Eagle-Eye Tours

# Thailand Itinerary

Link: Thailand

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## Tour Overview

Thailand is one of Asia's most rewarding birding destinations, with an extraordinary diversity of birds across its tropical forests, coastal wetlands and northern mountains. Our Thailand birding tour explores some of the country's finest birding areas, from the shorebird-rich Gulf of Thailand to the forests of Kaeng Krachan and Khao Yai National Parks, and the mountainous landscapes of Doi Ang Khang, Doi Lang and Doi Inthanon.

Along the Gulf coast, we will search for rare and endangered shorebirds, including the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann's Greenshank. In the tropical forests, our targets include spectacular hornbills, colourful broadbills and trogons, Blue Pitta, Gray Peacock-Pheasant and Silver Pheasant. Birding hides offer opportunities for close views of some of the forest's more elusive species.

In northern Thailand, we explore mountain forests rich in Himalayan and Southeast Asian specialties, looking for Giant Nuthatch, Spectacled Barwing, colourful sunbirds, laughingthrushes and wintering flycatchers and thrushes.

A splendid tour led by an experienced Eagle-Eye Tours guide alongside a knowledgeable local guide who know the area well.

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## Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Bangkok



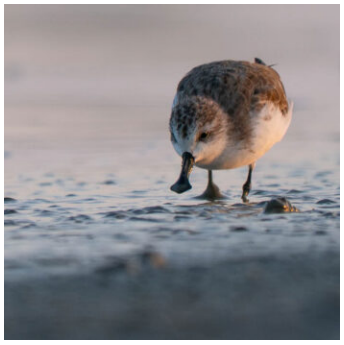
Our Thailand birding tour begins with arrival in Bangkok, where we transfer to our hotel near Suvarnabhumi Airport. Depending on arrival times, we will meet for a welcome dinner and an introduction to the exciting birding ahead. Night in Bangkok.

**Day 2: Bangkok Wetlands and Phetchaburi**



We begin our birding adventure in the wetlands, agricultural areas and parks around Bangkok, where an excellent variety of waterbirds, open-country species and winter visitors provides a wonderful introduction to Thailand's birdlife. Our first stops include the paddies and aquaculture ponds around Lat Krabang, where we will look for Bronze-winged Jacana, Gray-headed Swamphen, Yellow Bittern, White-browed Crake, Asian Golden Weaver, Baya Weaver and Red Avadavat. Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis and Spot-billed Pelican are other possibilities. We then explore some of Bangkok's parks and temple grounds, looking for Spotted Owlet, Red-breasted and Alexandrine Parakeets, Coppersmith Barbet, Asian Koel and Oriental Magpie-Robin. These green spaces offer a surprising variety of birds amid the busy city. Continuing southwest towards Phetchaburi, we may make additional birding stops in mangroves or coastal wetlands before arriving at our hotel near the Gulf of Thailand. Night in Phetchaburi.

**Day 3: Ban Pak Thale and Laem Phak Bia**



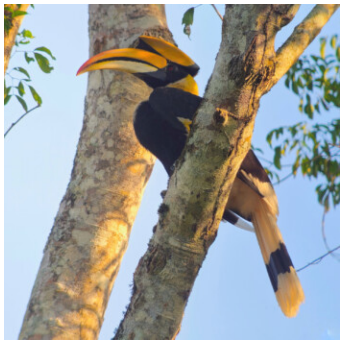
Today we explore one of Southeast Asia's most important wintering areas for shorebirds. The salt pans, mudflats and coastal wetlands around Ban Pak Thale and Laem Phak Bia attract an extraordinary diversity of migratory species, including some of the world's rarest shorebirds. Our most exciting target is the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, a tiny shorebird that winters in very small numbers along this coast. Finding one requires patience and careful searching, but the possibility makes this a particularly memorable birding destination. We will also look for the Endangered Nordmann's Greenshank, along with Asian Dowitcher, Terek Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and Bar-tailed Godwit. We will also take a boat excursion through the mangroves and out to the coastal sandspits at Laem Phak Bia, where we will search for Malaysian and White-faced Plovers, along with Chinese Egret and other coastal species. The mangroves provide opportunities for Black-capped and Collared Kingfishers, while the boat trip allows us to explore habitats that are difficult to access from shore. If time permits, we may visit nearby freshwater wetlands and rice fields before continuing inland towards Kaeng Krachan National Park, where forested mountains provide a striking contrast to the open coastal landscape. Night near Kaeng Krachan National Park.

