

Birdwatching for Beginners

Are you a fan of nature's beautiful flying creatures? If so, there is nothing more enticing and spellbinding than birdwatching! As such, we would like to introduce you to the world of birdwatching if you haven't been inducted already.

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned birdwatching veteran, all are welcome, and there's no better place to start than at Kinta Nature Park!

Emergency Contact List

Perak Police Station	999	Ipoh Ambulance	05 522 2506
Perak Police Department	05 245 1072	Perak Bomba Contact	994
Operator	05 245 1222	Ipoh – Jalan Kompleks Sultan	05 547 4444
Batu Gajah	05 366 2222	Ipoh – Simpang Pulai	05 257 4444
Gerih	05 791 2222	Ipoh – Bandar Meru Raya	05 526 4444
Teluk Intan	05 622 1222	Ipoh-Lahat	05 322 9549
Ipoh	05 245 1500	Batu Gajah	05 366 4444
Kampar	05 465 2222	Gopeng	05 359 4444
Kerian	05 721 5222	Kampar	05 466 4444
Kuala Kangsar	05 776 2222	Sungai Siput	05 598 2444
Manjung	05 688 5222	Kuala Kangsar	05 776 4444
Mainn Kg Ache	05 691 2361	Taiping – Jalan Panggong Wayang	05 808 4444
Penghalan Hulu	04 4778222	Taiping – Kamunting	05 891 2322
Parit	05 377 1222	Bagan Serai	05 721 5444
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Sungai Siput	05 598 2222	Selama	05 839 4444
Taiping	05 829 1222	Lenggong	05 767 7444
Tanjong Malim	05 452 8222	Gerih	05 791 1444
Tapah	05 401 1222	Penghalan Hulu	05 477 8344
Perak General Hospital	993	Seri Manjung	05 688 4444
Hospital Slim River	05 452 6467	Sitiawan	05 691 4444
Hospital Tapah	05 401 1333	Pulau Pangkor	05 685 1144
Hospital Teluk Intan	05 621 3333	Pantai Remis	05 677 1444
Hospital Gerih	05 791 1533	Parit	05 377 1444
Hospital Parit Buntar	05 716 3333	Seri Isbandar	05 371 2024
Hospital Batu Gajah	05 366 3333	Tapah	05 401 1444
Hospital Kampar	05 465 3333	Bidor	05 434 0444
Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun Ipoh	05 208 5000	Slim River	05 452 8444
Hospital Kuala Kangsar	05 776 3333	Tanjong Malim	05 459 6444
Hospital Sungai Siput	05 598 3333	Teluk Intan	05 622 1444
Hospital Selama	05 839 4223	Hutan Melintang	05 641 4444
Hospital Taiping	05 808 3333	Ayer Tawar	05 672 7444
Hospital Seri Manjung	05 688 1333	Batu Kurau	05 888 1844
Hospital Changkat Melintang	05 376 1333		
Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta	05 533 2333		

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THE LAND OF GRACE perak Kinta Nature Park A Bird's Paradise

A Paradise for Birds

Visited by thousands of bird enthusiasts every year, Kinta Nature Park (locally known as Taman Alam Kinta) is Perak's third state-gazetted park after Royal Belum State Park and Pulau Sembilan. Here's a fun fact: the park is made up of old tin-mining ponds! At close to 900 hectares in total, the park can be found at Kampung Pisang in Batu Gajah. Another fascinating thing about this park is that it is a sanctuary to 1,381 aquatic birds that belong to 150 species coexisting harmoniously. Today, Kinta Nature Park is known to be one of the largest heronries in Malaysia where you will find five species of herons and egrets. These include the grey heron, black-crowned night heron and cattle egret.

