



*Pale-throated Wren-Babbler was a new bird for Birdquest and a highly localised near endemic only shared with China (János Oláh)!*

## VIETNAM EXPEDITION

**2 – 10 APRIL 2017**

**LEADERS:** JÁNOS OLÁH and BAO NGUYEN

Following the Birdquest regular tour to Vietnam we offered an expedition this year to try and locate some rare birds which are new to Birdquest and at the same time get some information how some of these birds could be integrated to our main tour or make it a regular extension. We had four target species on this expedition and it was a two-centred programme. We were hoping to see the rare White-throated and Pale-throated Wren-Babblers at Fansipan Mountain of Western Tonkin and the little-known Golden-winged Laughingthrush and Indochinese Fulvetta at Ngoc Linh Mountain in Central Vietnam. The two wren-babbler species are a result of recent splitting as the White-throated Wren-Babbler was treated as a race of Long-billed Wren-Babbler (just like the Sumatran Wren-Babbler) while the Pale-throated Wren-Babbler was treated as a race of the Long-tailed Wren-Babbler before the four way split into Naga, Chin Hills, Grey-bellied and Pale-throated Wren-Babblers. The Golden-winged Laughingthrush is a recently described species while the Indochinese Fulvetta is just a highly localised bird. All in all we had an action-packed few days and we managed to find three out of the four targets – the Pale-throated Wren-Babbler, Golden-winged Laughingthrush and the Indochinese Fulvetta - so we considered the expedition to be highly successful! Especially because from the gathered information we knew that chances to see the White-throated Wren-Babbler are minute as only a handful of records exist from the type locality area, the Fansipan Mountain.

However recently it has been recorded south of Fansipan in the Mu Cang Chai area in Western Tonkin so probably another Birdquest Expedition will get to see this rare bird!

As soon as the regular tour ended in Hanoi Airport we drove off on the newly built highway to Lao Cai where we arrived in the evening. Next morning we were up early and drove to Sa Pa and quickly made our way to the cable car so we could reach the higher parts of the Fansipan Mountain. The idea was to go up by cable car and track down all the way to the Tram Ton Pass with nights camping in habitat for the targets. It was a great plan however the weather Gods were not very kind to us as a cold weather front just arrived to Northern Vietnam and our stay up the top did not look very promising. There was not much we could do, however, so we got on the cable car and made our way almost to the top of the mighty Fansipan, which is sometimes called the 'Roof of Indochina' as it is the highest peak in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (3143 meters). Our porters were waiting for us with all the food and equipment. This new cable car has been awarded two Guinness record certifications for being the world's longest three-wire cable car (6292 m) and also having the biggest altitudinal difference between the starting and the ending point (1410 m). Needless to say as we got to the top it was thick mist and a pretty strong wind (the weather front arrived). We decided to make our way to the very top so we climbed a few hundred more steps and we took a few foggy images being on the top. Following this we started our steep descent to lower elevations and hoped for a slightly better visibility. There were not many birds around but we got to see a Chestnut-headed Tasia, a few Black-faced Laughingthrushes, White-browed Fulvetta, Stripe-throated and White-collared Yuhinas and White-browed Bush-Robin. We were not expecting any of our targets at this high elevation, we had to get down to minimum 2500 meter to be in habitat for the two wren-babblers. In a few hours we got down to 2800 meters to our first basecamp. We packed our gear into the shelter and wandered around the camp area but unfortunately the wind was picking up and it was gale-forced by this time as well as visibility was limited to 2 meters! We had a brief sighting of Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler and heard Hill Partridges but finally we gave up and decided to have an early dinner and sleep.



*White-browed Fulvetta valentinae* race at the top of Fansipan (János Oláh).

