiting the park. Species that are hard to find elsewhere are Ratched-tailed Treepie (the only known spot in Thailand) and White-fronted Scops-Owl. Otherwise 8 species of Broadbill are known from the park, Blue and Eared Pitta are seen regularly and Grey Peacock-Pheasant, Kalij Pheasant are possibilities but are hard to find.

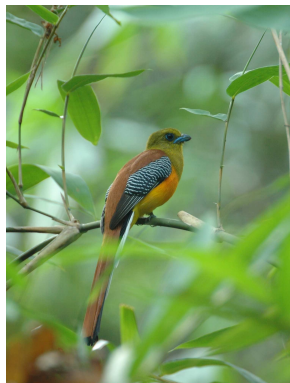
Where to go:

Access road: The access road leads through rather dry forest with a few specialities, though I have not spent much time searching. However, these forests should not be underestimated, as was proven by a stop at km 17 from the park entrance that produced **Heart-spotted** and **Laced Woodpecker**, **Greater Racket-railed Drongo**, **Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher**, **Sultan Tit** and **Tickell's Brown Hornbill**; further on was the biggest surprise, a **Malayan Night-Heron**.

Ban Krang Campsite: The camp site and its surroundings were very productive but without outstanding observations. **Crested Goshawk**, several **Barbets**, **Black-capped** and **Rufous-**



Greater Flameback



Orange-breasted Trogon



Tickell's Brown Hornbill



Blue-bearded Bee-Eater

backed Kingfishers were seen daily, **Blue-bearded Bee-Eaters** once. **Asian Barred Owlet**, **Bay Owl** and **Large-tailed Nightjar** were heard at night and sometimes even seen at daytime. Sometimes White-fronted Scops-Owl roosts on the camp-site (though I did not discover it there). Common **Flycatchers** were **Asian Brown** and **Taiga** but other species such as **Blue-and-white** occurred. **Golden-crested** and **Hill Mynas** were welcome varieties to the usual dish.

Streams 1-3: Going upwards towards Panoen Tong, you cross three streams. All of them are worth checking out, though I did not really discover a lot, except for a few species like **Moustached Barbet** and **Orange-breasted Trogon**. Stream 1 and 2 is where many observers have

seen or heard **White-fronted Scops-Owl**. I tried all evenings. During the second evening I heard calls of the bird coming from my left. Shortly afterwards an owl flew by hardly visible in the dusk followed by calls from my right. I hoped for better views but at least the bird was there. If you go for this species, be aware of elephants!

km 27.5: At km 27.5 a small car park is visible near an old sign with a bird on it. This area is frequently recommended and known for Ratched-tailed Treepie (which I missed here). Nice ones here were **Orange-breasted Trogon, Raffle's Malkoha, Vernal Hanging-Parrot, Green Magpie, Ochraeous Bulbul, White-crested Laughingthrush, Black-and-yellow Broadbill** and **Golden Babbler**. I did not spend much time here, as I needed to keep up the "uphill-schedule", there is probably a lot more to discover here.

Panoen Tong: Probably the most productive site although I spent only limited time. There is lots to see on the camp site, and along the main road, a few viewpoints are always worth checking out. **Ratched-tailed Treepie** is known to be in the vicinity of the lodge, fortunately it showed well during my visit. Lots of **Bulbuls** such as **Flavescent, Ashy** or **Mountain** were present, so were great numbers of **Leaf-Warbler (Radde's, Pale-legged)** though I had to leave many of them unidentified. A big surprise and obviously quite unusual was the sighting of a **Green Cochoa** along the main road a little downhill from the camp-site. Birds of prey in the area were **Besra** and **Mountain Hawk Eagle**.

