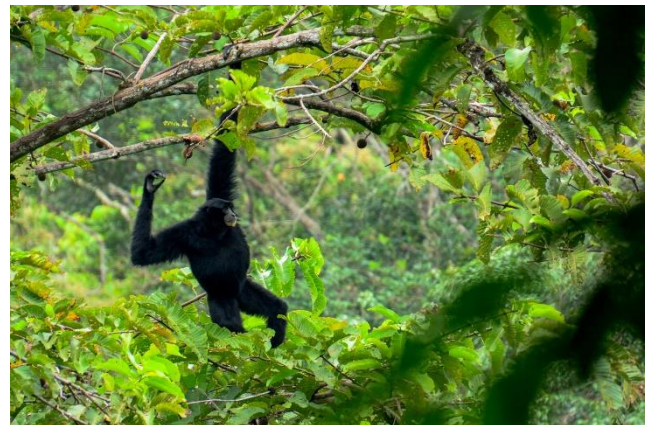


Malaysia's Highlights – A Birdwatching Tour

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline Itinerary

Day 1	Fly Kuala Lumpur
Day 2	Kuala Selangor
Day 3-4	Bukit Tinggi
Day 5-7	Fraser's Hill
Day 8-12	Taman Negara (2-nights Kuala Tahan, 3-nights Sungai Relau)
Day 13	Kuala Lumpur
Day 14	Fly London, Arrive London



Black-and-yellow Broadbill, Garnet Pitta, Siamang

Departs

September/October

Focus

Birds

Grading

A/B. Day walks only.

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code MYS04) or brochure

Highlights

- Stunning Southeast Asian Endemics
- Glorious Galliformes – chances of Mountain and Malayan Peacock-Pheasants, Great Argus and Ferruginous Partridge
- Chances of shy forest mammals, such as Smooth-coated Otter & gibbons
- Broadbills, laughing-thrushes, sunbirds, flycatchers, pittas, hornbills & much more



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

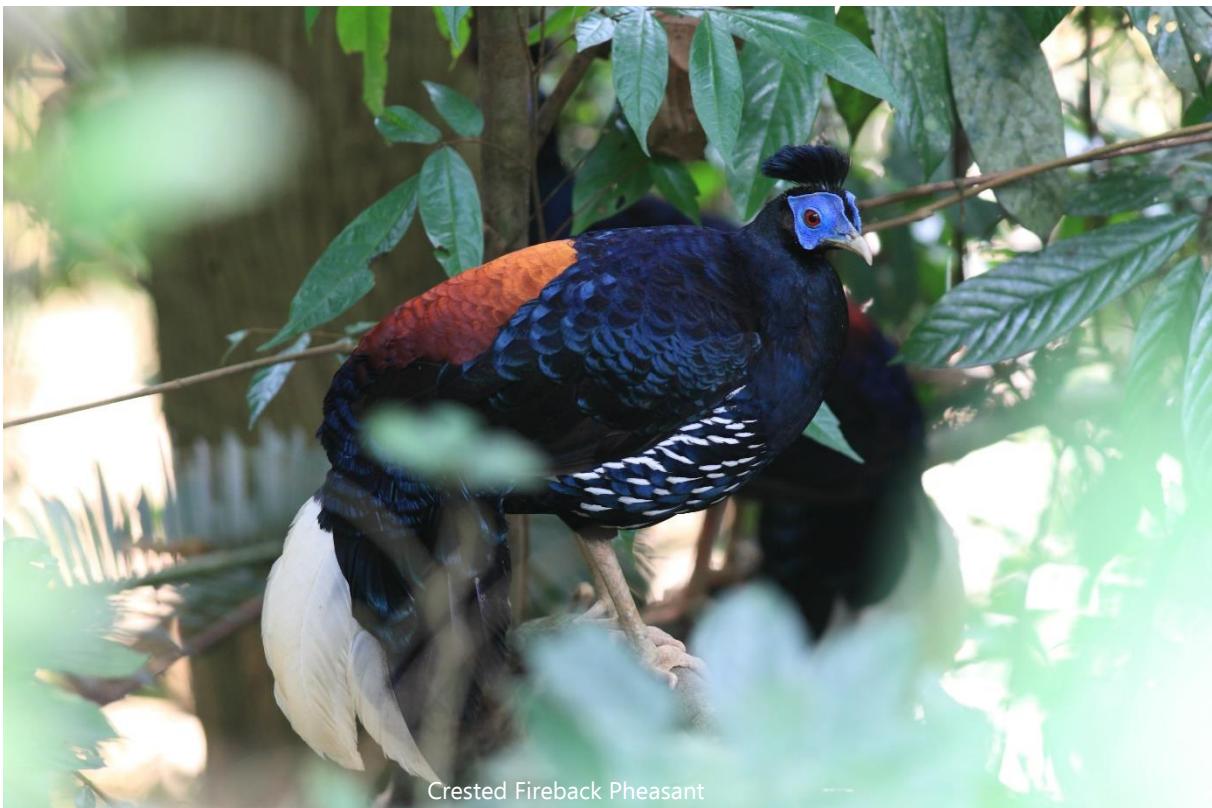
E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Introduction

