

Birding trip report
Southern Annam, Vietnam
Nov 24th – Dec 3rd 2010
by Peter Schmidt, Sweden



Introduction

After experiencing some of the related Asian avifauna from a couple of previous trips to China, India and Malaysia, this was my first visit to Vietnam. Since I went in November and only had 10 days, I chose to focus my efforts in the south, going to classical birding spots on the Dalat plateau and in Cat Tien. November may not be the best time to see species like Pittas and Pheasants where you rely rather heavily on the vocalisation activity, but I still found the birding to be quite rewarding and I was able to find much of what I had hoped for, including most of the endemic taxa in Dalat. I arranged my stay through Vietnam Birding (www.vietnambirding.com). A bit more costly compared to going completely on my own, but certainly no extremes and it saved me a lot of time dealing with logistics and finding the best birding areas. Especially around Dalat finding the good forest could be tricky for a first time visitor and there is also much happening with new roads and resorts being built every year, e.g. around Lake Tuyen Lam. Also nice with some company since I was travelling on my own this time. Additional photos from the trip and contact info are found on my pbase site: www.pbase.com/luscinia

Itinerary

Nov 23-24th. Arrival Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) and further transport to Dalat. Late morning Nov 24th: Slopes on the southeastern side of Tuyen Lam lake. Afternoon: Ta Nung valley.

Nov 25th. Morning: Forests on the western side of Tuyen Lam. Afternoon: Ta Nung valley.

Nov 26th. Morning: Mt Lang Bian(g). Afternoon: Slopes southeastern side of Tuyen Lam including “Elephant camp” surroundings.

Nov 27th. Morning and noon: Bidoup (including short stop at Suoi Vang lake). Late afternoon: Around Tuyen Lam (first east then west side, mostly along the road).

Nov 28th. Morning: Ta Nung valley. Transport to Di Linh. Afternoon: Di Linh.

Nov 29th. Morning: Di Linh. Transport to Cat Tien. Afternoon: Forest and grasslands west of HQ.

Nov 30th. Morning and noon: Crocodile lake including the 5 km trail. Late afternoon: Heaven’s Rapids road junction and Botanical garden trails.

Dec 1st. Morning: Heaven’s Rapids road + Botanical garden trails. Afternoon: Western forest + grasslands.

Dec 2nd. Morning: Crocodile lake including the trail. Late afternoon: Trails behind (northeast of) the HQ.

Dec 3rd. Morning: Heaven’s Rapids road junction including Botanical garden trails.

Places visited

Dalat area

Ho Tuyen Lam. A large artificial difficult-to-overview lake at about 1400m altitude just 10 minutes south of Dalat city created for irrigation purposes in the late 70’s. The best forest is at the southern end of the lake. Access from the north to both pine and evergreen forest used to be by boat, but is nowadays possible through two just recently constructed paved roads along the western and eastern shores, respectively. See Map 1 for more details on the areas I visited around the lake. I did most of the birding near the roads, the only walking was done a couple of kilometers at the southwestern end one of the mornings. There is a good map of Tuyen Lam prepared by Florian Klingel available on the web with also a number of birding trails marked for those who have more time to explore some of the other forests including the Quan Du peak at 1,800 m where there should even be a possibility to see Collared Laughingthrush. Apparently there is also still a small group of Black-shanked Douc around here. The map is found in a trip report on Dalat and Yak Don from April 2009 on Hanno Stammers website: (www.hannostamm.com) or alternatively click directly at this link: <http://sites.google.com/site/dalatbirding/>. A GPS or at least a compass is advisable as the trails are not always obvious and will be difficult to follow.

Ta Nung valley. Small largely isolated valley at about 1300m altitude with evergreen forest just a couple of kilometers west-southwest of Dalat. Ta Nung is also indicated on one of the maps in the document by Florian. The village of Ta Nung is actually a little further down the road and the junction to the birding site is signposted “Di Nong Trai” to a dirt road on the left coming from Dalat. The place has become famous for being the best place to find the Crocias during the last couple of years, but it is well worth a visit for general birding as well.

Ho Suoi Vang. Also called Dankia lake. Short stop at this large reservoir northwest of Dalat on the way to Bidoup (see Map 2).

Mt Lang Bian. With an altitude of just above 2,000m this is the traditional site to go looking for Collared Laughingthrush. It also holds a number of higher altitude species like Ashy-throated Warbler and Golden-throated Barbet as well as some of the other Dalat specialties such as the Black-crowned Fulvetta and Cutia. At the time of my visit it was still only possible to go up the mountain with a rented park Jeep for 200,000 VND. I experienced poor weather with strong winds and mist during my visit, so I didn’t really see the best side of this site. Apparently Collared Laughingthrush is getting more tricky to see up here, therefore including a trip to Bidoup Nui Ba in the travelling plan could be a good idea if time allows for it.

Bidoup Nui Ba. A larger forested area which includes a protected national park roughly 12 km (an hour away by motor vehicle) northwest of Dalat (and northwest of Mt Lang Bian). See Map 2 for details of the following descriptions. About 8 km before the junction to Bidoup Nui Ba NP the tarred road becomes a dirt road which could be difficult to travel with a normal car, especially after the rains (we used a motorcycle). There is also a narrow passage along a ridge where land slides have eaten up most of the slopes on both sides of the road, the question is how long this road is actually going to be possible to access? 1-2km before the junction there is a ranger station signed “Cong Troi” which was the only house I saw along this road. Most birding was done in evergreen forest at 1600-1800m along the 3-4 km dirt road stretch between the junction to Bidoup NP all the way to a large horseradish cultivation inside the forest. Another 250 metres northwest of the Bidoup junction, on the left hand side in a sharp curve going to the right, there is a narrow trail down the slope initially through some open forest that will take you all the way down to the bottom of the valley where there is a small stream and a

camp site. This is supposed to be a good spot for Collared Laughingthrush, although we did not hear any. This target species was instead found along the dirt road further north, about 600m before the “Horseradish junction” indicated in map 2. Bidoup Nui Ba has been rarely visited by birders since all target species can normally be seen with ease closer to Dalat, but this is definitely a rewarding alternative offering really good birding.

Map 1. Tuyen Lam lake.

Area 1. A slope with pines just where the road bends sharply to the right around a forested gully. A walk up this slope produced the Cutia, Slender-billed Oriole and the Cuckoo-shrike. Greenfinches were around in the mentioned gully on the opposite side of the road down towards the lake.

Area 2. “Elephant camp”. A newly constructed resort along the lake with thatched cottages and offering elephant rides. The open pine forest holds typical pine-associated species including Burmese Shrike, Crossbill, Long-tailed Minivet, Jay, various Bulbuls, Black-collared Starling and Chestnut-vented Nuthatch. Between area 1 and 2 there is a gully with broadleaf forest which is supposed to hold additional species like the Parrotbill and babblers, although it did not produce much at the time of my visit.

Area 3. Reached by taking the newly paved road on the west side almost to the end. On the right side there is a trail leading southwest to an open area with a small green house with a garden (visible on the Google Earth map). This is a good spot for the Crocias. The broadleaf forest on both sides held a lot of birds and several birdwaves were encountered including species like Indochinese Green Magpie, White-cheeked Laughingthrush, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, White-browed Scimitar-babbler and Grey-crowned Tit. Continuing on the trail further south through the forest, there is a patch with pines where both the Crossbill and Cuckoo-shrike were seen. Continuing along the ridge, taking a sharp left back towards the lake, there is more pine forest with broadleaf forest found below down the slopes where bird waves keep you busy. I only went a kilometer or two along this trail.



Map 2. Bidoup Nui Ba.



Di Linh - Deo Nui San pass.

At the southern edge of the Dalat plateau, the Deo Nui San mountain pass 20 km south of Di Linh is a well known birding spot at approximately 1100m, i.e. slightly lower altitude than Dalat. Birding along the paved road (which continues to the coast) the couple of hundred meters between the quarry (KM76 mile stone) and tea house and along the steep trails in the forest, including the small stream behind the tea house. I never visited the pine forest below on the other side.

Cat Tien

If you are a first time visitor and are not aiming to stay more than a couple of days, birding in Cat Tien is quite straight forward. There are plenty of trails in this lowland rainforest (altitude 100-150m) near the headquarters to keep you busy for at least a week. Most of the trails are worth repeated visits. Overview maps with trails indicated are available for free at the park reception and have been reproduced in several other trip reports.

Headquarters (HQ). Behind the headquarters, mostly to the north, there is a maze of trails in the forest all (?) which end out on the paved road to Cat Loc.

Western grasslands. The only road along the river on the southwestern side of the headquarters, initially going south through open forest and some bamboo patches, then west into grasslands where there are eventually two open spots with watchtowers. Going here in the afternoon is probably the best strategy to see the peafowl and since it is open areas and grasslands you will also see some species not encountered in the more densely forested parts of the park. Plenty of birds around and also nice to leave the leech and mosquito infested forests for a change. It is a fairly long walk all the way to the towers, so you could either arrange with a Jeep to drop you/pick you up or rent a bike. However, the dirt road is not good and neither are the bikes so I opted for the car.