ALAM KINTA

A Paradise for Birds

A hidden sanctuary right by Ipoh, Kinta Nature Park is a relaxing and awe-inspiring way to spend your day. If you're looking to discover a hidden paradise dedicated to the beautiful birds and wildlife found in the area, borne of destruction and cultivated by nature into a blooming ecosystem that is so unique, then head to Kinta Nature Park after you're done visiting all the hipster cafés and gorging on the food Ipoh has to offer.

TYPES OF BIRDS

Welcome to the world of birds! Distinct, colourful and amazing to look at, Kinta Nature Park houses a collection of birds so varied that it will excite any passionate bird-watchers.

Cattle Egret

A cosmopolitan species of heron, the cattle egret is often found in the tropics, subtropics, and areas with warm and temperate climates. Some authorities have once stated that western-cattle egret and the eastern-cattle egret are thought to be subspecies, but are now regarded as a full species.



Black-And-Red Broadbill

Found mostly in Southeast Asia, the black-and-red broadbill can grow to about 20-24cm in height and weighs around 50.3-76.5g. What makes this bird stand out is its distinct beak with a dual-tone, almost fluorescent turquoise blue and cream-yellow, a black coat of feathers on the top with some white lines going down its wing as well as a beautiful crimson bottom half, starting from below its chin to its feet.



Blue Throated Bee-Eater

Coming from the bee-eater family, it's no surprise that the diet of a blue-throated bee-eater consists mostly of bees! Along with other critters such as wasps and dragonflies. With a carmine red crown, grey beak, bright sky blue and green ombre nether region, they can be found all over Southeast Asia. This especially colourful bird can be found in both subtropical and tropical mangrove forests.



Thick Billed Green Pigeon

This cute pigeon is a brightly coloured beauty, unlike its city cousins. Often seen flying in pairs, the thick-billed green pigeon is known for its dual-tone bill and green eye ring visible even from afar. Both males and females have bright yellow stripes on the edge of their wings while the males have some maroon in their colouring and the females are mostly green all over. Look up at any fruiting tree and you'll see a bunch of them chirping away.



Yellow Eared Spiderhunter

The yellow-eared spiderhunter is a species of the Nectariniidae family and found almost everywhere in Southeast Asia. This species has an olive-green upper plumage and a golden mantle, a bright rump as well as a blush of yellow in its cheeks.



Kingfisher

Pass by any river in the area and you're bound to see a Kingfisher. With its brightly coloured feathers that glint as it flutters by, the Kingfisher is a common species found in the African, Asian and Oceanic tropics. This particular family known as Alcedinidae has 114 different species with three subfamilies and 19 genera.



Great Argus

A brown-plumaged pheasant, the Great Argus has a blue neck and head, black feathers which look quite a lot like hair adorning its crown till the back of its neck, red upper breasts and the most beautiful pinky-red coloured legs. When it ruffles its plumage, it truly is a spectacular sight.



Grey Heron

The Grey Heron is a predatory wading bird with long legs that comes from, you guessed it, the heron family! Native to Europe and Asia as well as parts of Africa, the Grey Heron usually stays in one place for most of the time but there are some groups from colder northern climates that migrate south in the autumn season.



Black-Crowned Night Heron

The black-capped night heron, commonly known as the black-crowned night heron or night heron is a medium-sized heron found all over the world. The only places that it is not too fond of are cold regions, including Australasia.



Lesser Coucal

Part of the cuckoo family but not crazy at all is the lesser coucal that is mostly black with lovely reddish-brown wings. It often hangs out around tree-covered marshes. It is known for its long claws and distinct call. Be warned that when you look for it through binoculars, you might have a difficult time trying to distinguish between the males and the females.



Olive Backed Sunbird

A tiny songbird, also known as the yellow-bellied sunbird, the olive-backed sunbird is a species of sunbird found in Southern Asia and Australia. Bright yellow underparts with dull brown back feathers, both males and females are almost indistinguishable apart for the males having dark, metallic blue almost black throats and upper chests. Some species like the subspecies found in the Philippines have orange on its chest while some have black or greyish-white underparts depending on if its from southern China or Vietnam.