The Federation of Malaysia is one of the region's most important and rapidly developing nations, with an increasingly significant role in global politics. However, despite the tremendous pace of industrial growth, the country has managed to preserve large tracts of forest which today are regarded as among the finest rainforest reserves in the world. Paramount among these is the magnificent Taman Negara National Park, embracing over 4,140 square kilometres of lowland forest in the north of peninsular Malaysia; a verdant ocean of trees which conceals a myriad of exotic birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects. Taman Negara boasts the largest tract of lowland forest in Asia and is a mysterious world of hornbills, trogons, pittas and many other rare and elusive creatures. Also present, though hardly ever seen, are rare mammals such as Clouded Leopard, Leopard, Asian Elephant, three species of deer, Malayan Tapir and Sun Bear. More than 3,000 species of plants have been recorded in the park alone.

Many Southeast Asian bird species are limited to the Malay Peninsula and it's not a surprise given that the area is home to some of the world's oldest Dipterocarp forests. On this holiday we'll explore some of the country's top birding sites, where we can expect to see upwards of 200 bird species including highly sought after species such as Garnet Pitta, a whole host of rare pheasants and partridges and some amazing broadbills. Red-bearded and Blue-throated Bee-eaters may be found, whilst Wreathed and Helmeted Hornbills are possible. The range of species is superb with a whole host of raptors, woodpeckers, malkohas, owls, swifts and nightjars all possible on this action-packed holiday.



Crested Fireback Pheasant

Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

In Flight

We will depart around midday from London Heathrow on a scheduled flight to Kuala Lumpur.

Day 2

Arrive Kuala Selangor

After arriving in Kuala Lumpur in the morning, we head for De Palma Resort Kuala Selangor with a few quick stops on route. De Palma is a comfortable hotel about an hour and a half away from the hustle and bustle of the city. We will be based here for one night. The name Kuala Selangor means 'estuary of the Selangor river', and it's in this coastal area that this tour begins its search for species.

This first afternoon, we will spend our time exploring the open mudflats north of Kuala Selangor, which are frequented by flocks of terns and waders at low tide, providing opportunities to see a fine selection of migrant shorebirds - including several species of plover, sandpipers, stints, godwits and curlew. A few miles away at Sekinchan rice fields, we might find Long-toed Stints, Greater Painted-snipe, Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns, White-breasted Woodswallow and Black Drongo inhabiting areas of wet paddy fields interspersed with stretches of more open cultivations and scrub. Greater Spotted Eagles and Black-winged Kite both occur here along with Lesser Coucal and a number of characteristic dwellers of open farmland such as Baya Weaver and Zitting Cisticola. If conditions allow, we will head out after dark to look for a number of owl species including Buffy Fish Owl.

