

Footprint

Adventures

the way to go.....



Travel Itinerary



Birds of Thailand

Thailand is well known for its rich and varied bird life. Its already numerous resident avifauna is supplemented in winter months by a influx of migrants from the Eastern Palearctic. This example of a fifteen-day tour covering three of Thailand's finest national parks, Khao Yai, Kaen Krachan and Doi Inthanon, is typical of the kind of itinerary than can be arranged for specialist bird watching groups.

Day 1, Bangkok (-/-)

Arrive Bangkok Airport. After customs and immigration formalities the clients will be met by our representative and transfer to hotel accommodation.

Day 2, Bangkok / Khao Yai (B/L/D)

Early morning departure by road for the 4-hour drive to Khao Yai, one of Thailand's premier national parks, 2,172 sq. kms of forested mountains and open grassland. In the afternoon start the first of four days' birding in the park.

Day 3-4, Khao Yai (B/L/D)

Walking the trails of Khao Yai is an unforgettable experience. The average tree height is far greater than anything most people are used to and the forest giants are truly awe-inspiring, some reaching well over 70m. In areas where the forest floor is open one has the feeling of being inside a vast natural cathedral. Some 318 migrant and resident bird species have been identified living in the park's lush forests. Easily observable and perhaps the most fascinating are the four species of hornbill found in the park. The two large hornbill species are the great and wreathed; the two smaller species are the noisy

Oriental Pied and the more secretive and Quiet Brown Hornbill. Overnight.

Day 5, Khao Yai / Bangkok (B/L/D)

In the morning do some more birding before returning to Bangkok. In the evening, enjoy an authentic Thai dinner in a delightful, typical Thai atmosphere. The meal will be accompanied by Thai classical music and dances. The dancers with their beautiful glittering costumes and exquisite, graceful movements will create a long lasting memory.

Day 6, Bangkok / Kaeng Krachan (B/L/D)

Depart to Kaeng Krachan National Park, situated on the eastern side of the remote Tenasserim mountain range near the Burmese border. The National Park was established in 1981 after a visit to the area by the King of Thailand. It is the largest national park in the country, over 3000 square kilometres in extent, and encompasses a range of forest habitats.

Day 7-8, Kaeng Krachan (B/L/D)

Birding at Kaeng Krachan. We will concentrate mainly on the impressive evergreen forest, which is bisected by a road which enables us to gain easy access and enjoy tremendous views. In the early morning, we will try to find fruiting tree where pigeons, barbets, bulbuls and leafbirds come to feed. The sound of swan-like wing beats will alert us to a Wreathed Hornbill passing overhead while flashes of scarlet and gold against a blue sky materialize into a flock of delicate Grey-chinned or Scarlet Minivets. Brown Noddies zip over the canopy at breathtaking speed whilst a plaintive cry echoes across the forest as a Crested Serpent Eagle soars high into the air. Deep in the forest we will creep silently through the tangle of vegetation, dwarfed by the immense trees that tower above us. A flash of colour in this green world may signal an Orange-breasted or Red-headed Trogon swooping up onto a low branch. We will listen carefully for a scuffling amongst the dead leaves on the forest floor that might lead us to anything from the seldom seen Grey Peacock-Pheasant and Ferruginous Wood-Partridge to a Large Scimitar-Babbler or a squirrel. Some rare and exciting birds occur here and in particular we shall be looking out for Woolly-necked Stork (here at one of its last remaining outposts in Thailand), the shy Silver Pheasant, Yellow-vented Pigeon, Ratchet-tailed Treepie (only recently discovered here, far to the west of its known range) and the decidedly elusive Plain-pouched Hornbill. By checking the dead trees we may find Rufous and Bay Woodpeckers, or even Great Slaty Woodpecker, while White-hooded Bblers utter their harsh chattering from the dense bamboo. Amongst the many other birds which we may well encounter during our stay here are Crested Honey Buzzard, Crested Goshawk, Shikra, Bar-

