

Malaysia's Highlights - A Birdwatching Tour

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st September – 4th October 2025



Ferruginous Partridge



Garnet Pitta



Great Argus



Red-headed Trogon

Tour report by Jim Wardill



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Tour participants: Jim Wardill and Shahrool Anuar (leaders) with four Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Sunday 21st September

Travel day

Our flight left London, bound for Kuala Lumpur.

Day 2

Monday 22nd September

Pantai Jeram – Sungai Buloh – Ban Kanal

Landing in Kuala Lumpur on time at 7.00am we were delighted finally to meet up as a group and meet Shahrool, our local guide for the coming two weeks. We drove across the city in rush hour traffic to our first stop, the mud flats at Pantai Jeram, where we were bombarded with great birds both on the mud and flying past! Huge, menacing-looking Lesser Adjutants amazed us with their size, dwarfing nearby Grey Herons. Crowds of waders included goodies such as Terek Sandpiper, Greater and Tibetan Sand Plovers, and *orientalis* Eurasian Curlews. A spectacularly bright-blue Collared Kingfisher settled on a mudflat rock and Brahminy Kites patrolled up and down, while we watched diminutive Little Herons feeding on the flats. Mudskippers and colourful crabs added interest, as did local cockle-pickers and fishermen. After lunch, we checked in to the attractive De Palma Hotel and caught up with some much-needed rest.

We were out again late in the afternoon at a spot on the Sungai Buloh River, where an odd juxtaposition of clapboard fisherman's huts, boats, houses, a nightclub and even a Buddhist temple lined the banks, but despite the mess and bustle, wildlife seemed to be thriving. We spent some time trying simultaneously to identify Whiskered and White-winged Terns, and take in all the herons, storks and flypast Brahminy Kites! We singled out Lesser Adjutant, our first Painted Stork, Black-crowned Night Herons and egrets, before a family of Smooth-coated Otters stole the show. First spotted out in the river, they came closer and put on a very entertaining display, swimming, diving, fishing, calling and even coming ashore briefly no more than a few metres away! We finished up watching many hundreds of egrets and other herons fly in to roost on an island, while Pacific Swallows crowded the wires, and Asian Koels and a Coppersmith Barbet put in appearances.

After dinner, we were out looking for owls on the Tanjung Karang paddyfields and the Ban Kanal channel. A couple of Eastern Barn Owls perched in palms and then on overhead wires started us off, ghostly in the torch light. Then a spectacular Buffy Fish Owl, again on overhead wires for many minutes, afforded brilliant views. We could hear Dusky Eagle-Owl over the water, and we enjoyed small bats hawking over the water before calling it a night, and heading back for a much-needed night's sleep.

Day 3

Tuesday 23rd September

Kuala Selangor Mangroves – Bukit Malawati – Sungai Selangor

The birding started around the hotel carpark, with a very fine pair of Greater Flamebacks, Black-naped Orioles, Dollarbird and Ashy Drongo. From here we headed to the Kuala Selangor Nature Park for a walk around the

mangrove trail. At the park entrance we encountered the massive troop of Long-tailed Macaques; we didn't bother them, nor they us, and we found their antics fascinating to watch. On the trail we saw some lovely birds: Common Iora, Common Kingfisher, Swinhoe's White-eye, Malaysian Pied Fantail and Coppersmith Barbet. Shahrool gave us a fascinating insight into the mangrove tree seeds and their dispersal, and we spent a good bit of time watching some other brilliant inhabitants of the mangrove mud: the Mud Lobster's mud mounds, little Fiddler Crabs, and the almost alien Mudskippers. Walking back, we spotted and scoped up a magnificent dark phase Changeable Hawk-Eagle.

After lunch and an early afternoon rest, we headed out again and were quickly waylaid by a troop of the endemic Selangor Silver Langurs in old trees in the middle of town. We were treated to a real show by these amazing creatures jumping from tree to tree, with their bright ginger babies, and queuing up on overhead wires. We spotted a perched Crested Serpent Eagle on the way up to Bukit Malawati, a hill above Kuala Selangor complete with a lighthouse, now over a mile away from the accreting coastline. Here we saw a very fine pair of Oriental Pied Hornbills in an epiphyte-laden old tree. We also saw more macaques and a family group of characterful Dusky Langur monkeys, which were brilliant to watch from the road. We then headed on to the Jeti restaurant for some tasty seafood, followed by a surprise river trip on a paddled boat to see mysterious fireflies pulsing their pale green bioluminescent lightshow above the dark river!

