



birdtour **ASIA**
specialists in asian birding tours

Peninsular Malaysia

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Participants: John Eyre and Mike Shaw



Rufous-tailed Shama

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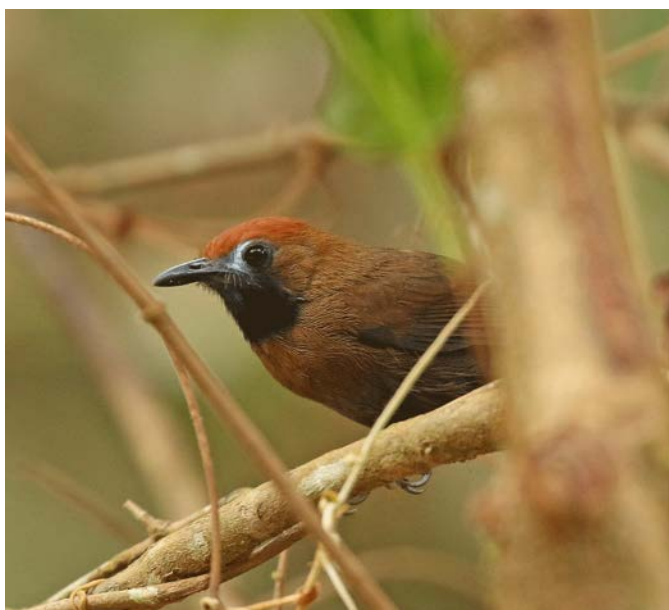
This was a short, highly targeted extension with one species overshadowing all others in importance – Rail-babbler!

On our first day, we arrived at a well-watched area of lowland forest in the south of the peninsula at dawn, and, as soon as it was light enough, we left the dusty access road and went into the forest. With negligible rain for months, and trees shedding their leaves in truckloads, walking silently was a challenge, but before long we heard the monotone whistle we were straining our ears for. The bird called only occasionally, but we were not about to give up easily. Over an hour after having initially located the bird, the Rail-babbler finally crept into view, stretching its neck upwards in the dense vegetation to get a look at us. The views were not great, but the relief

was palpable as John and Mike had their prize 'under the belt'. We gave the bird another 20 minutes, but there was no repeat performance, so we elected to continue on our way in the hope of finding another, albeit in a much happier and more relaxed frame of mind than previously!

The forest was extremely quiet, with only a few birds, such as Black-capped Babbler, Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker and Crimson-winged Woodpecker giving us cause to raise our bins, but persistence paid off as we eventually came within earshot of another calling Rail-babbler, this one sounding much more persistent than the first. It did exactly as we hoped it would, walking slowly through the rather open understorey from our right, then crossing the trail in front of us. High fives were exchanged all round as three Englishmen momentarily lost their stiff upper lip in the Malaysian rainforest! We paused to enjoy a pair of Grey-and-buff Woodpeckers with their comical, conical heads, before the Rail-babbler again took centre-stage as it decided to recross the trail. Several minutes later, as we exchanged notes and reveled in the moment, it was still calling. Should we go for thirds? A bit greedy perhaps, but it seemed rude not to! This time we went into the forest and concealed ourselves, and were rewarded with close views of the bird crouching on a mound flicking its wings and clucking before it descended to the forest floor and walked away from us and out of sight. Mission thoroughly accomplished, and time for lunch!

Rain over lunch and into the afternoon made a huge difference to the level of bird activity, and we were feted with an array of lowland species, and more or less constant action. Finsch's Bulbul was the pick of the many bulbul species seen, and we also enjoyed good looks at Rufous Piculet, Rufous-backed Kingfisher, Fluffy-backed Tit Babbler, Pale Blue and Grey-chested Jungle Flycatchers, Rufous-winged Philentoma, White-bellied Woodpecker and Violet Cuckoo.



Fluffy-backed Tit Babbler and Rufous-winged Philentoma

The next day we found our way to a less frequented part of the forest, and were soon rewarded by a good selection of birds. Crimson-breasted Flowerpeckers and Blue-winged Leafbirds fed in the trailside scrub, while Red-crowned Barbet, Black-thighed Falconet and Little Green Pigeons were seen in the taller trees. Two more Rail-babblers were encountered, although views were much more difficult than on our first day. We surprised a Short-tailed Mongoose foraging along the trail in front of us, and avian highlights included two more lifers for John and Mike - a stunning Red-bearded Bee-eater and a no less resplendent Red-throated Sunbird feeding in a flowering tree. Maroon Woodpecker, Raffles's Malkohas and Grey-rumped Treeswift were other birds of note from the morning.