Botanical gardens. Sign-posted paved trails inside the forest between the river (Ben Cu rapids) and junction to the Heaven's Rapids road.

Crocodile lake. Northwest of the HQ about 12km along the road to Cat Loc there is a 5 km trail (referred to as the Bau Sau trail) going through the forest east to the Crocodile lake. Birdwise, I don't think there is any reason to stay the night at Crocodile lake. This trail will take at least 2 hours one way (in birding mode walk pace) and is good for most of the rainforest species including Pheasants and Pittas. Compared to staying along the bigger roads (Cat Loc road and Heaven's rapids trail), the dense forest can be a bit slow at times. A few kilometers north on the Cat Loc road there is another smaller lake/marsh called the "bird lake" which is a shorter walk through the forest. Others have recommended it, but I didn't have time for a visit.

Heaven's Rapids road. The dirt road starting north of the headquarters going up-stream along the river. Mostly evergreen forest but also a couple of bamboo patches which should be good for Pale-headed Woodpecker (not in my case though). I went past the actual Heaven's Rapids spot in the river, but not all the way to the end so I wouldn't know what it looks like.



North end of Lake Tuyen Lam



Dalat city outskirts



The misty day at Mt Lang Biang

Daily log

Nov 23rd Travelling.

Stockholm-Frankfurt-Bangkok-Saigon flight with arrival in the evening. Richard Craik of Vietnam birding met up at the airport. He was leaving the next day for another birding trip but joined me for the short transport to the pre-booked hotel near the airport.

Nov 24th Tuyen Lam/Ta Nung.

A 50 min morning flight to Dalat and transport to the Dreams hotel in Dalat city where I met up with my guide and driver for the next couple of days, Luyen Nguyen. Luyen is the only (?) native birder in Dalat and knows the local avifauna and the birding spots very well. He is also a keen photographer. Quick stop to leave my bags in the room and by 9 a.m. we were off to do the first birding. Weather at this altitude (~1,500m) was pleasant with some clouds and around 20°C in the late morning. The rainy season had arrived very late this year but had also lingered a little longer than usual. It was constantly cloudy during my week here, but I was fortunate not to have much rain at all, only the wind was a bit annoying some of the days. We started by going southeast along Tuyen Lam lake and almost at the end of the road we climbed a slope with pine forest and rather dense undergrowth (Area 1 in the map). The first couple of species turned up, Grey Bushchat, Chestnut-tailed Nuthatches, Mrs Gould's Sunbirds, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon and various bulbul species, to name a few. Yellow-browed Warblers were heard constantly, as would prove to be the case all around Dalat. Soon we heard the song from a distant Cutia and after playing the tape there was soon a whole party coming in to inspect us. Great start. Other pine forest specialists were soon joining in – Slender-billed Oriole, Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike and several Vietnamese Greenfinches. After a quick lunch back at the hotel we went to Ta Nung valley. A little warmer now and afternoon bird activity was much lower, as would be the case the whole week. No sign of the Crocias but nice views of the beautiful endemic taxon of Black-throated Sunbird as well as of both Sibia species. Hopping on the trail at dusk a Robin with entirely rufous tail and dirty/wet breast from the moist undergrowth was initially thought to be a Rufous-tailed Robin, but was probably “just an” immature Siberian Blue Robin which would be far more common here.



One of the Cutias and a glimpse of the pine slope where it was found at the southeastern end of lake Tuyen Lam near Dalat.

Nov 25th Tuyen Lam/Ta Nung.

The early morning was dedicated to finding the Crocias at a newly discovered site that Luyen knew of. Along the newly constructed road on the west side of Tuyen Lam there was a small trail leading up an open area near a green house (Area 3 in the map). When we arrived we heard the calling birds and after some aid from the tape, a small party came in and perched in a low tree just 25m away. The birds sat still for more than 10 minutes and could be observed in the scope. The birds finally flew off but could be heard calling further away for at least half an hour more. The adjacent broadleaf forest patches soon proved to be excellent also for other birds. Following a few birdwaves, which included a Yellow-billed Nuthatch, White-cheeked Laughingthrushes and a group of Grey-crowned Tits, a vocal Indochinese Green Magpie required a bit of patience before it could be spotted in the dense foliage. We continued southwest along the trail and reached a patch with pine forest on the right hand side where we stopped for a short coffee. This yielded 2-3 Vietnamese Crossbills, an Indochinese Cuckoo-shrike and a vocal White-browed Scimitar-babbler nearby. Continuing along the ridge turning left back towards the lake resulted in several more bird waves along the slopes with broadleaf forest. Whistling like a Collared Owlet was generally very effective to stop the birds from moving along too quickly. On the way back I spotted a perched Grey Nightjar in a pine tree and near the road we stopped to take a closer look at some of the several Kloss's Leaf Warblers that were heard singing during the morning. By noon activity dropped and we headed back to the hotel for some lunch. The afternoon was again spent in Ta Nung where the dull looking local taxon of Blue-

winged Minla and a calling Banded Bay Cuckoo were added to the trip list. Otherwise the birding was rather slow. Evening spent walking around the busy but architecture-wise rather interesting and nice looking city of Dalat.

Nov 26th Lang Bian/Tiyen Lam.

This morning was spent at Mt Lang Bian. After hitching a ride with one of the park Jeeps, we soon realised that the weather was not with us today. Very windy and also dense mist made birding rather difficult. Consequently very few birds along the way up, but at least a few vocal Pygmy Wren-babblers, Lesser Shortwings and Grey-bellied Tesias were noted. Close to the top, near a camp site, we suddenly heard some Collared Laughingthrushes calling from below in a gully. We played the tape, but even though the birds responded initially, they did not come much closer. We eventually gave up and slowly headed back down. Still poor weather conditions, but we managed to locate a few bird waves and found both a pair of White-browed Shrike-babblers and another White-browed Scimitar-babbler. No sign of the endemic Black-crowned Fulvetta though, among the several Minlas and Mountain Fulvettas. Back in the pine forest a pair of Crossbill showed well, otherwise just some Flavescent Bulbuls, Chestnut-vented Nuthatches and Green-backed Tits. We got picked up by our pre-ordered ride and went back to Dalat. The weather had improved a little so after lunch we headed to the east side of Tuyen Lam to a “Elephant camp” resort at the end of the road. At many places around the lake there were new “Ecotourism” resorts under construction so there is much happening here at the moment. Except at the north end by the restaurants and the pier, we saw very few visiting people around the lake and Luyen had a little hard to understand who would come to stay at all these new hotels, most Vietnamese tourists preferred staying in Dalat city he pointed out. We walked around the resort (Area 2 in the map) which was mostly pine forest along the shores with a few gullies containing broadleaf forest. Several Sooty-headed Bulbuls, Hill Prinia, a few Greenfinches and a couple of Burmese Shirkes as well as a Slender-billed Oriole and some Jays. Many Little Grebes out on the lake.



Male Grey Bushchat at Lang Bian



A view from the park entrance Mt Lang Bian

Nov 27th Bidoup/Tuyen Lam.

This day was devoted to Bidoup, a big forest northwest of Dalat part of which has been proclaimed a national park (Bidoup Nui Ba NP). Weather was much better than the previous day. Luyen preferred to go there by motorbike since the dirt road is a little unreliable after the rains. This also proved to be the right decision as there were a few stretches where it would have been difficult to pass without a 4-wheel drive. Halfway to the forest, there is another big artificial water reservoir called Suoi Vang where we made a short stop near the bridge. Not too exciting, but a few waterbirds not seen elsewhere around Dalat. Once the tarred road turns into dirt road, the forest begins. Initially mostly pines, but it is gradually replaced by broadleaf forest further up. At about 1800m, just after the junction to Bidoup NP, we stopped at the left and walked a narrow steep trail through the rainforest down to a stream with a small camp site. This felt like a good spot for pittas, forketails & flycatchers etc, but it actually didn't produce much at all. The open forest at the beginning of the trail at the top held more birds including a selection of warblers, bulbuls, babbblers and a (probable) Dark-sided Flycatcher. Continued west on the dirt road a couple of kilometers and stopped by a gully to listen for Collared Laughingthrush. A party not far away responded to the tape and soon I had great views of 3-4 birds moving along in the dense undergrowth, occasionally perching in the open. The next hour or so several bird waves were found with a selection of good birds such as Orange-bellied Leafbird, Siberian Thrush (although I only realised afterwards...), Red-headed Trogon, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Speckled Piculet, Grey-crowned Tit, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Annam (Black-

browed) & Golden-throated Barbet and various warblers. A Mountain Hawk Eagle and a male Oriental Honey Buzzard were seen soaring. A little further along the road there was another junction to the right (north) eventually leading down to a large plantation with horseradish within the forest. Here, Black-crowned Fulvetta, Large Niltava and Red-billed Scimitar-babbler were new birds for the trip. Also a Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Bay Woodpecker and several singing Tesias were noted. Late return to Dalat, so after a quick meal there was only an hour of light left which was spent along Tuyen Lam. This did not produce much except for a few Greenfinches, Black-collared Starlings and Brown & Burmese Shrike along the road.