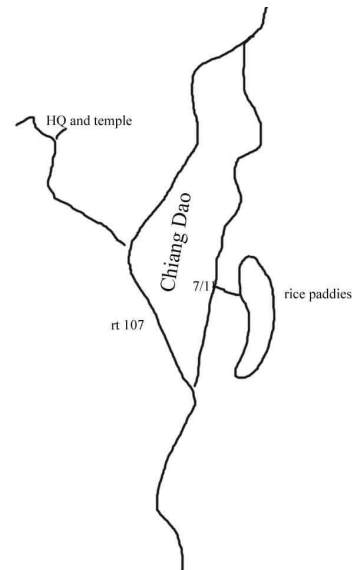
Species encountered: Red Junglefowl, Little Grebe, White-browed Piculet, Buff-rumped Woodpecker, Black-and-Buff Woodpecker, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Greater Yellownape, Streak-breasted Woodpecker, Laced Woodpecker, Greater Flameback, Great Barbet, Green-eared Barbet, Blue-throated Barbet, Moustached Barbet, Blue-eared Barbet, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Great Hornbill, Tickell's Brown Hornbill, Orange-breasted Trogon, White-throated Kingfisher, Black-capped Kingfisher, Rufous-backed Kingfisher, Blue-bearded Bee-Eater, Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater, Greater Coucal, Oriental Cuckoo, Violet Cuckoo, Drongo Cuckoo, Green-billed Malkoha, Raffle's Malkoha, Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, Indian Roller, Dollarbird, Vernal Hanging-Parrot, Himalayan Swiftlet, Asian Palm-Swift, Pacific Swift, Brown-backed Needletail, Grey-rumped Treeswift, White-fronted Scops-Owl, Bay Owl, Collared Owlet, Asian Barred Owlet, Large-tailed Nightjar, Spotted Dove, Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, Little Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Shikra, Besra, Crested Goshawk, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Little Egret, Chinese Pond-Heron, Malayan Night-Heron, Banded Broadbill, Black-and-yellow Broadbill, Greater Green Leafbird, Blue-winged Leafbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, Brown Shrike, Black Drongo, Ashy Drongo, Crow-billed Drongo, Bronzed Drongo, Spangled Drongo, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Common Green Treepie, Grey Treepie, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Black-naped Oriole, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Scarlet Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, White-throated Fantail, Common Iora, Green Cochoa, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Taiga Flycatcher, Blue-and-white Flycatcher, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama, Common Stonechat, Golden-crested Myna, Hill Myna, Sultan Tit, Asian House-Martin, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-headed Bulbul, Black-crested Bulbul, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Flavescent Bulbul, Streak-eared Bulbul, Ochraeous Bulbul, Ashy Bulbul, Mountain Bulbul, Grey-breasted Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Dark-necked Tailorbird, Asian Stubtail, Radde's Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Pale-legged Leaf-warbler, Plain-tailed Warbler, White-crested Laughingthrush, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Abbott's Babbler, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, Striped Tit-Babbler, Golden Babbler, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, White-hooded Babbler, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Brown-throated Sunbird, Olive-backed Sunbird, Black-throated Sunbird, Grey-breasted Spiderhunter, Streaked Spiderhunter, Grey Wagtail, Pin-tailed Parrotfinch, White-rumped Munia

Doi Chiang Dao (7.2. - 10.2.2008; 129 species)

General information: Doi Chiang Dao National Park lies approximately 90 km north of Chiang Mai. The park offers a lot of variety as there are intact forests at several altitudes up to 2200m with evergreen forests at lower elevations to pine stands at the higher altitudes. Homebase usually is somewhere near the HQ. [Malee's](#) or [Chiang Dao Nest](#) are a popular hostels among birders though prices are comparably high. Birdlife around the headquarters and the Temple area is abundant, however the most sought after species require a Drive to the Den Ya Kat (DYK) area, for which a 4WD is essential. Usually there are other birders around to share observations with, I stumbled into several groups helping me with the Leaf-Warblers and showing me Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl. Nick Upton, who guided a Canadian couple, was so kind to let me join the trip to DYK.