In the afternoon, rain arrived on cue, and lighting conditions remained gloomy till dark. Birding was good between the showers though, and we picked up Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, a pair of Red-naped Trogons prospecting for a nest site, a male Scarlet-rumped Trogon, and two Grey-chested Jungle Flycatchers engaged in a tuneful vocal duel over territorial boundaries. Grey-and-buff Woodpecker and Violet Cuckoo were again well seen, as was a lingering migrant Dark-sided Flycatcher. During and after dusk we added nice views of hunting Malaysian Eared Nightjar, but two calling Blyth's Frogmouths were not willing to reveal their whereabouts.

On our last morning, we had a few hours before John and Mike were due to fly on to join the Sarawak tour. Again, a pre-dawn calling Blyth's Frogmouth was not for showing itself, nor, frustratingly, was persistently calling Olive-backed Woodpecker. The trails proved more rewarding however, as we came across a recently-fledged juvenile Rufous-tailed Shama - Mike and John's 4th new bird of the trip. We returned to the site of the first day's Rail-

babbler but it was nowhere to be seen or heard. Still, the effort was not entirely wasted, as we had good views of a late male Siberian Blue Robin foraging on the forest floor, another Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher, and a pair of Crested Partridges were flushed from the trail on our return to the car.



Red-naped Trogon and Dark-sided Flycatcher



Red-bearded Bee-eater and Red-throated Sunbird



Blue-winged Leafbird and Short-tailed Mongoose

Systematic List

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga leucogaster</i>	
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	
Crested Goshawk	<i>Tachyspiza trivirgatus</i>	

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

Crested Partridge	<i>Rollulus rouloul</i>	
Great Argus	<i>Argusianus argus</i>	Heard only

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>	
Asian Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica indica</i>	
Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	
Little Green Pigeon	<i>Treron olax</i>	

PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae

Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>	Heard only
Blue-rumped Parrot	<i>Psittinus cyanurus</i>	Heard only

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

Black-thighed Falconet	<i>Microhierax fringillarius</i>	
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CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae

Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	
Violet Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus</i>	
Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>	Heard only
Asian Drongo Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris brachyurus</i>	
Raffles's Malkoha	<i>Rhinorthis chlorophaea</i>	
Chestnut-breasted Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus curvirostris</i>	
Chestnut-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus sumatranus</i>	

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena lempiji</i>	Heard only
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CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Podargidae

Blyth's Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus affinis affinis</i>	Heard only
CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae		
Malaysian Eared Nightjar	<i>Eurostopodus temminckii</i>	
Large-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>	
APODIFORMES: Apodidae		
Edible-nest Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus fuciphagus germani</i>	
Silver-rumped Spinetail	<i>Rhaphidura leucopygialis</i>	
Brown-backed Needletail	<i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>	
House Swift	<i>Apus [affinis] nipalensis</i>	
APODIFORMES: Hemiprocnidae		
Grey-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>	
Whiskered Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne comata</i>	
TROGONIFORMES: Trogonidae		
Red-naped Trogon	<i>Harpactes kasumba kasumba</i>	
Diard's Trogon	<i>Harpactes diardii sumatranus</i>	Heard only
Scarlet-rumped Trogon	<i>Harpactes duvaucelii</i>	
CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae		
Rufous-collared Kingfisher	<i>Actenoides concretus peristephes</i>	Heard only
Banded Kingfisher	<i>Lacedo pulchella pulchella</i>	Heard only
Rufous-backed Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx rufidorsa rufidorsa</i>	
CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae		
Red-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctyornis amictus</i>	
Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis viridis</i>	
CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae		
Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	
BUCEROTIFORMES: Bucerotidae		
Oriental Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris convexus</i>	
Black Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros malayanus</i>	
Bushy-crested Hornbill	<i>Anorrhinus galeritus</i>	
PICIFORMES: Megalaimidae		
Yellow-crowned Barbet	<i>Psilopogon henricii</i>	Heard only
Red-crowned Barbet	<i>Psilopogon rafflesii</i>	
Blue-eared Barbet	<i>Psilopogon duvaucelii duvaucelii</i>	
PICIFORMES: Picidae		
Rufous Piculet	<i>Sasia abnormis</i>	
Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Celeus brachyurus squamigularis</i>	Heard only
White-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus javensis javensis</i>	
Banded Woodpecker	<i>Picus miniaceus malaccensis</i>	
Crimson-winged Woodpecker	<i>Picus puniceus observandus</i>	
Checker-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus mentalis humii</i>	Heard only
Olive-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium rafflesii rafflesii</i>	Heard only
Maroon Woodpecker	<i>Blythipicus rubiginosus</i>	
Buff-necked Woodpecker	<i>Meiglyptes tukki tukki</i>	Heard only
Grey-and-buff Woodpecker	<i>Hemicircus concretus sordidus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Eurylaimidae		
Banded Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus javanicus</i>	Heard only
Black-and-yellow Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus ochromalus</i>	Heard only
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae		
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>	

