

Bird Watching in Cambodia: 10-Day Tours

Rare Bird Itinerary in Cambodia

This 10-day itinerary combines Cambodia's remarkable biodiversity with its cultural heritage, offering an unforgettable birdwatching adventure.

Cambodia, with its diverse ecosystems, stunning landscapes, and rich avian biodiversity, is a paradise for birdwatching enthusiasts. The country is home to more than 644 bird species, including several rare and endangered ones, making it an ideal destination for an immersive 10-day birdwatching trip.

Site: Siem Reap - Prek Toal – Ang Trapaeng Thmor- Florican Grasslands – Tmatboey – Kratie - Phnom Penh Cambodian Tailorbird.

Day 1: Arrival in Siem Reap and Birding Near Siem Reap

Day 2: Full Day Birding At Angkor Complex

Day 3: full day birding at Prek Toal Waterbird Sanctuary (overnight at Siem Reap)

Day 4: full day birding at Ang Trapeang Thmor Sarus Crane (overnight at Siem Reap)

Day 5: AM birding at Florican Grassland, PM birding and overnight at Be Treed Adventure

Day 6 Full Bird at Be Treed Adventure

Day 7: AM birding at Be Treed, PM Birding and overnight at Tmatboey

Day 8: full day birding at Tmatboey (overnight at Tmatboey lodge)

Day 9: AM birding at Tmatboey, PM birding and overnight at Kratie

Day 10: AM visiting the Mekong dolphin, PM birding the Cambodian Tailorbird, and overnight at Phnom Penh

Our Cambodia bird tour focuses on finding as many of the special birds of Cambodia, including mega world birds like: Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, Sarus Crane, Bengal Florican, Sarus Crane Greater Adjutant, Milky Stork, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Mekong Wagtail, Small Pratincole, Asian Golden Weaver, Cambodian Tailorbird, Spot-billed Pelican, White-rumped Falcon, Great Slaty Woodpecker, Black-headed Woodpecker, and Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Oriental Scops Owl, Spotted Wood Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Brown Fish Owl

Day 1: Arrival in Siem Reap

Arrive in Cambodia's bustling capital, AM or PM, Siem Reap. Spend the day acclimatizing and visiting local attractions like the Phnom Kroom or Chrev. In the evening, prepare for your birdwatching adventure by meeting your guide for a briefing.

Day 2: Siem Reap and Angkor Wat

Combine culture and birding as you explore the Angkor Wat complex and its surrounding forests.

Keep an eye out for species like the Forest Wagtail, White-throated Rock Thrush, Hainan blue flycatcher, Asian Barred Owlet, and Black Baza. The ancient temples offer an enchanting backdrop for birdwatching.

Day 3: Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

Prek Toal, a world-renowned bird sanctuary on the Tonle Sap Lake. Explore the sanctuary by boat and spot rare species. Look for the Oriental Darter, Painted Stork, Milky Stork, Greater Adjutant, Lesser Adjutant, Egrets, Heron, Ibis, Cormorants, and Spot-billed Pelican. These floodplains are also crucial habitats for migratory birds. Stay overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 4: Ang Trapeang Thmor

Head to Ang Trapeang Thmor, a wetland sanctuary northwest of Siem Reap. This area is a stronghold for the endangered Sarus Crane, Spotted Wood Owl, Greater Spotted Eagle, Eastern Marsh Harrier, Pied Harrier, Black Kite, Gray-headed Swamphen, and other wetland birds like the Comb Duck. Stay overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 5: BeTreed Adventure and Bengal Florican Grasslands

Visit the grasslands near Kampong Thom, one of the few remaining habitats for the critically endangered Bengal Florican, Sarus Crane, and Manchurian Reed Warbler. The open grasslands also attract raptors like the Eastern Marsh Harrier and storks, egrets, and more than 60 species of birds have been found over there.

In the late afternoon, we will check into the BeTreed homestay and local guide. After lunch and rest, join your guide for an introductory birding walk along forest trails. The dry forest is home to Siamese Fireback, Green Peafowl, Greater Yellownappe woodpecker, Burmese Shrike, Asian Barred Owlet, Rufous Treepie, and flocks of bulbuls and Drongos. As dusk falls, listen for the haunting calls of collared scops owls and perhaps spotlight nocturnal species such as nightjars or a rare brown wood owl. Dinner is served at the eco-lodge, prepared with local ingredients. Overnight in your jungle lodge, lulled by the sounds of cicadas and distant gibbon songs.