Nov 28th Ta Nung valley/Di Linh.

This final day in Dalat was spent in Ta Nung valley, which I had only visited in the afternoon before. More activity in the morning despite a bit of wind and Cutia, Crocias and Long-tailed Broadbills were heard calling at a distance. A walk in the rainforest below the cultivated field produced a Red-headed Trogon but not much else so we went back to the open area at the eastern end of the valley. A shortwing started singing from a gully and I made a half-hearted attempt to see it, moving closer. Suddenly a small bird moved close to the ground and thinking it was the shortwing I was astonished to instead lay my eyes on a small greenish finch with blue face and scarlet tail - it was a male Pin-tailed Parrotfinch! This unpredictable nomadic species I knew could be a remote possibility, but I never would have expected to actually come across it. After calling Luyen I realised it was in fact a pair. Luyen got a decent photo of the female, but the birds were wary and soon lost as they moved up the slope in the dense understorey. We waited for a long time but were not able to find the birds again. After this I made a final attempt sneaking up along the small stream at the east end of the valley hoping to find a forktail or a White-tailed Robin. Brief views of a Rufous-browed Flycatcher and a male Lesser Shortwing, but the Robin would prove to elude me also on this trip. A bird wave with many White-cheeked Laughingthrushes contained a couple of Black-crowned Parrotbills, much to my delight. After this rewarding end we headed back to Dalat to prepare for the transport to Di Linh. On the way to the hotel we made a short stop at a local bird shop that Luyen knew of. It was perhaps not news to me that the cage bird trade is big business in Vietnam (as in many of the neighbouring Asian countries), several times we had in fact bumped into people with bird traps in the forest, but I was still amazed to find both a Crocias and an Orange-breasted Laughingthrush in the collection of wild birds which otherwise seemed to include half the Robson fieldguide! 2 hrs in the car with a lunch stop along the highway took us to Di Linh where there was still a couple of hours of light to allow for some birding at the renowned Deo Nui San pass. The only Black Eagle and a male Red-headed Trogon were good and an Orange-breasted Laughingthrush was heard but never came close enough despite a long wait before dusk. Here we also briefly met an American birding group along the main road. Nice dinner at a local restaurant and back at the hotel I enjoyed watching Roger Federer beating Rafael Nadal in the London ATP Masters final before falling asleep in my beautiful fairytale four-poster bed with extremely slippery silk linen.

Nov 29th Di Linh/Cat Tien.

At pre-dawn we headed back to the pass. I skipped breakfast at the teashop and walked back towards the quarry. I heard the call from a Scimitar-babbler from a patch of bamboo up the slope and after a short climb I had nice views of a small group of Red-billed Scimitar-babblers inside the forest. Suddenly the trees came alive and I found myself in the middle of a large group with Black-hooded Laughingthrushes, clearly upset by my presence. Back on the main road the light was improving and soon the birds started moving around. Then followed a busy hour with wonderful views of Long-tailed Broadbill, Black-crowned Parrotbill and more Black-hooded Laughingthrushes along with many other species in the different mixed flocks. A little later an Orange-breasted Laughingthrush started calling not far from where we had heard it the evening before. With aid from the tape and a lot of patience I was finally treated with lovely views of one of the birds as it was singing in the dense understorey. It was now closer to noon so we made a final effort up along the stream behind the teashop. These trails here inside the forest have been known to produce good birds like Green Cochoa as well as pittas (Blue,



Black-hooded Laughingthrush and Black-crowned Parrotbill at Di Linh.

Rusty-naped and even irregular Eared), but it was dead silent and we had no luck with these. The forest is largely intact, although there are obvious signs of (illegal?) logging. Shells of the big snails that the Cochoa is supposed to be feeding on were found along the trail. Except for a distant calling Bar-backed Partridge, no signs of any pheasants either. It was time for departure for the lowlands and Cat Tien. After a couple of eventless hours in the car it was time to say goodbye to Luyen at the river crossing after a most pleasant stay on the Dalat plateau.

At the Cat Tien headquarters I had a pre-booked room and there were two restaurants to choose from nearby. I was to be accompanied by one of the park staff all of the mornings as this was included in the price. Mr Duyen was a nice man who had worked for a long time here and also very knowledgeable when it came to calls. A guide is otherwise not really a necessity in Cat Tien, as finding the way along the trails and roads is mostly easy. The afternoon was spent in the grasslands west of the headquarters, primarily to look for the Green Peafowl. During the jeep ride I saw a selection of open area birds including high-lights like Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Golden-crested Myna and Racket-tailed Treepie. Closer to the watchtowers I had three sightings of the peafowl and the as the sun disappeared more than twenty Great Eared-nightjars could be observed soaring like shadows over the grassland.



Papilo sp. butterfly in Di Linh



Long-tailed Broadbill in Di Linh

Nov 30th Cat Tien.

I decided to spend the morning along the Crocodile lake trail. During the jeep ride to the junction two males Siamese Fireback could be seen slowly crossing the road as well as the only Forest Wagtails of the trip. Once on the trail I felt the first raindrops and the forest was rather silent during the long walk inside the dense growth. Still, I managed to identify a few Grey-faced Tit-babblers among the more common Pin-striped. Some were also singing. Closer to the lake there were a few more birds in the forest, a male Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Pale-legged Warblers and a perched Barred Owlet harassed by a selection of passerines. At the lake there is a platform and a few houses where you nowadays can stay the night. Plenty of people had arrived already as I started to scan the lake. The expected waterbirds including a Yellow Bittern and on the far side of the lake there was a male Green Peafowl walking around. An immature male Eastern Marsh Harrier appeared briefly. On the way back the weather deteriorated and the drizzle made birding almost impossible. In addition, the rain brought out plenty of leeches of which at least half a dozen managed to get me despite leech socks and boots. Well back at the junction the rain had stopped and while waiting for our ride we had great views of a few Black-shanked Langurs and at least four very vocal Dusky Broadbills were chasing each other in a canopy. At the headquarters I had a quick lunch and then took a walk along to the Heaven's Rapids junction and the paved trails at the Botanical garden (which is just a part of the forest where there had been signs with the names put up on a few selected trees along the trails). On the way I saw several Oriental Pied Hornbills as well as a White-bellied and a Laced Woodpecker. Inside the forest I suddenly heard a calling Bar-bellied Pitta. I spent the remaining hour of the afternoon to see it (and to fight off the mosquitoes) and I was finally rewarded with exciting views of this one of my most wanted birds here. As it turned out the next couple of days, this pitta was not uncommon around the trails, but nonetheless very hard to get good views of. In the evening at the restaurant I met Florian Klinger, a German birder who had lived in Hanoi for a few years, who had just arrived from Dalat and we agreed to bird together the following morning.

Dec 1st Cat Tien.

Pre-dawn, we were taken by car to a patch of bamboo beyond the Heaven's Rapids and then spent the morning walking slowly back to the headquarters. No sign of Pale-headed Woodpecker, but instead great views of both Laced, Black-and-buff and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers. Walking the road produced a lot of birds in the high trees. Also a couple of Bar-bellied Pittas (of which one male provided a really nice observation). Back along the paved trails inside the "Botanical garden" we saw plenty of good birds including a perched male Orange-breasted Trogon and a rather confiding female Violet Cuckoo.

A quick lunch and the afternoon was spent with Florian walking westwards from the headquarters. Nice to get away from the leeches and walk in comfortable trainer shoes for a change. Another Orange-breasted Trogon was good as well as several Silver-backed Needletails and a variety of open forest birds. We had asked for a jeep to pick us up and since it arrived early we decided to go a bit further where I spent the first afternoon. No Peafowl today, but a Slaty-breasted Rail slowly crossing the road was a nice stroke of luck.

Dec 2nd Cat Tien. I went with Florian and Mr Duyen for a second walk along the Crocodile trail, but despite better weather also this time it was fairly quiet inside the dense forest. Mostly re-runs of previous species both here and at the lake. Some Swifts far up in the sky were probably Himalayan or Germain's and the same identification problem with some distant Striated/Red-rumped Swallows.

After another quick lunch, in the late afternoon we headed for the trails behind the HQ, entering the forest just by the bear rescue centre. Florian flushed a male Siberian Thrush and we heard the only Peacock-Pheasant of the trip. We did not manage to get closer to it despite some efforts. At dusk the usual owls and eared-nightjars.