Day 4

Wednesday 24th September

Kuala Selangor – Ban Kanal paddyfields – Tanjung Karang – Bukit Tinggi

We were up for an extensive breakfast at 7.00am and then did a spot of car-park birding, enjoying even better views of Greater Flameback, White-throated and Collared Kingfishers, and Black-naped Orioles and Asian Koels up in the trees. After checking out, we drove through Kuala Selangor, past the macaques and langurs for the last time before heading to the paddyfields. Here we were immediately rewarded with a superb Black-winged Kite perching, hovering, and diving for prey in the rice fields. Wetland birds included a number of slim, long-necked Purple Herons, Painted Storks and Asian Openbills, Little Heron and White-throated Kingfisher. We added White-rumped Munia, White-breasted Woodswallow and Barn Swallow to our tally before heading to the hills and our next destination: Bukit Tinggi.

After a drive through extensive hill forests, we arrived, checked in, and had lunch at the incongruous but very comfortable Colmare Resort Hotel, modelled on, of all things, a French chateau. It will certainly stick in the memory! After lunch, we drove to the base of the trail up to the feeding ground, where we had close views of a pair of Ochraceous Bulbuls and a tuneful White-rumped Shama, along with a couple of cute Himalayan Striped Squirrels bouncing around. Drawing a blank on pheasants and partridges, we headed back to the road and slowly birded our way back down, picking up a host of forest goodies on the way: a spectacular male Orange-breasted Trogon, a trio of Sultan Tits, Little Spiderhunter, Greater Green Leafbird, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Little Cuckoo-dove, Green-billed Malkoha, and maybe best of all, a stunner of a Red-bearded Bee-eater showing well and allowing for some knock-out photos.

Driving back down the road, Jim spotted a distant Siamang, the large black gibbon we were desperate to see, and it afforded reasonable views as it rested up on a fork in the canopy. Upon arrival back at the resort, we had a majestic pair of Wreathed Hornbills preening in full view, and we watched them for half an hour, disturbed only

by more Siamangs in a nearby tree; this time it was a mother and youngster climbing into the canopy, where they rested and the baby gibbon got a good groom!

Day 5

Thursday 25th September

Bukit Tinggi – Fraser's Hill

An early start got us to the feeding ground shortly after daybreak, and we were straight into the superstar birds with two striking and intricately-patterned Ferruginous Partridges showing off to the many camera lenses trained on them. Then came Bukit Tinggi's speciality bird: the Mountain Peacock-Pheasant, only found in the mountains of the Malay Peninsula, and highly-prized. In the company of the partridges, we had amazing views of this subtly beautiful creature of the dark forest floor. After getting our fill of these birds, we walked back slowly through to the carpark. At the first viewpoint, we had Gold-whiskered Barbet, Blue-winged Leafbird, Scarlet Minivet, Mountain Imperial Pigeon and a beautiful pair of one of Malaysia's most iconic forest birds, Rhinoceros Hornbill, which hung around long enough for us to get photos and scope views. Then we hit a mixed flock, with Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Black-and-crimson Oriole and Blyth's (formerly Asian) Paradise Flycatcher, soon followed by a group of Dusky Langurs.

After checking out of the chateau, we were on our way to the fabled Fraser's Hill. A few hours later, we were in position on the side of the Old Gap Road, looking into a feeding ground just baited with mealworms by Shahrool. We didn't have to wait long for a charming Rufous-browed Flycatcher, and then in bounced a show-stopping juvenile Rusty-naped Pitta, looking awesome with its ermine-like white spotting and greenish back. The treats just kept coming: a female Lesser Shortwing, then a stunning male Large Niltava with bright iridescent crown and wing patch, followed by a Grey-throated Babbler. The arrival of a fine Malayan Whistling Thrush put us in dreamland: a peninsular endemic that is famously hard to see spent over ten minutes just five metres from us, in full view! We agreed that this was one of the best half hour's birding any of us had ever had!

Barely getting our breath back, we turned to watch a mixed flock, with Sultan Tit, Malaysian Cuckoo-shrike, Long-tailed Sibia, Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush and Fire-tufted Barbet all putting in appearances. One client saw a Yellow-throated Marten cross the road. The rest of us didn't, but we all saw a strange Short-tailed Gymnure on the forest floor. Our evening run through the checklist made us realise just how well we'd already done, with three more days at Fraser's Hill to come!

Day 6

Friday 26th September

Fraser's Hill

We headed out after breakfast with Durai, a bird guide who has lived his whole life in Fraser's Hill, and is like a human Merlin app when it comes to bird calls! To start, we visited a few feeding grounds and scored some early successes with stunning Silver-eared Mesias, a quick-moving Streaked Wren-Babbler and a flock of migrating Blue-throated Bee-eaters calling overhead. Further up the road, above the golf course, a few of us had brief views of an elusive Red-bearded Bee-eater, and then came great excitement as we simultaneously found a troop of graceful Pale-thighed Langurs (leaf monkeys) and Siamang Gibbons feeding on leaves and completely unconcerned by the excited watchers below them! It was an absolute privilege to spend time so close to these amazing creatures,

watching their interactions and brachiation through the trees! A mixed flock was up next, with Mountain Bulbul, White-throated Fantail, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Mountain Fulvetta and Sultan Tits. Also in the vicinity was a spectacular Red-headed Trogon, and a majestic Greater Yellow-nape woodpecker.