Days 3 - 4

Bukit Tinggi

Today we leave Kuala Selangor, and head to higher elevation. For the next 2 nights, we will be based in the sub-montane forests, aiming for superstar species of these forests such as Mountain Peacock-Pheasant, and Ferruginous Partridge that come to areas viewed from screens. We'll also look for Silver-breasted and Long-tailed Broadbills, Fire-Tufted and Black-browed Barbets, and



Mountain Peacock-Pheasant

Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons. With a great deal of luck, we may even encounter the elusive Rail-babbler. For our 2-night stay, we will be in a comfortable hotel with wonderfully scenic highland views. After lunch on our second day here, we will depart for Fraser's Hill to search for a

whole range of new species. Three nights will be spent at Fraser's Hill, staying in a comfortable hotel.

Days 5 - 7

Fraser's Hill

The old colonial hill-station of Fraser's Hill (1220m asl) was much beloved by the British who found the cool air and tree-clad hills a welcome contrast to the heat of the lowlands. Tea is grown at these elevations and there are many reminders of the British connection in the place names. During our stay we will attempt to escape from the busier areas and concentrate our birdwatching on the excellent tracts of pristine sub-montane forest found in the vicinity. As in all forests, the success of each excursion often depends on the appearance of a mixed species feeding flock working through the trees but if we strike lucky, the components of such flocks can include some of the most spectacular and beautiful of Malaysia's birds such as the Long-tailed Broadbill, a green jewel of a bird which all too quickly slips away from view into the canopy. The range of species to search for during our stay in these hill forests include; Long-tailed and Silver-breasted Broadbills, Helmeted, Rhinoceros and Wreathed Hornbills, Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Silver-eared Mesia, Common Green Magpie, Large Niltava, Long-tailed Sibia, Blue Nuthatch, Malayan Whistling Thrush, Malayan Laughingthrush, White-hooded Babbler and Red-bearded Bee-eater. Other species to look for include the diminutive Pygmy Cupwing, Bay Woodpecker, Green-billed Malkoha, Fire-tufted Barbet, Sultan Tit and a miscellany of babblers and laughingthrushes. Although early in the season, arriving

wintering birds from northern Asia may include Siberian thrushes, flycatchers and warblers. If the birds are unpredictable in their appearances, we will have less trouble finding a delightful selection of orchids, pitcher plants and other tropical flora. Forest mammals we hope to see include Siamang, Dusky Langur, Himalayan Striped and Pallas's Squirrels, Yellow-throated Marten and the amazing Malaysian Slow Loris.



Rhinoceros Hornbill

Day 8

Depart for Taman Negara

After breakfast we embark on a three-hour journey by road to Taman Negara National Park. The final part of the journey to Taman Negara is made by a short boat ride over the Tahan River. Our accommodation will be at Kuala Tahan, where we shall be based in comfortable tourist chalets for the first two nights and then we will stay in the town of Gua Musang to explore the Sungai Relau area of the National Park for the latter three. Any time left after our journey will be used to commence our search for the huge array of species that we will have chance to see in the amazing Taman Negara.

Day 9

Taman Negara National Park – Kuala Tahan

Over 360 bird species have been recorded in Taman Negara, a staggering list for a lowland forest. Evolution has been under way for so long in these forests that the majority of animals have specialised in a particular niche, creating a remarkable diversity of life. Here the number and variety of birds seen is related to the birding techniques employed rather than the amount of ground covered.

Fruiting and flowering trees occur sporadically in the forest and attract a wealth of bird life. During a quiet observation of a flowering tree we can hope to see, amongst other species: Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot, Black-hooded Oriole, four species of spiderhunter and three species of leafbird. Visitors to fruiting trees depend upon the size of the fruit available, the larger varieties appealing to broadbills and the spectacular hornbills. The most



Silver-breasted Broadbill

numerous representatives of the latter are Black and Oriental Pied, but we could also find Bushy-crested, Rhinoceros and Helmeted. The smaller barbets, bulbuls and green pigeons flock to those trees bearing ripe fruits of a size more suited to their less capacious gullets.