Orange Bellied Flowerpecker

Often found in most parts of Southeast Asia and Bangladesh, the orange-bellied flowerpecker is a species of bird from the Dicaeidae family. This species is known to be thin with a short and slightly curved bill, a greyish blue chest and throat, a fiery orange lower chest that gradients into yellow on the vent. However, this only applies to the males who also have a blue crown, nape, wings and tail. The females, on the other hand, are quite dull-looking compared to their counterparts, being olive-brown all over with a light orange rump and yellow belly.



Woodpecker

Everyone loves a woodpecker! Originating from the Picidae family, woodpeckers and its various near-passerine members can be found all over the globe except for Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Madagascar, and the extreme polar regions.



Stork

Often seen carrying babies around (just kidding), storks are gangly-legged wading birds with long, stout bills. Once thought to be close relatives to herons and ibises, storks, today belong in their own category while its previous relatives have been moved into more precise family orders.



Plain-Pouched Hornbill

A species of hornbill from the Bucerotidae family, the Plain Pouched Hornbill can be found in the hills of Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia. Sadly, this particular species of hornbill are threatened due to deforestation and industrialisation.





BIRDING & BIRDWATCHING

What's the Difference?

Ever heard of the term **birding** or **birdwatching**? Wonder what separates the two? It's pretty simple!

Although the interest is the same, what separates birding from birdwatching is the level of commitment. Anyone can be a birdwatcher, but a birder is an individual who dedicates a great deal of energy and finances to the observation of as many birds as possible in their lifetime.

WHAT IS BIRDWATCHING?

So, what exactly is birdwatching? The term birdwatching was coined in the year 1891, and it means watching birds as a hobby. All you need to become a birdwatcher is simply to enjoy watching birds.

Did you know that 48 million people in just the United States are regular birdwatchers? Most birdwatchers are just in the minor leagues of the birdwatching game. Some probably purchase birdbaths and bird feeders to lure unsuspecting birds but don't worry, no birds are harmed in the process.

If you've never tried it before, give it a go. You'll be surprised how relaxing and therapeutic birdwatching is. A birdwatcher often silently observe birds from a distance or allow the birds to come to them, never invasive or desperate to identify the species of the bird. So, what are you waiting for? Perhaps it's time you started birdwatching. It's as simple as looking up at the sky and between the trees.



A BRIEF HISTORY ON BIRDWATCHING

It was at the end of the 19th century that birdwatching began to gain popularity. Before that, it was quite bleak for our beaky friends as aviary enthusiasts enjoyed shooting and caging birds instead of enjoying their splendour from a distance. Science was big back then, and what better way to learn about a creature than by cutting into it. But that was how things were back in the past.

After science came technology, and with technology came the invention of many things, including the binoculars. The

handy invention by J.P. Lemiere in the year 1825 allowed people to learn about these feathered wonders without resorting to violence. Not long after, around the year 1880, birdwatching became extremely popular.

Books were printed and impeccable illustrations painted an up-close picture, way better than a bird's eye view. Some of these books include classics such as John James Audobon's Birds of America and Gilbert White's 1788 book, the Natural History of Selborne.



WHY IS BIRDWATCHING FUN?

Firstly, birdwatching is fun because it lets you explore the world around you and discover more about our environment. It teaches us about the environment that we are depleting daily and the effects it has not just on our feathered friends but on all animal and plant life.

Secondly, you'll get the chance to meet other fellow birdwatchers, and chances are you'll become friends for life. Typical active birdwatching cluster and communities tend to organise events that venture into the outdoors in a space that is not so lonely with "birds of a feather" who flock together to witness the majesty of nature.