Day 6: Full day Birding at BeTreed Adventure

All day bird watching at BeTreed, BeTreed Adventures is a remote ecotourism homestay situated in Preah Vihear Province, inside the Phnom Thnot Phnom Pok Wildlife Sanctuary. It's about 2-3 hours by road from Bengal Florican Grassland. This intimate off-grid site helps conserve 42,000+ hectares of dry dipterocarp forest and offers support for local community conservation efforts. Trekking to the varied habitats from Dry to Evergreen Forest, taking a challenging hike to the top of the mountain, and exploring the Angkorian era "cave-temples.

Wake up before sunrise for coffee and depart on a dawn birdwatching trek. Early morning is the most active period for birds: look for White-browed Fantail, Scarlet Minivet, Asian Paradise

Flycatcher, Blossom-headed Parakeet, and flocks of woodpeckers tapping on old dipterocarp trunks. Lucky observers may encounter the Crested Serpent Eagle circling overhead or hear the deep calls of the Banded Broadbill hidden in the canopy.

After breakfast back at the lodge, continue with a longer hike into the core forest. The mixed habitat of bamboo groves, grassland patches, and rocky outcrops provides chances to see Indochinese Bushlark, Rufous-winged Buzzard, Common Iora, Brown Prinia, and the Blue-winged Pitta during migration months. Return to camp for lunch and siesta in a hammock. In the afternoon, take a forest edge trail leading to Prasat Preah Puol, an Angkor-era temple ruin reclaimed by trees. Along the way, keep binoculars ready for Green Peafowl displaying, Lineated Barbet, and Hainan Blue Flycatcher.

As evening approaches, climb the viewpoint ridge or try the zipline crossing: both offer spectacular panoramas and good chances for raptors such as Oriental Honey Buzzard and Shikra. After sunset, join a short night walk for possible sightings of owls, nightjars, and even civets. Night at BeTreed eco-treehouse or stilt house

Day 7, Be Treed adventure – Tmatboey - Giant ibis

Rise early once more for a final dawn birdwatching walk, targeting species you may have missed. Dry forests often reward patient birders: Black-headed Woodpecker, White-rumped Shama, Velvetfronted Nuthatch, and winter visitors like Taiga Flycatcher are frequently encountered. This is also a good time to hear gibbons calling across the valley, a magical soundtrack to end your stay.

Return to the lodge for breakfast, pack your belongings, and bid farewell to the conservation team. Depart late morning for Tmatboey Giant Ibis. The drive takes about 2-3 hours to reach Tmatboey, passing through rural farmland and small Khmer villages.

When we arrive at Tmatboey and meet our local guide at 3:30 PM, we head into the surrounding dry deciduous forest, one of Southeast Asia's rarest ecosystems. Local guides know the seasonal waterholes where ibises often feed. Target species include: Giant Ibis – Cambodia's national bird, Critically Endangered, and the star of Tmatboey, White-shouldered Ibis – another globally threatened species. Other sightings may include the Black-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Burmese Shrike, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Rufous-winged Buzzard, and Lesser Adjutant. At 6 PM, return to the lodge and enjoy dinner back at the lodge. Optional night spotlighting may reveal Collared Scops Owl, Spotted Owlet, Large-tailed Nightjar, or even Barn Owl around the clearing. Overnight at Tmatboey Eco-Lodge.

Day 8: Full Birding Day: Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis & Forest Specialists

Wake before sunrise with coffee/tea and set out on foot or by ox-cart with your guides. Your destination: seasonal wetlands and forest clearings where the Giant Ibis feeds at dawn. With luck, you may watch Cambodia's national bird foraging in a shallow pond—an unforgettable experience. After breakfast in the field, continue birding along dry forest trails. This habitat is excellent for

species of woodpeckers, Brown Wood Owl, Spotted Wood Owl, Brown Fish Owl, Blossom-headed Parakeet, White-browed Fantail, Common Flameback, Large Cuckooshrike, and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch. Return to the lodge for lunch and a midday rest. In the afternoon, visit another site where White-shouldered Ibis often gather, as well as areas supporting Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Green Bee-eater, Blue-winged Pitta (in migration months), and Siamese Fireback. Evening birding walks near the village, with a chance of spotting Collared Scops Owl, Barn Owl, or even a Largetailed Nightjar at dusk. Dinner and overnight at Tmatboey Eco-lodge.