Our first few days in Taman Negara will be spent staying at the enchanting Mutiara Resort right on the edge of the forest. Here, along the network of well-maintained trails and boardwalks through the forest, we shall employ 'stop and wait' tactics in the hope of seeing some of the more elusive dwellers of the forest floor. Possibilities here include; Malayan Crested Fireback, Crested Partridge and Malayan Banded Pitta. Rail-babbler, Striped and Large Wren-Babblers and Malayan Black-capped and Short-tailed Babblers are also possible but locating some of these more retiring inhabitants of the forest requires a careful approach and a certain element of luck.

The composition of bird species in the sub/mid canopy level of the forest at Taman Negara is very different to those encountered in the montane forests. Typically of a higher population density, these forests contain such species as; Banded Kingfisher, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Buff-necked Woodpecker, Red-naped, Diard's, Cinnamon-rumped and Scarlet-rumped Trogons, Banded, Black-and-yellow, Dusky and Black-and-red Broadbills, Rufous-fronted Babbler, Spotted Fantail, Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher and Black-naped Monarch. At lower levels we can hope to find; Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfishers, Chestnut-winged, Chestnut-rumped, Black-throated and White-necked Babblers. The small-pebbled Tahan River with its crystal clear waters (stained whisky-brown by peat) is among Malaysia's most beautiful rivers with huge, buttressed Neram trees lining the banks and in places leaning forward to form a continuous canopy overhanging the water. Approaching along the waterways is a good way of obtaining views of various birds and mammals frequenting the

forest edge and if we are fortunate we may spot a Smooth-coated Otter or perhaps a Sambar nervously drinking.

Whilst the birds are the most obvious residents of Taman Negara the reserve also boasts a very impressive mammal list. The difficulty of finding mammals in such a vast area of forest combined with the secretive and often nocturnal behaviour of many species ensure that most visitors (including us!) have little contact with these animals but the 'official' list records; Tiger, Clouded Leopard, Leopard, various cat species, Asian Elephant, three species of deer, Malayan Tapir, Sun Bear, five species of monkey, two species of gibbon, a number of squirrels and a considerable variety of lizards. Added to these are a profusion of exotic flowers, magnificent rainforest trees and dancing clouds of colourful butterflies which combine together to create one of the most idyllic and tranquil wildlife sites in Asia.

Days 10 – 12

Taman Negara National Park – Sungai Relau

For our final three days in Taman Negara, we move to the Northeast corner of the park to explore the Sungai Relau area, complete with a fantastic forest canopy walk-way and a number of areas where special species such as Great Argus, Garnet Pitta, Malayan Peacock-Pheasant and White-rumped Shama come to areas viewed from screens or from the roadside.



White-rumped Shama

Due to this part of the park being less developed, we have to stay in the nearby town of Gua Musang, some 40 minutes drive from the park entrance, but the urban accommodation and driving is well worth it for the new forest specialities – broadbills, malkohas, hornbills and woodpeckers - we can see from the canopy walk-way and the impressive viewing tower, as well as from the trail through the forest which we will explore from the back of an open topped pick-up.

As darkness falls we will also try for some of the elusive species of nightbird such as frogmouths and owls – an experience to remember whether we see the birds or not as being in the forest at night is always atmospheric.

There is a fantastic array of species to see in Taman Negara and we have designed the itinerary in a way that means we maximise our chances of seeing as much as we can across the 5-night stay.

Day 13

Return to Kuala Lumpur

We can enjoy more birding in the forest of Taman Negara in the morning before returning to Kuala Lumpur after lunch, with a stop to try for some more species on route. In Kuala Lumpur, we stay at a hotel close to the airport, ready for our flight home the following morning. Note that, depending on flight times, we may leave this evening on an overnight flight.