backed Partridge, Red Junglefowl, Thick-billed Pigeon, Emerald Dove, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Vernal Hanging-Parrot (whose appearance is heralded by its incessant cratchy 'see-sip' flight note), Plaintive and Drongo Cuckoos, Green-billed and Chestnut-breasted Malkohas, Collared Scops Owl, Collared Owlet, Himalayan Swiftlet, Fork-tailed Swift, Grey-rumped Treeswift, Chestnut-headed and Blue-bearded Bee-eaters, Dollarbird, Brown, Oriental Pied and Great Hornbills, Great, Golden-throated. Overnight at Baan Rim Kaeng bungalow.

Day 9, Kaeng Krachan / Bangkok / Chiang Mai (B/L/D)

Transfer to Bangkok Airport for flight to Chiang Mai. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel accommodation. In the evening enjoy a superb northern Thai dinner accompanied by charming northern dances and hilltribe shows performed by Akha, Yao, Lahu, Meo, Lisu and Karen tribespeople.

Day 10, Chiang Mai (B/L/D)

Depart to Doi Inthanon for birding. Overnight at Inthanon Highland Resort.

Day 11-12, Chiang Mai / Doi Inthanon (B/L/D)

Birding at Doi Inthanon National Park, a large reserve surrounding Doi Inthanon, at 2,596 metres Thailand's highest peak. These northern mountains and plains have a very different avifauna from central Thailand and many Palearctic and Himalayan species reach their southern limits here. The birdlife shows great contrasts as one proceeds from low to high altitudes. At the lower levels the avifauna has a strong resemblance to that at Khao Yai but at higher levels it is quite different in character and the divergence increases steadily with altitude.

Day 13-14, Chiang Mai (B/L/D)

Birding at Doi Suthep-Pui National Park, fairly rich in mountain forest birds with more than 326 kinds of birds have been spotted on this mountain. Its proximity to Chiang Mai marks it out as a convenient spot for bird-watchers. Overnight in Chiang Mai town.

Day 15, Chiang Mai / Bangkok (B/L/-)

Transfer to airport for flight to Bangkok and connect flight home.

Departure: Daily, year round (good during November – February)

Services included in the price:

- Tours and transfers by air-conditioned minivan. Non air-conditioned transportation

will be used in remote areas. Remark: A minivan is comfortable enough for a group less than 7 pax. In case the group is over 6 pax and require a larger transport, this will be at an additional cost.

- Hotel accommodation throughout the tour is first class hotel in Bangkok and Chiang Mai and standard class hotel in Khao Yai, Kang Krachan and Doi Inthanon foothill. Based on 2 persons in twin-bedded room. All rooms are air-conditioned, except in Kang Krachan which is fanned room, with attached bath and toilet.
- Meals as specified in the program.
- Service of local English-speaking guide (not a professional bird leader).
- Park Entrance fee (12 entry) Remark: We reserve the right to adjust the price if there is any increase of the park fee.

Services not included in the price:

- Airport tax.
- Domestic flight Bangkok/Chiang Mai/Bangkok.
- Drinks & meals not mentioned in the above itinerary.
- Service of expert bird leader, which is available upon request.
- Tips for guide & drivers.
- Personal expenses.

Preferred accommodation list:

- Bangkok – Royal River (sup), or Prince Palace
- Khao Yao – Juldis Khao Yai Resort and Spa (sup)
- Kang Krachan – Wang Won Resort (Tourist class)
- Chiang Mai – Empress (ROH)
- Doi Inthanon – Inthanon Highland (Standard class)

THE BIRD FAUNA OF KHAO YAI

A total of 318 species have so far been recorded from Khao Yai, most of these in the vicinity of the headquarters. The montane bird fauna is not well represented in Khao Yai, not only because the park is relatively remote from the higher forested mountains of the north and west, but partly because it has only small, isolated areas of unexceptionally high mountain tops. Some typical montane birds include the White-browed Stirike-Babbler *Pteruthius flaviscapis* and the White-tailed Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus davisoni*, both of which may be found around Khao Khieo and the other high peaks. Some other mountain bird species (eg. Whitetailed Robin

