

## BIRDING REPORT

# KRUNG CHING, KHAO LUANG NATIONAL PARK, NAKORN SRI THAMMARAT 26-27/8/08

-by Peter Ericsson

-Where does one go for birding in the South of Thailand? Obvious answer to that is Khao Nor Chu Chi and Gurney's Pitta. Then what? Mangroves of Krabi are pretty good but how about something more exotic filled with Hornbills and exotic tropical rain forest species? The obvious answer is: Hala Bala. Now, the main problem with that is the imminent danger to life. Should one risk his life for a thrill (birds)? To me, the answer is clearly a no. The bloodshed in the deep South is astonishing with lots of brutal killings taking place daily.

So, at the back of my head I have wanted to visit Krung Ching waterfall at Khao Luang National Park in Nakorn Sri Thammarat for a long time.

Krung Ching is a sub station of the park placed at the very Northern tip of the park. One either has to get to Surat Tani or Nakorn Sri Thammarat before driving towards the park.

I had some things to take care of in Phuket and Phang Nga and decided to head there.

I made a call (075-460000) to reserve a bungalow (600Baht/night) and arrived at 6 pm. No food available as it was weekday but a small store offered the mandatory dried Mama noodles and that was my staple for the next 4 meals. (I made up for it once back home).

It was very invigorating to see the rather massive mountains in this part of the country. Something I hadn't seen before. The highest peak in the park is over 1800 meters and holds some good montane birdlife.

The visitor centre is surrounded by greenery and has a few ponds full of fish. A female adult Buffy Fish Owl and her young off spring showed real well and allowed for close approach. Javan Frogmouth is fairly common here but though I heard it several times I failed to connect with it.

Another wanted bird often seen is Wallace's Hawk Eagle. I also dipped on this one.

Now, what did I see then? First of all I must say that it is such a nice change to simply hear the sounds of the Southern forest as it is rather different from the Central and Northern region. The very distinct calls of Green Broadbills rang clearly and the birds responded well to playback. What a cracking bird that is!

My first morning walk was met with a flock of at least 6 White-crowned Hornbills in a fruiting tree with the songs of Dark-throated Oriole, Red-throated Barbet and Gold-whiskered Barbets filling the air.

The trail to the waterfall is 3700 metres long and starts out quite steeply after a couple of hundred meters. Once this initial climb is done it is easy walking.

A couple of Scarlet-rumped Trogons sang in the early morning and one showed well.

Several types of Babblers naturally were around: Grey-headed, Chestnut-winged, Scaly-crowned being some of them. Black-yellow Broadbill was common and pretty easy to see. A flock of Dusky Broadbills were unmistakable. Several Rufous-winged Philentomas showed well.

I walked the trail about half way and would return to the start yet to come back again later on. I came across a nice male Banded Pitta on the trail but no pictures.

The forest here at about 3-400meters level was quite healthy with many large trees. The canopy actually is very high and hard to see through. Once outside of the trail I had looks at Silver-rumped Needletails, Glossy Swiftlets and even a few Germain's Swiftlets.

I only stayed for a day and a morning but it was well worth the long drive I had to do from Phuket. Still, I managed to drive all the way back to Bangkok on the day of return (800 some km).

So, was it as good as Hala Bala? Certainly not, as not much can beat HB but for me it was a nice learning experience even though I didn't add any new species to my Thai list.

Trying to get pictures and identifying what I saw kept me happy.

## Birdlist

Banded Bay Cuckoo (2 heard)  
Violet Cuckoo (1 seen)  
Drongo Cuckoo (3 heard)  
White-rumped Shama (5 seen)

Grey Wagtail (2 seen)  
Grey-cheeked Bulbul (5-6 pairs seen)  
Red-eyed Bulbul (2 seen)  
Yellow-bellied Bulbul (1 seen)

Ocraceous Bulbul (4 seen)  
Grey-headed Babbler (2 flocks seen)  
Chestnut-winged Babbler (1 flock seen several heard)

Scaly-crowned Babbler (1 seen)  
Moustached Babbler (heard)  
Black-capped Babbler (heard)  
Striped Tit Babbler (plenty)  
Puff-throated Babbler (plenty)  
Glossy Swiftlet (1 seen)  
Raffle's Malkoha (1 seen)  
Chestnut-bellied Malkoha (4 seen)  
Yellow-black Brodbill (2 seen, many heard)  
Green Broadbill (4 seen)  
Dusky Broadbill (3 seen)  
Buffy Fish Owl (2 seen)

Collared Scops Owl (1 seen)  
Asian Fairy Bluebird (3 seen, many heard)  
Dark-throated Oriole (3 seen)  
Dark-necked Tailorbird (plenty)  
Rufous-winged Flycatcher (2 seen)  
Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker (1 seen)  
Red-throated Barbet (3 seen, many heard)  
Gold-whiskered Barbet (many heard)  
Brown Barbet (3 seen)  
Blue-eared Barbet (many heard)  
White-crowned Hornbill (flock of 6 seen)

Bushy Crested Hornbill (3 seen against the sky flying away, not 100% sure of the ID)  
Great lora (2 seen)  
Green lora (1 seen)  
Grey-headed Flycatcher (plenty)  
Hill Blue Flycatcher (1 heard)  
Little Spiderhunter (common, 2 seen)  
Banded Kingfisher (2 heard)  
Scarlet-backed Trogon (2 seen)  
Orange-breasted Trogon (1 heard)  
Banded Pitta (1 seen)