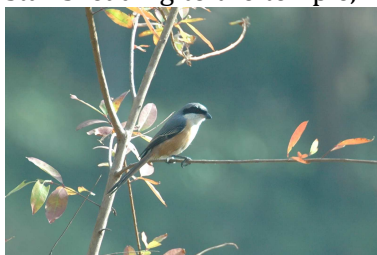
Access: From Chiang Mai, take route 107 northwards until you reach the town of Chiang Dao. From here, different routes have to be taken depending on, where you want to go. The temple area can be reached by following the signpost towards Chiang Dao Cave; the hostels, HQ and the temple are beyond this point. The rices paddies are found by heading on northwards until you pass a 7/11-store, where a flashing road-sign occurs. Turn right immediately after this store. You cross a bridge and get to a crossroads afterwards. Here, the rice paddies begin to your right.

Finding DYK is a bit tricky and I would have had my problems without Nick driving in front of me. The following is his description, but I guess, HQ will be helpful, if you ask there. DYK is reached, driving from the temple back to Chiang Dao. Turn south towards Chiang Mai. After precisely 4.9 Kms there is a sign which says "checkpoint 20 Km" which has replaced the former green-roofed bus shelter landmark. A series of roads on the right all go towards the dirt track that heads up the mountain and one must simply twist and turn through the maze of roads until they funnel into one. Once this turns into a dirt track the quality deteriorates rapidly.



What to see: Most birders visiting want to see Giant Nuthatch and Hume's Pheasant. Both occur at DYK, a 4WD is necessary to get there. The mysterious Deignan's Babbler, treated as a separate species by some authorities, also occurs at DYK. Rusty-naped Pittas occur in the temple area and Grey-headed Lapwings and Wire-tailed Swallows can be seen in the rice-paddies.

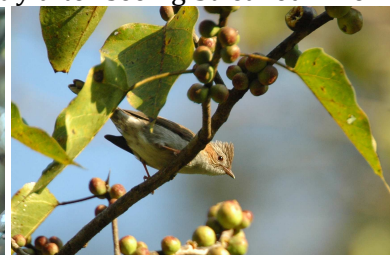
Where to go: In the temple area, everything between Mallee's and the temple should be checked out carefully. Especially fruiting trees should be observed patiently as there is always coming and going in these trees. Patience is rewarded here. Grey-backed Shrike preferred the more open areas. Lots of **Leaf-Warblers**, **White-Eyes** and **Sunbirds** occurred in the vicinity of the temple, the surrounding forests have **Hooded Pitta** (that I missed) and **Rusty-naped Pitta**, **Streaked Wren Babbler** and **White-crowned Forktail**. For the latter species, a small gully entering the forest just below the temple is a good choice. **Bay Owl** and **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** were heard each night and seen once from the clearing below the temple. According to Nick Upton, **Limestone Wren-Babbler** does not occur although it is frequently claimed. At the foot of the stairs leading to the temple, I had good looks at a bird (shortly after seeing Streaked Wren-Bab-



Grey-backed Shrike



Brown-cheeked Fulvetta



Striated Yuhina

bler) with a whitish belly and clearly visible, bold throat streaks that I do regard a Limestone Wren-Babbler.

DYK is a must. Remember to get a permit at the parks HQ (located in the temple area) prior to your visit. **Giant Nuthatch** was seen going uphill, I can't quite remember the exact place. It was somewhere between the checkpoint and the substation. If you drive over a ridge with a few dead pines, you should try for this species. **Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush** was also seen here. About 1 km below the substation the road takes a sharp right turn and a small track leads uphill in front of you. This spot was very rewarding: **Hume's Pheasant**, **Slaty-blue Flycatcher**, **Spot-winged Grosbeak**, **Rusty-cheeked** and **Coral-billed Scimitar-Babblers** were all seen here. Later on we parked the car at the substation and made our way uphill towards the summit. About 100m past the substation, Nick Upton discovered a group of birds that he claimed to be **Deignan's Babblers** after studying them quite a while. Other species on this track included **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker**, **Pale Blue Flycatcher**, **Oriental White-Eye**, **Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler**, **Chestnut Bunting** and **Large Hawk-Cuckoo**. Giant Nuthatch is along this trail as well, though we didn't find it. Black-tailed Crake is supposed to be at the pond at the substation.