**Days 4–5: Kaeng Krachan National Park**



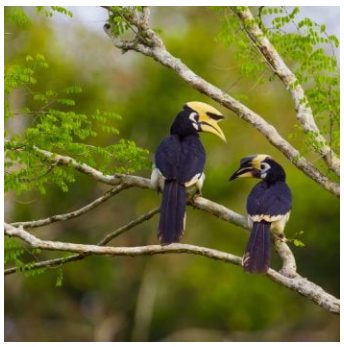
We have two full days to explore Kaeng Krachan, Thailand's largest national park and one of the country's premier birding destinations. Its extensive forests along the Myanmar border support an exceptional diversity of birds, ranging from colourful canopy species to secretive inhabitants of the forest floor. Birding along the park roads and forest trails can be especially rewarding. We will search for Great Hornbill, Oriental Pied-Hornbill, Red-bearded Bee-eater, Great Slaty Woodpecker, Greater Yellownape, Green-eared Barbet and Asian Fairy-bluebird. The forest is also home to an exciting variety of broadbills, trogons, leafbirds and babblers, with Orange-breasted Trogon and Banded Broadbill among our targets. Where access and conditions permit, we will explore the higher forest around Phanoen Thung, where fruiting trees and mixed feeding flocks can be particularly productive. Here we may encounter White-browed Piculet, Collared Babbler, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler and an assortment of colourful bulbuls and other forest birds. We will also spend time at specially maintained birding hides near the park, which provide excellent opportunities to observe and photograph species that are normally difficult to see in dense forest. Among our principal targets are Gray Peacock-Pheasant, Kalij Pheasant, Bar-backed Partridge, Scaly-breasted Partridge, Blue Pitta and Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush. Siberian Blue Robin and Orange-headed Thrush are other possibilities around the hides. Kaeng Krachan is also rich in mammals, and we may encounter Dusky Langur, White-handed Gibbon, Stump-tailed Macaque and several species of squirrels as we explore the forest. Nights near Kaeng Krachan National Park.

**Day 6: Kaeng Krachan to Khao Yai**



Today we leave Kaeng Krachan and travel towards Khao Yai National Park, with birding stops in a variety of open-country and freshwater habitats along the way. Depending on our route and available time, we may explore agricultural wetlands and rice fields, where large concentrations of waterbirds, weavers and wintering raptors can be found. We will look for Black Kite, Eastern Marsh Harrier, Pied Harrier and other birds of open fields and marshes. Greater Spotted Eagle is a particularly exciting possibility. This is an excellent opportunity to encounter species associated with open country before we return to the forest habitats of Khao Yai. We arrive at our accommodation near the park entrance, ready for two full days of birding. Night near Khao Yai National Park.

**Days 7 & 8: Khao Yai National Park**



We spend two full days exploring Khao Yai National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site protecting extensive evergreen forests, grasslands and waterfalls. The park offers outstanding opportunities for both birds and mammals, with a network of roads and trails allowing us to visit a range of habitats. Early mornings can be particularly productive for some of Khao Yai's most sought-after birds. We will look for Silver Pheasant along quiet forest roads, while Red-headed Trogon, Black-throated Laughingthrush and Long-tailed Broadbill are among the specialties of the evergreen forest. Siamese Fireback is another possibility, although this striking pheasant can be difficult to find. Elsewhere in the park, we will search for Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Banded Kingfisher, White-crested Laughingthrush, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker and a variety of barbets, woodpeckers and other forest birds. Fruiting trees can attract an impressive diversity of species, including Oriental Pied-Hornbill and Wreathed Hornbill. Khao Yai is also home to Buffy Fish-Owl, which we will look for around suitable forested waterways and known roosting areas. This impressive owl is one of several special birds that may reward patient searching. The park is also one of Thailand's best-known wildlife destinations. We may encounter Asian Elephant, White-handed Gibbon, Pileated Gibbon, Sambar and Pig-tailed Macaque. Around dusk, we may have opportunities to look for Great Eared-Nightjar or other nocturnal wildlife, depending on conditions and the day's activities. Nights near Khao Yai National Park.

**Day 9: Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen**



After breakfast, we leave Khao Yai and travel to Bangkok for our flight north to Chiang Rai. Arriving in northern Thailand, we enter a different landscape of mountains, valleys, agricultural fields and wetlands. Depending on our flight schedule, we may visit Nong Luang Lake, where Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Ferruginous Duck and other freshwater birds may be found. Another particularly interesting target is Annam Limestone Babbler, a localized species associated with limestone outcrops near Chiang Rai. We will search for it where access and timing allow. We continue to Chiang Saen, near the Mekong River and the borders with Laos and Myanmar. Night in Chiang Saen.