Cinclidium frontale and Green Cochoa *Cochoa vilidis*), though they occur both in northern Thailand and in the south-east, are apparently absent from the park. Khao Yai's bird fauna is chiefly composed of those lowland and hill slope (submontane) birds, which have fairly wide altitudinal ranges. Some other lowland species, such as Siamese Fireback *Lophura diardi*, Pompadour Pigeon *Treron pompadora* and Javan Frogmouth *Batrachostomus javensis*, which may once have been abundant in the evergreen forests, which formerly covered the surrounding plains, are found only at extremely low density around the Khao Yai headquarters area.

Some typical resident species inhabiting the evergreen forests of the headquarters area include Silver Pheasant, Indian Hanging Parrot, Green-billed Malkoha, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Mountain Scops-Owl, Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons, four species of hornbills, 3 barbets, Greater Goldenback and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, 4 species of broadbills, Blue Pitta, Blue-winged Leafbird, Asian Fairy Bluebird, a variety of buibuls, including the Puff-throated and Grey-eyed; Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Green Magpie, a number of babblers, including Abbott's Babbler together with 3 species of laughing-thrush, the Striped Tit-Babbler and the White-bellied Yuhina. The commonest resident warbler of the forest is the Dark-necked Tailorbird and the commonest flycatcher is the Hill Blue Flycatcher.

Some other resident species, eg. Lineated Barbet and Goldenfronted Leaf bird, are mainly confined to the drier and more open habitats around the plateau margins. A number of resident species are characteristic inhabitants of grassland and scrub. These include the two species of buttonquail, the White-throated Kingfisher, Indian Roller, Chestnut-capped Babbler and three species of prinias together with the diminutive Bright-capped cisticola. Khao Yai is host to many migrant or wintering birds, most of which are visitors from the north and which inhabit the park from October through to April. Among those migrants which winter in forest, one of the most abundant, but most difficult to see, is the Siberian Blue Robin which haunts the forest floor. A variety of leaf-warblers inhabit the middle storey and canopy. The Blyth's Leaf-Warbler and the Sulphurbreasted leaf-Warbler are among the more common and join together with many of the park's resident species to form mixed species flocks or "bird waves". Species such as the Radde's Warbler, Two-barred Greenish Warbler, Forest Wagtail and Olive-Tree Pipit are mainly found along the forest edge while other conspicuous migrants inhabiting grassland include the Stonechat and the Brown Shrike. In addition to the above long distance migrants, there are a few

species which, though they breed elsewhere in Thailand, occur in Khao Yai only as non-breeding winter visitors. Two of the most conspicuous birds in this category are the Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike and the Grey-headed Flycatcher.

CLIMATE

Khao Yai has - a strongly monsoonal climate and is seasonally very wet. The average annual rainfall at the park headquarters is 2,270 mm, over 84% of which falls during the south-west monsoon, from May to October. The driest months are December and January, which average no more than 15 mm per month. The average temperature ranges from 28 C, in the hottest months of April and May, to as low as 17 C in December and January. Average humidity is roughly 86 percent (National Parks Division 1987).

AMAZING KAENG KRACHAN

A superb park for hikers and naturalists, yet a paradise for the birdwatcher. The park is situated 200 km. southwest of Bangkok and takes in almost 3,000 sq.km. which makes it the largest natural park in Thailand. The park contains a broad range of lush tropical broad-leaved evergreen forest - from foothills to elevated top of 1,000 meters - and is home to at least 40 mammal species. The Kaeng Krachan area includes a reservoir lake, beautiful scenery, waterfalls, caves, mountains. It is almost entirely covered with evergreen forest, which supports ecologically, economically and scientifically valuable plants and animals, including many wild elephants. Kaeng Krachan supports more than 400 bird species including 6 of hornbills. Many northern montane birds are also recorded here. A remarkable and unexpected recent discovery of a population of the Ratchet-tailed Treepie, previously known only from northern Vietnam, Laos and southern China makes Kaeng Krachan an exciting birding site.