The **rice paddies** offer a good chance of seeing a completely different set of birds, though I wasn't able to spend much time here. **Wire-tailed Swallow** was perched on the wire at the crossroads described above. Turning right there, drive on, until you reach another crossroads with a road going left. Here, the chances for **Grey-headed Lapwing** are excellent, I had 17 birds. Other species were **Black-shouldered Kite**, **Ashy Woodswallow** and **Pin-tailed Snipe**. Check out the snipes in the area carefully, as Common Snipe is present too. There are several observations of Painted Snipe here.

Species encountered: Red Junglefowl, Mrs Hume's Pheasant, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Greater Yellownappe, Great Barbet, Blue-eared Barbet, Blue-throated Barbet, Common Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, Greater Coucal, Violet Cuckoo, Green-billed Malkoha, Common Hoopoe, Himalayan Swiftlet, Fork-tailed Swift, House Swift, Collared Scops-Owl, Collared Owlet, Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, Bay Owl, Large-tailed Nightjar, Great-eared Nightjar, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon, Pin-tailed Snipe, Grey-headed Lapwing, Crested Goshawk, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Common (Eastern) Buzzard, Black-shouldered Kite Chinese Pond-Heron, Rusty-naped Pitta, Blue-winged Leafbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, Brown Shrike, Grey-backed Shrike, Ashy Drongo, Bronzed Drongo, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Eurasian Jay, Grey Treepie, Slender-billed Oriole, Black-hooded Oriole, Maroon Oriole, Grey-chinned Minivet, Long-tailed Minivet, Scarlet Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, White-throated Fantail, Common Iora, Common Woodshrike, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, Blue Rock-Thrush, Red-throated (Taiga) Flycatcher, Little Pied Flycatcher, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Blue-throated Flycatcher, Hill Blue-Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Pale Blue Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama, White-capped Water-Redstart, White-crowned Forktail, Common (Siberian) Stonechat, Pied Bushchat, Grey Bushchat, Ashy Woodswallow, Common Myna, White-vented Myna, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Giant Nuthatch, Great Tit, Wire-tailed Swallow, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Striated Swallow, Black-headed Bulbul, Black-crested Bulbul, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Sooty-headed Bulbul, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Flavescent Bulbul, Grey-eyed Bulbul, Puff-throated Bulbul, Mountain Bulbul, Black Bulbul, Hill Prinia, Rufescent Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Two-barred Warbler, Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, White-tailed Leaf-Warbler, Oriental White-Eye, Japanese White-Eye, Bianchi's Warbler, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Buff-breasted Babbler, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Streaked Wren-Babbler, Limestone Wren-Babbler, Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler, Striped Tit-Babbler, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler, Blue-winged Minla, Striated Yuhina, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, White-bellied Yuhina, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, Plain Flowerpecker, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Purple Sunbird, Black-throated Sunbird, Little Spiderhunter, White Wagtail, Spot-winged Grosbeak, Chestnut Bunting

Doi Inthanon (10.2. - 14.2. 2008; 107 species)

General information: Doi Inthanon National Park is home to Thailand's highest mountain with a summit of 2565 m above sea level and covers almost 500 km². This means, there is a good variety of different habitats and birds. To reach the summit, a drive of 40+ km is required. The most popular birding spots are quite a long distance apart, however, there is plenty of possibilities to enter the forest while driving uphill. Accommodation within the park is rather sparse, but there are possibilities at Mr Daengs and a nearby camp-site. I stayed at The Inthanon Highland Resort (<http://www.inthanonhighlandresort.com/>) outside the park borders.

