

info@naturetravelbirding.com
www.naturetravelbirding.com



Thailand Birding Tour

14 DAY/ 13 NIGHT TOUR

OVERVIEW

Thailand, the world's 50th largest and 21st most populous country, is situated in Southeast Asia, in the Indo-Chinese peninsula of the Oriental Region. The attractions of Thailand are myriad – ruined cities, ancient monasteries, Buddhist monks, floating markets, dense rainforests, exotic wildlife, tropical islands with golden beaches and pristine coral reefs, hospitable people, the famous Thai massage and of course its spicy cuisine.

It has been described as a *zoogeographic crossroads* because the country's avifauna comprises Sino-Himalayan, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Chinese and Sundaic elements and there are a large number of migrant visitors from the Palaearctic Region. There are approximately 962 species (2 true endemics) currently recorded, in other words almost 10% of the world species are present in Thailand.

Thailand is a superb birding destination with varied environments that include mountainous regions, coastal areas and several types of forest. Although much of central Thailand is devoted to agriculture, many parts of the country remain excellent as birding destinations. Especially noteworthy are the mountainous regions in the north and the forests in the southern peninsula. There are 96 national parks, 48 wildlife sanctuaries and a number of non-hunting areas, watershed reserves, forest parks and biosphere reserves that have been protected by law. These areas are the main birding spots all over the country where birds can be seen all year round, and on this tour we will try to cover as many of these habitats as we can, concentrating on the western and northern parts of the country, maximizing our chances of seeing some great birds, and a great number of birds!

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Bangkok to Kaeng Krachan National Park
DAY 2	Kaeng Krachan National Park
DAY 3	Kaeng Krachan National Park to Khao Yai National Park

DAY 4	Khao Yai National Park
DAY 5	Khao Yai National Park to Mae Wong National Park
DAY 6	Mae Wong National Park
DAY 7	Mae Wong National Park to Chiang Mai
DAY 8	Chiang Mai to Doi Ang Khang
DAY 9	Doi Ang Khang to Doi Lang (Doi Pha Hom Pok NP)
DAY 10	Doi Lang (Doi Pha Hom Pok NP)
DAY 11	Doi Lang (Doi Pha Hom Pok NP) to Doi Inthanon National Park
DAY 12	Doi Inthanon National Park
DAY 13	Doi Inthanon National Park
DAY 14	Doi Inthanon National Park to Chiang Mai

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Bangkok to Kaeng Krachan National Park

This birding tour starts in the capital city of Bangkok. The city is located in the Chao Phraya River delta in central Thailand, and has a population of over eight million people. It has been described as the most exuberant city in Southeast Asia, and would justify a trip to Thailand all by itself.

You will be picked up from your hotel and we will travel to Kaeng Krachan National Park. It is the largest National Park in Thailand, occupying 2915 square kilometres (1125 sq. miles); this is possibly Thailand's premier forest birdwatching location due the quantity and quality of species that have been found there. Most of the forest here is in an excellent condition and consists of evergreen tree species, although a number of deciduous species are also present, particularly in the lower elevations of the park. Kaeng Krachan's location on the border with Myanmar means it is part of a much larger forest complex than just the National Park and an excellent refuge for a huge number of species, including many of Asia's rarest mammals and birds. Ninety-one species of mammals and 461 bird species have been counted in the park.

Here we will look for Asian Golden, Streaked and Baya Weaver, Asian Openbill, Javan and Chinese Pond Heron, Chinese Egret, White-throated Kingfisher, Little Green, Blue-bearded and Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Indian Roller, Ashy Wood Swallow, White-browed

and Large Scimitar Babbler, Bamboo and Great Slaty Woodpecker, Greater Yellowthroat, Ruby-cheeked Sunbird and many other birds.

We will enjoy lunch at the Park's restaurant and in the afternoon search an area closer to the river for Blue Pitta, Black-backed Kingfisher, Black-and-yellow, Silver-breasted, Dusky and Banded Broadbill, Common Green Magpie, Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Violet Cuckoo, Oriental Dollarbird, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Large Woodshrike, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Blue-eared and Blue-throated Barbet, Common Iora and many more.

After an exciting first day we will check into our resort close to the park for dinner and a good night's rest.

DAY 2: Kaeng Krachan National Park

Today we will spend the full day in this wonderful gem of a park.

