

Fraser's Hill, Malaysia

1-4 October 2007



Silver-eared Mesia

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General

This was a short trip to one of the hill stations in central peninsular Malaysia. As it was part of a family holiday to Kuala Lumpur, I just had the chance of doing three days of birding at Fraser's Hill. Having been to Fraser's Hill in 1991 and to Cameron Highlands in 1986, I was rather target-oriented. I birded only in the mornings and afternoons spending the rest of the time with the family. The birds recorded are therefore not really representative for a regular birding trip.

Highlights

Without doubt the highlight of the trip was the smashing views I had of a male Mountain Peacock-Pheasant, an endemic Pheasant that is seen very irregularly by any birders anywhere. Some birders, including the local birdguide, have even stated that it may be gone from Fraser's Hill. Second key bird was the endemic Malaysian Partridge that conveniently came in to playback very quickly the first morning. The hoped-for Rusty-naped Pitta and Long-billed Partridge, unfortunately ended up as heard only in spite of extensive efforts at least for the Pitta. Another heard-only was a Blue-winged Pitta that probably was on migration. Due to the efforts I made for the Rusty-naped, I ended up with much less time for the Gap than planned.

Itinerary

We arrived at Kuala Lumpur about midnight on 28/9 and spent the first few days at Sunway Resort in Kuala Lumpur. Very few birds were noted.



The Petronas twin towers, once the highest buildings in the world

1/10

We left Sunway Resort in the southwest of Kuala Lumpur in a rental car about 14.00 and arrived at Fraser's Hill 16.45. The weather was cloudy with a light drizzle, so not very welcoming. It did not really get better, as we had pre-booked the Silver Park Resort. This turned out to be a really filthy place with bad smell from the entire hotel, no other people around, the restaurant being closed, etc. Anyway, we checked in and quickly went for an early dinner at Pine Tree Resort. Between 19.00 and 19.30 I birded briefly at the start of Pine Tree Trail and heard the target Long-billed Partridge. It was however, too dark to create any fruitful action. In the evening we had a quick beer at local square and chatted with a visiting birder.

2/10

I started birding along Bishop's Trail between 7.00 and 9.40, by the time I had bagged Malaysian Partridge, but still had no sniff of Rusty-naped Pitta. It was however, time for a late brecky with the family, which turned out to be a disappointment at the Silver Park. The weather was good and we decided to play a round of golf with the kids, as there were no other players around. The court is very nicely situated and birding was possible along the edges with some feeding flocks moving past.

In the afternoon we arranged for a change of hotel and instead moved over to Shanzan Hotel.

By 16.30 I was back at Pine Tree Trail in search of Long-billed Partridge and the faint hope of calling in a Mountain Peacock-Pheasant. Not a sniff of the latter, but a nice duetting pair of the former. However, they did not behave in spite of me sneaking a long way down the slope and trying some playback. By dusk at 19.15 I gave up and returned to the hotel where we had a nice dinner. This was also spiced up with a huge Atlas Moth inside the lobby.

3/10

Previous day I met some Dutch birders that had bumped into a Rusty-naped Pitta at Hemmant's Trail, so that was a natural start of the day. I birded there and along Bishop's Trail for between 7.00 and 10.00. The Pitta proved frustrating and called back four times, but completely refused to show. Same for the Blue-winged Pitta that called for a long time along Bishop's Trail.

During the middle of the day we played golf again and softened around until late afternoon when I went out again. Between 16.00-16.30 I checked Hemmant's Trail, but as there was no sign of the Pitta I decided a quick dash to Pine Tree Trail was due. The Dutch birders had had a glimpse of a Peacock-Pheasant at a spot where I the day before had found some scratching marks on the trail. At 16.40 I was slowly walking down the trail when I suddenly heard the Pheasant calling from nearby. Excitement! I quietly hid behind a log and played the tape, but nothing was happening at all and the bird went silent. It might have come in without me noticing, but after a while I had no option other than checking further down the trail. After about 50 meters, I suddenly saw the male Peacock-Pheasant right out on the trail. He did not see me, so I could admire him for at least 30 seconds while he was slowly walking away from me and finally disappearing around the corner. Wow!