Access: From Chiang Mai, travel southwards along road 108. From here, Doi Inthanon is sign-posted. A drive to the summit from just outside the park boundaries takes about 45 minutes, so long distances have to be covered.

What to see: Due to its size and different altitudes there is lots to discover. To me Doi Inthanon is a Thrush-paradise, many sought after but skulking species such as Grey-sided or Dark-sided Thrush occur. Lesser and White-browed Shortwing definitely are highlights, so are the Cochoas, Yellow-browed Tit, Ashy-throated Warbler, Green-tailed Sunbird or White-capped Water-Redstart. But there is so many birds around that it is hard to name the highlights.

Where to go:

Blossom-headed Parakeet roost: This site is in fact outside the National Park Borders. Shortly before the gate, turn right and head towards the Inthanon Highland Resort. Shortly before the resort turn left onto a dirt track close to a small stream (and rice paddies?). Keep right when the track splits. Stay on the track until you reach an area with several (abandoned?) houses. Here you should keep your eyes open for a small hut with an iron roof (about 3 km from the Highland Resort). **Blossom-headed Parakeets** are present in the high trees near the hut at dusk and dawn, **Rufous Treepie** also frequents this area.

km 13 after making the turn uphill towards the summit, you pass a small bridge: dry forest site that should be visited early in the morning. Not much around, but a good site for **Black-headed Woodpecker** (that I saw) and White-rumped Falcon (that I missed). Other nice observations were **Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker**, **Maroon Oriole** and **Large Cuckooshrike**.

Any Waterfall is good for the Water Redstarts. At Vatcharitan Waterfall (km 20) were **Plumbeous Water Redstart** and **Slaty-backed Forktail**; **White-capped Water Redstart** was further up, though I forgot which Waterfall it was.

Mr Daeng's and the park HQ are located at km 31 and offer food, drinks and accommodation. However, there is lot's of birds in the vicinity that can sometimes even be seen enjoying cool drinks on the patio. A logbook gives informations about recent sightings. Directly behind the restaurant is a small, wet forest that has a few specialities. During my visit I noticed flashes from out of the forest. Shortly afterwards a photographer came and, after I asked, offered me to spend some time in his hide. In about 45 minutes I received great looks of species like **Lesser Shortwing**, **Siberian Blue Robin**, **Dark-sided Thrush** and **Hill Blue-Flycatcher**.



Siberian Blue Robin



Dark-sided Thrush



Hill Blue-Flycatcher

The **Jeep Trail** at km 37.5, just behind the checkpoint, is famous for it's Cochoas. Both *Purple* and *Green Cochoas* are known to occur here, though they are notoriously hard to find It is helpful to know the calls. The best area for the Cochoas seems to be about 800m from the trail start. I had one bird calling like **Purple Cochoa** really close-by but still it took me about half an hour to

discover it. From the short glimpses through the leaves I guess it was PC but I'm not 100% sure. I described the site to a group I stumbled into later. They spent 90 min in that area, heard the bird and saw about as much as me. Probably Purple Cochoa remained the unsatisfying result. But the group was also able to observe two Green Cochoas nearby. Other species seen here were *Lesser Shortwing*, *Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher*, *Slaty-bellied Tesia*, *White-necked Laughingthrush*, *Rufous-fronted Babbler*, *Silver-eared Mesia*, *White-browed* and *Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler*, *Grey-cheeked Fulvetta* and *Black-throated Parrotbill*.