Dec 3rd Cat Tien/Departure. My last morning I spent around Heaven's Rapids road junction and the Botanical garden trails, again with Florian and Mr Duyen. Near the junction by an open area with grass just by dawn I caught a short glimpse of a Slaty-legged or a Red-legged Crake quickly crossing the trail in. Too bad I did not think of looking specifically at the leg colour, but the light and distance was not favourable either. In the large bamboo patch at the junction we heard a modest pecking noise and suspected it could be a White-browed Piculet. After quite some effort we were finally rewarded with a pair foraging inside the forest. We also found a pair of Black-and-buff Woodpecker in the same area. Quite a few birds around including a party with 5 species of sunbird and Little Spiderhunters by some flowering bushes. We headed down to the river near Ben Cu Rapids where we saw Golden-crested Myna and the only Black-capped Kingfisher of the trip. Suddenly a Fish-Eagle flew off and perched in the open on the opposite side. We didn't notice any obvious tail band so we immediately suspected it was the much more unexpected Lesser Fish-eagle. Unfortunately the tail of the perched bird was hidden behind a branch from where we stood so after waiting 20 minutes we tried to move to another position. Eventually the bird flew off and the identification could be confirmed. Excellent views of this uncommon bird was a nice ending to the trip.

My flight was from Saigon in the evening, so to avoid getting stuck in traffic I left already after noon. Two Jungle Crows from the car on the 4 hrs journey was the last species recorded on the trip.



The Lesser Fish Eagle near Ben Cu Rapids in Cat Tien

Species account

No strict taxonomy reference used, subspecies mentioned when of special interest.

(H) – heard only

[species name] - uncertain identification

Chinese Francolin, *Francolinus pintadeanu*. 3-4 calling males on both afternoon visits to the grasslands west of the HQ, Cat Tien. One male was seen calling perched in the open, low in a dead tree.

(H) Bar-backed Partridge, *Arborophila brunneopectus*. Heard once in Bidoup and heard both days in Di Linh. Inaccessible thickets every time.

(H) Scaly-breasted Partridge, *Arborophila chloropus*. Heard several times in Cat Tien, along the Crocodile lake trail and Heaven's Rapids road.

Red Junglefowl, *Gallus gallus*. A female on the road west of HQ and a group of two males and two females at the first visit to the Crocodile lake. Also heard a few times, west of the HQ and along the Crocodile lake trail.

Siamese Fireback, *Lophura diardi*. Nice views of two males slowly crossing the Cat Loc road seen from the Jeep about halfway to the Crocodile lake trail junction. A female was later flushed along Crocodile lake trail.

(H) Germain's Peacock Pheasant, *Polyplectron germaini*. Silent during my walks, on one occasion a single bird replied once to playback in the forest behind the HQ, but we were unable to find anything despite some searching. Probably not the best time of the year to search this species, although Florian actually found one the day after I left.

Green Peafowl, *Pavo muticus*. On my first afternoon in Cat Tien I had three sightings of a total of five birds (2 pairs and a single male) between the two towers in the grasslands west of the HQ. One of the males was seen calling from a tree at dusk. The following day a male was found feeding opposite the platform at Crocodile lake.

Lesser Whistling-Duck, *Dendrocygna javanica*. Some 100+ restless birds at Crocodile lake on both visits.

Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. Totally at least 20 seen on Tuyen Lam lake, also 2 Suoi Vang lake.

Woolly-necked Stork, *Ciconia episcopus*. 1 soaring for a while over Crocodile lake on the second visit.

Yellow Bittern, *Ixobrychus sinensis*. 1 moving out in the open Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Little Heron, *Butorides striata*. 1 flushed Suoi Vang lake, Dalat.

Chinese Pond Heron, *Ardeola bacchus*. 1-3 daily around Dalat and commonly seen Cat Tien. I am uncertain to what extent Javan Pond Heron is a possibility here and did not really take closer look.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus coromandus*. 1 + 1 near Dalat, 15+ near Di Linh village, 2-3 Cat Tien and also noted en route in the lowlands.

Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*. 1 Suoi Vang lake, Dalat.

Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*. 3-4 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*. Seen a few times en route in the lowlands.

Intermediate Egret, *Mesophoyx intermedia*. 3-4 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*. 1 Suoi Vang, Dalat, 2 en route near Cat Tien.

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*. 1 + 1 Tuyen Lam, 1 Suoi Vang lake, noted daily in Cat Tien with 1-2 individuals along the river and at Crocodile lake.

Oriental Honey-Buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. 1 moulting adult male soaring in Bidoup.

Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*. 1 + 1 between Dalat-Di Linh, 1 Di Linh, 1 + 1 western grasslands, Cat Tien.

Lesser Fish Eagle, *Ichthyophaga humulis*. 1 adult bird seen perched and flying along the river, near the Ben Cu Rapids below the Botanical garden trails, on the last morning in Cat Tien.

Crested Serpent Eagle, *Spilornis cheela*. 1 adult flushed in the forest near the horseradish plantations Bidoup and 1 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Shikra, *Accipiter badius*. 1 soaring Bidoup was the only bird identified. Two more *Accipiter* raptors, seemingly too big for Shikra, seen in Ta Nung and in Cat Tien could not be identified.

Grey-faced Buzzard, *Butastur indicus*. 1 seen soaring over Ta Nung the first afternoon.

Black Eagle, *Ictinaetus malayensis*. A single bird seen flying Di Linh.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle, *Nisaetus nipalensis*. 1 adult soaring in Bidoup.

Eastern Marsh Harrier, *Circus spilonotus*. A younger male seen flying over Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

White-breasted Waterhen, *Amaurornis phoenicurus*. 2-3 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Purple Swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*. 4-5 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien on both visits.

Slaty-breasted Rail, *Gallirallus striatus*. 1 at dusk seen slowly crossing the road in the grasslands west of HQ near the second tower.

[Slaty-legged/Red-legged Crane, *Rallina eurizonoides/fasciata*]. One bird crossing the Heaven's Rapids road in the open area near the junction was briefly glimpsed on the last morning. Probably a Slaty-legged, but unfortunately it was a bit dark and I only noticed the bold black-and-white barring and reddish head and breast and I did not think of looking specifically at the leg colour or if there were any barring on the wing coverts and primaries.

Grey-headed Lapwing, *Vanellus cinereus*. Up to 40 birds at Crocodile lake, Cat Tien, on both visits.

Red-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus indicus*. 2 birds Suoi Vang, Dalat. In Cat Tien, 1 in the western grasslands and two Crocodile lake on the first visit.

Bronze-winged Jacana, *Metopidius indicus*. 3-4 adults and 2-3 juveniles seen both visits to the Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*. 1 east side Tuyen Lam and 1 Suoi Vang, Dalat.

Green Sandpiper, *Tringa ochropus*. At least three Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia*. Small numbers in towns and villages.

Red Collared Dove, *Streptopelia tranquebarica*. 100+ coming in to roost both afternoon visits to the western grasslands, Cat Tien.

Spotted Dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*. 3-4 daily around Dalat. Common in the western grasslands and a few Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Barred Cuckoo-Dove, *Macropygia unchall*. A single bird seen perched low along the road on the west side of Tuyen Lam, Dalat.

[**Emerald Dove**, *Chalcophaps indica*]. Very brief glimpse of a small dove darting low into the forest in Ta Nung was most likely this species.

Thick-billed Green-Pigeon, *Treron curvirostra*. One bird perched in the canopy along Heaven's Rapids trail was the only green pigeon identified in Cat Tien. Surprisingly few green pigeons, perhaps 3-4 in total, seen in Cat Tien. Partly due to the fact that I spent a lot of time inside the forest.

Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon, *Treron apicauda*. At least three perched in a low tree in the forest on the west side of Tuyen Lam. Almost gives a parakeet impression at first glance in flight with the long pointy tails.

Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon, *Treron sphenura*. Around Dalat only a handful of green pigeon observations, one perched low on the east side of Tuyen Lam and another Bidoup were the only birds identified as this species.

Green Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula aenea*. In total some 25 birds in Cat Tien, almost all during the first afternoon spent in the grasslands west of the HQ.

Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula badia*. Not more than 6-7 birds seen around Dalat. About 10 seen in flight in Di Linh.

Vernal Hanging Parrot, *Loriculus vernalis*. In Cat Tien, 3 birds could be observed examining an excavation high up in the canopy along Heaven's Rapids road, otherwise just a few flight observations of 5-10 birds each time.

Red-breasted Parakeet, *Psittacula alexandri*. Fairly common Cat Tien with 10-20 birds seen daily around the park.

Banded Bay Cuckoo, *Cacomantis sonneratii*. Calling birds recorded four times - in Ta Nung and on the west side of Tuyen Lam, Dalat. In Cat Tien birds were heard on four different dates. Unfortunately never seen.

Violet Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*. A female with diagnostic yellow and reddish bill was seen for a couple of minutes in a tree along one of the trails in the Botanical garden, Cat Tien.

Green-billed Malkoha, *Rhopodytes tristis*. 1 Ta Nung, 1 Bidoup and 1 Di Linh on the Dalat plateau. Repeatedly encountered in Cat Tien with 3-5 single birds daily.