By 17.20 I was thus back at Hemmant's Trail and around 18.15 the Pitta call 20+ times from the slope above me, again without showing at all. I stayed until dusk at 19.00 without any further action.

4/10

This morning was planned to see me at the Gap, but as the Rusty-naped Pitta was still lurking at Hemmant/s Trail, I decided to give it a last try between 6.40 and 7.30. This morning I did not even hear it. Dip! I returned to the hotel and together we drove downhill to the Gap, where I birded from KM 3 down to the junction until 10.00. No major discoveries and we left for Kuala Lumpur, where we arrived at Sunway Resort at 13.30.

Coming back from Fraser's Hill, we spent another couple of days at Sunway Resort in Kuala Lumpur before flying back to Beijing in the evening of 6/10

Weather

The weather was mostly fine and dry. In Kuala Lumpur we had a couple of very short showers and the first afternoon at Fraser's Hill was misty and with a bit of very light rain.

Site descriptions

Fraser's Hill is well described in many bird trip reports and needs no further presentation.



Birds

Crested Serpent-Eagle, *Spilornis cheela malayensis*

One along the highway north of Kuala Lumpur and one heard at the Gap.

Sparrowhawk sp, *Accipiter* sp

One at Fraser's Hill could have been a Crested Goshawk.

Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, *Spizaetus alboniger*

Four sightings of most likely this species at Fraser's Hill and one below the Gap.

Long-billed Partridge, *Rhizothera longirostris longirostris*

One duetting pair was heard on two consecutive evenings at the start of Pine Tree Trail at Fraser's Hill. First evening they called around 19.00 and the second evening around 18.15. In spite of my efforts walking down the slope trying some playback, there was not a sniff of them.

Malaysian Partridge, *Arborophila [orientalis] campbelli*

At least one pair heard duetting at Bishop's Trail at Fraser's Hill and then called in and showed extremely well when they walked past me at 7 meters. One duetting pair was heard a short way in on Hemmant's Trail at 7.15 in the morning. This taxon is often treated as a species separate from the other taxa on Sumatra and Java.

Mountain Peacock-Pheasant, *Polyplectron inopinatum*
One male calling at 16.45 and 20 minutes later seen on the trail for 30 seconds at 17.05 about 300-350 meters down Pine Tree Trail. Mega!

Zebra Dove, *Geopelia striata*
A few at Kuala Lumpur.

Little Cuckoo-Dove, *Macropygia ruficeps malayana*
Two at Fraser's Hill.

Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula badia badia*
Two heard at Hemmant's and Bishop's Trails.

Mountain Scops-Owl, *Otus spilocephalus vulpes*
Three heard at Fraser's Hill.

Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei brodiei*
One heard at Bishop's Trail, one heard at Hemmant's Trail and one heard near the Gap.

Glossy Swiftlet, *Coolocalia esculenta cyanoptila*
Common at Fraser's Hill.

Black/Edible-nest Swiftlet, *Aerodramus maximus/fuciphagus*
50 at Kuala Lumpur.

House Swift, *Apus nipalensis subfurcatus*
A few at Fraser's Hill and a few at Kuala Lumpur.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater, *Merops philippinus*
One between the Gap and Fraser's Hill and 50+ in smaller flocks, apparently migrating, at Fraser's Hill.

Rhinoceros Hornbill, *Buceros rhinoceros rhinoceros*
Heard once at the Gap.

Fire-tufted Barbet, *Psilopogon pyrolophus*
Common at Fraser's Hill.

Black-browed Barbet, *Megalaima oorti oorti*
Three heard at Fraser's Hill.

Greater Yellownape, *Picus flavinucha wrayi*
One pair at Bishop's Trail at Fraser's Hill.

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis cameroni*
One heard at Pine Tree Trail at Fraser's Hill.

Rusty-naped Pitta, *Pitta oatesi deborah*
One heard at the start of Hemmant's Trail at Fraser's Hill. It called four times in response to tape at 7.15 and 20+ times at 18.15, but refused to give itself up.

Blue-winged Pitta, *Pitta moluccensis*
One heard calling half-way along Bishop's Trail in mid morning.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica ssp*
A few between Kuala Lumpur and Fraser's Hill. Many unidentified hirundines encountered.