We will have an early morning drive up to Phanern Thung summit to search for Ratchet-tailed Treepie, White-hooded Babbler, Pied Shrike-Babbler, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Streaked Spiderhunter, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Flavescent and Mountain Bulbul, Great Barbet, Grey Treepie, Rufous-browed and Hill Blue Flycatcher, Asian Palm Swift, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Wreathed, Great and Tickell's Brown Hornbill, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Golden, Rufous-fronted and Buff-breasted Babbler and many other species.

After lunch we will look in some other habitat for Red-bearded Bee-eater, Speckled Piculet, Pale Blue Flycatcher, Common & Greater Flameback, Greater Yellowthroat, Laced Woodpecker, Black-throated and White-crested Laughingthrush, Large Scimitar Babbler, Banded Kingfisher, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Asian Paradise Flycatcher and many other birds.

We will return to our resort for dinner and our overnight stay.

DAY 3: Kaeng Krachan National Park to Khao Yai National Park

We will start our day early in the morning at the Baan Song Nok Pool, where we will hopefully see Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Black-naped Monarch, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Ruby-cheeked, Crimson, Black-throated and Olive-backed Sunbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Sooty-headed, Black-headed, Streak-eared, Stripe-throated and Black-crested Bulbul, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, Abbott's and Puff-throated Babbler, Siberian Blue Robin, and many other birds.

We will also be on the lookout for other wildlife, and we might see Dusky Langur, Stump-tailed Macaque, White-handed Gibbon, Black Giant and Variable Squirrel, Gliding Lizard and even some snakes...

After lunch at the pool we will travel to Khao Yai National Park, stopping along the way to look for Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacana, White-browed Crake, Pink-necked Pigeon, Black Drongo, Yellow Bittern, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Lesser Whistling Duck, Plain Prinia, Little Grebe, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munia and many others.

We will arrive at our resort closer to the park in the early evening, have dinner and a good night's sleep. Tomorrow we explore the park!

DAY 4: Khao Yai National Park

Khao Yai National Park was the first to be established in Thailand in 1962 and is part of a World Heritage site, both of which give a strong hint as to the quality of the habitat at this location, and at 2168 square kilometres this park is the third largest in Thailand. Seasonal evergreen forest is the dominant habitat here but there are also areas of hill evergreen forest and expanses of grassland. An extensive system of trails means that there is plenty of opportunity to explore the forest and look for fauna. Elevations mostly range from 400–1000 m above sea level. Records show 3,000 species of plants, 320 species of birds (it is probably the best spot in Thailand for hornbills!) and 66 species of mammals for the park. There are no tigers in Khao Yai, and there haven't been any for at least twenty years. Its waterfalls include the 80 metre Heo Narok, and Heo Suwat made famous from the film *The Beach*.

We will start our day early after breakfast and explore Wang Jum Pee and Pong Tong Sai salt lick, where we hope to see Long-tailed Broadbill, Red-throated Flycatcher, Slaty-backed Forktail, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Dove, Thick-billed and Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Green-billed Malkoha, Chestnut-flanked White-eye, Ashy Wood Swallow and many other birds. Other wildlife to look out for in the park include Long-tailed Macaque, White-handed and Pileated Gibbon, Black Giant and Variable Squirrel, Gaur, Wild Elephant, Asian Porcupine, Large Palm Civet, Sambar, Southern Red Muntjac and some reptiles and snakes.

After lunch at the park restaurant we will do some afternoon birding at Pha Klouy Mai. Here we aim for Moustached, Green-eared, Coppermith and Blue-eared Barbet, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Red-headed Trogon, Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike, Fire-breasted, Plain and Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Grey-backed Shrike, Asian Fairy Bluebird, White-throated Rock Thrush, White-rumped Shama, Hainan Blue Flycatcher, Hill Blue Flycatcher, White-bellied Yuhina and many other birds.

Later we will move to the area around the Heo Suwat waterfall, and search for Great Hornbill, Sultan Tit, Blue-bearded Bee eater, Banded Broadbill, Orange-breasted Trogon, White-rumped Shama, Hainan Blue Flycatcher, Striped Tit-Babbler, Grey-eyed Bulbul and many others.

We will return to our resort for dinner and our overnight stay in the late afternoon.