Greater Coucal, *Centropus sinensis*. Not noted in Dalat, but fairly common in Cat Tien. Also frequently heard.

Lesser Coucal, *Centropus bengalensis*. 1 + 1 in the western grasslands on the first afternoon in Cat Tien. Not sure if they were juveniles or just out of breeding plumage.

(H) Collared Scops-Owl, *Otus lettia*. One bird was heard calling for at least 10 minutes behind the HQ on the first evening in Cat Tien.

(H) Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei*. This call was frequently used to attract birds around Dalat. On three occasions (twice Tuyen Lam, once Ta Nung) owlets started calling back, but were not seen.

Asian Barred Owlet, *Glaucidium cuculoides*. Often heard around Cat Tien. One bird seen along Crocodile lake trail.

(H) Brown Boobook, *Ninox scutulata*. 1-2 heard every evening around the HQ, Cat Tien.

Great-eared Nightjar, *Eurostopodus macrotis*. Around 5.30 p.m. the first eared nightjars started to appear in the sky. Only 2-3 birds were heard calling and one of the nights when there was a slight drizzle in the air, activity was very low. More than 15 silent birds at the same time soaring like shadows over the western grasslands at dusk the first day in Cat Tien was certainly one of the high-lights of the trip.

Large-tailed Nightjar, *Caprimulgus macrurus*. One seen on the ground in front of the Jeep at dusk the first day in Cat Tien. The white in the wings and tail was noted as it took off. None heard.

Grey Nightjar, *Caprimulgus indicus*. A bird found day-roosting high up in a pine tree on the west side of Tuyen Lam.

Silver-backed Needle-tail, *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*. On the evening of 12/2, 3-4 sightings of in total more than 20 birds were had near the river while walking west from the HQ towards the grasslands.

Asian Palm-Swift, *Cypsiurus balasiensis*. A few seen over the river near HQ and then 10+ at Crocodile lake the first visit.

House Swift, *Apus affinis*. Common Dalat city and in Saigon. A few swifts with pale rumps seen high over Crocodile lake were probably Germain's or Himalayan Swiftlets. Unfortunately they never came close enough for certain identification.

Orange-breasted Trogon, *Harpactes oreskios*. Great prolonged views of 1 bird along one of the trails in the Botanical garden and also nice views of a second bird in the forest west of the HQ, Cat Tien. Both males.

Red-headed Trogon, *Harpactes erythrocephalus*. Glimpses of 1 southern forest Ta Nung valley, 1 in a birdwave Bidoup and 1 male seen perched inside the forest Di Linh. Poor views of 1-2 calling birds along Crocodile lake trail, Cat Tien.

Indian Roller, *Coracias benghalensis*. Several western grasslands and 1-2 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Dollarbird, *Eurystomus orientalis*. 4-5 birds noted on three dates, all flying birds in the late afternoons, Western grasslands and HQ, Cat Tien.

(H) Banded Kingfisher, *Lacedo pulchella*. Heard twice, along Heaven's Rapids road and Crocodile lake trail, but could not be lured out with the tape. Not really a bird you only want to hear.

Stork-billed Kingfisher, *Pelargopsis capensis*. 1 Crocodile lake on the second visit, Cat Tien.

White-throated Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*. 1 in an agricultural area north Dalat, 2-4 daily around Cat Tien (mostly Crocodile lake and western grasslands) and a few from the car during transport in the lowlands.

Black-capped Kingfisher, *Halcyon pileata*. 1 along the river below the Botanical garden on the last morning.

Common Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*. 1 along the Cat Loc road and 2-3 at Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater, *Nyctyornis athertoni*. 2 in a high tree in the forest west of the HQ and poor views of another two calling birds along Crocodile lake trail.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, *Merops leschenaulti*. Numerous in the western grasslands and also several at Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Oriental Pied Hornbill, *Anthracoceros albirostris*. 8-9 birds in the open area near Heaven's Rapids area the first afternoon, 1 near Crocodile lake junction and 2-3 along Crocodile lake trail. Also a few flushed hornbills in the forest that could not be identified.

Red-vented Barbet, *Megalaima lagrandieri*. 1 calling Di Linh and at least 1 calling Cat Tien, probably a bit overlooked but anyhow never seen.

(H) Lineated Barbet, *Megalaima lineata*. Fairly common with 3-6 birds seen and heard daily in Cat Tien, especially west of HQ.

Green-eared Barbet, *Megalaima faiostriata*. 1 + 1 seen near the HQ and once I learnt and listened for the call heard a few times the last two days in Cat Tien.

Golden-throated Barbet, *Megalaima franklinii*. 1-2 seen with Black-browed barbets in a fruiting tree in Bidoup. Heard calling only once in Lang Bian, but possibly overlooked.

Black-browed (Annam) Barbet, *Megalaima oorti annamensis*. This Annam taxon was commonly heard around Dalat. 1 was seen in a birdwave west side of Tuyen Lam and 3-4 together in a fruiting tree in Bidoup.

Blue-eared Barbet, *Megalaima australis*. In Cat Tien, initially some confusion to separate the different calling barbets, but this species was fairly commonly heard. Also seen well once along Heaven's Rapids trail.

(H) Coppersmith Barbet, *Megalaima haemacephala*. One calling near the HQ, Cat Tien, was the only record.

Speckled Piculet, *Picumnus innominatus*. 1 seen slowly moving with a birdwave in Bidoup.

White-browed Piculet, *Sasia ochracea*. A drumming bird was heard from the bamboo patch just by the Heaven's Rapids road junction, but it took almost 30 minutes before I finally managed to see two birds inside the bamboo thicket.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos canicapillus*. 1 in a pine tree west of Tuyen Lam, Dalat. In Cat Tien, 2 in the western grasslands and 1 + 2 along Heavens Rapid's Road.

White-bellied Woodpecker, *Dryocopus javensis*. 1 seen near the Heaven's Rapids road junction the first afternoon.

Lesser Yellownape, *Picus chlorolophus annamensis*. 1 east side of Tuyen Lam, Dalat the first day in Vietnam. Another unidentified Yellownape along Heaven's Rapids road, Cat Tien.

Laced Woodpecker, *Picus vittatus*. 1 Heaven's Rapids road, 1 Crocodile lake trail and 1 west of the HQ, all males.

Common Flameback, *Dinopium javanense*. 7 sightings of 9 birds around Cat Tien.

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*. 2 heard calling Bidoup and one heard along Heaven's Rapids road.

Black-and-Buff Woodpecker, *Meiglyptes jugularis*. 2 high up in a tree near Heaven's Rapids and the last morning another 2 at Heaven's Rapids road junction.

Heart-spotted Woodpecker, *Hemicircus canente*. 1 seen high in a tree near Heaven's Rapids was the only record.

(H) Great Slaty Woodpecker, *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*. 1 heard several times from inside the Botanic garden forest, but unfortunately it disappeared before it could be spotted.

Long-tailed Broadbill, *Psarisomus dalhousiae*. Calling birds heard but never seen in Ta Nung on two occasions, but this was compensated in Di Linh where 10-15 birds together were showing well in low trees along the road in the early morning.

Dusky Broadbill, *Corydon sumatranus*. At least 5 very vocal birds were seen in the canopy of a high tree by the Crocodile lake trail junction.

Black-and-Red Broadbill, *Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus*. 1 + 2 + 2 along the Heaven's Rapids trail on different dates.

(H) Banded Broadbill, *Eurylaimus javanicus*. Only heard on one occasion along the Crocodile lake trail, but too far away and did not respond to playback.

Bar-bellied Pitta, *Pitta elliotii*. Probably quite common around all the Cat Tien forest trails visited but of course tricky to get good views of. Of 4-5 serious attempts to find birds responding to tape, 2 males were seen. Another 9 birds heard, only 2-3 calling spontaneously. Not a single Blue-rumped Pitta was heard despite some playback efforts.

Olive-backed Pipit, *Anthus hodgsoni*. Not many around Dalat, in total 7-8 birds noted exclusively in pine forest at Tuyen Lam, Ta Nung and Bidoup.

Forest Wagtail, *Dendronanthus indicus*. 2 birds together along the main road to Cat Loc halfway to the Crocodile lake trail junction.

Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*. Some 20 birds in total around Dalat including in Bidoup, mostly along the roads, and also noted in Di Linh.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*. A few near Dalat and Di Linh. Common over the river and Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

[Striated Swallow, *Cecropis striolata*]. 10+ over Crocodile lake. Really poor distant views, pretty much only pale rumps noted, so Red-rumped Swallows cannot really be ruled out.

Ashy Woodswallow, *Artamus fuscus*. 30-40 birds in the grasslands west of HQ the first afternoon in Cat Tien, only a few noted the second visit.

Slender-billed Oriole, *Oriolus tenuirostris*. 2 birds offered prolonged views in pines on the east side of Tuyen Lam the first day in Dalat. Poor views of another bird two days later at the same spot and also one seen near the "elephant camp".

