

Bird Watching Itinerary in Cambodia: 14-Day Tours

Rare Bird Itinerary in Cambodia

This 14-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 14-day birdwatching trip.

Site: Siem Reap - Prek Toal – Ang Trapaeng Thmor- Florican Grasslands - BeTreed – Tmatboey – Vulture Restaurant - Kratie – Pursat_ 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: Full Birding at Chang Kran Roy, night in Changkran Roey Camp

Day 6: Full day bird at Chang Kran Roey, night in Siem Reap

Day 7: AM birding at Florican Grassland, PM birding and overnight at Be Treed Adventure

Day 8 Full Bird at Be Treed Adventure

Day 9: AM birding at Be Treed, PM Birding and overnight at Tmatboey

Day 10: full day birding at Tmatboey (overnight at Tmatboey lodge)

Day 11: AM birding at Tmatboey, PM birding and overnight at Vulture Restaurant,

Day 12: AM birding at Vulture restaurant, PM birding and overnight at Kratie

Day 13: AM birding at Kratie, PM birding and overnight at Pursat- Grassbird

Day 14: AM birding at Pursat Grassbird, PM birding at Cambodian Tailorbird, and overnight at Phnom Penh

Day 15: Full day city tours and transfer to Phnom Penh airport

Our Cambodia bird tour focuses on finding as many of the special birds of Cambodia, including mega world birds like: **Pale-capped Pigeon, Coral-billed ground cuckoo, Bar-bellied pitta, Yellow-breasted bunting, Asian golden weaver, Great slaty woodpecker, Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, Greater Adjutant, Black-headed Woodpecker, Milky Stork, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Mekong Wagtail, Cambodian Tailorbird, Spot-billed Pelican, Red-headed Vulture, White-rumped vulture, Slender-billed vulture, Indochinese bush lark, Manchurian reed warbler, Javan pond heron, Grey-headed fish eagle, Eastern marsh harrier, Pied harrier, Greater spotted eagle, Rufous-winged buzzard, Alexandrine parakeet, Blossom-headed parakeet, Bengal Florican, Chinese Grassbird, Sarus Crane, White-rumped Falcon, Great Slaty Woodpecker, Spotted wood owl, Brown wood owl, Brown fish owl, Asian barred owlet, Spotted owlet, Brown boobook, Oriental scops owl, Collared scops owl, Oriental bay 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 Kroam 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, Hinan 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 - Sarus Crane

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 Swamphe, and other wetland birds like the Comb Duck. Stay overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 5 Siem Reap to Chong Kran Roy

By the early morning, leave from Siem Reap Town heading to Chong Kran Roy, we will start travelling towards our next birding site of Chong Kran Roy, where we will stay in a tented camp. In the late afternoon, we visit a hide set up at an area that attracts birds, with Bar-bellied Pitta, Coral-billed ground cuckoo, Siamese fireback, and Siberian blue robin being the birds we most hope to see here. Along with this prize, we also hope to see a Green-legged partridge and an Orange-breasted trogon, all species that are very hard to see under normal circumstances. Commoner birds here include Black-naped Monarch, Green-eared Barbet, Lineated Barbet, Puff-throated Babbler, and Hinan Blue Flycatcher, Gray-eyed Bulbul.

Day 6, Chong Kran Roy to Siem Reap

In the early morning, we revisit the hide to give us another chance to see the key species that visit, including Bar-bellied Pitta and Siberian Blue Robin. Waiting for the birds to come is a nice way to start the morning with other species we might expect, including Red Junglefowl and Emerald Dove. We plan to spend most of the day in the woodlands here with plenty of different species to look for. Spending the whole morning in the forest, birds like Thick-billed Green Pigeon, Green-eared Barbet, and Asian Fairy Bluebird can be expected on any fruiting trees. The list of possibilities is quite long,

and although we only have a short time at this location, it is a good time to be here with many species vocal as the breeding season gets into full swing. With that in mind, we should have a decent chance at finding Banded Broadbill, the funny little Heart-spotted Woodpecker, or even Banded Kingfisher. Bring all your luck charms, keep your fingers crossed, and there could even be the possibility of the Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo, as this is its most vocal time of the year.

By mid-afternoon, we will begin the drive back to our hotel at Siem Reap, arriving in plenty of time to have a shower and relax a bit before dinner.

Day 7: 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 Yellownape 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 8: 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 Tnout 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 9, 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, Velvet-fronted 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 10: 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 Large-tailed Nightjar at dusk. Dinner and overnight at Tmatboey Eco-lodge. Accommodation: Tmatboey Eco-lodge

Day 9 – Morning Birding Tmatboey & Departure

If there are still any key species that we are searching for, we can use a final few hours on our last morning at Tmat Boey. If local guides have discovered a roosting tree, we might be lucky enough to experience the sight and sound of the Giant Ibis as it wakes at its roost tree, if we have not already been amazed by this prehistoric scene.

