



2018\_3 Days Yunnan Gaoligong Mountains



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7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018



I flew to Tengchong to guide a birding excursion on December 6<sup>th</sup>. At this time, the cold current from Siberia has arrived in the most northern and central parts of China, which made the birding activities quite difficult in those areas. However here in Yunnan, known as the "Kingdom of Plants and Animals", it is a different situation. The comfortable weather and abundant resources not only make it is an ideal place for human beings but also a perfect residence for wildlife. In the chilly winter, millions of birds migrate to Yunnan for wintering, turning Yunnan into a paradise for birding.

I was so excited to know that I was going to guide Tom for the short birding excursion around Tengchong in December, especially the excursion includes one of the most famous birding destination called Baihualing. In Tengchong, I was informed by Tom that he could leave earlier than originally planned. So I recommended him to visit a great birding site in Tengchong called Laifengshan National Forest Park. The trip started at 11:00 am December 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Right after I met Tom at his hotel, I took him to Laifengshan National Forest Park immediately. The Park is located in the center of Tengchong county, with convenient transportation, high vegetation coverage, rich biodiversity, and over 300 species of birds. We harvested many breathtaking species even though we only have very limited birding time there.

To make the best use of our limited time, we drove directly to the top of the hill. Before we stepped out of the car, we were attracted by a flock of mixed bird specie. We quietly approached them.

Here we saw the Red-tailed Minla, Blue-winged Minla, and Bar-throated Minla. These are all three species of the minla you could expect to see in China. We also saw active and lovely White-throated Fantail, and Speckled Piculet, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Eurasian Nuthatch, noisy Black-headed Sibia, David's Fulvetta, Rufous-capped Babbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler and Mountain Bulbul.



**Red-tailed Minla**





**White-throated Fantail**

4:00 PM. On the way to Baihualing, we spotted more species including Red-vented Bulbul, Rufescent Prinia, and Crimson Sunbird.

After three and a half hours of driving, we arrived at our small guesthouse in Baihualing. We decided to go to bed early after a simple dinner so that we can start early tomorrow.

The next morning, we left our guest house after simple breakfast in the morning darkness to try our luck along the so-called rainforest ring trail. It was still very dark when we drove to the parking lot around 7:40 am. The dawn light hasn't shown up in eastern sky until we walked to an open area. We could hear beautiful bird calls constantly. We checked closely the spot where the calls came with our binoculars, and spotted a male Orange-bellied Leafbird.

Within 10 minutes, more birds showed up and hopped in trees, such as beautiful Streaked Spiderhunter and Striated Bulbul, Maroon Oriole, Great Barbet, Blue-throated Barbet, and noisy Ashy Drongo and Black Bulbul.



**Orange-bellied Leafbird**

It was a very good start, we were very excited and expected to find more interesting species. We walked on slowly along the peaceful nature path and searched closely along the way. After 6 hours of hard working, we got very good and productive result, we harvested cute Chestnut-headed Tesia, and Slaty-bellied Tesia, Rusty-fronted Barwing, Whiskered Yuhina, White-bellied Erpornis, Scarlet Minivet, White-gorgeted Flycatcher, Pygmy Blue Flycatcher, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, Clicking Shrike Babbler, Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler and Himalayan Bluetail.



**Slaty-bellied Tesia**

During our search, we were very lucky that we met a flock of mixed bird species including Nepal Fulvetta, Golden Babbler, Grey-throated Babbler and Buff-barred Warbler. Along a small stream in the valley, we saw some water birds like Plumbeous Water Redstart and White-capped Water Redstart near the stream. On the way back, we found a female Scarlet Finch.

After the rainforest ring trail, we decided to try some bird hides. The bird hide can be very helpful and productive especially when you are short of time. With support from local government and NGOs, bird hides

here are run by local village community. This eco-friendly industry makes positive influence on conservation and public education and helps build a win-win relationship between humans and nature. Well, obviously, it helps local people a lot to increase their income, many birders and photographers from all over the world come for birding and bird photography.

Not surprisingly, we got a lot of beautiful birds in the bird hide, such as Rufous-throated Partridge, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, Scaly Laughingthrush, Red-tailed Laughingthrush Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, Scarlet-faced Liocichla, Long-tailed Sibia, Beautiful Sibia, Crested Finchbill, Flavescent Bulbul, Grey-winged Blackbird, Golden Bush Robin, Rusty-capped Fulvetta and so on. In conclusion, we saw more than 30 species of birds in the bird-hide.



**Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler**



After spending time in the bird-hide, we went back to the main road and continued birding along the road until the sky was completely dark, we saw beautiful Fire-tailed Sunbird, elegant Spotted Forktail, Speckled Wood Pigeon, and Olive-backed Pipit.

At dinner in our lovely local guesthouse, we did our checklist and found we saw 70 species in total in the past 12 hours from 7:40 am to 7:30 pm! It is very good for one-day exploration.



**Fire-tailed Sunbird**

We drove back to Tengchong at 5 am on the third day morning so that we could get some time for birding in Laifengshan again before we have to leave for the airport to catch the departure flight at 1 pm. It was around 8 am when we arrived Laifengshan. We got about 3 hours for birding here. We had seen many species here on the first day, so we picked a different path to try different species, and fortunately we spotted Great Barbet, Eurasian Jay, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Rusty-capped Fulvetta, Whiskered Yuhina and Black-throated Bushtit that we had not seen before.



**Blue-winged Minla**

Time flies, it was 10:40 am, we decided to pack up and drive to airport, at that moment, I heard a big rustling sound from the bush, we stopped the engine immediately and waited there quietly. After a short time, a big whitish bird suddenly stepped out the bush. It was Silver Pheasant! It was the best way to conclude our 3-day excursion. After some pleasant time with the spectacular species, we drove to the airport.

In our three-day trip, we recorded 97 bird species including some very special ones like Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Scarlet Finch, Silver Pheasant, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Rufous-throated Partridge, etc. But definitely these places worth more time if your schedule allows you.



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