

Thailand Bird Photography

Professional Bird Watching & Bird Photography Tours

Central + North Thailand Bird Photography Tour 15 Days

Guest Name:

Tour Request: Thailand Bird Photography Tour 15 Days

Tour Date:

Tour Code: Cr+NrTBW#00015D

Duration: 15 Days.

Destination: Khok Kham/Pak Thale/KKC/Doi Ang Khang/Doi Lang/Doi Inthanon NP.

Bird Leader:

Vehicle Type:

Driver Name:

Room Type Request:

Deposit: 30% After Confirm the Trip.

Cash on Tours: 70% or One Week before Departure Date.

Sample Itinerary

Day 1: Bangkok-Khok Kham-Pak Thale Salt Pans

-We usually leave at 5am. to get to Khok Kham by a little after 7am. Here you can see the critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper. It is not always so easy to photograph though but your guide has probably photographed it more often than anyone else so you have a decent chance.

Around mid-morning start driving towards Pak Thale, there are huge numbers of shorebirds, terns, egrets and suchlike here. Heat haze can be a problem but you can usually get close to many of the commoner species. Nordmann's Greenshank, Asian Dowitcher, Terek Sandpiper, Pacific Golden Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Kentish Plover, Red-necked Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Little Tern, Great Knot, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern, Painted Stork and many others are around it is just a case of using the time as you feel like it.

It gets hot out here with little shade so I have scheduled time enough to revisit the next day if desired.

We also do a short boat trip here to a sand spit where Malaysian Plovers occur. Chinese Egret, White-faced Plover, Great Crested Tern, Brown-headed Gull, Pacific Reef Egret, Collared Kingfisher all occur here and a decent number of them can usually be photographed.

Often in this open area some of the best photos are flight shots. Good to have the right lens for this here.

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Sun Hotel

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 2: Pak Thale-Phetchaburi Rice Field.

06:00 Breakfast

-This day allows you to revisit the shorebird area for any birds you might want to chase and/or visit nearby rice fields where there are many species – Asian Openbill is common and can easily be photographed. Weavers will be starting to nest by now and are easily approached too. One of those days to play around with but certainly no lack of options and the time is very easily filled.

10:00 We drive around 1 hour to our accommodation for lunch and afterwards we visit a nearby hide which overlooks a feeding and bathing area where we should see a lot of birds come to visit through the afternoon. Likely species include Scaly-breasted Partridge, Large Scimitar Babbler, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Greater necklaced Laughingthrush, Puff-throated Babbler, Red Junglefowl, Kalij Pheasant, Emerald Dove, Siberian Blue Robin, Indochinese Blue Flycatcher, Chinese Blue Flycatcher, Black-naped Monarch and many more.

17:00 Return back our Resort.

19:00 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Baan Maka Nature Lodge

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 3-6 Kaeng Krachan NP.

06:00 Breakfast/We'll spend 4 full days in Kaeng Krachan NP.

-Kaeng Krachan National Park is huge and the number of birds here is impressive. Photography in the forest takes some patience but there are usually some good opportunities with patience. Visiting the right spots at the right time will often reveal Oriental Pied Hornbill, Hill Myna, Common Flameback, Greater Flameback, Sultan Tit, Great Hornbill, Orange-breasted Trogon, various bulbuls, sunbirds and hopefully a few broadbills. This type of photography while birding can be good at times but requires patience. The best is if you find a fruiting tree.

However, your guide will plan these sessions around the best photography set ups which will be at the several hides around the national park. You will visit at least 2 hides, probably 3 where you have a good chance of photographing, at close range many of the following; Kalij Pheasant, Bar-backed Partridge, White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Indochinese Blue Flycatcher, Scaly-breasted Partridge, Large Scimitar Babbler, Blue Pitta (we hope), Pin-striped Tit Babbler, Racket-tailed Treepie, Black-crested Bulbul, Black-naped Monarch, Abbott's Babbler, Common Green Magpie, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Puff-throated babbler, Ferruginous Partridge, Greater Yellownape, Stripe-throated Bulbul, Red Junglefowl, Grey peacock Pheasant.

The gardens of Baan Maka are a nice place to relax and there are birds to photograph here too. The owners sometimes have a few feeding stations. To be honest, another day here is probably something you would enjoy depending on how you like to do your photography and birding.

12:00 Lunch.

17:00 Return back our Resort.

19:00 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Baan Maka Nature Lodge

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 7: Kaeng Krachan NP.

06:00 Breakfast.

-This morning gives you a last opportunity to try for some target birds in the forest or (re) visit another of the hides.

12:00 Lunch/Check-out/Transfer to Air-port/**Takes Flight to Chiang Mai.**

18:00 Arrive in Chiang Mai/Transfer to hotel in Chiang Mai/Check into **Sakulchai Place.**

19:00 Dinner

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Sakulchai Place.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 8: Chiang Mai-Pha Plong Temple-Doi Ang Khang.