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica gutturalis/mandschurica</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae		
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Tephrodornithidae		
Black-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus hirundinaceus</i>	
Large Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis virgatus</i>	
Rufous-winged Philentoma	<i>Philentoma pyrhoptera</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae		
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus speciosus xanthogaster</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae		
Puff-backed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus eutilotus</i>	Heard only
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier personatus</i>	
Cream-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus simplex simplex</i>	
Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus brunneus</i>	
Spectacled Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus erythroptalmos</i>	
Finsch's Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus finschii</i>	
Yellow-bellied Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus phaeocephalus</i>	Heard only
Hairy-backed Bulbul	<i>Tricholestes criniger</i>	
Buff-vented Bulbul	<i>Iole olivacea</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Chloropseidae		
Greater Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>	
Blue-winged Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Aegithinidae		
Green Iora	<i>Aegithina viridissima</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae		
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius maculicollis</i>	Heard only
Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis atrogularis</i>	Heard only
Rufous-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sericeus hesperius</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae		
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae		
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	
Rufous-tailed Shama	<i>Copsychus pyrropygus</i>	
Dark-sided Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>	
Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis umbratilis</i>	
Pale Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis unicolor</i>	
Siberian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora cyane</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae		
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	
Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone affinis</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Timaliidae		
Pin-striped Tit Babbler	<i>Mixornis gularis</i>	Heard only
Fluffy-backed Tit-Babbler	<i>Macronus ptilosus</i>	
Chestnut-rumped Babbler	<i>Stachyris maculata</i>	Heard only
Chestnut-winged Babbler	<i>Stachyris erythroptera</i>	Heard only
PASSERIFORMES: Pellorneidae		
Short-tailed Babbler	<i>Malacocincla malaccensis</i>	Heard only
Moustached Babbler	<i>Malacopteron magnirostre</i>	
Sooty-capped Babbler	<i>Malacopteron affine</i>	Heard only

Black-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum capistratum</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Acanthizidae		
Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>	Heard only
PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae		
Ruby-cheeked Sunbird	<i>Chalcoparia singalensis</i>	
Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>	
Red-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes rhodolaemus</i>	
Purple-naped Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera hypogrammica</i>	
Thick-billed Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera crassirostris</i>	Heard only
Spectacled Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera flavigaster</i>	
Yellow-eared Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera chryso-genys</i>	
Grey-breasted Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera modesta</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Dicaeidae		
Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Prionochilus maculatus oblitus</i>	
Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Prionochilus percussus ignicapilla</i>	
Orange-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum trigonostigma trigonostigma</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae		
Dark-throated Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthonotus</i>	Heard only
PASSERIFORMES: Irenidae		
Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Dicuridae		
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae		
Malayan Black Magpie	<i>Platysmurus leucopterus</i>	Heard only
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	
Southern Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Eupetidae		
Rail-babbler	<i>Eupetes macrocerus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae		
Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	
Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	
Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanensis</i>	Introduced
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae		
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Ploceidae		
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	
PASSERIFORMES: Vireonidae		
Erpornis	<i>Erpornis zantholeuca</i>	
MAMMALS		
Common Treeshrew	<i>Tupaia glis longipes</i>	
Dusky Langur	<i>Presbytis obscurus</i>	
Long-tailed Macaque	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	
Sunda Pig-tailed Macaque	<i>Macca nemestrina</i>	
White-handed Gibbon	<i>Hylobates lar</i>	Heard only
Short-tailed Mongoose	<i>Herpestes brachyurus</i>	
Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	

Sunda Black-banded Squirrel
Slender Squirrel

Callosciurus nigrovittatus
Sundasciurus tenuis



That "Rail Babbler" moment!