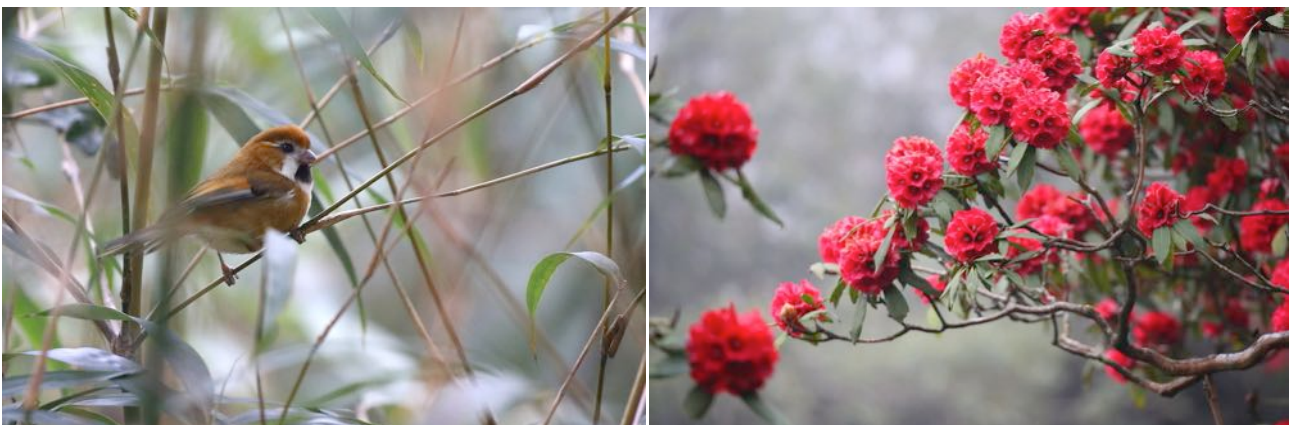


After a very long windy night with some very heavy rain we were up early, packing up and leaving the camp area. Visibility was more or less the same but the wind had dropped a little. We were going down as fast as we could and at 2500 meters visibility was improving and suddenly even the sun came out! Our mood was also much better and in thick bamboo we located a singing Bar-winged Wren-Babbler. This species was just recently found in Vietnam and by distribution it is far from any other breeding grounds, so it could be a new subspecies here. Unfortunately the clear weather was just for a short while and we were back to the misty conditions.



*Bar-winged Wren-Babbler on Fansipan (János Oláh).*

It was a bit of struggle for a few hours again but now were fishing for the two target birds. We had no success but a Scaly Laughingthrush was seen by some through the mist and Bar-throated Minla and Whiskered Yuhina were new birds. By the afternoon we were at 2200 meters elevation in the best habitat for our targets and the weather was also clear again. Unfortunately despite much work we could not locate any more wren-babblers. We got to see Yellow-cheeked Tit, Black-faced Warbler, Blyth's Leaf Warblers, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Rusty-capped Fulvetta, a pair of Golden Parrotbills and Small Niltava.



*Golden Parrotbill (left) and Rhododendrons on Fansipan (János Oláh).*

Early next morning we continued our search. The weather was clear and perfectly suitable and we were in the best elevation and habitat for the target wren-babblers. We heard a Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler and seen many Yellow-cheeked Tits, Chestnut-headed Tesia and lots of Blyth's Leaf Warblers. As we got off the main trail and started to walk on an alternative trail we suddenly heard a distant response to our Pale-throated Wren-Babbler tape. It took about half an hour to get close to the spot and climbing and bushwacking was also involved. Finally we made it there it was calling in a thick bamboo area so carefully positioned ourselves and we were in action. We waited and the bird was answering for some time but suddenly gone silent. We thought the bird is close around us somewhere so we patiently waited for a long time but nothing happened. Rather frustrated we continued on the trail and could not believe how unlucky we were or we could not actually tell what the problem was. We covered some distance and it was approaching midday when we got to a suitable-looking bamboo area again. As usual we were trawling for both wren-babblers and suddenly a very close Pale-throated Wren-Babbler answered again. Within a few minutes we managed to get amazing looks at this poorly known bird. What a great result after two days of hard work. Everybody was smiling and the porters presented our final bit of food for lunch! Success!



*Pale-throated Wren-Babbler (János Oláh).*

We continued after lunch in good habitat through endless bamboo trying hard for the other wren-babbler but we did not have a sniff. We got to see Ashy-throated Leaf Warbler, Rufous-winged Fulvetta and Red-billed Blue Magpie. After almost three full days on the mountain we arrived at the Tram Ton Pass, where our driver was already waiting for us. We made a short stop by a waterfall area and got good looks at Little Forkatail, Plumbeous Water Redstart and White-capped Water Redstart. As it was getting dark we drove to Sa Pa and checked into a hotel where we had a very welcome shower and a fantastic local celebration meal! Next day we still had some time before we had to leave the area so we tried some more suitable habitat around the Tram Ton Pass but we had no sign of any species of wren-babblers. We got to see Yellow-browed Tit, Grey-bellied Tesia, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Snowy-browed and Brown-breasted Flycatchers and a Crested Goshawk. Also it was a Vietnamese holiday so by mid morning there were many tourists around and we decided to finish the first part of the expedition and drive back to Hanoi where we caught an evening flight to Da Nang.