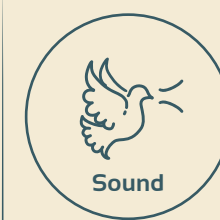
Thirdly, birdwatching teaches us to stop and smell the roses, to look at the wonders around us and to appreciate the multitudes of moments in our lives. We're often so busy getting from point A to point B in one piece that we fail to notice what's around us, which is the total opposite of birdwatching. The goal is simple, focus all your attention on what you see and hear, and with a little bit of patience, you'll see the bounty of birdwatching unfold before your very eyes.

5 TIPS FOR BEGINNER BIRDERS

Beginner Birders, fear not. We have you covered with our top tips on the basics that you need to be a great bird-watcher.



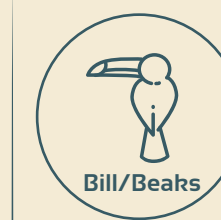
These four letters will help you figure out the birding basics you require, as simple as G.I.S.S which means to ID a bird by looking for the General Impression of Shape and Size. Try and figure out the things you can see such as how it moves, what's it shape and size like.



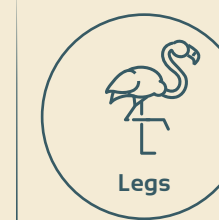
Sometimes, in the jungle, it can be hard to see birds visibly. So, apart from looking for bird features, listen closely to their calls. Birds have their own language, so if you're keen on adding a new language to your portfolio, here's your chance.



Colours and patterns of a bird's plumage can help you to not only identify the species of bird but also distinguish the males and the females. Unlike in the human world, it's the male's responsibility to attract the female in the bird kingdom, using bright colours and vibrant streaks in their plumage.



The perfect place to start bird identification is its beak or bill. With a variety of shapes, sizes and colours, keeping a close eye on a bird's bill will reveal a lot more about a bird than might think.



There's a lot you can tell from a bird's legs as the longer it is, the higher chances it's from the wading family. Short legs mean more time up in the shires. The length and colours of a bird's legs will help you figure out not just where it's going but where it comes from as well.

HOW TO BEGIN BIRDWATCHING?

There are a few essentials that are going to ease the process of birdwatching for you and this starts with getting the birding basics right. Follow our list of essential needs and you'll be prepped and ready to go. Keep reading to find out more on how you can begin birdwatching today!



Journal

Keep a bird journal to write down what you see and hear and the locations of where each bird was spotted. This will help you learn about each bird's unique habits and features. Plus, it'll help you keep track of all the birds you've seen thus far.



Mosquito Repellent

We live in Malaysia, so mosquito repellent is necessary especially when you're in bird territory which usually equals to mosquito territory as well.



Binoculars

Get a good pair, spend a little extra if you need to because the better you see from a distance, the better the birdwatching experience.



Camera

A good camera can help you capture and create a private collection of birds for you to reflect on and keep track of long after the birdwatching experience is over.



Camouflage Clothing

The less obvious you make yourself out to be, the better. The whole purpose of birdwatching is to watch birds in their natural state and that typically removes you out of the equation, so go camo!



Water

Stay hydrated. Birdwatching excursions can sometimes be lengthy and temperatures in the Kinta area can fluctuate so be safe and drink plenty of aque while you look for our avian friends.



Rain Gear

There are only two types of weather conditions in Malaysia which are sun and rain and with global warming, the weather isn't as predictable as it used to be, so just play it safe and bring some extra rain protection. If anything, a simple raincoat will do.

BIRD ID: How to Identify Birds?

Field Guides

Field guides will help you identify birds with ease. Think of it as a bird dictionary with a listing of 650 bird species, beautifully illustrated for your birdwatching benefits. Three field guides we recommend are A Field Guide to the Birds of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore by Allen Jeyarajasingam, Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia by Craig Robson and the Birds of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore by C.W.H Davison. Compact and comprehensive, these field guides are easy to read with lovely illustrations and maps based on up-to-date resources.