After lunch and an afternoon rest, we were out exploring another part of Fraser's Hill's network of forest roads and trails, in the hope of seeing Malayan Hill Partridge, a much sought after endemic. Birds were calling in the valley below, but did not come in to calls aimed at attracting them. Whilst we waited, a nearby fruiting tree pulled in Sultan Tit, Long-tailed Sibia and a spectacular male Orange-bellied Leafbird. Having all but given up on seeing the partridges, we headed down the road, only to then hear their calls more clearly from behind us; maybe the birds were finally emerging from the forest? We headed back up the road, and bingo! There were three fine adults and three juveniles, half the size of the adults.

More than satisfied with what we had seen, we wandered down, picking up perched Mountain Imperial Pigeon, a fly-by Black-and-crimson Oriole, and a very fine bright-red Banded Woodpecker. The bus took us back down to the hill to the feeding area, where we were once again treated to the wonderful juvenile Rusty-naped Pitta and Malayan Whistling Thrush. Another mixed flock had Golden Babblers in with Mountain Fulvettas, along with a Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, showing off its striking iridescence and long tail streamers, not to mention its uncanny range of vocalisations.

Day 7

Saturday 27th September

Fraser's Hill

Our first stop of the morning was back at a small feeding ground at the end of the Fraser's Hill Golf Course, where mealworms brought in Buff-breasted Babblers, a Rufous-browed Flycatcher, and a charming, subtly coloured female Hill Blue Flycatcher. We were then distracted when Jim picked up a small flock of Long-tailed Broadbills flying across the road; this bird with an 'Elvis hairdo' black cap was one of our target birds. Most of us got views (of varying quality); these fast-moving birds didn't hang around. Whilst we watched the broadbills, the Pygmy Cupwing had at last appeared. Unfortunately, only two people managed to see it before it disappeared back into the forest floor tangle. We would have to try again for this elusive little gem tomorrow.

Next was the Telecom Loop road, high on a hill above the scattered settlement of Fraser's Hill. The rest of the morning was spent walking on the road through the impressive forest, with Durai trying to whistle in various species, but with little luck. We did find some good-looking butterflies, and some sizeable funnel webs in the roadside bank, which must host some sizeable spiders. We didn't have any takers to try to entice the occupant out of its hole, so the identity of the occupants remained a mystery. Later, we saw Mountain Fulvetta, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Black-throated Sunbird, White-bellied Erpornis and Yellow-bellied Warbler, as well as having brief views of Chestnut-breasted Malkoha. A few birds stayed stationary to allow better views through the scope, including a female Red-throated Barbet, a small group of Brown Barbets (which look far better than in the book, with their orange-red legs) and three Malayan Cuckooshrikes. As we got back to the hotel, the first tropical downpour of the tour started and hardly let up all afternoon, so we spent the rest of the day catching up with ourselves, relaxing and reflecting on a fantastic week's wildlife watching, and looking forward to the week to come!

After dark, the rain stopped and we headed out to the end of the Singapore House Road to look for owls. Shahrool played a blinder, quickly finding a Brown Wood Owl: this was a welcome recovery from last night's fail. We also found some other fascinating night creatures: a spectacular Striped Green Hawk-moth which looked for all the world like a couple of leaves, and a very large rhinoceros beetle.

Day 8

Sunday 28th September

Fraser's Hill

We employed a slightly different tactic this morning. We set out at dawn for early birding and had breakfast later, to give us all the best chance of getting views of the elusive Pygmy Cupwing. The plan turned out to be a fine one, with all of us having great views of the bird when it turned up and grabbed a few mealworms shortly after we arrived. We had an even better view half an hour later, when we saw another working its way along the roadside bank in its skittish manner. After a few more stops, we were at Allan's Water on the off-chance that we might pick up our target bird today: the Malayan Laughingthrush. Shahrool heard one calling in the distance, and we walked up the road to find a single with a small flock of Silver-eared Mesias. This fine-looking bird, confined to the mountains of the southern Malay Peninsula, gave brief but good views, and it was exciting finally to connect with it after two days of Durai regularly whistling its call in the hope of attracting one out of the forest! Breakfast at the hotel coincided with rain, which saw Pale-thighed Langurs sheltering under the eaves, and one cheeky individual actually getting in and sitting on a light fitting, eyeing up the buffet!