Accommodation: Tmatboey Eco-lodge

Day 9 – Morning Birding & Departure

After our final morning at Tmat Boey, we travel to the small town of Kratie. The journey takes around 5-6 hours, and we will stop at Presh Vihear town for lunch. We will stop at a small marsh near Kratie in the late afternoon, where we should see large numbers of weavers, including Grey-headed Swamphen, Oriental Reed Warbler, Asian Golden and Baya Weaver, and other wetland birds, and sometimes you will have a chance to see Small Pratincole flying over the rice fields. Overnight at the hotel in Kratie.

Day 10 Kratie – Phnom Penh (Cambodian Tailorbird focus)

Kratie is a province located in the northeast of Cambodia, with the Mekong River running across the province for approximately 140km. This river is the home of Irrawaddy dolphins, fish, and birds. It will take about 30 minutes from Kratie town to Kapi, where we will spot the Mekong Wagtail and the Irrawaddy Dolphins. We spent about 2 or 4 hours on the boat observing that the Mekong Wagtail usually feeds on small islands in the Mekong River. The main target birds on the Mekong River are: Mekong Wagtail, Small Pratincole, Grey-throated Martin, Golden-bellied Gerygone, Indian spot-billed duck, Yellow-bellied Prinia, and Dusky Warbler. On the way back to the mainland, we will sometimes see Irrawaddy dolphins show up near our boat.

After spending a full morning at Kratie, we will continue moving to Phnom Penh to look for the one final star species along the way to Phnom Penh City. The Cambodian Tailorbird, which is a new endemic species that was found in Cambodia in the year 2009, in the outskirts of Phnom Penh city, during avian influenza checks. We will then transfer to Phnom Penh Airport or a hotel for departure, where we will bid each other goodbye.

Tour Details: premium packages

Tour Cost: 3235\$ per person

Single Supplement: 100\$ (Note: single accommodation is available at Siem Reap, Kratie, and Phnom Penh. However, it will probably not be available at Tmat Boey and Be Treed Adventure.

Included in the tour cost: All transport including airport transfers, road tolls, national park and reserve entry fees, all accommodation in Cambodia including on the final night of the tour, vulture restaurant fees, all meals from dinner on the first night to breakfast on the day of departure, bottled drinking water, boat trips, services of English-speaking birding guide and Local guide.

Not included in the tour cost: International flights, travel insurance, entry visa, alcoholic and soft drinks, tips, laundry, hotel mini bar, phone calls, and any other items of a personal nature.

Accommodation: In Siem Reap, we stay in a very comfortable hotel with air-conditioning, private bathroom/shower, and wifi. At several sites, we stay in simple tented camps where there are shared toilet/shower facilities. Our stay at Tmatboey will be in a local eco lodge that has simple private shower/toilet facilities with fans in the rooms. At Siem Reap, Kratei, and Phnom Penh, we stay in comfortable, air-conditioned local hotels where wifi is available. Finally, we stay in a hotel in the city of Phnom Penh, where all facilities are available.

Physical effort: This trip does not require any great physical effort in terms of long uphill hikes, but does require that participants are fit enough to walk, sometimes for 3-4 kilometres in hot conditions. The walking is mostly on a flat landscape, but some walking on even ground is needed to search for many key species. The physical effort required is well within the capabilities of most healthy people with the ability to deal with tropical climates.

Weather: Hot and dry weather is expected throughout this tour. There is always the possibility of a shower or two, given the world's changing climate, but it is likely to be dry most, if not all, of the time. Midday temperatures are likely to be very hot, but most of the woodland sites we visit have low humidity. Wetland sites, however, can be fairly humid by their very nature. The tour has been paced so that we have plenty of time and are not forced to be birding throughout the heat of the day to see most of the birds.

Food: Khmer cuisine is similar to most Southeast Asian cooking, but rather less spicy. The traditional cuisine of the country is recovering after much of the knowledge being lost through the years of war here, but staff at the lodges we visit cook a wide variety of good local food. The former French influence is evident in the fact that good bread is readily available in many areas, and for those who prefer beer, there is a surprisingly wide range of local brews to try.