*Little Forktail (top left), juvenile Plumbeous Water Redstart (top right), Snowy-browed (left) and Brown-breasted (right) Flycatchers and a view of Fansipan (János Oláh).*

The Central Highlands are the least populated part of the country and probably the last untouched wilderness of Vietnam where unbroken forest stretches as far as the eye can see. This border area with Cambodia and Laos is where two new bird species to science - Golden-winged Laughingthrush and Black-crowned Barwing - were described as recently as the 1990s! These new species were originally found by Birdlife International expeditions to the remote Mount Ngoc Linh (2598m), which is the highest peak of the Central Highlands. We started early from Da Nang and drove towards the Lo Xo Pass area that we know very well from our main tour. A quick stop along the Vuzia River produced two distant River Lapwings (a rare bird in Vietnam) and a few hours later we turned off the main road after the pass towards the mighty Ngoc Linh Mountain. After some winding and pretty rough roads we got to the area we were aiming for, a forest at around 1900 meters, not far from the national park on the slopes of the sacred mountain. This is a closed area for visitors though public roads can be used. There are many ethnic groups in this area and this is why the government not really encouraging tourism. Anyway we have arrived at our destination and as usual we were eager to get into the habitat. We found a trail used by local 'ginger farmers' and started to climb on this rather muddy and steep trail to a higher elevation. The Golden-winged Laughingthrush is supposed to be as low down as 2000 meters. After an hour of climbing we reached the required elevation and the birding began. We soon located a pair of Black-crowned Barwing and a party of shy Red-tailed Laughingthrushes. Two amazing birds! The Red-tailed Laughingthrushes had a very scaly breast, probably the *vitryi* subspecies (or an undescribed race).



*A pair of Red-tailed Laughingthrush (left) and the near-endemic Black-crowned Barwing (János Oláh).*

It was getting late afternoon and activity was picking up and various mixed flocks were located with Black-faced Warbler, Mountain Tailorbird, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Yellow-cheeked Tit and Blue-winged Minla. A Grey-bellied Tesia was seen and while looking for this ground dweller an understorey flock came through a little clearing with thick bushes and bamboo. We heard the familiar chittering of the Indochinese Fulvetta and we were soon looking at a pair of this highly localised and difficult to see bird. Yes, another new bird for Birdquest and the expedition participants! We had great looks at these fast moving birds and suddenly a Black-throated Parrotbill was also located and some of us managed to get views of it before it disappeared into the bamboo. This is the little-known *kamoli* race here and a likely future candidate for splitting as Black-eared Parrotbill. After this success we decided to turn back so we could still get out of the forest in daylight. We walked a few hundred meters back when we heard a singing Golden-winged Laughingthrush distantly.



We made a quick plan and played its song but had no response. We waited for twenty minutes but nothing happened. It was a very promising, however, as we still had two full days in this area! We were tracking back along the trail and after another few hundred meters Red-tailed Laughingthrushes were spotted crossing the trail and suddenly we heard Golden-winged Laughingthrush again. It was very close now and after a few nervous minutes we got to see one, and then two and three and they were all hopping across the trail, a total of five birds! Wow! They were amazingly quick and not staying at one location long enough to photograph them but we got repeated excellent looks of this mega rare and localised bird! We stayed with the birds for about 20 minutes and made several great sound recordings plus finally managed to get some record shots too. We could not believe our luck, seeing both of our targets on the first afternoon and seeing them both very well! Mission completed: two new birds for the Birdquest list!



*A poor record shot of a Golden-winged Laughingthrush (top) which has only ever been seen by about 25 birders until now and the highly localised Indochinese Fulvetta (right) which is rarely seen on any regular birding circuit to the county (János Oláh)!*

We arrived at our basic accommodation in the dark and celebrated the great success with a nice meal and some beers! Next morning we were back on the mountain and had a nice exploratory birding along a new road where we had as many as 14 Black-crowned Barwings! We got repeated excellent looks of singing and displaying birds, certainly the highlight of the morning! We also picked up a few migrant Eye-browed



Thrushes with a single male Siberian Thrush. The local distinctive form of Green-tailed Sunbird gave us superb looks and we also had Little Pied Flycatcher, Black-headed and Rufous-backed Sibias. Both of these have different races here the *kingi* (Black-h S) and *roundi* (Rufous-b S) which is different from the South Vietnamese *robinsoni* and *eximia* respectively. In fact some authors (HBW) suggest that the *kingi* race of the Black-headed Sibia should be split as 'Brownish-backed Sibia' while the *robinsoni* as 'White-spectacled Sibia'. Although looking at the images they have both very strong eye-ring (eye-crescents) but of course *robinsoni* has streaked ear-coverts.