Day 14

London

Flight departs Kuala Lumpur in the morning and lands back into London in the late afternoon.

Tour Grading & Focus

A/B This is a dedicated birdwatching tour, so long hours can be expected and early morning starts. There are no prolonged treks although hot and humid conditions may make some of the walks seem more arduous than suggested by distances.

Weather, Clothing & Equipment

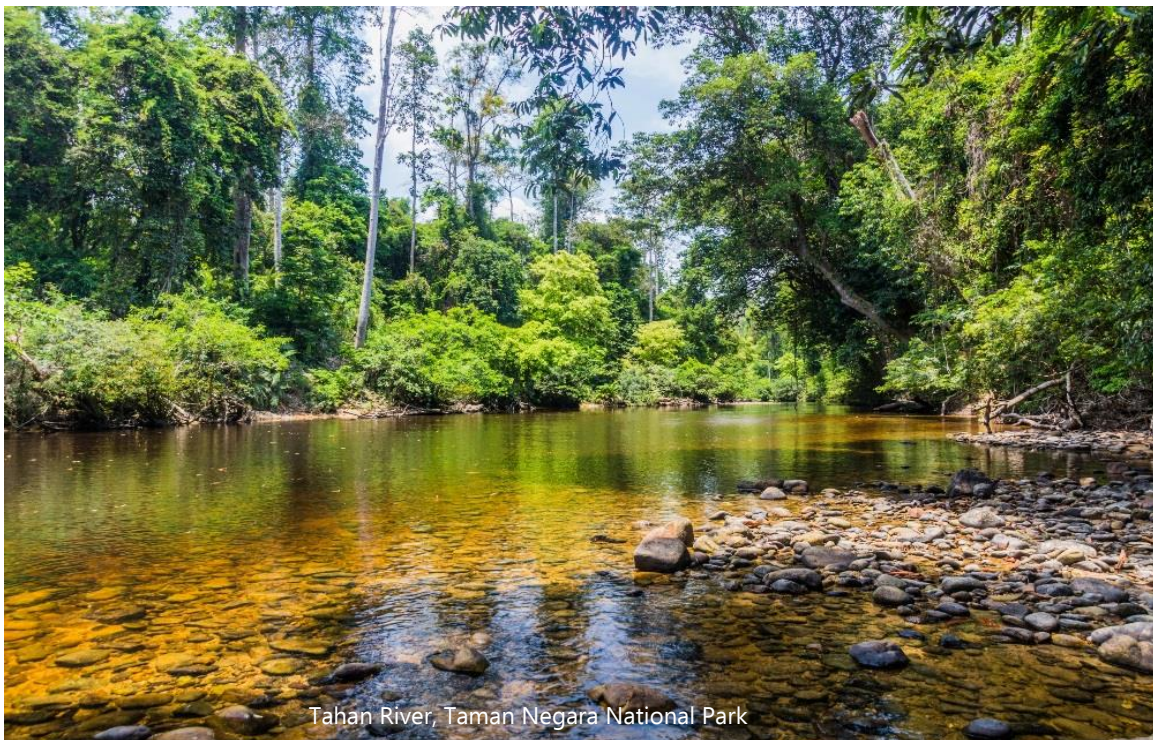
Tropical climate with very warm days and cooler nights. Humidity of about 70% can be expected. The temperatures at Bukit Tinggi and Fraser's Hill will be somewhat cooler. Whilst showers may occur, there should not be prolonged rain at this season. Binoculars are of course essential for this holiday, while a telescope will be useful, if you have one.

What's Included

All accommodation, meals and tipping for porters, boatmen and drivers are included.

Extending Your Holiday

We can arrange many popular extensions to this holiday so please speak to operations manager Tom Mabbett if you would like further details.



Tahan River, Taman Negara National Park

How To Book Your Place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements at the time of booking.

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