DAY 5: Khao Yai National Park to Mae Wong National Park

We will enjoy an early breakfast before exploring a local lake, where we will hope to see Burmese Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Siberian Rubythroat, Spotted and Asian Barred Owlet, Great Reed Warbler, Yellow-bellied and Grey-breasted Prinia, Yellow-eyed and Chestnut-capped Babbler, Lesser Coucal, Oriental Pratincole, Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacana, Bright-headed Cisticola, Plain-backed Sparrow and many others.

We will return back our resort, check out and travel to Wat Phra Phutthabat temple and look for Rufous Limestone Wren Babbler, Lineated and Coppersmith Barbet, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Blue Rock Thrush, Blue Whistling Thrush and other birds. Wat Phra Phutthabat is among the oldest Buddhist temples in Thailand. Its name means "temple of Buddha's footprint", because it contains a natural depression believed to be a footprint of the Buddha.

We will have a packed lunch today and continue onto Mae Wong National Park, birding along the way and making stops if we see something interesting.

We will arrive at our resort close to the park in the early evening and have dinner before a good night's sleep.

DAY 6: Mae Wong National Park

We will check out of our resort early in the morning, have breakfast and then move into the Mae Wong National Park. The park covers 894 square kilometres and is part of the western forest complex: the largest remaining tract of forest in Thailand. Much of this area used to be occupied by various hilltribe communities, so there are areas that are deforested, but secondary growth has established itself quickly and there are large areas of beautiful forest with huge, mature trees. Additionally, a number of streams and rivers drain the park and add to the scenic nature of this area as well as the avifauna.

We will spend the rest of the day birding in the park, including having lunch in the park, before returning to our resort for dinner and a good night's rest.

Here we will hope to see Rusty-naped Pitta, White-crowned Forktail, Rufous-throated Partridge, Silver-eared Mesia, Streaked Wren-Babbler, Rufous-fronted Flycatcher, White-necked and Black-throated Laughingthrush, Streak Spiderhunter, Coral-billed and Red-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Black Eagle, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Buff-breasted Babbler, Black-throated Sunbird, Speckled and White-browed Piculet, Collared Owlet, Golden-throated and Great Barbet, Striated, Ashy and Black Bulbul, Grey Peacock-Pheasant, Hill Prinia, White-hooded and Grey-throated Babbler, Orange-bellied and Blue-winged Leafbird, Long-tailed Sibia, and Kalij Pheasant amongst many others.

DAY 7: Mae Wong National Park to Chiang Mai

This morning we will explore the Mae Wong National Park some more. It is home to the rare Indochinese Tiger, a subspecies of the Tiger, where a population of about 300 individuals remains. The tigers are now seriously threatened by planned construction of a dam on the Mae Wong River, despite all efforts by World Wildlife Foundation and other groups to stop construction.

Aside from this issue, the park offers excellent birding and is also the best place to see several rare species not readily seen elsewhere in Thailand, namely Rufous-necked Hornbill and Burmese Yuhina. Neither of these species are easily found, but we will look for them and others, including Red-billed Blue-Magpie, Crested and Black-capped Kingfisher, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Ashy Minivet, Abbott's Babbler, Brown-cheeked and Yunnan Fulvetta, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Great, Blue-throated and Golden-throated Barbet, Bay Woodpecker, Grey-chinned Minivet, Grey Treepie, Flavescent Bulbul, Davison's Leaf-Warbler, Striated Yuhina, White-browed Piculet, Short-billed Minivet, Maroon Oriole, Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail, Mountain Tailorbird and many others.

In the afternoon we will transfer to the city of Chiang Mai, a convenient stop on the way to our next destination. Chiang Mai was founded in 1296, and was the capital of the independent Lanna Kingdom until 1558. It is the largest city in northern Thailand. Chiang Mai's historic importance is derived from its close proximity to the Ping River and major trading routes. Its Old City area still retains vestiges of walls and moats from its history as a cultural and religious center. It's also home to hundreds of elaborate beautiful Buddhist temples.

We will check into our hotel in the city, have dinner and rest up for tomorrow.

DAY 8: Chiang Mai to Doi Ang Khang

We will travel north this morning to the Doi Ang Khang area. It is an area on the border with Myanmar (Burma) consisting of a number of peaks and steep ridges that, although largely deforested farmland, contain a lot of scrubby vegetation and forest patches which provide enough habitat to house a good number of interesting bird species, many of which are found in few other parts of the country. It is the site of an agricultural station, the first such research station set up by King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 1969.