The **Summit broadwalk** is located at the summit and starts opposite the Ranger Station It leads through a moist forest at an altitude of roundabout 2500m. This short easy round-track is not to be missed. *Ashy-throated Warbler*, *Silver-eared Laughingthrush*, *Chestnut-tailed Minla*, *Rufous-winged Fulvetta*, *Green-tailed Sunbirds*, *Mrs Gould's Sunbird*, *Dark-backed Sibia* and *Flavescent Bulbul* were all easy ones, *Ashy Woodpigeon*, *Snowy-browed Flycatcher*, *Orange-flanked Bush-Robin*, *Brown-throated Treecreeper* and *Yellow-browed Tit* were seen in small numbers. *White-browed Shortwing*, *Chestnut* and *Grey-sided Thrush* were seen together in a small patch of maybe 25 m² but required a lot of patience. Without Phil Round telling me the exact spot (he had discovered them 5 minutes earlier) I would probably have missed those. Rufous-throated Partridge, Davison's Leaf Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker and Pygmy Wren Babbler are said to be in the area, but I missed out on those.



Silver-eared Laughingthrush



Snowy-browed Flycatcher



Green-tailed Sunbird

Species encountered: Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker, Black-headed Woodpecker, Lineated barbet, Coppersmith Barbet, Red-headed Trogon, White-throated Kingfisher, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, Indian Roller, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Himalayan Swiftlet, Asian Palm Swift, House Swift, Brown-throated Needletail, Zebra Dove, Ashy Wood-Pigeon, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Crested Goshawk, Grey-faced Buzzard, Common (Eastern) Buzzard, Chinese Pond-Heron, Yellow-bellied Fantail, White-throated Fantail, Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, Grey-sided Thrush, Eyebrowed Thrush, Dark-sided Thrush, Red-throated Flycatcher, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Blue-winged Leafbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Ashy Drongo, Bronzed Drongo, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Large-billed Crow, Common Green Magpie, Rufous Treepie, Maroon Oriole, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Large Cuckooshrike, Grey-chinned Minivet, Long-tailed Minivet, Short-billed Minivet, Scarlet Minivet, Hill Blue-Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Siberian Blue Robin, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Orange-flanked Bush-Robin, White-capped Water redstart, Plumbeous Water-Redstart, Lesser Shortwing, White-browed Shortwing, Slaty-backed Forktail, Siberian Stonechat, Pied Bushchat, Grey Bushchat, Ashy Woodswallow, Black-collared Starling, Chestnut-tailed Starling, Common Myna, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, Brown-throated Treecreeper, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Yellow-browed Tit, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-crested Bulbul, Sooty-headed Bulbul, Puff-throated Bulbul, Mountain Bulbul, Rufescent Prinia, Mountain Tailorbird, Common Tailorbird, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Ashy-throated Warbler, Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, White-tailed (Davinson's) Leaf-Warbler, White-necked Laughingthrush, Silver-eared Laughingthrush, Striped Tit-Babbler, Rufous-fronted Babbler, Silver-eared Mesia, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Rufous-backed Sibia, Dark-backed Sibia, Black-throated Parrotbill, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Purple Sunbird, Mrs Goulds Sunbird, Green-tailed Sunbird, Black-throated Sunbird, Little Spiderhunter, Richard's Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit, White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Scaly-breasted Munia, Little Bunting

Mae Hia Agricultural College: (14.2.2008; 35 species)

General information: Located in the west of Chiang Mai, Mae Hia is dominated by farmland and grassland, with areas of shrubs and pools and a few (small) woodlands. The college is not open for public, but apparently birders are welcome and may skim the premises for birds. I visited this site due to a recommendation from Nick Upton (for seeing Lesser Whistling-Duck, Burmese Shrike and Green Bee-Eater) for only 90 minutes or so during late morning awaiting my flight to Bangkok.

Access: Mae Hia is reached by taking the Chonpratan Road (Outer Ring Road) bordering the canal road on the western side of Chiang Mai. Once you reach it, go southwest for approximately 4.5 kilometres to the canal roads intersection with the Doi Sythep road. The College is sign-posted in Thai (large) and English (small) and can be seen from the road.

What to see: Most birds present are rather common open country species. But there usually are gems to be found, especially during migration of course. Indochinese Bushlark, Ashy Woodswallow and Pied Bushchat, Greater and Lesser Coucals and Prinias are common. The area usually has small numbers of Burmese Shrike. Wire-tailed Swallow, Green Bee-Eater and Lesser Whistling Duck seem to be here regularly during the right season. An observer I met had observed Rubythroat, another species that seems to be a regular visitor.



