



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

THAILAND HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 3–23, 2024

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Red-headed Trogon (female) © Dion Hobcroft

The Orient is a timeless land of ancient cultures, golden pagodas, and wonderful, little-known exotic birds. Thailand, situated at the crossroads of three biogeographic provinces (Himalayan, Indochinese and Sunda), is the heartland of Southeast Asia. It hosts a remarkably diverse avifauna of well over 900 species, including some of the world's most beautiful birds. Thailand also offers a variety of interesting mammals, reptiles and amphibians, a number of which we shall see. On previous tours we

have enjoyed encounters with White-handed Gibbons, the rarely observed Slow Loris, Leopard, Asian Elephant, and a variety of squirrels, including the spectacular cat-sized Black Giant Squirrel. The people of Thailand are really wonderful—it is indeed the “Land of Smiles.”

This tour is an ideal introduction to the biological riches of the Oriental region. From our bases in lovely accommodations with exquisite food, we will explore nearby birding hot-spots, including the lush lowland forests and deciduous woodlands of the rightly renowned Kaeng Krachan and Khao Yai National Parks, and the rich montane forests of the far north, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

*While the pheasants are perhaps the finest spectacle of any Oriental tour, Thailand also boasts a vast array of characteristic Southeast Asian birds that cannot fail to impress any birder, including pigeons, parakeets, malkohas, trogons, hornbills, barbets, kingfishers, broadbills, pittas, minivets, bulbuls, leafbirds, spiderhunters, babblers, parrotbills, and the challenging *Phylloscopus* warblers.*



March 3-4, Days 1-2: Travel to Bangkok. Participants can take one of a number of connections which depart the United States on March 3 and arrive in Bangkok on March 4. Upon arrival and after clearing customs and immigration, participants may proceed to our airport hotel by a direct shuttle, where a room will be reserved in your name. Those arriving in Bangkok early enough on March 4 are welcome to join our leader for dinner.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group should consider arriving in Bangkok on March 3 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging and day-touring arrangements in Bangkok.

NIGHT (March 4): Novotel Airport Hotel, Bangkok

March 5, Day 3: Drive to Khao Yai National Park. We will drive northward to the ancient capital of Ayutthaya, where we will lunch amidst a pantheon of stupas, and remnants of this lovely and important Siamese antiquity. After lunch we will continue on to our very comfortable accommodations near Khao Yai National Park. If time permits, we will make a stop at a spectacular Buddhist temple where we hope to have luck seeing the localized Rufous Limestone Babbler.

NIGHT: Recall Isaan Isan Concept at Khao Yai, Nakhon Ratchasima

March 6-7, Days 4-5: Khao Yai National Park. Khao Yai National Park is justly regarded as one of the premier reserves in Southeast Asia. It encompasses an area of 2,168 square kilometers and an altitudinal range from 1,600 feet (500 meters) to 4,250 feet (1,328 meters). Khao Yai's lush, tall, evergreen forests alternating with grassy clearings, waterfalls, and pristine creeks provide ideal habitat for many species of birds and mammals. Birding is relatively easy along the forest-lined roads, although we will also work the forest trails in order to see some of the more retiring specialties. Typically, one can walk for some time without seeing many birds. Then, suddenly, there is a change in atmosphere, and the forest is alive with activity. Mixed flocks of a dozen or more species and as many as 100 individuals can be frustrating, overwhelming and exciting.

We shall also keep a watch out for fruiting trees, where we may see congregations of frugivores such as Thick-billed Pigeon; Mountain Imperial-Pigeon; Asian Emerald Cuckoo (uncommon); Brown (the rarest of this group), Great, Wreathed, and Oriental Pied- hornbills; and Green-eared and Moustached barbets. We may also see the dazzling Asian Fairy Bluebird, and, if we are fortunate, Golden-crested Myna. The incredible song of the White-handed Gibbon resonates through the forest and we will try our best to see these wonderful primates. We are likely to encounter several species of squirrel, including the attractive Variable and Cambodian Striped species. Normally, it will be cool in the mornings and late afternoon and warm to hot during the middle of the day. Bird