05:30 Early morning starting from Chiang Mai. After breakfast or breakfast on the way drive an hour or so to Pha Plong Temple. This is not an especially notable place for photography but it gives you a location in the morning not too far from Chiang Mai city, to take advantage of the morning light. Our best spots are just a bit too far for the first stop. Here there are some commoner birds, often in low trees and flowering bushes; bulbuls, spiderhunters, sunbirds, orioles.

Continue the journey to Doi Ang Khang. This area has some spectacular scenery and well-planted gardens are a magnet for birds. The photography is done freestyle, there may be a photo stakeout for a few species but the focus will probably be on the gardens.

12:00 Lunch.

16:00 Transfer to Fang District/Check into **Tangerine Ville Hotel.**

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Tangerine Ville Hotel.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 9: Doi Sanju or Doi Lang West.

05:00 Starting, All day at Doi Lang West. Arriving very early gives you an excellent chance of photographing Mrs. Hume's Pheasant at a feeding area. Other birds that visit the feeding area include Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Japanese Tit, Buff-throated Warbler, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Olive-backed Pipit, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, White-browed Laughingthrush and Grey-backed Shrike.

On Doi Sanju or Doi Lang West there are a number of regular photo stakeouts which you can visit over the course of your two visits. You can usually get all of the stakeout birds in one day but two visits allows you to get them in the best light; the midday light can be rather harsh. Species I would expect include Silver-eared Laughingthrush, White-gorgetted Flycatcher, Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher, White-tailed Redstart, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Hill Prinia, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Siberian Rubythroat, White-browed Laughingthrush, Blue Whistling Thrush and possibly others depending on the conditions.

12:00 Lunch.

16:00 Return back to your hotel.

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Tangerine Ville Hotel.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 10: Doi Lang East.

-Today there is a bit of a bumpy ride up Doi Lang East but it is worth it for a couple of stakeouts at the top of the road. Here you can photograph Scarlet-faced Liocichla, Spectacled Barwing, Large Niltava, Black-backed Sibia, Himalayan Bluetail, Silver-eared Laughingthrush, White-tailed Robin. In “cold” years there can be a thrush or two visiting too. In surrounding trees “freestyle” photography is often quite good too with flocks of small birds regularly passing through visiting low trees with small fruits. Usually there are decent chances to photograph Whiskered Yuhina, Striated Bulbul, Mountain Bulbul, Buff-barred Warbler, Davison’s Leaf Warbler, Grey-chinned Minivet, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Golden-throated Barbet.

12:00 Lunch.

16:00 Return back to your hotel.

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Tangerine Ville Hotel.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 11: Doi Sanju or Doi Lang West.

-Another trip to Doi Sanju or Doi Lang West. This area is really great for birds and there are miles of birding along an extremely quiet road along the Thai/Myanmar border. You get another chance at Mrs. Hume’s Pheasant should you need it and another chance to visit the stakeouts for the best light.

At Doi DSanu or Doi Lang general freestyle photography can be rewarding too with flocks of birds passing through and visiting fruiting trees. We often get photo opportunities of species such as Golden-throated Barbet, Blue-throated Barbet, Yellow-bellied Fantail, Hume’s Treecreeper, Grey-chinned Minivet, various warblers, bulbuls and even Himalayan Cutia. Spot-breasted Parrotbill usually poses nicely for photos and at this time of the year there will be other photographers around and there will probably be a few surprises nailed down at fruiting trees or feeding stations. By this time of year some resident birds will be starting to nest so you can hope for Black-throated Tit, Giant Nuthatch and many others. It is just a question of which birds allow a photographic opportunity.

12:00 Lunch.

16:00 Return back to your hotel.

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Tangerine Ville Hotel.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 12: Fang Hot Springs.

06:00 Breakfast/Short drive to Fang Hot Springs.

-Fang Hot Springs in the morning. This scenic location is very close to your accommodation and while there are no stakeouts or hides there are usually some birds that present themselves for photos. Spot-winged Grosbeaks are always here and usually descend low enough for photographs as they lick up salts that a geyser (artificial) deposits on surrounding trees. Blue Rock Thrush, Striated Swallow, White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Coppersmith Barbet, Asian Barred Owlet, Golden-fronted Leafbird are all likely for photos and flowering/fruiting trees can draw in other birds close.

By late morning start driving south towards Chiang Mai. The drive is around 3.5-4 hours including a stop for lunch. There is probably some time to make a few stops along the way.

12:00 Lunch.

17:00 Check into **Touch Star Resort.**

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Touch Star Resort.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Day 13-15: Doi Inthanon NP.

-We'll spend 3 full days at Doi Inthanon, Thailand's highest mountain (you can drive to the top, no hiking needed). Here there are a couple of hides at different altitudes where species such as Streaked Spiderhunter, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Small Niltava, Yunnan Fulvetta, Hill Blue Flycatcher, White-browed Fantail, Ochraceous Bulbul, Pygmy Cupwing, Plumbeous Redstart, Blue Whistling Thrush, Slaty-backed Forktail, White-crowned Forktail and others regularly show.