Burmese Shrike



Lesser Whistling-Duck



Green Bee-Eater

Species encountered: Hoopoe, Wryneck, Brown Shrike, Burmese Shrike, Baya Weaver, Plain-backed Sparrow, Richards Pipit, Indochinese Bushlark, Zebra Dove, White-breasted Waterhen, Asian Koel, Kestrel, Zitting Cisticola, Plain Prinia, Ashy Woodswallow, Red-wattled Lapwing, Common Myna, White-vented Myna, Barn Swallow, Common (Siberian) Stonechat, Pied Bushchat, Grey Bushchat, Blue Rock Thrush, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Lesser Whistling-Duck, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Striated Grassbird, Green Bee-Eater, Olive-backed Sunbird, Purple Sunbird, Grey Heron, Chinese Pond-Heron, Little Pied Flycatcher.

Khao Yai: (15.2. - 17.2.2008, 112 species)

General information: Established in 1962, Khao Yai is Thailand's first National Park. It is located in Central Thailand, about a 3 hours drive north-east of Bangkok.

The park is very popular among locals and tourists, so it can get very busy, at least it was during my visit. Weekends should be avoided.

The park consists of forests and grassland, thus offering a large selection of habitats and species. There are fair numbers of bungalows and two camp-sites along with restaurants. I stayed at Pla Gluay May-camp-site, as there are good chances of finding Blue Pitta and Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo nearby.

Access: If driving from Bangkok, take the northbound highway (Rt 1) to Saraburi. Turn right onto Rt 2 towards Nakorn Ratchasima. Shortly before Pak Chong there are signposts for Khao Yai National Park in English.

What to see: A tally of around 300 species makes it difficult to pick the stars of the area. My aim was to find Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo, Blue Pitta, Silver and Siamese Fireback. Unfortunately I failed on the latter two. There is said to be Eared Pitta in the area. Four species of Hornbill (Oriental Pied, Great, Austen's Brown & Wreathed) occur and can be seen quite easily.



Blue Rock-Thrush occurs in different subspecies



Blue Pitta

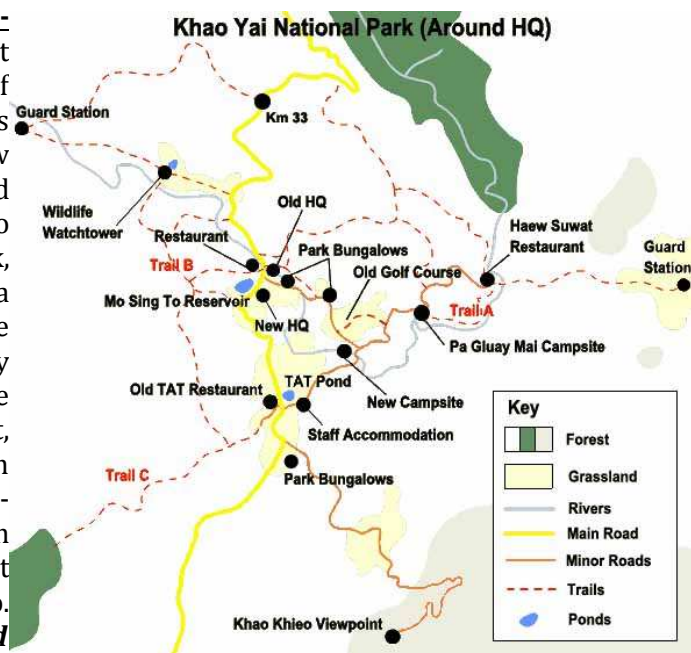
Where to go:

As mentioned before, Pla Gluay May-campsite

is a good opportunity to start the day in a relaxed way. In fact, most of the birding I did, was in and around this site. There is an old toilet block, below that is THE stakeout for **Blue Pitta** and **Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo**. Please do not enter this area from the toilet block, as it drives the birds away. There is a small path going down further up the camp-site. During my stay (and obviously this is a rather familiar sight), there were several photographers tents in the forest, but the guys were so nice, letting me join them into one tent with free space. Patience was required but rewarded with fantastic views of Blue Pitta and short glimpses of Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo. **Siberian Blue-Robin** and **Pale-legged Leaf-Warblers** were other birds seen in the stakeout.