Climate

Humidity remains high throughout the year, with heavy rain during the rainy season and cool weather for much of the year. The steep forested areas of the park are even more humid than the young forest and cleared lands in the lower elevations; some days it is clear and warm at headquarters, but it may be raining very hard in the forest 20 kilometres away. Near headquarters, annual rainfall averages 1,100 millimetres (although within the forest, it is probably much more). The wettest month is October, when rains can be nearly continuous and almost one-quarter of the annual rainfall may arrive. The driest month in an average year is January. The coldest months are December and January; the hottest are March and April. Temperatures in the area range

from 10 to 40 Degree Celsius, and may get colder on the mountaintops within the forest.

AMAZING DOI INTHANON

The park incorporates Thailand's highest mountain and is one of the most visited natural sites in the country. The 272 sq.km mountain and surrounding areas contain some of its most prolific bird life and flora. Birdwatching is good throughout the year. One of two races of the Green-tailed Sunbird endemic to Thailand is restricted to the summit of the park that rises to 2,565 metres. Other species include the Pigmy Wren-babbler, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Orange-flanked Bush-robin and thrushes. There are some populations of hill tribes still living within the park boundary in several villages. The park also provides a wonderful spectrum of native pine, wild flowers and a large number of orchid species.

Of the total of **382 species of birds** so far known from Doi Inthanon, at least 266 species are resident or were formerly resident on the mountain. The status of a further 12 species is unclear, but breeding is suspected in many of these. The remainder (104 species) are non-breeding winter visitors or passage migrants.

Doi Inthanon comprises some of the **tallest and best preserved** montane forest found anywhere in the entire country. The predominance of massive, huge-boled trees may be of particular significance for trunk-foraging species such as the Brown-throated Treecreeper. The profusion of epiphytes and the lush, moist understorey also contribute to the great variety of foraging niches for small, insectivorous birds. **Many larger birds**, such as the White-winged Wood-Duck and most hornbills, have probably been **extirpated due to hunting pressure**. Great Hornbills were last reported by Dickinson (1964) and although a single Rufous-necked Hornbill (a species which is threatened throughout its world range from the Himalayas across to Northern Indochina) was reliably seen as recently as 1986, it is however, appear to have fared better: Black Eagle, Rufous-bellied Eagle and Mountain Hawk-Eagle are all frequently seen. Although both galliformes and pigeons have also suffered adversely from illegal hunting, some species are still fairly common.

BIRDWATCHING IN DOI INTHANON

Since most visitors will approach Doi Inthanon along the road from Chom Thong, we describe the route as it ascends the mountain, point out those habitat features of particular interest and suggest which bird species to look out for.

Park Gate - Km 14

Soon after entering the park gate, the road climbs steeply through a cutting before leveling out, passing

the **Doi Inthanon National Park Information Center**, overlooking the Mae Klang river on the left. The road passes through open dry dipterocarp forest and after crossing over to the left bank, follows the course of the river, overlooking it. This forest type is of rather low stature trees, chiefly *Shorea siamensis* and *S. obtusa*, with *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus* and *D. obtusifolius* being co-dominant in some places. In the dry season, the leaves of the trees become yellow and red, before being shed. There is usually a fresh flush of green foliage in April, however, when the first showers announce the impending wet season. The understory is open and grassy. Fires, deliberately set by local people, sweep through the ground story in the dry season, from February onwards. In the heat of the day, this forest type may seem to be almost devoid of birds, but in fact, it is **quite rich, especially in medium to large-sized species**. **Early morning is the best time** to birdwatch here. Look out for Collared Falconets and Lineated Barbets perched high up in dead snags. The Indian Roller is also common. Many species of woodpeckers occur, including the scarce Black-headed and White-bellied Woodpeckers, while Eurasian Jay is fairly common. The beautiful Blue Magpie and strikingly marked Rufous Treepie are less easy to see. The magpies are highly social and usually found in small flocks, especially in the early morning, when they often descend to the river to drink. The Chinese Francolin haunts the grassy understory while, if you scan the skyline, you may pick up a soaring bird of prey. The Shikra is common, but Black Baza, Crested Serpent Eagle and Rufous-winged Buzzard are often seen. Smaller birds **appear scarce** and are apt to be concentrated in **small feeding flocks**, especially in bamboo brakes and denser foliage in steep gullies and along small permanent streams. Look out for Common Wood-Shrike, Small Minivet, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, White-crested and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes, Blue-throated and Tickell's Blue Flycatchers. A number of migrant species, including both Yellow-streaked and Radde's Warblers, may be found.