*The robinsoni (top) race (not seen on the extension) and the kingi race (bottom) of the Black-headed Sibia (János Oláh).*

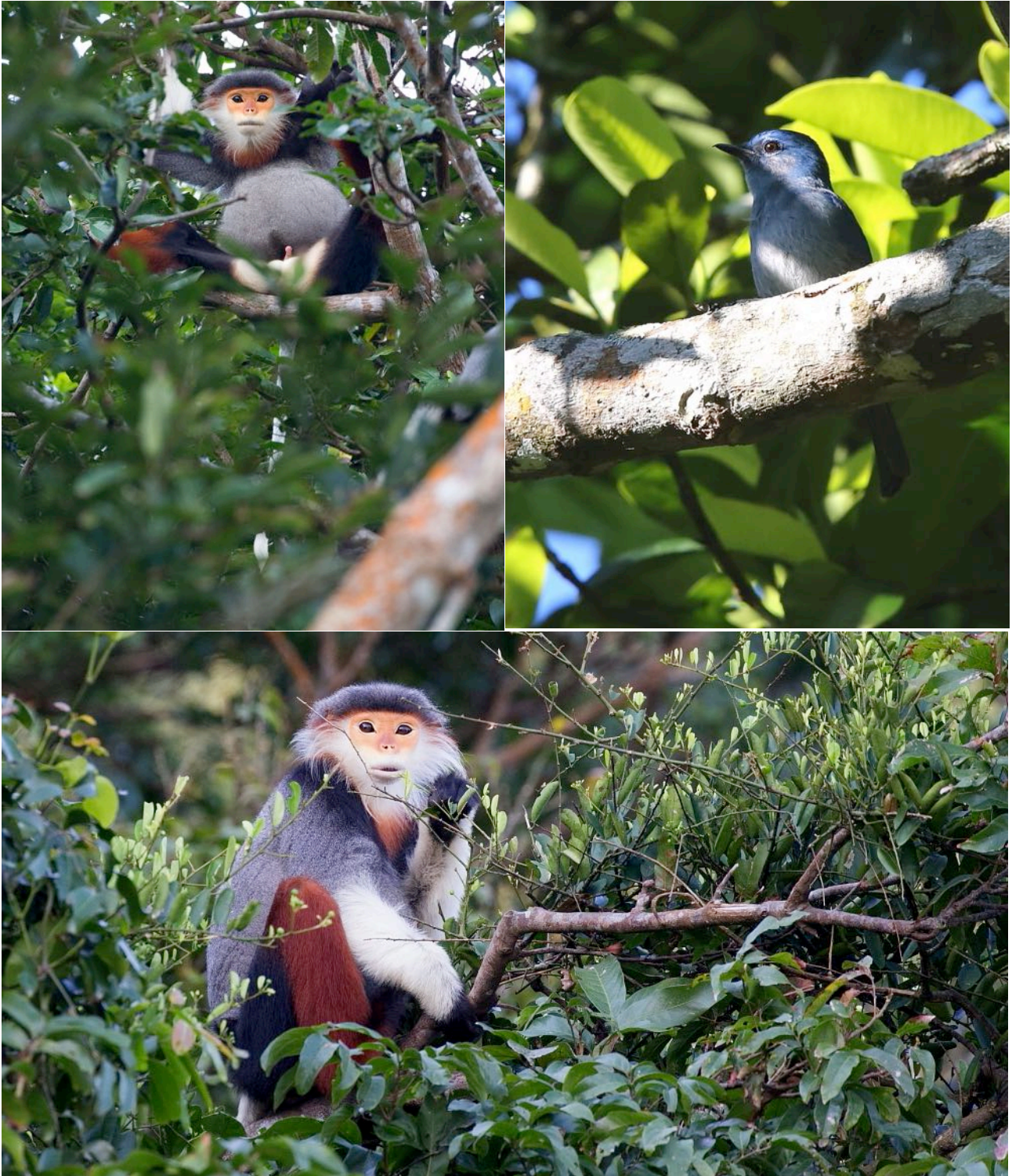




*Displaying Black-crowned Barwings (top) and Green-tailed Sunbird at Ngoc Linh Mountain (János Oláh).*



After lunch we decided to drive to Mang Canh Forest in search for some new birds and areas. We arrived in the late afternoon and there was not much activity but we managed to see Yellow-billed Nuthatch. We still had a few hours the next morning when we got to see Necklaced Barbet, Common Cuckoo, Black-hooded Laughingthrush, Pale Blue Flycatcher, Rufous-faced Warbler and three Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush. It was a clear sky and by midday there was no activity so we started our long drive back to Da Nang. It was well after dark we arrived and settled into a nice hotel. The last morning of the expedition we visited the Son Tra Reserve on the edge of town and had superb looks of the rare and endangered Red-shanked Douc Langurs. This was the final experience and the expedition ended with a flight back to Saigon!