After breakfast, we headed out again with Durai, first stopping to see a pitcher plant hanging over the road, a rather spectacular carnivorous plant and a regional endemic. Then we reached the lookout by the Smokehouse Campground, where we had brilliant views out over mist-wreathed forested ridges and large trees covered in epiphytes, and were rewarded with good views of Orange-bellied Leafbird, Long-tailed Sibia, Green-billed Malkoha and Little Cuckoo-dove. A little later, down the Waterfall Road, we connected briefly with a mixed species flock carrying Ashy-throated Minivet, Arctic Warbler and Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike.

After lunch, we walked the kilometre-long Mager Trail, taking us away from the roads for a true taste of the hill forest. The highlight was a Blue Nuthatch which showed briefly but well on a tree trunk. At the bottom of the trail, we were met by the minibus, had our usual cans of pop and iced coffee from the coolbox, and continued birding: we found a male Little Pied Flycatcher in a mixed species flock, had fantastic views of Streaked Wren Babbler allowing us to get photos, and saw a singing Black-browed Barbet through the scope, its throat sacs inflated to allow it to belt out in far-carrying monotonous and seemingly never-ending 'song'.

Day 9

Monday 29th September

Fraser's Hill – Kuala Tahan – Taman Negara

After breakfast, it was time to leave Fraser's Hill and head back to the lowlands. We stopped on the New Gap Road, where we had good views of a magnificent Red-billed Malkoha and a very obliging first-year Tiger Shrike, a migrant passing through these forests on its way south. We called in at the Bukit Telaga Waterfall, where we found a charming Chestnut-naped Forktail on the lovely, rocky, forested stream. We also found a tiny toad in the streamside rocks and a Raffles's Malkoha, before continuing to Taman Negara.

Just the other side of the city of Raub, we stopped to try durian, the fabled south-east Asian fruit known for its strong smell and indescribable taste. Jim was very excited to taste this treat again after so many years, but his enthusiasm wasn't shared by the group, who all tried it but weren't impressed. It's an acquired taste, so maybe more work is needed! Another guide, Husna, joined us in Jerantut. Nearing Kuala Tahan, we stopped a few times to see Pig-tailed Macaques, but these chunky primates were not habituated in the same way the earlier Long-tailed Macaques had been, and they headed off into the forest as we approached.

Upon arrival at Kuala Tahan we said goodbye to Jai, our driver, and loaded our luggage onto a boat for an atmospheric ride across to the rather fancy and very beautiful Mutiara Resort, where we would be staying in cabins amongst big forest trees for two nights. We met Andrew, our specialist guide, but didn't get a chance for afternoon birding due to the heavy rain. We did head out along the River Trail after a buffet dinner for a night walk, but only managed to hear a Reddish Scops Owl, probably due to the continuing light rain. A few stick insects and katydid bush-crickets, along with a handsome Torrent Frog, were on the path outside our cabins.

Day 10

Tuesday 30th September

Taman Negara (Swamp Loop and River Trails)

Morning broke on this southern edge of the mighty Taman Negara National Park, and it was not raining! An extensive breakfast washed down with coffee was followed by an amazing four hours of brilliant birding with Andrew and Husna along the forest trail boardwalk. We kicked off proceedings with a flock of Chestnut-winged Babblers, and began to see why Andrew is a famed bird guide, with his skill of picking up movement, identifying birds on call and making sure we were in the right position to get views of the elusive feathered inhabitants of the forest. Black-naped Monarch showed to all and a White-crowned Forktail to a few, and then a real 'birders bird', a vocal but shy Large Wren Babbler, flipped leaves on the forest floor and sometimes hopped onto logs to sing.

Leaving the forest briefly, we scanned out from the viewing platform hide, where we saw some distant birds through the scope: Fiery Minivets, Black-eared Barbet and Red-eyed Bulbul. Returning to the trail, Andrew quickly spotted a group of Malayan Crested Firebacks: a real forest megastar. We watched the iridescent royal-blue, white and orange males with their bare blue face masks, followed by the beautifully marked brown females, strutting the forest floor for over half an hour. A noisy flock of Pin-striped Tit-babblers showed up next in thickets above our heads, and we encountered a group of Yellow-bellied Bulbuls before we headed back to the hotel, all very happy beans!

A wonderful Spectacled Spiderhunter fed on flowers in a tree by our rooms and was enjoyed at length by a few of us. Then we had lunch and a rest, before heading out again at 3.30pm. The birding was immediately busy, with Raffles's and Black-bellied Malkohas alongside Greater Racket-tailed Drongos. Scaly-crowned and handsome Black-throated Babblers moved restlessly in the understorey. We ventured onto the River Trail for the rest of the afternoon, where a Black Hornbill was followed by big broadbill action: Banded, Black-and-yellow and Black-and-red in quick succession. These beauties are what you'd probably imagine if you were asked to make up a colourful rainforest bird! Half an hour in the open area at the start of the trail at dusk brought flyover Little Green Pigeon, Asian Fairy Bluebird and the fast-flying Brown-backed Needletail.