Smartphone Apps

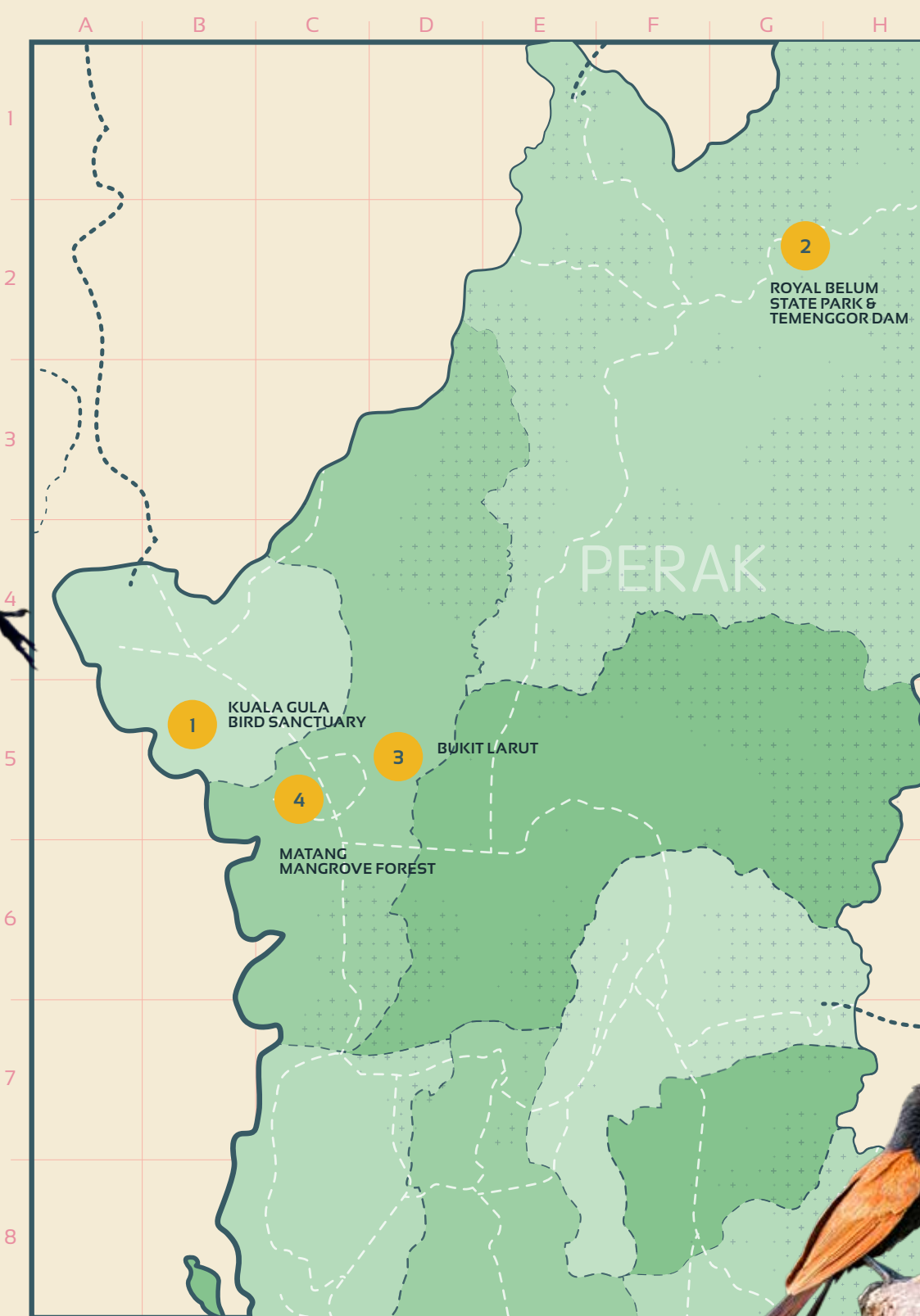
Even though the guides mentioned above are easily portable, there are digital options you can access via your phone at the click of a button. There are smartphone apps available such as Ebird, Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Labs and Audubon Bird Guide. These apps are user-friendly, with quick ID, birdcall samples, bird listings and more! They are the next step in getting the information you need and logging information on the go.