**Day 10: Chiang Saen Wetlands and Fang**



We begin the day exploring the wetlands around Chiang Saen, including Nong Bong Khai Non-Hunting Area and the marshes of Wiang Nong Lom. These habitats attract a wide range of wintering waterfowl and other wetland birds, offering a change from the forest birding of the preceding days. We then travel towards Fang, stopping in agricultural areas around Mae Ai and the Mae Fang valley. Here we will look for birds of rice fields, scrub and open grassland, including Chestnut-eared Bunting, Black-faced Bunting, Eurasian Wryneck, Citrine Wagtail and Red-throated Pipit. Yellow-breasted Bunting is a rare and declining species that would be an exceptional find. The surrounding mountains provide an impressive backdrop as we approach our base for the next three nights. From here we will explore two of northern Thailand's most rewarding mountain birding areas. Night in Fang District.

**Day 11: Doi Ang Khang**



Today we explore the highlands of Doi Ang Khang, part of Doi Pha Hom Pok National Park. Close to the Myanmar border, this mountainous region supports a fascinating mixture of resident Himalayan and Southeast Asian birds, together with winter visitors from farther north. We will explore forest edges, gardens, mountain roads and wooded slopes around the Royal Agricultural Station and other productive birding sites. The flowering gardens and fruiting trees can attract a wonderful variety of colourful birds, including Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, White-headed Bulbul, Silver-eared Mesia and Blue-winged Minla. The surrounding forest and mountain roads provide opportunities for Crested Finchbill, Spot-winged Grosbeak, Large Niltava and a variety of laughingthrushes and other montane birds. Wintering species are another attraction, and we will look for Daurian Redstart, Black-breasted Thrush, Gray-sided Thrush and other visitors from farther north. The mix of flowering gardens, pine forest and broadleaf woodland makes Doi Ang Khang a particularly rewarding place to explore. We return to our accommodation in Fang after a full day in the highlands. Night in Fang District.

**Day 12: Doi Lang and Doi San Ju**



We make an early start for Doi Lang, where mountain roads along the Thai–Myanmar border provide access to excellent high-elevation birding. The area around Doi San Ju is especially well known for its forest specialties and opportunities to observe otherwise elusive birds. One of our principal targets is Giant Nuthatch, an impressive and highly sought-after species associated with the mountain forests of this region. We will also search for Mountain Bamboo-Partridge, which can sometimes be found along quiet roads and forest edges. As we explore the mountain roads, we will look for Ultramarine Flycatcher, Siberian Rubythroat, Red-eyed Scimitar-Babbler, Hume's Treecreeper and Spot-breasted Parrotbill. Mixed feeding flocks may also include Streaked Barwing, Yunnan Fulvetta and other mountain specialties. The beautiful Hume's Pheasant is another possibility, although it is extremely difficult to see and would be an exceptional sighting. Night in Fang District.

**Day 13: Fang to Doi Inthanon**



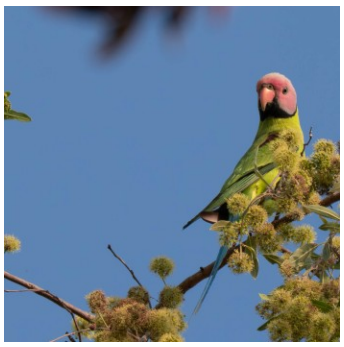
Today we travel south towards Doi Inthanon National Park, making several birding stops along the way. We may explore wetlands and agricultural habitats around the Mae Ai valley before continuing towards Chiang Mai. Depending on our route and available time, we may also visit limestone forest around Wat Tham Tap Tao, where Streaked Wren-Babbler is a particular target. One of the day's highlights is a visit to an area known for Green Peafowl, one of Thailand's most impressive birds. We will search for these magnificent pheasants in the open woodland and surrounding countryside. Along the Mae Ping River, we may also look for Wire-tailed Swallow and Small Pratincole. By late afternoon we arrive near Doi Inthanon, Thailand's highest mountain, where we will spend the next three nights exploring its diverse forests and mountain habitats. Night near Doi Inthanon National Park.

**Days 14 & 15: Doi Inthanon National Park**



We have two full days to explore Doi Inthanon National Park, one of Thailand's finest birding destinations. Rising to 2,565 metres, the mountain encompasses a remarkable range of habitats, from dry forests on the lower slopes to cool, moss-covered evergreen forest near the summit. We will explore different elevations, looking for the distinctive birds associated with each habitat. Lower forest and wooded streams may produce Black-headed Woodpecker, Collared Falconet, White-capped Redstart and Plumbeous Redstart. Flowering trees and fruiting shrubs can attract an assortment of sunbirds, bulbuls and other colourful species. Higher on the mountain, we enter lush evergreen forest with a rich variety of flycatchers, laughingthrushes, fulvettas and other montane birds. Among our targets are Rufous-bellied Niltava, White-gorgeted Flycatcher, Spectacled Barwing, Clicking Shrike-Babbler and Chestnut-tailed Minla. We will also search for several secretive birds of the forest undergrowth, including Himalayan Shortwing, Pygmy Cupwing and Slaty-bellied Tesia. These species can be difficult to observe, but quiet forest trails and carefully selected birding sites offer opportunities for rewarding encounters. Near the summit, the cool, mossy forest and rhododendron-covered slopes support some of the mountain's most distinctive birds. We will look for Green-tailed Sunbird, Silver-eared Laughingthrush, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush and Rufous-throated Partridge. Wintering birds add further interest, with Scaly Thrush, Dark-sided Thrush and Himalayan Bluetail among the possibilities. We may also spend time at a birding hide, where White-tailed Robin, Streaked Spiderhunter and other shy forest species can sometimes be observed at close range. Nights near Doi Inthanon National Park.