Other species seen from or near the camp included **Oriental Pied Hornbill**, **Rufous-bellied Eagle**, **Hainan Blue Flycatcher**, **Hill Myna** and **Plain Flowerpecker**.

From the camp sites car-park, **Trail A** starts heading towards a waterfall. The trail offers opportunities to find **all the Hornbills**, **Thick-billed Green-Pigeon** and **Long-tailed Broadbill**. Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo and Slaty-backed Forktail are seen here as well, but not by me.



Trail B starts just opposite the Old HQ and is said to be the most rewarding track in the park, though walking and birding is not easy. The pheasants & Pittas as well as the Ground-Cuckoo can be seen along this trail. However leeches can be as problem in the wet season and have driven away birders on many occasions. My visit was not very successful, probably due to a visit during midday. I noted only 20 species with *Common Green Magpie*, *Sultan Tit* and *Great Hornbill* being better ones.

TAT Pond is a small pond south of the HQ. Birds around the pond are rather common but this place is a good site for several swift species. All the needletails can be seen here with *Brown-backed Needletail* being the most common.

The **Wildlife Watchtower** can be rewarding though it is essential to arrive early in the morning, as this place can be highly frequented by noisy visitors scaring the Wildlife away. Salt licks are supposed to attract mammals but don't expect to see much. Birds of the area are rather open country species such as *Chestnut-headed Bee-eater* and *Siberian Stonechat*. Brown

Species encountered: Red Junglefowl, Greater Yellownappe, Green-eared Barbet, Moustached Barbet, Blue-eared Barbet, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Great Hornbill, Austen's Brown Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Orange-breasted Trogon, Red-headed trogon, Common Kingfisher, Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, Green-billed Malkoha, Drongo Cuckoo, Coral-billed Ground Cucokk, Indian Roller, Dollarbird, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Aasian Palm Swift, House Swift, Silver-backed Needletail, Brown-backed Needletail, Collared Owlet, Great-eared Nightjar, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Peaceful Dove, Thick-billed Green Pigeon, Emerald Dove, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Black Baza, Oriental Honey-Buzzard, Shikra, Crested Goshawk, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Chinese Pond-Heron, Blue Pitta, Long-tailed Broadbill, Blue-winged Leafbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Brown Shrike, Grey-backed Shrike, Ashy Drongo, Spangled Drongo, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Large-billed Crow, Common Green Treepie, Black-naped Oriole, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Swinhoe's Minivet, Ashy Mminivet, Scarlet Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Common Iora, Black-naped Monarch, Blue Rock-Thrush, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Red-throated Flycatcher, Hainan Blue Flycatcher, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Siberian Blue Robin, White-rumped Shama, White-crowned Forktail, Siberian Stonechat, Ashy Woodswallow, Common Myna, White-vented Myna, Hill Myna, Sultan Tit, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Black-headed Bulbul, Black-crested Bulbul, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Grey-eyed Bulbul, Puff-throated Bulbul, Rufescent Prinia, Plain Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Radde's Warbler, Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Chestnut-flanked White-Eye, Oriental White-Eye, Plain-tailed Warbler, White-crested Laughingthrush, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Abbott's Babbler, Striped Tit-Babbler, White-bellied Yuhina, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, Plain Flowerpecker, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Olive-backed Sunbird, Little Spiderhunter, Richard's Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit, White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Plain-backed Sparrow.