Black-naped Oriole, *Oriolus chinensis*. Totally 5 observations of single birds around Cat Tien.

Black-hooded Oriole, *Oriolus xanthornus*. 5 observations of single birds around Cat Tien.

Maroon Oriole, *Oriolus traillii*. 1 + 1 + 1 during the forest walk on the western side of Tuyen Lam on 11/25, 2 Bidoup and 4-5 Di Linh.

Indochinese Cuckooshrike, *Coracina polioptera*. The first day in Dalat, 2-3 in pine forest on the east side and the following day another 1-2 birds in pine trees on the west side, Tuyen Lam. Extensive white on underside of tail when seen from below.

[Swinhoe's/Ashy Minivet, *Pericrocotus cantonensis/divaricatus*]. Despite really good views twice of pairs feeding low I felt uncertain of these birds. All had greyish hoods, but were all grey/white without obvious brownish tones on the rump and flanks. I suspect they were Swinhoe's after all?

Long-tailed Minivet, *Pericrocotus ethologus annamensis*. 1-3 sightings of minivets daily around Dalat of which this species was identified a few times. I was rather lazy with the minivets and probably overlooked both Scarlet and Grey-chinned.

Scarlet Minivet, *Pericrocotus flammeus*. 1 male Heaven's Rapids road, Cat Tien.

Large Woodshrike, *Tephrodornis gularis*. A probable female near Crocodile lake trail junction was the only sighting. Would have expected more of these, also in Dalat.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, *Hemipus picatus*. About 10 birds around Dalat and 4 Di Linh, mostly in pairs. Also 2 birds together in the Botanical garden, Cat Tien.

Common Iora, *Aegithina tiphia*. Three sightings of single birds in Cat Tien.

Great Iora, *Aegithina lafresnayei*. Fairly regular in Cat Tien with 3-6 birds seen daily.

White-throated Fantail, *Rhipidura albicollis*. 2-6 birds daily Dalat and Di Linh.

Black-naped Monarch, *Hypothymis azurea*. Fairly common with 3-10 birds each day in Cat Tien.

Ashy Drongo, *Dicrurus leucophaeus*. Common in small numbers around Dalat and Di Linh. Also 6-7 birds in Cat Tien, here the birds seemed slightly darker than in Dalat.

Bronzed Drongo, *Dicrurus aeneus*. 1 Ta Nung, Dalat and 3-4 seen along Heaven's Rapids road/Botanical gardens, Cat Tien.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus remifer*. 1 west side of Tuyen Lam, 1 Ta Nung and 3-4 Di Linh.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus paradiseus*. Common in Cat Tien with 10-20 birds daily.

Hair-crested Drongo, *Dicrurus hottentottus*. 1 Di Linh. 2-3 daily in Cat Tien, but also 15-20 seen flying over the western grasslands late afternoon on the second visit worth mentioning.

Southern Jungle Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchus*. 2 flying birds seen from the car near Saigon the last day.

Eurasian Jay, *Garrulus glandarius leucotis*. Several sightings with 3-10 birds daily around Tuyen Lam and in Bidoup. Mostly in small parties and in association with pine forest.

Indochinese Green Magpie, *Cissa hypoleuca*. 1 finally seen well after some struggling with a rather vocal bird in the forest on the west side of Tuyen Lam. The illustration in the Robson guide does not do it justice, the belly is strikingly yellow. Luyen had brief views of another bird in Di Linh.

Racket-tailed Treepie, *Crypsirina temia*. 5 sightings of 10 birds in Cat Tien, most west of the HQ.

Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus*. 7 birds around Dalat and a single bird Crocodile lake, Cat Tien. Race uncertain.

Burmese Shrike, *Lanius colluriooides*. Seen daily with a total of 9 birds around Dalat. Also 1 near Di Linh.

Blue-winged Leafbird, *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*. 6-7 sightings of some 10 birds in total in Cat Tien, no Golden-fronted identified.

Orange-bellied Leafbird, *Chloropsis hardwickii*. 5-6 birds seen in Bidoup.

Asian Fairy Bluebird, *Irena puella*. A few noted in Ta Nung, Dalat and in Di Linh. Daily up to 10 birds Cat Tien, also often heard.

Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*. 1 + 1 Dalat city were the only records.

Vinous-breasted Myna, *Acridotheres burmannicus*. 1 in an agricultural field Dalat and 2 + 2 in the western grasslands, Cat Tien on two separate visits.

Black-collared Starling, *Gracupica nigricollis*. This noisy bird was seen 2-4 times every day around Dalat. Most often 2-3 birds, largest group was a party of 8.

Golden-crested Myna, *Ampeliceps coronatus*. 2 + 2 western grasslands and 1 + 3 Heavens Rapid's Road, Cat Tien.

Common Hill-Myna, *Gracula religiosa*. One sighting of 8-10 birds Ta Nung, Dalat. 1 near the Crocodile lake trail junction and 2 by the river below the Botanical garden, Cat Tien.

Lesser Shortwing, *Brachpteryx leucophrys*. 2 singing Ta Nung, 2 singing Bidoup and 4-5 singing Mt Lang Bian. The only bird seen was a presumed male in Ta Nung. Males here are greyish-brown with conspicuous short white eyebrow.

Siberian Blue Robin, *Luscinia cyane*. 1 female-coloured Ta Nung, 1 female and later an adult male in undergrowth near Crocodile lake. A *Luscinia* seen on the trail on the way back at dusk the first afternoon in Ta Nung initially fitted well with a Rufous-tailed Robin (*L. sibilans*) in my eyes. The bird could be observed for several minutes hopping around almost constantly bobbing the tail like a redstart. Entirely rufous tail, dirty (but also a bit wet) breast and an unbroken eye-ring. However, *sibilans* is apparently a very rare winter visitor this far south in Vietnam. It was probably just an immature Siberian Blue Robin lacking blue in the tail. Arguably I don't have enough experience with these species, but I didn't expect the identification to be so tricky.

Siberian Thrush, *Zoothera sibirica*. Very poor views of a female or possibly a young male in a fruiting tree in Bidoup was the only observation. In Cat Tien, Florian flushed an immature male in the forest.

Grey Bushchat, *Saxicola ferreus*. Regularly seen with 2-5 birds daily in open areas and pine forest around Dalat.

Stonechat, *Saxicola torquatus*. A few seen in the grasslands west of HQ and 1 male Crocodile lake, Cat Tien.

Pied Bushchat, *Saxicola caprata*. 2-3 males and poor distant views of 1-2 probable females in the western grasslands the first afternoon in Cat Tien.

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, *Culucicapa ceylonensis*. 5-10 both in Bidoup and Di Linh and also heard in Ta Nung valley. Often noticed by the song.

Hainan Blue Flycatcher, *Cyornis hainanus*. 1 + 1 Heaven's Rapids road on different dates and 2 Crocodile lake trail 1 HQ, all males.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, *Cyornis tickelliae*. 1 male seen near Crocodile lake, Cat Tien, was the only record. Also a few flycatchers heard singing which would have been Tickell's or possibly one of the other *Cyornis* species, but again I did not know the calls well enough.

Verditer Flycatcher, *Eumyias thalassina*. 6 noted around Tuyen Lam and 2 in Bidoup. 1 seen west of the HQ, Cat Tien.

Large Niltava, *Niltava grandis decorata*. 1 male in the Horse Radish cultivation, Bidoup, and 1 male along the stream behind the tea shop in Di Linh were the only records of this S Annam taxon.

Mugimaki Flycatcher, *Ficedula mugimaki*. 12 birds in total around Dalat and in Di Linh including both adult males and younger individuals.

Little Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula westermanni*. 1 + 1 east side Tuyen Lam on two dates and 1 Di Linh, all adult males.

Taiga Flycatcher, *Ficedula albicilla*. Only two birds seen, both near the HQ in Cat Tien on the same day.

Asian Brown Flycatcher, *Muscicapa dauurica*. 3-4 birds Cat Tien, all at or near the HQ on different dates.

[**Dark-sided Flycatcher**, *Muscicapa sibirica*.] A *Muscicapa* seen in Bidoup with more streaking on the breast compared to the birds seen later in Cat Tien was most likely a Dark-sided Flycatcher. Grey-streaked (*griseisticta*) could perhaps not be ruled out, but should be very rare wintering in this area.

Oriental Magpie Robin, *Copsychus saularis*. 1 + 1 + 2 at different dates in Cat Tien.

White-rumped Shama, *Copsychus malabaricus*. 1-3 daily in Cat Tien. Also heard singing a few times.

Black-headed Bulbul, *Pycnonotus atriceps*. This oriole-like bird at first glance was seen twice (2 + 1 birds) in the western grasslands, Cat Tien.

Black-crested Bulbul, *Pycnonotus flaviventris johnsoni*. Rather common. 10-20 daily around Dalat and maybe 5-7 daily in Cat Tien. Always in small groups.

Stripe-throated Bulbul, *Pycnonotus finlaysoni*. Fairly common in Cat Tien with 2-3 daily sightings, mostly single birds or pairs.