After our final morning at Tmat Boey, we will move to the small town (Dung Plet Village) of Boeng Toal Vultures Restaurant. By mid-morning, we will transfer to the Vulture restaurant at Boeg Toal, where food for the vultures will have been pre-organized to be provided at the right time for our visit. After doing some birding around the camp, which is a great location for Yellow-crowned Woodpecker and White-browed Fantail, we will visit the large hide constructed for vulture-viewing, where we hope to see several species loafing in the trees nearby if not already feeding on a carcass. Overnight camping in the forest.

Day 12, Boeng Toal (Vulture Restaurant) to Kratei Mekong Wagtail

Birdwatching at the Vulture Restaurant in northern Cambodia is one of the most unusual and rewarding wildlife experiences in Southeast Asia. Unlike many birding sites where the focus is on forest songbirds or waterbirds, here the highlight is the chance to see three species of critically endangered vultures—the White-rumped Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, and Red-headed Vulture all in one place. The “restaurant” is not for people but for birds. It is a conservation project run by the local community in Dongphlet village (Preah Vihear Province) with support from NGOs such as WCS. Since natural carrion has become scarce due to habitat loss, hunting, and declining wild ungulates, villagers organize controlled feedings by placing carcasses in a forest clearing. This attracts large numbers of vultures that can feed safely, while visitors watch from a discreet hide. The entrance fees and visitor support provide vital income for the community and a direct incentive to protect these globally threatened species. Visiting birders pay for a cow with which to feed the birds, which will hopefully result in close-up sightings of Red-headed, Slender-billed, and White-rumped Vultures viewed from within a hide. Watching these endangered birds should be a very memorable experience and one that presents some great photo opportunities. Some other raptors or mammals may come to join the feeding frenzy, but seeing some of Asia’s most endangered raptors will make for some exciting birding.

After our final morning at Vulture restaurant, we will continue to Kratie, nestled alongside the Mekong River. The journey takes around 4 hours, and we will stop in Stung Treng for lunch. The hotel we stay in here is very pleasant with good facilities, and it is in front of the Mekong River, which will be nice after some of the more rustic accommodations over the last few days. On the same day, late afternoon, After we check in the hotel and then We will proceed to marsh near Kratie in the late afternoon, where we should see large numbers of weavers, including Grey-headed Swamphen, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Brown-winged Jacanas Oriental Reed Warbler, Asian Golden and Baya Weaver, Golden-headed Cisticola, Yellow-bellied prinia, Dusky Warbler, and other wetland birds, and sometimes you will have a chance to see Small Pratincole flying over the rice fields.

We spent just one night in our hotel in Kratei.

Day 13 Kratie – Pursat for Chinese Grassbird

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 3 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. And then continue to Pursat Grassland for the Chinese Grassbird and other wetland birds.

Day 14, Pursat to Phnom Penh

On our final morning of birding in Cambodia, we will wake up very early to bring breakfast in the field in the Pursat grasslands. Locals in this area are part of a new conservation project to protect the grasslands and their key species, which are the Chinese Grassbird and Yellow-breasted Bunting. This poorly-known and cryptic species has a very patchy and thinly-spread distribution throughout Asia, having been wiped out because of habitat loss in many places. A population was discovered near Pursat a few years ago, and by being out in the right habitat in the early morning, we have an excellent chance of observing at least one Chinese Grassbird.

In addition, we have a chance of finding small groups of critically endangered species, the Yellow-breasted Bunting. These grasslands provide an important wintering habitat and, as such, they add another dimension to the importance of conservation here. We also have another chance to see as well as other key species such as Manchurian Reed Warbler, Asian Golden Weavers, which should be performing a pre-migration song by now. Striated Grassbird, Oriental Pratincole, Red Avadavat, and the stunning Pied Harrier are also likely here.

After lunch, we will begin to drive back towards the capital city, Phnom Penh, with one final star species to look for along the way again. The Cambodian Tailorbird is not uncommon in the right habitat, and there will be several places for us to stop to see it before we get to our hotel in Phnom Penh city. For overnight in Phnom Penh. The next day, we will transfer to Phnom Penh Airport or a hotel for departure, where we will bid each other goodbye.

Tour Details

Tour Cost: 3560\$ per person

Single Supplement: 350\$ (Note: single accommodation is available at Siem Reap, Kratie, and Phnom Penh. However, it will probably not be available at Be Treed Adventure, Tmat Boey.

Included in the tour cost: All transport including airport transfers, road tolls, national park and all reserve entry fees, all accommodation in Cambodia, including on the final night of the tour, 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 Temple Tours 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, our stay at Thmat Boey and BeTreed Adventure will be in a local eco lodge that has simple private shower/toilet facilities with fans in the rooms. At Kratei, 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 2-5 kilometres in hot conditions. The walking is mostly on a flat landscape, but some walking on even ground is needed to search for some 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.

Note: Other things to bring: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent, and binoculars.