After our evening meal, some of us headed out with Andrew for a night walk along the River Trail, this time in fair weather, and tracked down a calling Sunda Scops Owl in a tree top tangle. A Diadem Roundleaf Bat hanging from a dead palm frond over the boardwalk on the way back was an unexpected treat, and a great way to round off our action-packed day in the forest.

Day 11

Wednesday 1st October

Taman Negara (Swamp Loop Trail, Negara, Sungai Relau)

We made the most of our last morning at Kuala Tahan, birding the mature forest once more from the Swamp Trail. A calling Maroon Woodpecker drew us in, and we were soon watching a pair of spectacular Black-and-red Broadbills. Husna found an exotic-looking Hagen's Pit Viper in a trail-side tree and we managed great views of this venomous forest predator. A small flock of White-chested Babblers appeared, before a pair of Green Broadbills showed well; they were such bright gems of the forest. We heard the near-mythical Rail-babbler, but didn't manage to locate it on the dark forest floor. You always need a reason to come back to these amazing forests!

We got the boat back across the river, said goodbye to Andrew, and hit the road for the three-hour drive round to another entrance to the massive Taman Negara National Park. We stopped at Jarantut bridge for a Crested Serpent Eagle spotted from the bus, and added more raptors to the list with a dark-morph Changeable Hawk-Eagle and a majestic pair of White-bellied Sea Eagles, one carrying a sizeable stick, presumably to add to its nest. Another tasty lunch was enjoyed, complete with cakes all round to celebrate a birthday in the group.

We then we headed through the impressive limestone peaks and cliffs of the forest edge, before reaching Merapoh and quickly getting into action, transferring to an open-backed pick-up to zoom up the forest road to the first feeding area, where meal worms were put out, and we waited behind an improvised mesh screen. Immediately, a White-rumped Shama appeared, followed a few minutes later by an absolutely stunning Garnet Pitta, which blew our minds with its almost luminescent red and blue on black feathering. We all got fantastic views and photos, and felt very pleased indeed. Three minutes after arriving at the next stop, we were watching one of the most special birds of the trip: a majestic Malayan Peacock-Pheasant scratting around in the gloom for over ten minutes, allowing us great views of its back, covered in iridescent 'eyes', its red facial skin and its short, but undeniably peacock-like tail. Elated, we got back on the pick-up as the rain started. We made it back to the safety of the minibus just as the rain became torrential, and travelled the thirty minutes to Gua Musang, where we ate and then checked in for the night. It had been another great day with some real superstar birds: it was exciting to think what we might see tomorrow!

Day 12

Thursday 2nd October

Taman Negara (Sungai Relau)

After coffee and food on the way, we got to the park entrance just after 8.00am, where we took to the very impressive canopy walkway for a few hours, spotting Black-and-red Broadbills, Red-throated Barbet, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, gorgeous Blue-winged Leafbirds and a very obliging and handsome Black-thighed Falconet which we looked down on as it perched, made hunting sallies, and returned to eat captured butterflies! We also got great views of the silky, long-tailed Black Giant Squirrel, high in the canopy, but at our eye level.

Back at the park entrance, Juki, the Park Guide, took us along the rainforest road in the back of a 4WD pick-up. We drove straight to the area where we had seen the Peacock-Pheasant the previous afternoon, and were blown away by what we saw on arrival: a stunning male Great Argus, a legendary peacock-like forest pheasant whose tail feathers are so long that the bird looks like a train carriage, balanced on legs too far forward to support the body. This was a spectacular start to the day, and a bird we hadn't expected to see!

From here, we drove further along the road to the Bukit Seraya Tower, where we had stunning views out over vast, forested ridges. A pair of Grey-headed Fish Eagles soared above us, and Grey-rumped Treeswifts past us. We saw Raffles's and Green-billed Malkohas from the roadside, then travelled on to Kuala Juram, where we saw a White-chested Babbler working its way along the riverbank, and the group were treated to the spectacle of Juki, Husna and Jim wading into the river, trying (and failing) to catch one of the many sizeable Mahseer fish that live in this beautiful part of the river. The weather was, by this point, very hot, so we travelled back to the park entrance with the wind in our hair.