Silver Pheasants seen on the roadside at Khao Yai. © Dion Hobcroft

activity is greatest during the cooler part of the day, so we will concentrate our birding then. Some of the other species we hope to encounter include Besra; Changeable Hawk-Eagle; Silver Pheasant; Siamese Fireback (if we are fortunate); Scaly-breasted Partridge; Barred Cuckoo-Dove; Vernal Hanging-Parrot; Green-billed Malkoha; Brown Boobook; Mountain Scops-Owl; Great-eared, Large-tailed, and Gray nightjars; Red-headed and Orange-breasted trogons; Chestnut-headed Bee-eater; Heart-spotted and Great Slaty woodpeckers; Dusky, Banded, and Long-tailed broadbills (these are some of the real gems of the Orient); with a great deal of luck, possibly either Eared or Blue pittas; Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike; Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike; Scarlet and Swinhoe's minivet; Red-whiskered, Stripe-throated, Gray-eyed, Puff-throated, and Ashy bulbuls; six species of drongo; Green Magpie; Black-naped Oriole; Abbott's Babbler; White-browed and the elusive Large scimitar-babblers; and Lesser Necklaced, White-crested, and Black-throated laughingthrushes. The last five species often associate as a mixed foraging party and are typically shy. We may also see Crimson Sunbird and Fire-breasted Flowerpecker. A number of interesting migrants winter in the area, and we are most likely to see the relatively tame Radde's Warbler, which forages near the ground at the edge of the forest, and a host of confusing and challenging "little brown jobs" such as Pale-legged, Sulphur-breasted, and Thick-billed warblers; Asian Brown

and Taiga flycatchers; and the elusive Siberian Blue Robin. If we are very lucky, we may also find such forest specialties as the wild-sounding Coral-billed Ground-Cuckoo.

Khao Yai is good for mammals, and we will make a special night drive to look for such species as Binturong, Small Indian Civet, Lesser Mouse-Deer, Barking Deer, Sambar, Slow Loris, Malayan Porcupine and Asian Elephant in addition to nocturnal birds. This is a truly wonderful place that you will find difficult to leave behind.

NIGHTS: Recall Isaan Isan Concept at Khaoyai, Nakhon Ratchasima

March 8, Day 6: Return to Bangkok. This morning we will return back to Bangkok. We plan to make an early morning visit to a nearby nature reserve that offers good dry woodland birding and a good chance to see the stunning Siamese Fireback pheasant if we have had no luck in Khao Yai. After having lunch at a seaside restaurant, we will make another stop at Bang Pu for a good cross-section of mangrove and coastal birds including Painted Stork, Brown-headed Gull, Swinhoe's White-eye and hopefully a Pacific Swallow.

NIGHT: Novotel Airport Hotel, Bangkok

March 9, Day 7: Morning Bangkok Area: Afternoon Flight to Chiang Mai.

Despite Bangkok's huge size, there are still remnants of the vast marshes and swamp forests that once characterized the entire Chao Praya River floodplain that is the centerpiece of continental Thailand. We will begin birding with a visit to the Rice Research centre during the relative cool of the morning. We can expect to encounter a good range of open-country and secondary woodland birds, as well as large numbers of freshwater wetland species. Some of the birds we may come across include Little Cormorant; Purple and Gray herons; Great, Intermediate, Little and Cattle egrets; Javan Pond-Heron; with a bit of luck Yellow and Cinnamon bitterns; Black-shouldered Kite; Ruddy-breasted Crake; White-breasted Waterhen; Common Moorhen; Red-wattled Lapwing; a smattering of shorebirds, such as Little Ringed Plover and Wood Sandpiper; Red Collared, Zebra and Spotted doves; Asian Koel; Greater and Lesser coucals; Common, White-throated, and the gorgeous Black-capped kingfishers; Indian Roller; Hoopoe; Coppersmith Barbet; Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker; Asian Palm-Swift; Yellow-vented and Streak-eared bulbuls; Black Drongo; Thick-billed, Black-browed and Oriental Reed-warblers; Oriental Magpie-Robin; Amur Stonechat; Taiga Flycatcher; Malaysian Pied-Fantail; Brown Shrike; Siamese Pied and Black-collared starlings; Common and Grand mynas; the handsome Plain-backed Sparrow; Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker; and a good chance for the localized Asian Golden-Weaver.