**Day 16: Final Birding and Return to Bangkok**



We leave the Doi Inthanon area and travel towards Chiang Mai, with time for some final birding depending on our flight schedule. We may visit the agricultural landscapes around Ban Thi, where open fields, wetlands and scattered trees attract a wide variety of wintering birds. We will look for Blossom-headed Parakeet, Gray-headed Lapwing, Oriental Skylark and an assortment of raptors. Booted Eagle, Short-toed Snake-Eagle and other winter visitors are possibilities. We then transfer to Chiang Mai Airport for our flight to Bangkok, where we spend our final night near Suvarnabhumi Airport. Night in Bangkok.

**Day 17: Departure**

Our Thailand birding tour concludes today. Transfers to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport will be arranged for our international departures.

# What to Expect

**Overview**

Our Thailand birding tour is fast-paced, with early mornings and long days in the field as we explore a wide variety of habitats, from coastal wetlands and tropical forests to the mountains of northern Thailand. While much of the birding involves relatively easy walking, the combination of long days, heat, humidity and occasional more challenging trails can be physically demanding. Participants should be comfortable with a full schedule of birding activities.

**Food**

We often begin birding early in the morning, either returning to the hotel for breakfast or occasionally having breakfast in the field. Lunches are typically picnic-style or at restaurants along our route, allowing us to maximize our birding time. Dinners are usually at our lodge or a nearby restaurant. Each evening, we review the day's sightings, compile our bird checklist and discuss plans for the following day.

**Accommodation**

We generally stay in comfortable, approximately 3-star hotels or lodges, selected for their proximity to our birding destinations. In some more remote areas, accommodation options are limited and facilities may be simpler than those in larger towns and cities.

**Walking**

Most walking is moderate, generally covering distances of up to 2–3 km (1–2 miles) at a time. Much of our birding takes place along roadsides, tracks and established forest trails, although some sections may be narrow, uneven, rocky or muddy.

There are a few more challenging walks, particularly around Doi Ang Khang and Doi Inthanon, where we may encounter steeper trails, stairs and uneven terrain. At Doi Inthanon, some birding takes place at elevations above 2,000 m (6,560 ft), where the thinner air may make exertion more tiring. The summit is approximately 2,565 m (8,415 ft) above sea level. Participants should be comfortable walking on uneven surfaces and negotiating occasional steep sections.

**Driving**

Most days involve a small to moderate amount of driving between birding locations, with frequent stops to look for birds and take breaks. Some days involve longer transfers between destinations. Road conditions vary, and some forest roads may be rough or winding.

**Climate**

Thailand's climate varies considerably across the regions we visit. In Bangkok, along the Gulf coast and in the lowland forests, expect generally warm to hot conditions, with temperatures often reaching 30–35°C (86–95°F). Humidity can make the heat feel more intense, particularly during forest walks. Although January/February is generally part of the dry season, occasional rain is possible, so a lightweight rain jacket or poncho is recommended.

The northern mountains are considerably cooler, particularly in the early mornings and at higher elevations. At Doi Inthanon, temperatures near the summit can occasionally drop to 0–5°C (32–41°F), so warm layers, including a fleece or insulated jacket, are essential.

Mosquitoes and other biting insects may be encountered, particularly in forested areas. We recommend bringing insect repellent and lightweight, long-sleeved clothing.

**Boat Trips**

We plan to take a boat excursion of approximately 1.5–2 hours at Laem Phak Bia to explore the coastal sandspits and look for shorebirds. The excursion uses a small, open boat, and participants should be comfortable boarding and disembarking, potentially onto sandy or uneven ground. The water is generally sheltered, although conditions can vary. There are no toilet facilities on board, and the excursion is subject to suitable weather, tides and local conditions.

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# What's Included

**Tour Price Includes**

• All accommodation (Good to moderate high-quality hotels and lodges)
• All meals and soft drinks
• Internal flights included
• Airport transfers
• Ground transportation
• Eagle-Eye Tours guide + a local guide with 4 - 10 participants
• All park, conservation and entrance fees
• Gratuities

**Tour Price Does Not Include**

• Flights to and from Bangkok
• Travel Insurance
• Alcoholic beverages
• Items of a personal nature

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