After lunch in Gua Musang, we mounted a quick turn-around to return to the park for the remainder of the afternoon. Between us, we had some time on the canopy boardwalk and along the forest road, variously seeing Garnet Pitta again briefly, a female Crested Fireback on the road, Short-tailed Babbler, Grey-breasted Spiderhunter and Stripe-throated Bulbul. Our afternoon's birding was cut a little short by a rainstorm, but we ventured out again as dusk fell (as did an unseen tree in the forest, making a huge sound), and looked for owls and frogmouths, unfortunately to no avail, probably due to the rain. A bonus along the road back was a wonderful Brown Wood Owl, which we were able to approach closely and photograph. This was a bird we had seen at Fraser's Hill, but we had much better views here. After food back in Gua Musang, we went for coffee under a magical spot-lit limestone cliff, and added another bird to our list: a Blue Rock Thush trying to find a suitable roosting spot high above us!

Day 13

Friday 3rd October

Taman Negara (Sungai Relau) – Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve, Lanchang

This, our last day of birding on the tour, saw us heading once more to the magical forest at Sungai Relau, where birding by the car park yielded an arresting male Asian Fairy Bluebird and a fine tricoloured Prevost's Squirrel. Next, we birded the road a while, where a mixed flock gave some of us views of Rufous Piculet, Blyth's Paradise and Verditer Flycatchers, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo and Chestnut-winged Babbler. Next, we did a loop of the fine Canopy Boardwalk, where the birding was excellent, starting with a flock of bright red and black minivets (probably Fiery), and both Lesser Green and Blue-winged Leafbirds. We then got eye-to-eye with Green Iora, male Red-crowned and Golden-whiskered Barbets, three species of malkohas, and a characterful family of Dusky Broadbills, which put on a real show for us, flying from bough to liana at close range. On the five-hour drive to Kuala Lumpur Airport, we stopped for a meal in pleasant Kuala Lipis, before we learned that Shahrool had one more 'megastar' bird in mind.

Driving through rain for a few hours brought us to the edge of the Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve near Lanchang, where we headed down off the roadside, through the wet forest mud and leaf paths with raised umbrellas. After a few minutes, we came to a makeshift hide, and after ten minutes of waiting in the rain, we assumed we were about to 'dip out'. But then, out of the forest gloom, our target bird appeared: a Rufous-collared Kingfisher, with royal blue back, green cap and orange breast and collar. We watched it feed for ten minutes,

before heading back to the minibus to complete our journey to the nation's glittering capital and our waiting hotel. Being in a rainforest in the rain and seeing a bird like this was a fitting end to our wonderful and varied time birding Peninsular Malaysia. What a trip!

Day 14

Saturday 4th October

Travel day

We safely caught our flights, and returned home after a truly outstanding holiday.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		September-October 2025											
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Ferruginous Partridge	<i>Caloperdix oculeus</i>				2								
Malayan Partridge	<i>Arborophila campbelli</i>					6							
Malayan Crested Fireback	<i>Lophura rufa</i>									6			
Great Argus	<i>Argusianus argus</i>											1	
Malayan Peacock-Pheasant	<i>Polyplectron malacense</i>										1		
Mountain Peacock-Pheasant	<i>Polyplectron inopinatum</i>				1								
Grey-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>											2	
Plume-toed Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia affinis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edible-nest Swiftlet - I	<i>Aerodramus fuciphagus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brown-backed Needletail	<i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>									1			
Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>									1			
House Swift	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>					3							2
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>								1	1	2	2	3
Raffles's Malkoha	<i>Rhinortha chlorophaea</i>								1				
Red-billed Malkoha	<i>Zanclostomus javanicus</i>								1		1	1	
Chestnut-breasted Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus curvirostris</i>						1			1			
Black-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus diardi</i>									1			
Green-billed Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>			1				2				1	1
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	2		2								H	H
Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓									
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		✓	✓									
Little Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia ruficeps</i>		2		4		2		2				
Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>										1		1
Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	3										2	3
Little Green Pigeon	<i>Treron olax</i>									6			
Mountain Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula badia</i>					5							
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>		2	1									

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		September-October 2025											
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Tibetan Sand Plover	<i>Anarhynchus atrifrons</i>	5											
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Anarhynchus leschenaultii</i>	2											
Malaysian Plover	<i>Anarhynchus peronii</i>	1											
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	4											
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	1											
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		1										
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓											
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1											
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	4											
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	1											
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	2											
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	4	1	✓									
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	6	2										
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	2	1										
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	✓											
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓											
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	4											
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓											
Medium Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	2											
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>	3											
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓										
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>			4									
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>			2		✓							
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>		1	2							1		
Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>		1								1		
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	4	5	1							1		
White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga leucogaster</i>										2		
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>											2	
Eastern Barn Owl	<i>Tyto javanica</i>	3											
Sunda Scops Owl	<i>Otus lempiji</i>												
Buffy Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa ketupu</i>	1											