Pacific Swallow, *Hirundo tahitica javanica*
Common at Fraser's Hill and around Kuala Lumpur.

Asian House-Martin, *Delichon dasypus dasypus*
A few at Fraser's Hill.

Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*
A few at Fraser's Hill.

Javan Cuckoo-shrike, *Ciracina javensis*
Two at the golf course at Fraser's Hill.

Yellow-vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotis goiavier personatus*
A few at Kuala Lumpur.

Lesser Shortwing, *Brachypteryx leucophrys wrayi*
Three heard at Bishop's Trail at Fraser's Hill.

Common Tailorbird, *Orthotomus sutorius maculicollis*
One at the Gap.

- Rufous-browed Flycatcher, *Ficedula solitaria malayana*
Five at Bishop's Trail at Fraser's Hill.
- Little Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula westermanni westermanni*
One at the golf course at Fraser's Hill.
- Large Niltava, *Niltava grandis decipiens*
Two at Hemmant's Trail at Fraser's Hill.
- Pygmy Blue Flycatcher, *Muscicapella hodgsoni sondaica*
One male at Bishop's Trail at Fraser's Hill.
- Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis calochrysea*
One heard at Fraser's Hill.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin, *Copsychus saularis musicus*
Two in Kuala Lumpur and several at Fraser's Hill and the Gap.
- White-tailed Robin, *Cinclidium leucurum leucurum*
One at Hemmant's Trail at Fraser's Hill.
- Chestnut-naped Forktail, *Enicurus rufocapillus*
One at the Gap.
- Slaty-backed Forktail, *Enicurus schistaceus*
One between the Gap and Fraser's Hill.
- White-throated Fantail, *Rhipidura albicollis atrata*
Several at Fraser's Hill.
- Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush, *Garrulax mitratus major*
Several groups at Fraser's Hill.
- Pygmy Wren-Babbler, *Pnoepyga pusilla harterti*
Two heard at Bishop's Trail and one heard at Silver Park Resort at Fraser's Hill.
- Golden Babbler, *Stachyris chrysaea chrysops*
Three at Fraser's Hill.
- Silver-eared Mesia, *Leiothrix argentauris tahanensis*
Several small flocks at Fraser's Hill.
- Blue-winged Minla, *Minla cyanouroptera sordidior*
Five at Fraser's Hill.
- Mountain Fulvetta, *Alcippe peracensis peracensis*
Several at Fraser's Hill.
- Long-tailed Sibia, *Heterophasia picaoides wrayi*
Two at Bishop's Trail and five at the Smokehouse at Fraser's Hill.



Long-tailed Sibia

- Blue Nuthatch, *Sitta azurea expectata*
Two at the golf course at Fraser's Hill.

- Olive-backed Sunbird, *Cinnyris jugularis ornatus*
One in Kuala Lumpur.
- Black-throated Sunbird, *Aethopyga saturate wrayi*
Four at Fraser's Hill.
- Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna magna*
Several at Fraser's Hill.
- Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum cruentatum ignitum*
One in Kuala Lumpur.
- Everett's White-eye, *Zosterops everetti tahanensis*
Five at Fraser's Hill.
- Black-naped Oriole, *Oriolus chinensis diffusus*
One in Kuala Lumpur.
- Black-and-crimson Oriole, *Oriolus cruentus malayanus*
One pair at the golf course at Fraser's Hill.
- Tiger Shrike, *Lanius tigrinus*
One at the Gap.



Tiger Shrike

- Bronzed Drongo, *Dicrurus aeneus ssp*
One at Bishop's Trail.
- Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus remifer peracensis*
Several at Fraser's Hill.
- House Crow, *Corvus splendens ssp*
Common in Kuala Lumpur.
- Large-billed Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos macrorhynchos*
A few at Fraser's Hill.
- Asian Glossy Starling, *Aplonis panayensis strigata*
Common around Kuala Lumpur.
- Jungle Myna, *Acridotheres fuscus torquatus*
A few north of Kuala Lumpur.
- Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis tristis*
Common in Kuala Lumpur.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus malaccensis*
Common in Kuala Lumpur.
- White-rumped Munia, *Lonchura striata subsquamicollis*
A few at Fraser's Hill.