TIPS FOR LOCAL BIRDWATCHING

- Keep one eye to the sky. Most senior birdwatchers will share that birds are everywhere so you need to always be on the lookout even if they are areas that you're prone to frequent.
- Get a bird feeder, birdbath or a birdhouse as this will give you a chance to study them up-close.
- Explore the jungles around you. Where there are trees, there are usually birds.
- Wake up at the crack of dawn. Timing plays a huge role in birdwatching as birds are most active during the wee hours of the morning. The saying rings true once again as the early bird most definitely catches the worm.
- Start a birdwatching club and get together for birdwatching outings and tips for a better birdwatching experience.
- Be patient and continue to be persistent while keeping a close eye on your target.
- Visit your local national parks. Make a bucket list and support your local national wildlife sanctuaries so that you can keep enjoying birdwatching and ensure the survival of the creatures that bring you so much joy.

Birdwatching Must-Sees in Perak



Branching Out : Birdwatching Must-Sees in Perak

Here's our list of must-see birdwatching parks and sanctuaries in Perak. Since you're already in the area, it would be a shame to miss out on the surrounding birdwatching sanctuaries.



KUALA GULA BIRD SANCTUARY

Kuala Gula Bird Sanctuary, 34350 Kuala Kurau, Perak
+605-896 2207

Situated in the Kerian district at the northern edge of the Matang Forest Reserve, the Kuala Gula Bird Sanctuary was established in the year 1970 to safeguard resident and migratory birds that flock to this bird haven. Known for its diverse habitats such as tidal mudflats, estuaries and mangrove forests, the Matang Forest reserve is the perfect refuge for a variety of birds. Some of these birds include waterbirds and shorebirds. The latest records show that there are more than 190 bird species found in this area alone, half being migratory birds often seen between October to December and August to April.

ROYAL BELUM STATE PARK & TEMENGGOR DAM

Tingkat 1, Kompleks Bangunan Kerajaan Negeri Perak, JKR 341 Jalan Sultan Abdul Aziz, 33300 Gerik, Perak
+605-791 4543

One of the last remaining pockets of pristine rainforest found in Peninsular Malaysia, Royal Belum State Park is 130 million years old and covers an area of 320,257 hectares. Did you know that it is said to be even older than the Amazon and the Congo Basin? Populated by some of the world's most endangered mammals in the world, including wild Asiatic elephants, Sumatran rhinos, clouded leopards, tapirs and more. If you're looking for all 10 species of hornbills, then venture to the Temenggor Dam for mass migration sightings of thousands of hornbills. This is why it's called the Hornbill Capital of the World! 304 other bird species have also been discovered in the area.

BUKIT LARUT

Bukit Larut 34000 Taiping, Perak
+605-807 7241

Bukit Larut or Maxwell Hill is Peninsular Malaysia's oldest hill station. Its varied altitudes and range of habitats are what makes it an ideal birdwatching getaway to witness about 250 species of lowland and montane birds. As Bukit Larut is situated in the wettest part of Malaysia, it experiences very high rainfall, so be sure to bring along essentials needed to brave the rain. Here's a good tip for those keen on visiting soon: go early in the day as it usually rains in the afternoon.

MATANG MANGROVE FOREST

Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve, Kampung Kuala Sepetang, 34650 Kuala Sepetang, Perak
+605-896 2207

Just ten kilometres from Taiping, Matang Mangrove Forest is a great spot for birdwatching. Follow the boardwalk and you'll gain passage to the mangrove where birdwatching bliss and some pretty awesome photograph opportunities await. You can also opt for a boat birdwatching expedition. Prior arrangement is needed, of course, but you'll get the chance to see the collared kingfisher, mangrove whistler, pied hornbill, cinereous tit, ashy tailorbird and many more.