It is worth **carefully searching along the edges of the river** for riparian species. The rather scarce Black-backed Forktail is a typical inhabitant of streams of the foothills and wintering Little Herons, White Wagtails and Grey Wagtails may also be seen.

Km 14 - 23

As the road climbs gradually, an **evergreen gallery forest** begins develop along the banks of the river, supporting many tall and stately dipterocarp trees. Away from the river, however, the forest type is still predominantly dry dipterocarp. In addition to the bird species found in the preceding area, Large Wood-Shrike and Black-hooded Oriole should be looked for.

Soaring birds of prey can sometimes be seen over the steep ridge on the north side of the road, on the opposite bank of the Nam Mae Klang. The more level areas in the vicinity of the river are now cultivated and support small areas of orchard or vegetable gardens. The exposed rocks of road cuttings sometimes support the Blue Rock Thrush, a winter visitor. The impressive **Vachiratharn waterfall** is situated towards the upper end of this section and has a vertical drop of roughly 50 meters This is one of the **best sites** on the mountain for observing **birds of fast-flowing streams**. Walk down the steps leading to the main fall, looking out for the Plumbeous Redstart and the River Chat, which often perch on boulders in mid-stream, fly catching to take insects from the air or from the water's edge. The large and more robust Blue Whistling Thrush often wades into the stream to pluck out food items, or sits unobtrusively under rock overhangs. The Brown Dipper, recorded here in the past, has not been seen for many years. Where the current is weaker, well upstream of the main fall, the Slaty-backed Forktail can sometimes be seen. This illustrates well the altitudinal segregation between this species, which is more a bird of the mountains, and Black-backed Forktail, which is strictly a bird of the foothills, well downstream of the waterfall. The constant fine spray from the fall appears to allow more evergreen trees to grow here and a few birds characteristic of higher elevations, such as the White-headed Bulbul, begin to appear.

Km 23 - 29

Above the waterfall, the road once again crosses over the Mae Klang river and continues to ascend the mountain, following the north bank. The surroundings change very abruptly in character, and pines predominate in many areas. The **pine forest** appears to support a **lower diversity of birds** than other forest types. A few species, such as the Great Tit, are more or less confined to pine forests in northern Thailand but most other species which occur here, such as Large Hawk-Cuckoo, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch are ecologically tolerant species which also occur in a variety of other woodland types. The Inornate Warbler, Red-throated Flycatcher and Olive Tree-Pipit are among the commonest wintering species found. Such broadleaved woodlands as remain are mostly low-stature, secondary regrowth but support a number of smaller resident species, including Buff-breasted Babbler and Brown-cheeked Fulvetta. The **rare Giant Nuthatch**, which is one of the few species which is positively associated with pines, has not been seen on Doi Inthanon for many years but should be **looked for in this zone**, particularly towards its upper altitudinal limits where the pines begin to intergrade with broadleaved evergreen trees

such as oaks . Along the course of the Mae Klang are many Karen rice terraces. Dry stubble occasionally supports White-rumped Munias and the occasional wintering Chestnut Bunting or even Chestnut-eared Bunting. In recent years, however, many more cabbages and other vegetable crops are being grown on these terraces and they generally support fewer birds. Look out for birds of prey, such as Crested Honey-Buzzard, or the wintering Common Buzzard or Grey-faced Buzzard. Towards the end of this section, a **rocky crag** overlooks the road and may provide **nesting habitat** for species such as House Swift *Apus affinis* and Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*.