With luck, we may encounter Asian Elephants in Khao Yai. © Dion Hobcroft

After lunch we will catch a flight to Chiang Mai. Often referred to as Thailand's northern "Shangri-La," Chiang Mai is an attractive city located in a fertile valley 300 meters above sea level. Founded in 1296, it has withstood invasion from the Burmese and various other influences, to the extent that its people still have their own dialect and cultural traditions. It is an ideal base from which to explore the forested mountains, river valleys, and cultivated plains that extend northwards to the borders of Myanmar and Laos and the region known as the "Golden Triangle."

NIGHT: Empress Hotel, Chiang Mai

March 10, Day 8: Morning at Huai Kong Krai; Afternoon Drive to Doi Inthanon National Park. This morning we will visit an area of tall, mixed, dry dipterocarp woodland that holds a small population of the spectacular Green Peafowl. Once widespread but unfortunately hunted close to extinction throughout much of its range, this exotic pheasant has until now been virtually impossible to find in Thailand without mounting a mini-

expedition. Thus, our outing this morning is a very special opportunity. Nevertheless, the birds can be very shy, and we will have to ensure we are on-site before dawn—in position to locate the calling males, which bugle from the dense foliage of tall trees. In addition to this marvelous bird, we may also find some of the following: Lesser Whistling-Duck, Chinese Pond-Heron, Common and White-throated kingfishers, the lovely Rosy Minivet, Eurasian Jay, and perhaps the handsome Black Baza. We will then return to Chiang Mai for lunch before driving southwards to Doi Inthanon National Park. If time permits, we will start our exploration of the park this afternoon by exploring dry woodlands adjacent to our hotel. We have encountered a good variety of birds in this area, including the scarce and beautiful Blossom-headed Parakeet, Plain-backed Sparrow and Indochinese Bushlark.

NIGHT: Inthanon Highland Resort, Doi Inthanon National Park

March 11-12, Days 9-10: Doi Inthanon National Park. We will spend two full days and one whole morning exploring the spectacular Doi Inthanon National Park. Doi Inthanon is Thailand's highest mountain, with a maximum elevation of about 8,200 feet (2,590 meters). Undoubtedly, this is the foremost birding locality in northern Thailand, with 343 species recorded to date. Dry teak forests on the lower slopes give way to stands of pines interspersed with open grassy areas which support wintering Buff-throated, Radde's, and Yellow-streaked warblers; a few Little and Chestnut buntings; and an occasional Gray-faced Buzzard. Hill evergreen forest then grades into lower-stature montane forest at about 4,700 feet (1,500 meters) and hosts a large number of species. Climbing ever higher, we will ascend through some magnificent sub-montane forest, eventually reaching montane forests on the summit. Here, flowering rhododendrons surround a sphagnum bog that is bisected by a boardwalk, permitting us to explore the interior of this superb habitat. Some of the birds we may encounter at higher levels include Common Buzzard; Mountain Hawk-Eagle; Rufous-throated Partridge (we will almost certainly hear pairs duetting, but they are tough to see; our best chance being as we quietly walk around the sphagnum bog on the summit shortly after dawn); Wedge-tailed Pigeon; with luck, Ashy Wood-Pigeon; Large Hawk- and Asian Emerald cuckoos; Collared Owlet; Great, Golden-throated, and Blue-throated barbets; Stripe-breasted and Bay woodpeckers; Cook's Swift; Short-billed and Gray-chinned minivets; Orange-bellied Leafbird; Striated, Mountain, White-headed (scarce), and Flavescent bulbuls; five drongos; Hume's Treecreeper; Slaty-bellied Tesia; Ashy-throated, Buff-barred and Davison's leaf-warblers; Chestnut-crowned Warbler; Pygmy Cupwing; Golden Babbler; Silver-eared Laughingthrush; White-browed and Clicking shrike-babblers; the very attractive Spectacled Barwing; Rufous-winged Fulvetta; Black-backed and Rufous-backed sibilias; Silver-eared Mesia (a real gem); Chestnut-tailed Minla (noisy, conspicuous, stunningly attractive, and often quite numerous near the summit); White-browed and Lesser shortwings; Scaly Thrush; Dark-sided Thrush (with luck, one or two can often be found quietly digging away in the soft ground surrounding the summit bog); White-capped Redstart; Plumbeous Redstart; Snowy-browed and Slaty-backed flycatchers; Large, Rufous-bellied, Small and Vivid niltavas; the charming Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail; Yellow-browed and Yellow-cheeked tits; and Common Rosefinch. We will also be on the lookout for the inconspicuous and rarely seen Green and Purple cochoas. Once every few years there is an exceptional winter invasion of thrushes and flycatchers; perhaps we will be lucky. Species we may encounter include Gray-winged Blackbird; Eye-browed, Chestnut and Gray-sided thrushes; Siberian Blue Robin and Himalayan Bluetail.