We will spend the rest of today birding here, and hope to see Black-breasted and Dark-sided Thrush, White-tailed Robin, Daurian Redstart, Giant Nuthatch, Silver-eared Mesia, Brown-breasted Bulbul, Slaty and Pale Blue Flycatcher, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, Large Niltava, Scarlet and Short-billed Minivet, Dark-backed Sibia, Spectacled Barwing,

Little Pied Flycatcher, Grey and Pied Bush Chat, Gould's Sunbird, Spot-breasted Grosbeak, Maroon Oriole, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Little Bunting, Red-faced Liocichla and many others.

We will have dinner and overnight at our accommodation nearby.

DAY 9: Doi Ang Khang to Doi Lang

We will bird this morning in the Doi Ang Khang area again, hoping to connect with some species we may have missed yesterday. We will look for Collared Owlet, Pallas's Leaf-Warbler, Gray-headed Parrotbill, Black-breasted, Eyebrowed, Grey-sided, White's and Scaly Thrush, Crested Finchbill, Sapphire Flycatcher, Hume's Pheasant, Rufous-gorgetted, Ultramarine, Sapphire and Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Cook's Swift, Buff-throated Warbler, Great Barbet, Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, Spot-throated Babbler, White-browed Laughingthrush and many more.

One of the delights of Doi Ang Khang is that the scenery is some of the most spectacular in the country, together with some tasty fresh local food. This region is a very relaxing place to stay with plenty of opportunities for walking and birding in the surrounding countryside, although one must be prepared for some steep hikes.

In the afternoon we will drive even further north to Doi Lang, where we will spend the next two nights.

DAY 10: Doi Lang (Doi Pha Hom Pok National Park)

Doi Lang is part of the Doi Pha Hom Pok massif in the north of the country and lies within the national park of that name. The park covers 524 km² of the mountain area of the Daen Lao Range, at the border with Myanmar. The tallest peak is Doi Pha Hom Pok at 2,285 metres (7,497 feet), the second highest in Thailand. Although inside the national park, Doi Lang habitat is not well protected. The major attraction of Doi Lang is its location, where a variety of species not present elsewhere in Thailand can be found. This location is one of the wildest areas of Thailand that is accessible by car, affording fantastic views across into Myanmar and providing birders with many miles of fabulous roadside birding in a variety of upland habitats with hardly any vehicular disturbance at all.

We will hope to see the two big specials of the area; Hume's Pheasant and Giant Nuthatch. We will also connect with Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Red-faced Liocichla, Lesser Shortwing, Slaty-backed, Slaty Blue, Pale Blue, Ultramarine, Sapphire, Little and Pied Flycatcher, Orange-flanked Bush Robin, Siberian Rubythroat, White-bellied Redstart, Crested Finchbill, Black-throated Tit, Davison's Leaf Warbler, Rufous-backed Sibia, Black-

throated Tit, Hodgson's Frogmouth, Bay Woodpecker, White-browed Laughingthrush, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and many other birds.

We will have lunch on the go today, and have dinner and a good night's sleep at our accommodation nearby.

DAY 11: Doi Lang to Doi Inthanon National Park

With habitats that include pine forest, rice paddies, orchards and moist forest the number of potential species at Doi Lang is staggering. It is a great place to spend time at, exploring the area and enjoying what is one of the best birding sites in northern Thailand.

A few species are known only from Doi Lang, or a couple of other sites, in Thailand. This site is the best chance for us to see Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Whiskered Yuhina, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Spot-breasted and Pale-billed Parrotbill, Scarlet Finch, Black-headed Greenfinch, Little, Crested and Chestnut Bunting, Spotted Elachura, Himalayan Cutia, Black-eared Shrike-Babbler and Black-throated Bushtit.

After another exciting morning we will have an afternoon transfer to Doi Inthanon National Park, nicknamed "the roof of Thailand".

At 482 square kilometres big, the park protects four major watersheds and, of course, Thailand's highest mountain, Doi Inthanon, which has its summit at 2565 metres (8415 feet) above sea level. The park is unique in Thailand as it is 300 metres higher than any other mountain in the country which allows it to support a tract of upper montane forest and Thailand's only sphagnum bog.