Km 30 - 34

This area has borne the brunt of **deforestation** due to upland shifting cultivation and virtually all native forest has been cleared. Little more than a decade ago, the area was dominated by scrub and grassland, among which were scattered a few opium poppy fields. During the past few years, however, there has been a great increase in horticultural activity under the auspices of the **Highland Agricultural Project** and a great variety of **fruits and vegetables** are now grown. In addition, many areas have been replanted with *Pinus kesiya*, so that dense stands of conifers are beginning to cover the formerly denuded hills. This area also supports a large human population. In addition to nearby Hmong and Karen villages, there are many government offices and residential buildings. including the headquarters of the National Park and various highway and construction works.

In spite of such a high level of human activity, the **scrublands and cultivated areas** continue to support a **great variety of birds**. Lowland species such as Red-whiskered and Sooty-headed Bulbuls, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, Pied Bushchat and Long-tailed Shrike occur alongside such mountain birds as Flavescent Bulbul, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, Hill Prinia and Pale-footed Bush-Warbler. In such moist secondary growth as remains, particularly along watercourses, a number of the more tolerant forest birds, including Orange-bellied Leafbird and Slaty-blue Flycatcher are found. During the late dry season, from January onwards, a number of red-flowered *Erythrina* trees are in blossom. These produce copious nectar which attracts a great many birds. Look out for the rather scarce White-headed Bulbul among the commoner species such as Red-whiskered Bulbul Occasional flocks of Long-tailed Minivets may also be seen during the winter months. This area supports a **great number of winter visitors**, including Siberian Rubythroat, and Buff-throated, Yellow-streaked and Radde's Warblers, all of which inhabit dense banks of scrub and herbage, while Stonechats, Olive Tree-Pipits, White Wagtails

and Little Buntings occur in the more open areas. The Grey Bushchat may be seen here commonly during the winter months as a breeding bird, however, it is usually restricted to the higher elevations . The **national park headquarters** is situated at **Km 30**, beyond the Hmong village of Ban Khun Klang.

Km 34 - 40

This section supports some of the **best remaining broadleaved hill-evergreen forest** on the mountain. Although the action of fire, sweeping into the margins of this zone from the cultivated areas below, combined with road construction activities, has "thinned" the forest edge in places, large expanses of dense forest supporting many tall, large-boled trees remain and there is a good deal of lush, moist ground storey vegetation, particularly along small forest brooks. The vegetation along the road is much disturbed with many secondary and pioneer fruit-bearing shrubs. As already mentioned, this zone has a **higher bird species diversity** than any other: among its characteristic reside species are the Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Great Barbet Golden-throated Barbet, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Bay Woodpecker, Maroon Oriole, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Golden Babbler, White-necked Laughingthrush, Blue-winged Minla Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Rufous-backed Sibia and Large Niltava among many more. In the more disturbed edges may be found the Silver-eared Mesia, Spectacled Barwing and Mountain Tailorbird. Tall dead trees are a favoured haunt of the Chestnut-vented Nuthatch. Birdwatching along the road can be quite productive, particularly in the vicinity of the checkpoint at Km 37.5, where a road forks off towards the village of Mae Chaem, or at Km 3 where a dirt road forks off towards the south.