*Pale Blue Flycatcher (right) and Red-shanked Douc Langurs (János Oláh).*





*A pair of Red-tailed Laughingthrush with a heavily scaly breast, probably the vitryi race (János Oláh).*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**CR** = Critically Endangered, **E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). 2017. IOC World Bird List (v 7.2). This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra ([www.igoterra.com](http://www.igoterra.com)) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola* (H) One was heard on Fansipan Mountain [*griseata*].

Mountain Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola fytchii* One was flushed on the lower Fansipan Mountain [*nominata*].

Chinese Pond-heron *Ardeola bacchus* Common on the drives.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Common throughout. See note.

Great Egret (Great White E) *Ardea alba* Several sightings on the drives [*modestus*].

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* One was seen.

Crested Honey-buzzard (Oriental H-B) *Pernis ptilorhyncus* Just one at Mang Canh.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* One was seen at Ngoc Linh Mountain.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* One seen at Fansipan Mountain and one at Ngoc Linh Mountain.

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelli* ♦ Two were seen on the Vuzia River. A rare bird in Vietnam. NT

Rock Pigeon (R Dove) *Columba livia* Common near human habitation throughout.

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Two were seen on the drive back to Da Nang.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* Just one seen on a drive.

Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia* (H) Heard in the Central Highlands [*griseicapilla*].

Asian Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx maculatus* (H) Heard briefly on the Ngoc Linh Mountain [*nominata*].

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* One seen on our drive back to Hanoi [*querulus*].

Large Hawk-cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveriioides* (H) Heard once on the Fansipan Mountain.

Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx nisicolor* (H) Heard at Mang Canh. See note.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* (H) Heard at Mang Canh [*concretus*].

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* One was seen at Mang Canh [*bakeri*].

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) It was heard on the Ngoc Linh Mountain [*nominata*].

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* Two were seen on our way down from Sa Pa [*innominatus*].

Germain's Swiftlet *Aerodramus germani* A few sightings in the Central Highlands. See note.

Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* Two were seen on the way down from Fansipan Mountain.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* About 50 were seen on the Ngoc Linh Mountain [*nominata*].

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* Three were seen on the way down from Fansipan Mountain [*kanoi*].

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Two of the resident race was seen at the Vuzia River [*ferrugineiceps*].

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* One was seen at the Vuzia River.

Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* (H) heard distantly on the lower slopes of Fansipan [*indochinensis*].

Indochinese Barbet (Annam B) ♦ *Psilopogon annamensis* Several seen in the Central Highlands.

Necklaced Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon auricularis* Two seen at Mang Canh. See note.

Red-vented Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon lagrandieri* (H) It was heard at Mang Canh.

Stripe-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos atratus* Just one was seen on the Ngoc Linh Mountain [*vietnamensis*].

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* (H) Several heard but no sightings [*pyrrhotis*].

Blue Pitta ♦ *Pitta cyanea* (H) One was heard briefly at Mang Canh [*nominata*].

Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* It was seen on the way down from Fansipan Mountain [*anthoides*].

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* Three were seen at Mang Canh [*deignani*].

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Seen in central Vietnam [*tricolor*].

Dalat Shrike-babbler (Annam S-b) ♦ *Pteruthius annamensis* (H) Heard distantly in the Central Highlands. See note.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* It was seen in the Central Highlands [*robinsoni*].

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* Small numbers in the Central Highlands [*peracensis*].

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* Two seen at Mang Canh [*styan*].

Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphoe affinis* Nice white males were seen at Mang Canh. See note.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* One was seen briefly on the Fansipan Mountain [*nominata*].

Indochinese Green Magpie ♦ *Cissa hypoleuca* (H) It remained heard only in the Central Highlands [*nominata*].

Ratchet-tailed Treepie ♦ *Temnurus temnurus* (H) Heard in Mang Canh.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* It was seen at Mang Canh. See note.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* Two were seen near Sa Pa [*nominata*].

Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus* It was seen on the Fansipan Mountain and also in Mang Cabh [*rex*].

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* One was seen near Sa Pa [*monticola*].

Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster* One was seen in the Central Highlands [*dolichurus*].

Stripe-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus finlaysoni* Two were seen in the Son Tra Reserve [*eous*].

Flavescent Bulbul *Pycnonotus flavesens* It was seen in the Central Highlands [*vividus*].