Flavescent Bulbul, *Pycnonotus flavescens*. 3-10 birds daily and recorded at all places visited around Dalat and in Di Linh.

Streak-eared Bulbul, *Pycnonotus blanfordi*. Just west of the HQ 1 + 2 birds were seen on two different dates.

Red-whiskered Bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus*. Some 10 birds in total seen on the east side of Tuyen Lam the first afternoon was the only day this species was seen. Also the most popular cage bird in Dalat.

Sooty-headed Bulbul, *Pycnonotus aurigaster*. 5-6 along the road south of Dalat, 12-14 on the east side of Tuyen Lam and 5-6 along the road north of Dalat. Also 2 + 2 in the western grasslands, Cat Tien, on different dates.

Birds with yellow vents in both Dalat and Cat Tien.

Grey-eyed Bulbul, *Iole propinqua*. This rather nondescript bird was seen with 2-3 birds each visit in Ta Nung and 2 birds Di Linh. Also poor views of two probables west of HQ in Cat Tien.

Ochraceous Bulbul, *Alophoixus ochraceus*. 2-4 birds twice in Di Linh and small parties of 2-3 birds on three occasions (Heaven's Rapids road and Crocodile lake trail) in Cat Tien. I am not sure of the status of Puff-throated Bulbul, *Alophoixus pallidus* in these places, so this is a possible confusion.

Ashy Bulbul, *Hemixos flava remota*. This charming Bulbul was seen on five occasions around Dalat, 1 + 2 in open forest on the west side of Tuyen Lam, 2 Ta Nung and 2 + 2 Bidoup.

Mountain Bulbul, *Ixos mcclllandii griseiventris*. Noted 1-3 times daily with perhaps a total of about 25 birds at all places visited around Dalat.

Himalayan Bulbul, *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*. Fairly common around Dalat and small groups noted several times daily and at all places visited. No deviating birds with white in the plumage noted.

Mountain Tailorbird, *Orthotomus cuculatus*. Two seen well in Ta Nung the first visit and then 1-2 heard singing daily around Dalat and in Bidoup.

Common Tailorbird, *Orthotomus sutorius*. 1 + 1 Ta Nung valley, 1 Di Linh and 1-2 seen daily in Cat Tien. I am not very good at the calls, but at least among the several Tailorbirds seen I was not able to find any Dark-necked which should occur also.

[Rufescent Prinia, *Prinia rufescens*]. 2 seen well just west of the HQ were most likely this species. Brownish upperparts with contrasting grey cap, prominent eye-brow and plain breast. However, I don't have enough experience to confidently rule out non-breeding plumage Grey-breasted Prinias.

Yellow-bellied Prinia, *Prinia flaviventris*. One seen well showing yellow underparts in the western grasslands and a few more probables the same first afternoon in Cat Tien.

Plain Prinia, *Prinia inornata*. A few seen well enough for certain identification in open areas around Cat Tien, including a singing bird Crocodile lake.

Hill Prinia, *Prinia supercilialis klossi*. Best close-up views were had in Ta Nung on two visits, but a few also noted by Tuyen Lam and in Bidoup. Prominent white markings above and below the eye of this taxon.

Grey-cheeked Warbler, *Seicercus poliogenys*. Only noted in Bidoup with 3-4 individuals, a few singing.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler, *Seicercus castaniceps annamensis*. About 10 birds in total in Bidoup, in several bird waves. These birds had bright yellow underparts extending all the way up to the grey throat.

(H) Grey-bellied Tesia, *Tesia cyaniventer*. 2 singing Mt Lang Bian and at least 3 singing near the horseradish cultivation, Bidoup. Could have made a better effort to try to see them.

Kloss's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus olgilviegranti*. Previously included in White-tailed Leaf Warbler, *P. davidsoni*. In degraded forest on the west side at least 4 birds were seen well while calling and singing (rather soft warbling) and a few more heard that morning. Also noted a few times elsewhere e.g. Ta Nung and Mt Lang Bian and 4-5 heard and a few calling birds seen in Bidoup. Notably yellowish upper- and underparts. No Blyth's (*P. reguloides*) identified, but possibly overlooked or even confused with this species on some occasion. The southern race *ticehursti* is apparently also rather yellow in the plumage. The calls, albeit similar, should be a little sharper and the song theme more repetitive.

Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus tenellipes*. 4-6 heard daily of which several were seen, Cat Tien. Mostly noted by the rather distinctive metallic call. Generally foraging much lower down, in open forest undergrowth, compared to the other *Phylloscopus* seen in Cat Tien.

Two-barred Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochiloides plumbeitarsus*. 2-5 birds heard/seen daily in Cat Tien, most found around Crocodile lake and around and west of the HQ.

Ashy-throated Warbler, *Phylloscopus maculipennis*. A single bird observed in a birdwave in Bidoup at about 1700m.

Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Very common and almost constantly present on the Dalat plateau and 8-10 noted daily in Cat Tien.

Black-crowned Parrotbill, *Psittiparus margaritae*. Two seen in Ta Nung in a bird wave commanded by White-cheeked Laughingthrushes. Another bird wave along the road on the morning in Di Linh contained at least 25 parrotbills. Previously considered a race of Grey-headed Parrotbill, *P. gularis*.

White-bellied Yuhina/Erpornis, *Erpornis zantholeuca*. 2 + 2 west side of Tuyen Lam, 2 Bidoup and 5-6 Di Linh.

Mountain Fulvetta, *Alcippe peracensis*. An estimated 15-30 birds daily around Dalat and in Di Linh. A default species in most bird waves. After a while I realised that some, if not all, of the fulvettas in Di Linh looked slightly different from the birds in Dalat. The head pattern of these birds was not as distinct, seemingly fainter eye-rings and the cheeks looked a bit "dirty", not pure grey. Theoretically this could rather have been Black-browed Fulvetta, *Alcippe grotei*, but I do not know the status of this species in Di Linh and the differences were after all subtle.

Black-crowned Fulvetta, *Alcippe klossi*. Another taxon restricted to Vietnam, previously regarded as a race of Rufous-winged Fulvetta, *A. castaneiceps*. Not seen the misty day at Mt Lang Bian, but on the next day 2 + 1 were seen mixed in with Mountain Fulvettas in Bidoup.

Rufous-capped Babbler, *Stachyris ruficeps*. 1 + 1 Bidoup and 2 Ta Nung. Rather secretive, seen low on the ground.

White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*. One or possibly two in the forest on the west side of Tuyen Lam and another in a bird wave on the way down from Mt Lang Bian.

Red-billed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps*. A very vocal party of 5-6 birds seen near the junction to the horseradish cultivation, Bidoup, and another 2-3 calling birds seen in bamboo in Di Linh.

Pygmy Wren-Babbler, *Pnoepyga pusilla*. Only recorded in the rainforest of Mt Lang Bian where 2-3 birds were singing, also one was seen briefly after some waiting.

Pin-striped Tit Babbler, *Macronous gularis*. Most of the Tit Babblers identified proved to be this species, in all maybe 10-15 birds. Most found along the Crocodile lake trail. However, only the next species was heard singing.

Grey-faced Tit Babbler, *Macronous kelleyi*. Only two seen well enough for certain identification the first day along the Crocodile lake trail, thereafter perhaps a bit overlooked. At least 3 were heard singing along Crocodile lake trail and another inside the Botanical garden. Did not seem to respond to tape.

(H) Buff-breasted Babbler, *Pellorneum tickelli*. A single record only. One heard singing from dense thickets along Heaven's Rapids road, Cat Tien, but the bird refused to come out despite playing the tape.

Scaly-crowned Babbler, *Malacopteron cinereum*. Only 2 seen, along one of the Botanical gardens trails, Cat Tien.

(H) Abbott's Babbler, *Malacocincla abbottii*. A singing bird in thickets along Heaven's Rapids road and later another singing along the Crocodile lake trail. None could not be seen despite quite some effort, very annoying.

Vietnamese Cutia, *Cutia (nipalensis) legalleni*. At least 4 birds performed beautifully in pines on the east side of Tuyen Lam. Also heard on one visit in Ta Nung.

White-cheeked Laughingthrush, *Dryonastes vassali*. Parties of 10+ birds were encountered four times, twice in Ta Nung, in a gully on the west side of Tuyen Lam and along the road Di Linh.

Black-hooded Laughingthrush, *Garrulax milleti*. When climping up a steep slope to get views of a calling Red-billed Scimitar Babbler inside a bamboo patch, the forest suddenly came alive with calling Laughingthrushes, a great experience! Possibly the same party was later seen crossing the road and then offered prolonged open views as they lingered when we played the tape.

White-crested Laughingthrush, *Garrulax leucolophus*. 9-10 groups recorded in Cat Tien, and since they are never silent would be impossible not to run into on a visit here. Moving fairly high up, seen well a few times.