There are **very few trails**, which makes access into the areas of moist forest understorey difficult. By the check-point at Km 37.5 a dirt track leads off to the north and provides access into the forest interior. Otherwise, the more adventurous observer must find his own way, usually by following ridge tops or seeking out small streams and following them. Among the **many scarce arboreal birds** to look out for are Red-headed Trogon, Long-tailed Broadbill, Brown-throated Treecreeper and Green Cochoa. The many secretive ground-living and understorey birds include Rufous-throated Partridge, Silver Pheasant, Rusty napped Pitta, Pygmy Wren-Babbler, Lesser Shortwing, White-tailed Robin, Slaty-bellied and Chestnut headed Tesias, White-gorgetted Flycatcher and Small Niltava. No birdwatcher ever manages to see all of these species on a single visit, and indeed the impossibility of predicting which of these or any other species one will encounter is something which merely adds to one's excitement and constant sense

of anticipation. The resident White-tailed Leaf Warbler is one of the commonest birds in the forest, though a number of wintering leaf-warblers are also found here. Another winter visitor, the Eye-browed Thrush, is often seen in small flocks feeding either on the forest floor or in the treetops.

Km 40 - 46

The road continues through this section to the summit. It initially traverses an exposed, windswept grassy ridge, before once more entering the forest. Here, where **rocky road cuttings are found adjacent to forest trees**, one should look out for the Dusky Crag Martin and for the Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush which has been recorded throughout the year and is believed to breed here. The forest in this zone is characterized by an abundance of **Rhododendron** and other species of the families Ericaceae, Theaceae and Magnoliaceae. The trees are of lower stature than in the preceding zone and are frequently swathed in epiphytes.

Many of the bird species in this zone are **shared with the preceding zone** but some, such as the Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush and Rufous-winged Fulvetta, are **much more abundant here**. The Chestnut-tailed Minla and Black-headed Sibia are among the commonest babblers. The Mountain Imperial Pigeon is still the commonest pigeon species, though both the scarce resident Ashy Wood-Pigeon and the wintering Speckled Wood-Pigeon should be looked out for. Thailand's second resident species of leaf-warbler, Ashy-throated Leaf-Warbler, is extremely common, occurring alongside the White-tailed Leaf-Warbler. The migrant Orange-barred Leaf-Warbler is also abundant during the winter months. Another winter visitor, the Common Rosefinch, may sometimes be seen in large numbers. This species often frequents the dense banks of brambles (*Rubus* sp.) along the roadside margins. Both the Grey Bushchat and the Hill Prinia are also common here.

Across the road from the highest point of the mountain, a **narrow footpath** leads down into a small **sphagnum moss bog**. This is one of the **best spots on the entire mountain for birdwatching**. Many of the birds are extremely confident and will approach quite close to a quiet and patient observer. The brightly-colored and endemic form of Green-tailed Sunbird, which is resident on the mountain, is extremely common. During the winter months, it may be seen alongside the somewhat similarly-marked Gould's Sunbird, which is a migrant visitor. One of the **greatest treats** in store for the observer in February or March is to watch both these "living jewels" feeding on the nectar of the beautiful blood-red flowers of *Rhododendron delavayi*, one of the

many species of **flowering plants** for which Doi Inthanon is the **only station in Thailand**. In addition to the great variety of arboreal birds, the watcher should look out for the **many shy or scarce ground-feeding species** which frequent moist, leaf-strewn muddy patches around the margins of the bog. The White-browed Shortwing is quite common; normally rather shy and somewhat difficult to see, it becomes very **bold and confident** during the **breeding season**, from **February through to May**. The resident Dark-sided Thrush can sometimes be seen digging craters in the soft mud with its heavy, curved bill while one or two pairs of Snowy-browed Flycatchers haunt the ground storey vegetation.

The Eurasian Woodcock is an annual winter visitor, as is the Orange-flanked Bush-Robin. Wintering thrushes can be abundant here; in most years, one or two scarce Grey-sided Thrushes can be seen feeding unobtrusively on the forest floor or sitting in the treetops with the much commoner, but similarly marked, Eye-browed Thrush. In some years, irruptions of other thrush species occur, perhaps with the onset of unusually cool weather in south-west China. Long-tailed Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, Red-throated Thrush and Dusky Thrush have all been seen on the summit of Doi Inthanon.

Important: Before you travel please check your **Tour Voucher** and **Arrival Information** for the latest joining instructions. This will be sent to you upon receipt of final payment.

All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.