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Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>					1	1					1	
Cinnamon-rumped Trogon	<i>Harpactes orrhophaeus</i>									1			
Scarlet-rumped Trogon	<i>Harpactes duvaucelii</i>											1	
Orange-breasted Trogon	<i>Harpactes oreskios</i>			1							1		
Red-headed Trogon	<i>Harpactes erythrocephalus</i>					2							
Rhinoceros Hornbill	<i>Buceros rhinoceros</i>				2			H			H		
Helmeted Hornbill	<i>Rhinoplax vigil</i>												H
Oriental Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>		2										
Black Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros malayanus</i>									1			
Wreathed Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros undulatus</i>			2									
Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	2	2	1									
Rufous-collared Kingfisher	<i>Actenoides concretus</i>												1
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>			2			1						
Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	3	2	2									
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		1										
Red-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctornis amictus</i>			1		1				H			
Blue-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops viridis</i>				✓	✓	✓						
Fire-tufted Barbet	<i>Psilopogon pyrolophus</i>				1	1							
Golden-whiskered Barbet	<i>Psilopogon chrysopogon</i>				1			H					1
Red-crowned Barbet	<i>Psilopogon rafflesii</i>												1
Red-throated Barbet	<i>Psilopogon mystacophanos</i>						1					1	
Black-browed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon oorti</i>				1	1	1	3					
Yellow-crowned Barbet	<i>Psilopogon henricii</i>									H			
Black-eared Barbet	<i>Psilopogon duvaucelii</i>									1			
Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>	1	2										
Sooty Barbet	<i>Caloramphus hayii</i>						5						
Rufous Piculet	<i>Sasia abnormis</i>									H			1
Banded Woodpecker	<i>Chrysophlegma miniaceum</i>					1							
Greater Yellownape	<i>Chrysophlegma flavinucha</i>					1							
Greater Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus</i>	2	2	2									
Maroon Woodpecker	<i>Blythipicus rubiginosus</i>									H	1		

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Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>		1											
Buff-rumped Woodpecker	<i>Meiglyptes grammithorax</i>												1	
Buff-necked Woodpecker	<i>Meiglyptes tukki</i>				1						1			
Black-thighed Falconet	<i>Microhierax fringillarius</i>			2										
Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus galgulus</i>										1		4	
Long-tailed Broadbill	<i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>						5							
Dusky Broadbill	<i>Corydon sumatranus</i>												4	
Black-and-red Broadbill	<i>Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos</i>									3	4			
Banded Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus javanicus</i>									1				
Black-and-yellow Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus ochromalus</i>									1				
Green Broadbill	<i>Calyptomena viridis</i>										2			
Rusty-naped Pitta	<i>Hydornis oatesi</i>				1	1								
Garnet Pitta	<i>Erythropitta granatina</i>										1	1		
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>							1						
Large Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis virgatus</i>												1	
White-breasted Woodswallow	<i>Artamus leucorynchus</i>			1										
Common lora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>		1											
Green lora	<i>Aegithina viridissima</i>												1	
Fiery Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus igneus</i>									4				
Grey-chinned Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>							5	1					
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus speciosus</i>				1									
Malayan Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina larutensis</i>				1		3							
Pied Triller	<i>Lalage nigra</i>		3											
White-browed Shrike-babbler	<i>Pteruthius aeralatus</i>					1								
White-bellied Erpornis	<i>Erpornis zantholeuca</i>						3							
Black-and-crimson Oriole	<i>Oriolus consanguineus</i>				1	1		1						
Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>		2	2										
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>					2		1						
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>									2	1		1	
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>		1											
White-throated Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>					1	1	2						

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Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>		1											
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>									1	2			
Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone affinis</i>				1								2	
Tiger Shrike	<i>Lanius tigrinus</i>								1			1		
House Crow - I	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓	✓	✓								2	2	
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	2	4	1				1			H			
Rail-babbler	<i>Eupetes macrocerus</i>										H			
Sultan Tit	<i>Melanochlora sultanea</i>			3	2	5								
Hairy-backed Bulbul	<i>Tricholestes criniger</i>									3				
Yellow-bellied Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus phaeocephalus</i>									4	1			
Grey-cheeked Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus tephrogenys</i>												1	
Ochraceous Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus ochraceus</i>			2	2									
Mountain Bulbul	<i>Ixos mcclellandii</i>					3		1						
Grey-bellied Bulbul	<i>Ixodia cyaniventris</i>												2	
Scaly-breasted Bulbul	<i>Ixodia squamata</i>			1										
Black-crested Bulbul	<i>Rubigula flaviventris</i>			1	2									
Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>		2										1	
Asian Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>									4		2	3	
Stripe-throated Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus finlaysoni</i>			2	3					1		2	3	
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓						
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo javanica</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			1										
Rufous-bellied Swallow	<i>Cecropis badia</i>					4								
Pygmy Cupwing	<i>Pnoepyga pusilla</i>						1	1						
Yellow-bellied Warbler	<i>Abroscopus superciliaris</i>						4							
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>							1						
Rufescent Prinia	<i>Prinia rufescens</i>					3								
Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>									H				
Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>		3											
Swinhoe's White-eye	<i>Zosterops simplex</i>		4											
Hume's White-eye	<i>Zosterops auriventer</i>								1					