Although there is quite extensive deforestation in places due to a sizeable hill-tribe population, there remain large areas of quality habitat which is home to a very high number of species. The long road to the summit provides many places to stop and access to the forest which is magnificent in places; particularly the moss-clad forest at higher altitudes. Highway markers along this road are a convenient way to denote prime birding locales.

We will arrive at our accommodation, the famous Mr. Deang Birding Centre in the park, late in the afternoon, maybe do some quick birding, and then have dinner and a good night's rest. Tomorrow we explore the park!

DAY 12: Doi Inthanon National Park

Birds seem to be in greater densities here than in many other locations in Thailand, meaning that this is an ideal place to see a large number of species in a short space of time and one of the most memorable locations for birdwatching in Thailand.

This we hope to see a large number of species, including Black-backed Sibia, Spectacled Barwing, Grey-throated Babbler, Scarlet Minivet, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Green Cochoa, Lesser Shortwing, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler and many other birds. Next to the summit of Doi Inthanon we hope to find Pygmy Cupwing.

We will have lunch back at Mr. Deang's and continue in the afternoon at Huay Sai Luang Waterfall. Here we will see White-capped and Plumbeous Redstart, Slaty-backed Forktail, Scarlet Minivet, Ashy and Little Bronze Drongo, Dark-sided Flycatcher, White-rumped Shama and many more birds.

We will return to the centre late in the afternoon for dinner and our overnight stay. Remember to look for the elusive Dark-sided Thrush around our accommodations!

DAY 13: Doi Inthanon National Park.

We will spend another full day in the park, the premier birding destination in northern Thailand. With 383 species, it ranks second among Thailand's national parks in number of bird species. Doi Inthanon has so many birding highlights it is almost impossible to mention them all without giving the entire checklist for the National Park. This mountain spans a number of habitats and consequently contains the birds associated with them. The summit area, which is higher than any other in Thailand, provides some of the most memorable bird watching on the mountain, perhaps even the whole country. The sheer size of Doi Inthanon National Park means that a high species total can be accumulated on any visit, and by staying for three days and birding at a wide range of altitudes a large number of exciting birds can be seen which will match the variety of habitats.

After breakfast at Mr. Deang's Birding Centre, we will start our birding at KM.34.5 on the summit road, looking for Hume's Warbler, Large, Small, Vivid and Rufous-bellied Niltava, Streak-breasted Woodpecker, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Speckled and Ashy Wood Pigeon, Chestnut-fronted and White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Rufous-backed Sibia, Mountain Tailorbird, White-bellied Redstart, Russet Bush Warbler, Rufous-winged Fulvetta and many other birds.

After lunch we will do our afternoon birding around the Jeep Track, hoping to connect with Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Purple and Green Cochoa, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Mountain Tailorbird, Dusky Warbler, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Brown-throated Treecreeper and many more.

Dinner and a good night's sleep is back at Mr. Deang's Birding Centre.

DAY 14: Doi Inthanon National Park to Chiang Mai

After an early breakfast at Mr. Deang's Birding Centre we will transfer to KM.13 on the summit road. In this area we will aim for White-rumped Falcon, Collared Falconet, Black-

headed Woodpecker, Asian Barred Owlet, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Maroon Oriole, Grey-chinned Minivet, White-crowned Forktail and other birds.

We will enjoy a last lunch in the park, and after checking out continue to do some birding in the park as we make our way slowly out. We hope to see Rufous-winged Buzzard, Striated Yuhina, Blue-throated Flycatcher, Citrine, Grey, Yellow and White Wagtail, Black-backed Forktail, Oriental Turtle Dove and many others.

We will leave the park and travel northeast for about 2 hours to Chiang Mai, where depending on flight times, you will either be dropped at the International Airport or a hotel in the city. This last night's dinner and overnight stay (if needed) will be for your own account.

End of Tour.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.

Inclusions:

- English-speaking Nature Travel birding guide
- Accommodation (twin share basis) with private bathroom & A/C
- All meals, fruit, coffee, tea and water
- Transfers as per itinerary
- Park entrance fees

Exclusions:

- Any other service not mentioned in the itinerary
- Gratuities
- Personal expenses
- All alcoholic drinks
- Airfare to and from Thailand