Orange-breasted Laughingthrush, *Garrulax annamensis*. Required a lot of patience in Di Linh. A calling bird was finally seen well in dense thicket by the road after attracting it with the tape.

Collared Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteron yersini*. One party heard but never seen the misty and windy day at Mt Lang Bian just below the summit. The next day I was compensated with stunning views of at least four birds in a gully by the road in Bidoup at 1750m. Felt almost impossible to see without the tape.

Blue-winged Minla, *Minla cyanouroptera orientalis*. This dull endemic taxon with entirely brown wings was observed five times, in Ta Nung, twice on Mt Lang Bian, on the east side of Tuyen Lam and in Bidoup, with more than 10 birds on four of the occasions.

Grey-crowned Crocias, *Crocias langbianis*. Early morning on the 11/25, on a recently discovered site in the forest on the west side of Tuyen Lam, at least four individuals were seen. The birds called at arrival and after playing the tape, they came in and were seen sitting quiet in a low tree for more than ten minutes. The flight is a bit peculiar and almost clumsy. Calling birds were also later heard in Ta Nung valley on two visits, but since I had already seen the birds well earlier we refrained from trying to tape them in.

Black-headed Sibia, *Malacias desgodinsi robinsoni*. 2-3 birds Ta Nung on all three visits, 1 (also singing) Bidoup and some 10 birds Di Linh. A taxon with a broad broken white eye-ring restricted to southern Annam.

Rufous-backed Sibia, *Leioptila annectens eximia*. 1 + 2 birds on separate visits to Ta Nung of this black-backed taxon restricted to the Dalat plateau.

White-browed Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius flaviscapis annamensis*. Also restricted to the Dalat plateau, this taxon called Dalat Shrike-babbler was seen four times, a female Lang Bian, a male east side of Tuyen Lam and a male and a little later a female in Bidoup. All in evergreen forest and in association with bird waves.

Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius aenobarbus*. Brief and unsatisfying views of a single individual in a bird wave in evergreen forest along the road on the west side of Tuyen Lam. Mainland taxa sometimes called Clicking Shrike-babbler to separate them from the Javan taxon *aenobarbus*.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, *Sitta frontalis*. Cat Tien, 2 near Heaven's Rapids and 2 + 2 on separate visits along the Botanical garden trails.

Yellow-billed Nuthatch, *Sitta solangiae*. Single birds were seen on three occasions, 1 + 1 the same day on the west side of Tuyen Lam and 1 near the horse radish plantations in Bidoup. All in more or less evergreen forest and in association with bird waves.

Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, *Sitta nagaensis*. Fairly common in pine forest around Dalat (around Tuyen Lam, Bidoup, Lang Bian) and noted daily with 5-10 birds.

Green-backed Tit, *Parus montanus*. Commonly seen, primarily in pine forest, around Tuyen Lam, Bidoup and on Mt Lang Bian.

Yellow-cheeked Tit, *Parus spilonotus*. 2 seen in a birdwave in evergreen forest in Bidoup.

Black-throated (Grey-crowned) Tit, *Aegithalos concinnus annamensis*. This distinct and restricted taxon was seen twice, a party of 5-6 birds in the open forest west of Tuyen Lam and 10+ in a bird wave in evergreen forest in Bidoup.

Purple-throated Sunbird, *Leptocoma sperata*. Only males identified, 1 west of the HQ and at least three in a sunbird party along Heaven's Rapids trail, in Cat Tien.

Olive-backed Sunbird, *Cinnyris jugularis*. Some 6 males in total Cat Tien, mostly around the HQ area.

Crimson Sunbird, *Aethopyga siparaja*. In Cat Tien, 1 male just west of HQ and 1 + 1 males Heaven's Rapids trail.

Mrs Gould's Sunbird, *Aethopyga gouldiae*. Widespread on the Dalat plateau including Di Linh with up to 15 birds daily and noted at all places visited.

Black-throated Sunbird, *Aethopyga saturata johnsi*. Up to 10 birds each visit to Ta Nung. Actually not noted elsewhere around Dalat. A very distinct taxon with the bright red mantle and scarlet breast in the males.

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird, *Chalcoparia singalensis*. Cat Tien, 2 males and a female together just west of HQ and 1 + 1 males along Heaven's Rapids trail.

Purple-naped Sunbird, *Hypogramma hypogrammicum*. One bird in a mixed sunbird/spiderhunter party along Heaven's Rapids trail on the last morning in Cat Tien.

Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna*. 2-4 each visit in Ta Nung and at least 4 Di Linh.

Little Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera longirostra*. Cat Tien, 1+1 Heaven's Rapids junction and 1 just west of the HQ.

Thick-billed Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum agile*. 1 seen and photographed in a low tree, Cat Tien HQ.

Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*. 2-3 in a garden south of Dalat and 1 near the HQ Cat Tien.

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum cruentatum*. In Cat Tien, 1 just west of HQ, 1-2 Crocodile lake and 1 Heaven's Rapids trail, all female-coloured.

White-rumped Munia, *Lonchura striata*. A single bird in a low tree at the Cat Tien HQ the first morning was the only record.

Scaly-breasted Munia, *Lonchura punctulata*. Four birds in open forest west of Tuyen Lam and 15+ birds in high grass along the road just north of Dalat (on the way to Bidoup).

Pin-tailed Parrotfinch, *Erythrura prasina*. Probably the most unexpected finding of the trip. A pair was found foraging low in the undergrowth in one of the gullies on the northern side at the bottom of the Ta Nung valley on the morning of 11/28. The birds were rather shy and soon disappeared not to be found again despite some searching. A good photo of the female was taken by Luyen. Apparently only a few previous sightings from the Dalat plateau (Ta Nung and Di Linh) of this nomadic bamboo specialist.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*. Common in urban areas.

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra meridionalis*. Birds of this isolated Annamese taxon were encountered in pine forest on three occasions, 3 birds on the west side of Tuyen Lam, two birds Lang Bian and a single individual on the east side of Tuyen Lam. Sturdy bills compared to the ones I am used to from Sweden.

Vietnamese Greenfinch, *Chloris monguilloti*. About ten sightings of an estimated 24 individuals seen daily and mostly along the roads around the Tuyen Lam lake, but also noted in Ta Nung. Often seen in pairs.

Other animals

Black-shanked Douc, *Pygathrix nigripes*. Noted on 4-5 occasions in Cat Tien. Wary but seen well a few times.

Pig-tailed Macaque, *Macaca nemestrina*. Difficult to get good views of the macaques, so many remained unidentified, but twice in Cat Tien this species was identified.

Long-tailed Macaque, *Macaca fascicularis*. A group of 7-8 individuals was seen briefly inside the forest at Di Linh.

Muntiac, *Muntiacus muntjak*. 1 in the grasslands west of the HQ, Cat Tien.

Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*. 1 in the grasslands west of the HQ, Cat Tien.

Black Giant Squirrel, *Ratufa bicolor*. 1 Ta Nung and 2 near the HQ, Cat Tien. Not sure if this is the only *Ratufa* species seen in southern Vietnam.

Cambodian Striped Squirrel, *Tamiops rodolphii*. Many seen in Dalat and in Cat Tien. See comment below.

Pallas' Squirrel, *Callosciurus erythraeus*. Squirrels that looked like this species were commonly seen (and heard) both in Dalat and Cat Tien. For both this and the previous species, I do not know if there are other similarly looking species around to confuse the identification.

Tree-shrew sp. Seen twice in Cat Tien.

Mole sp. A Mole of unknown species was found on the paved road one early morning near Tuyen Lam, Dalat. Slightly larger and a little more elongated than the European Mole but otherwise similarly looking.

Siamese Crocodile, *Crocodylus siamensis*. 1 Crocodile lake, Cat Tien. Reintroduced here apparently.

Some additional species of interest which are seen more or less regularly, but not found during this trip (excluding heard only's mentioned in the trip list).

Dalat/Di Linh: Silver Pheasant, Rufous-throated Partridge, Yellow-vented Green Pigeon, Grey-headed Parakeet (nomadic), Hodgson's Frogmouth, Blue and Rusty-naped Pittas, White-tailed Robin, Slaty-backed and Spotted Forktails, Green Cochoa, Pale Blue Flycatcher, White-tailed Flycatcher, Hume's Treecreeper, White-spectacled Warbler, Arctic and Blyth's Leaf warblers, Chestnut-capped, Grey-throated and Spot-throated Babblers, Streaked and Eye-browed Wren-babblers, Fork-tailed Sunbird, Plain-backed Sparrow, etc.

Cat Tien: Orange-breasted Partridge, Watercock, Barred Buttonquail, most Green Pigeons, Falconets, Black Baza, Javan/Blyth's Frogmouth, Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher, Great Hornbill, Pale-headed Woodpecker, Blue-rumped Pitta, Blue-winged Pitta (only there in summer), Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, Large Scimitar-babbler, Chestnut-capped, Puff-throated and White-hooded Babblers, Eye-browed Wren-babbler, Golden Weaver, etc.