The summit of the mountain is also good for photos. No stakeouts but a great abundance of birds that are not afraid of people. Sometimes you arrive and not much is happening but spending time up here always gives good photo opportunities; Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Green-tailed Sunbird, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Black-backed Sibia, Silver-eared Laughingthrush, Ashy-throated Warbler, Davison's Leaf Warbler, Blyth's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Tit roam in flocks, often just a few metres away. Rufous-throated Partridge, Pygmy Cupwing, Ashy Woodpigeon, Dark-sided Thrush are a bit harder but often seen and photographed. At this time of the year a low fruiting tree should attract Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker, Grey-sided Thrush and Eyebrowed Thrush. It is a productive spot.

***On Day 15:** Afternoon transfer to Chiang Mai Air-port or your hotel in Chiang Mai/**End of the Trips.**

12:00 Lunch.

13:30 Start the afternoon program.

18:30 Dinner.

-Meals: B/L/D

-Overnight at: Touch Star Resort.

-Expert Bird Leader:

Remark:*Inclusion:**

- Transfers as itinerary
- Accommodation (twin share) with private bathroom & A/C
- English-speaking Bird Leader.
- Meals, Fruit, Coffee and Tea
- Park entrance fees
- Refreshment
- Insurance

Exclusion:

- Any other service not mentioned in the programs
- Personal expenses
- All alcoholic.

Preparation:

- Light walking boots or Sports Shoes
- Camera+Lens
- Long trousers and Long-sleeved Shirt for walking in the Forest
- Mosquito Repellent, Sun hat and Sun Cream.

Health & Safety

Thailand has an excellent health care system with hospitals and clinics in every small town and large village. However, make sure you have travel insurance that covers you sufficiently as for foreigners it is not free at point of service (although cheap by the standards of most countries).

Obviously I am not a health provider but as far as I know there are no requirements for any vaccinations of any sort for entry. There may be some exception to that regarding yellow fever depending on your age and where you have travelled, so check that. Thailand is a safe country and tropical diseases are not prevalent, malaria is not really an issue and my understanding is that all cases are in the rainy season and the strain of malaria in SE Asia is resistant to medications, apart from, perhaps, the antibiotic doxycycline.

Most Thais are still wearing masks for covid but it is not a legal requirement. More and more people are dispensing with them and my attitude would be wear them if you feel comfortable with them, don't if you do not want to. I would bring some with you though just in case.

Thailand is really safe, it is highly unlikely that you would be the victim of the type of crime that is prevalent in many societies – mugging, car break-ins and suchlike. However, use your common sense when in tourist areas.

When in Kaeng Krachan National Park there are wild elephants and each year a few people are killed. However, it is always people who are behaving stupidly. Just listen to Tony on this and if he tells you to get into the vehicle, do so.

Be careful when crossing the road. By far the biggest danger in Thailand is the traffic.

Equipment

Obviously bring all your birding/photography equipment. Do bring a tripod and /or monopod. In hides and some stakeouts although birds are fairly tame they do get spooked by movement so if you keep bringing your camera up quickly they fly off. Also in some of the hides the light levels can be challenging so having the camera on a tripod is almost essential really.

In the early mornings it can be cold in the mountains in the early morning, evening and night so bring a warm sweatshirt or fleece or something. No need to go over the top with this but do bring something, in some years it can get quite cold although by February things are usually warming up. Make sure whatever you bring is soft in nature and not stiff and scratchy. I had a terrible time once with someone's coat making a noise every time he moved with birds flying away when he did so.

In the lowlands, particularly while watching the shorebirds, the temperature can be very high with no shade so bring a sunhat and sunscreen.

No special footwear is really required but do bring a change of shoes in case one gets wet. I would always recommend closed shoes rather than sandals.

Equally I recommend long trousers rather than shorts so that biting insects and scratchy plants do not get you.

Please remember to wear dull colours. In the dark forest this makes a big difference and certainly shy birds will not emerge if you are wearing pale colours in the field. I have had some people wearing pale stone-coloured birding clothing that might be appropriate in some places but certainly not in tropical forests.

Internet

Most of the places you will stay have decent internet connections but if it is essential for you I would suggest buying a Thai Sim with internet when you arrive at the airport. Internet requires a password at most places you will stay at so ask for this when you check in.

Alcoholic Drinks

These are not included in the cost so please pay your bill every night if you have a beer. From memory everywhere you stay sells local beers, very few places sell spirits. I do not think anywhere sells wine. If you want to drink wine you will need to ask your guide to take you to a 7/11 store, some of which sell it, or a supermarket.

Laundry

You can get laundry done cheaply at Tangerine Ville Hotel at Fang, Inthanon Highland Resort and Baan Maka Nature Lodge or from your hotel or resort, where you stay.

Problems

Please let your guide know immediately if there is anything that needs dealing with. While we cannot promise that everything will go perfectly, we do know that issues that are not raised until the trip ends cannot be addressed.