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mccllellandii* Small numbers in the Central Highlands [*griseiventer*].



**Black Bulbul (Himalayan B B)** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Widespread in montane areas. See note.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* A very commonly encountered winter visitor.

**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus* We saw a flock near Lao Cai.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Some wintering birds were seen at Ngoc Linh Mountain [*japonica*].

**Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga albiventer* (H) Heard a few time on the Fansipan Mountain [*nominate*].

**Pygmy Wren-Babbler (P Cupwing)** *Pnoepyga pusilla* (H) It was heard in the Central Highlands [*nominate*].

**Rufous-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus albogularis* Four were seen at Mang Canh [*fulvifacies*].

**Black-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus sshiticeps* It was seen on Fansipan [*ripponi*] and on Ngoc Linh too [*not known*].

**Mountain Tailorbird** *Phyllergates cucullatus* Two were seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*coronatus*].

**Grey-bellied Tesia** *Tesia cyaniventer* It was seen on Fansipan and on Ngoc Linh Mountain.

**Chestnut-headed Tesia** *Cettia castaneocoronata* It was seen in bamboo on Fansipan Mountain [*abadiei*].

**Black-thorated Bushtit** ♦ *Aegithalos annamensis* It was seen at Mang Canh [*probably annamensis*]. See note.

**Ashy-throated Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A few seen on Fansipan Mountain [*nominate*].

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Two seen near Sa Pa.

**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* It was common on the Fansipan Mountain [*assamensis*].

**Kloss's Leaf Warbler** ♦ *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti* It was common in the Central Highlands. See note.

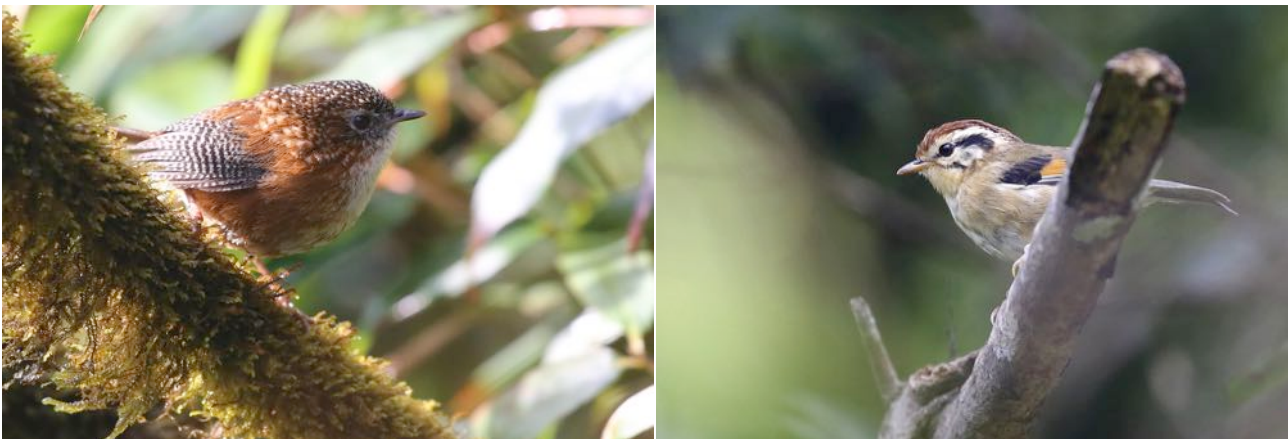
**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** ♦ *Seicercus castaniceps* One was seen near Sa Pa [*sinensis*].

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius* Seen in the Son Tra Reserve [*longicauda*].

**Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler** ♦ *Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps* (H) It was heard at Mang Canh [*dickinsoni*].

**Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus superciliaris* A brief sighting at 2800m on Fansipan [*rothschildi*].

**Bar-winged Wren-Babbler** ♦ *Spelaeornis troglodytoides* Superb looks at this recently discovered unknown race.



Bar-winged Wren-Babbler (left) and Rufous-winged Fulvetta on Fansipan Mountain (János Oláh).

**Pale-throated Wren-Babbler** ♦ *Spelaeornis kinneri* Fantastic views of one on Fansipan Mountain.

**Grey-throated Babbler** *Stachyris nigriceps* (H) Heard in the Central Highlands [*yunnanensis*].

**Golden Babbler** *Stachyridopsis chrysaea* Great looks at Mang Canh [*aurata*].

**Pin-striped Tit-babbler (Striped T B)** *Macronus gularis* It was seen at Son Tra Reserve [*kinneri*].

**Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneiceps* Excellent looks on Fansipan [*exul*] and on Ngoc Linh [*stepanyani*].