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Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	
Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Mixornis gularis</i>									5				
Golden Babbler	<i>Cyanoderma chrysaeum</i>					3		2						
Chestnut-winged Babbler	<i>Cyanoderma erythropterum</i>									4			1	
Grey-throated Babbler	<i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>				2	2		1						
Large Wren-Babbler	<i>Turdinus macrodactylus</i>									2				
Scaly-crowned Babbler	<i>Malacopteron cinereum</i>									5			1	
Mourning Babbler	<i>Pellorneum malaccense</i>										1	2	1	
Buff-breasted Babbler	<i>Pellorneum tickelli</i>				4	2	2	4						
Malayan Swamp Babbler	<i>Pellorneum rostratum</i>										4	1		
Streaked Wren-Babbler	<i>Gypsophila brevicaudata</i>					1		1						
Mountain Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe peracensis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓						
Malayan Laughingthrush - N	<i>Trochalopteron peninsulae</i>							1						
Long-tailed Sibia	<i>Heterophasia picaoides</i>				2	3		2						
Silver-eared Mesia	<i>Leiothrix argentea</i>					6		4						
Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus mitratus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓						
Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>				1								1	
Blue Nuthatch	<i>Sitta azurea</i>							1						
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>				1									
Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	
Javan Myna - I	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	✓	✓	✓									✓	
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓	✓										
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>			1	1						2	2	1	
Dark-sided Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>				1									
Large Niltava	<i>Niltava grandis</i>				2									
Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassinus</i>												1	
Rufous-browed Flycatcher	<i>Anthipes solitaris</i>				2	2	1	2						
Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis umbratilis</i>													
Large Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis magnirostris</i>													
White-tailed Robin	<i>Myiomela leucura</i>							H						
White-crowned Forktail	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>									1				

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Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	
Chestnut-naped Forktail	<i>Enicurus ruficapillus</i>								1					
Malayan Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus robinsoni</i>				1	1								
Lesser Shortwing	<i>Brachypteryx leucophris</i>				1	1								
Little Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula westermanni</i>				1	1		2						
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>											1		
Greater Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis sonnerati</i>			1										
Blue-winged Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis moluccensis</i>				1					1		1	2	
Orange-bellied Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis hardwickii</i>					1		4						
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>						1							
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>			1										
Black-throated Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga saturata</i>					1	1							
Purple-naped Spiderhunter	<i>Kurochkinogramma hypogrammicum</i>									2	1			
Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>			1				H			1			
Spectacled Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera flavigaster</i>									1				
Grey-breasted Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera modesta</i>											1		
Streaked Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera magna</i>				3	2	2	4						
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>		5											
White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>			✓										
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				5		1	2						

Mammals

		September-October 2025												
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	
Southern Pig-tailed Macaque	<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>				✓				✓		✓			
Long-tailed Macaque	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pale-thighed Langur	<i>Presbytis siamensis</i>					✓	✓	✓		✓				
Selangor Silvery Langur	<i>Trachypithecus selangorensis</i>	✓	✓											
Dusky Langur	<i>Trachypithecus obscurus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					
Siamang	<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>			4		6								

Common name	Scientific name	September-October 2025											
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Himalayan Striped Squirrel	<i>Tamias maclellandii</i>			✓	✓								
Slender Squirrel	<i>Sundasciurus tenuis</i>			✓	✓								
Low's Squirrel	<i>Sundasciurus lowii</i>			✓									
Plantain Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus notatus</i>		✓								1		
Grey-bellied Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus caniceps</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Common Treeshrew	<i>Tupaia glis</i>										1		
Max's Short-tailed Gymnure	<i>Hylomys maxi</i>				1	1		1					
Smooth-coated Otter	<i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i>	5											
Yellow-throated Marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>				1								
Diadem Roundleaf Bat	<i>Hipposideros diadema</i>									1			

Amphibians & reptiles

Common name	Scientific name	September-October 2025											
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Forest Toad sp.	<i>Mertensophryne</i> sp.								1				
Nicobarese Frog	<i>Indosylvirana nicobariensis</i>									1			
Asian House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		
Draco Flying Lizard sp.	<i>Draco</i> sp.		1										
Asian Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>	1	1	1									
Clouded Monitor	<i>Varanus nebulosus</i>									1	1		
Hagen's Pit Viper	<i>Trimeresurus hageni</i>										1		

Selected invertebrates

Common name	Scientific name	September-October 2025											
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Giant Millipede sp.	<i>Thryopygus</i> sp.				1								
Common Birdwing	<i>Toides helena</i>									1	1		
Common Five-ring (butterfly)	<i>Ypthima baldus</i>											2	2