**Rusty-capped Fulvetta** *Alcippe dubia* We seen a few on Fansipan [*genestieri*].

**Spot-throated Babbler** ♦ *Pellorneum albiventre* (H) Heard at Mang Canh [*cinnamomeum*].

**Black-hooded Laughingthrush** ♦ *Garrulax millet* Several were seen at Mang Canh [*sweeti*]. **NT**

**Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush** ♦ *Garrulax konkakinhensis* A few brief looks at Mang Canh. **VU**

**Scaly Laughingthrush** ♦ *Trochalopteron subunicolor* (LO) One was seen in the mist on Fansipan [*fooksi*].

**Black-faced Laughingthrush** ♦ *Trochalopteron affine* A few seen on Fansipan [*saturatum*].

**Golden-winged Laughingthrush** ♦ *Trochalopteron ngoclinhense* Wow! Amazing looks on Ngoc Linh. **VU**

**Red-tailed Laughingthrush** ♦ *Trochalopteron milnei* This beautiful bird was seen on Ngoc Linh [*probably vitryi*].

**Blue-winged Minla** ♦ *Minla cyanouroptera* Just one seen in the Central Highlands [*wingatei*].

**Bar-throated Minla** *Minla strigula* (LO) One was seen on Fansipan [*yunnanensis*].

**Black-crowned Barwing** ♦ *Actinodura sodangorum* Superb views of about 20 birds on Ngoc Linh Mountain. **NT**

**Silver-eared Mesia** *Mesia argenteauris* It was heard at Mang Canh [*cunhaci*].



*Rufous-backed Sibia on Ngoc Linh Mountain (János Oláh).*

**Rufous-backed Sibia** ♦ *Heterophasia annectans* Great looks in the Central Highlands [round].

**Black-headed Sibia** ♦ *Heterophasia desgodinsi* Several were seen in the Central Highlands [king].

**White-browed Fulvetta** *Fulvetta vinipectus* We had many excellent looks on the Fansipan [valentinae].

**Indochinese Fulvetta** ♦ *Fulvetta danisi* A pair was seen well on Ngoc Linh. Birdquest lifer [bidoupensis].

**Black-throated Parrotbill** ♦ *Suthora nipalensis* One was seen briefly on Ngoc Linh Mountain [kamoli]. See note.

**Golden Parrotbill** ♦ *Suthora verreauxi* A pair was seen on the Fansipan Mountain [craddocki].

**Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta* Just two were seen at Mang Canh.

**Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis* Just two were seen on the Fansipan Mountain [rouxi].

**Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* It was common on the Fansipan Mountain [nominate].

**White-collared Yuhina** *Yuhina diademata* It was common on the Fansipan Mountain [ampelina].

**Japanese White-eye** *Zosterops japonica* It was common on the Fansipan Mountain [simplex].

**Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus* Just two were seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain [siamensis].

**Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** *Sitta nagaensis* A breeding pair was seen on Fansipan Mountain [montium].

**Yellow-billed Nuthatch** ♦ *Sitta solangiae* A group of three were seen at Mang Canh [fortior]. **NT**

**Siberian Thrush** *Geokichla sibirica* A fine male was seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain with Eye-browed Thrushes.

**Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* About six were seen on a fruiting tree at Ngoc Linh Mountain.

**Oriental Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis* One was seen near Sa Pa [nominate].

**Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui* One was seen singing near Sa Pa.

**Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea* One was seen on the trails at Ngoc Linh Mountain.

**Pale Blue Flycatcher** ♦ *Cyornis unicolor* Two were seen in the Mang Canh area [nominate].

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae* A male was seen below Lo Xo Pass [indochina].

**Small Niltava** *Niltava macgrigoriae* One was seen others heard on Fansipan Mountain [signata].

**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus* Occasional sightings throughout [nominate].

**Lesser Shortwing** *Brachypteryx leucophrys* (H) One was heard at Ngoc Linh Mountain [langbianensis].

**White-browed Bush Robin** *Tarsiger indicus* Two were seen on the higher parts of Fansipan [yunnanensis].

**Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* A pair was seen near Sa Pa.

**Blue Whistling-thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus* One was seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain [eugenei].





*Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher on Ngoc Linh Mountain (János Oláh).*

**Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophilata* Nice looks of one on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*fuscogularis*].  
**Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* A singing male near Sa Pa [*nominata*].  
**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* A male was seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*probably langbianis*].  
**Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Phoenicurus fuliginosa* Several were seen in the Sa Pa area [*nominata*].  
**White-capped Redstart** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* One was seen near Sa Pa.  
**Blue Rock-thrush** *Monticola solitarius* About five on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*philippensis*].  
**Stejneger's Stonechat** *Saxicola stejnegeri* One was seen near Sa Pa. See note.  
**Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea* One was seen on our way down from Fansipan Mountain.  
**Mrs Gould's Sunbird** *Aethopyga gouldiae* Fantastic views at Mang Canh [*unknown*].  
**Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis* Several excellent looks on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*unknown*].  
**Black-throated Sunbird** *Aethopyga saturata* A few were seen at Mang Canh [*ochra*].  
**Streaked Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera magna* One was seen on Ngoc Linh Mountain [*remota*].  
**Eurasian Tree-sparrow** *Passer montanus* Frequently seen around habitation [*malaccensis*].  
**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Many sightings of wintering birds [*leucopsis*].  
**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Just a few were seen at Sa Pa and Ngoc Linh Mountain.  
**Black-headed Greenfinch** *Chloris ambigua* (H) It was heard near Sa Pa [*nominata*].

## MAMMALS

**Stump-tailed Macaque** *Macaca arctoides* A few were seen at Son Tra Reserve last morning.  
**Red-shanked Douc Langur** ♦ *Pygathrix nemaeus* A group of 15 were seen at Bach Ma NP. Stunning!

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird List (v3.1). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org/ioc-lists/master-list/>

### **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*

Some authors lump this form in Western Cattle Egret *B. ibis*, using the name Cattle Egret for the enlarged species.

### **Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo** *Cuculus nasicolor*

A recent study split the former Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo into four species: Northern Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx hyperythrus* (of southeast Siberia, NE China and Japan, wintering in Borneo and, rarely, Sulawesi); Malaysian Hawk-Cuckoo *H. fugax* (resident in southern Peninsular Thailand, Malaya, Sumatra and Borneo); Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo *H. nasicolor* (breeds lower Himalayas from Nepal eastwards and southern China wintering at lower altitudes in the Himalayas and in Malaya, Sumatra, Java and Borneo) and Philippine Hawk-Cuckoo *H. pectoralis* (resident in the Philippines).

### **Germain's Swiftlet** *Collocalia germani*

This form was formerly often lumped in Edible-nest Swiftlet *Aerodramus fuciphaga*.

### **Necklaced Barbet** *Psilopogon auricularis*

Until recently considered conspecific with *P. franklinii*, but split proposed on molecular grounds supported by morphological evidence.

### **Dalat Shrike-Babbler (Annam S-b)** *Pteruthius annamensis*

This form was formerly lumped in White-browed Shrike-babbler *P. flaviscapis*.

### **Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone affinis*

Oriental / Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher is split from Indian [Asian] Paradise Flycatcher. Change of English name to Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher.

### **Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Several recently split species were formerly lumped in this species with the name Large-billed or Jungle Crow being used for the enlarged species.

### **Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

This form was formerly lumped in Madagascar Bulbul *H. madagascariensis*, with the name Black Bulbul being used for the enlarged species. The form *concolor* was seen at most locations.

### **Black-throated (Grey-crowned) Bushtit** *Aegithalos [concinus] annamensis*

Robson (2008) splits this form from Black-throated Bushtit *A. concinnus*.

### **Kloss's Leaf Warbler (White-tailed L W)** *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti*

Following recent molecular studies, this is now considered to be a different species to the monotypic *P. davisoni* (Davison's Leaf-warbler). We saw the *klossi* form on the tour.

### **Black-throated Parrotbill** *Suthora nipalensis*

The race we have recorded on the tour is *kamoli* and together with the *beaulieu* race is a likely future split as Black-eared Parrotbill.

### **Stejneger's Stonechat** *Saxicola stejnegeri*

Split from Siberian Stonechat *S. maurus* according to mtDNA analysis, but may be premature and further resolution of the entire stonechat complex is needed.



## MAMMALS

### **Red-shanked Douc Langur** *Pygathrix nemaeus*

This form is sometimes lumped with Black-shanked Douc Langur *P. nigripes* and Gray-shanked Douc Langur *P. cinerea*, with the name Douc Langur being used for the enlarged species.

## APPENDIX: overall results of the 'Bird of the tour' contest

### Species

- |     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 1st | Golden-winged Laughingthrush |
| 2nd | Red-tailed Laughingthrush    |
| 3rd | Pale-throated Wren-Babbler   |
| 4th | Indochinese Fulvetta         |
| 5th | Black-crowned Barwing        |



*The view from Ngoc Linh Mountain (János Oláh).*