NIGHTS: Inthanon Highland Resort, Doi Inthanon National Park

March 13, Day 11: Morning at Doi Inthanon; Afternoon Drive to Doi Chiang Dao. We will spend the morning in the dry teak woodlands looking for a number of rare species including both Black-headed and White-bellied woodpecker, the dapper Collared Falconet, Eurasian Jay, and with luck Red-billed Blue-Magpie. If time permits, we will explore some photogenic rice fields with a chance to see Gray-headed Lapwing, Rufous-winged Buzzard, Greater Painted Snipe and with good fortune, perhaps Blue-breasted Quail. We will have lunch at Chiang Mai before heading north towards the base of the spectacular mountain known as Doi Chiang Dao. Well protected forest adjoining a spectacular monastery will give us the chance to connect with certain species like Streaked Wren-Babbler, Pin-tailed Pigeon, Purple-naped Spiderhunter and Great Iora.

NIGHT: Malee's Guest House, Doi Chiang Dao

March 14, Day 12: Doi Chiang Dao to Fang. Following a bird rich morning at Doi Chiang Dao hopefully connecting with the likes of Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher and Black-hooded Oriole, we will proceed north to Fang. In the late afternoon we will bird along the Ping River and adjacent rice fields. Some of the species we may encounter include Pied and Eastern Marsh-harriers; Barred Buttonquail; Gray-headed Lapwing; Oriental Pratincole; Pin-tailed Snipe; Eurasian Wryneck; Bluethroat; Siberian Rubythroat; Pied Bushchat; Radde's, Dusky, Pallas's Grasshopper and Oriental Reed warblers; Lanceolated Warbler (skulking, but this is one of the easier places to see this "mouse"); Chestnut-capped Babbler; Citrine Wagtail; Red-throated Pipit; Chestnut-tailed Starling; Wire-tailed Swallow; and Burmese Shrike. Fang will be our base for the next three nights as we make strategic birding trips to some of the remote mountains here that border Myanmar and offer some of the best birding in Thailand.

NIGHT: Sleeping Tree Hotel, Fang

March 15, Day 13: Doi Ang Khang. Doi Ang Khang is a remote mountain area that has remarkably good road access. We have the entire day to explore this lovely area. For much of the time, we will be birding from a narrow, little used, paved road surrounded by stunning, evocative landscapes that will forever be your image of the mystical Burmese-Thai border. We will explore an interesting mélange of scrub, native pine woodlands, and biologically rich and diverse mixed broad-leaved evergreen forests. Doi Ang Khang supports some special birds—in fact, several we are unlikely to encounter anywhere else on the tour. Some of the birds we hope to find include Mountain Bamboo-Partridge, Crested Finchbill, Brown-breasted Bulbul, White-browed Laughingthrush and the noisy but very shy White-necked Laughingthrush, Scarlet-faced Liocichla, Spot-breasted and Gray-headed parrotbills, and perhaps Giant Nuthatch (scarce). Other species we may encounter here include Speckled Piculet, Bay and Stripe-breasted woodpeckers, Striated Bulbul, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Russet Bush-Warbler, Buff-throated and Yellow-streaked warblers, Mountain Tailorbird, Daurian Redstart, White-tailed Robin, Gray-backed Shrike, Indian White-eye, and Little and Crested buntings.

NIGHT: Sleeping Tree Hotel, Fang



Some years highly secretive birds like the Rusty-naped Pitta make an appearance like this male at Doi Lang. © Dion Hobcroft

March 16, Day 14: Doi Lang. A paved, forest-lined road extends along the border of Myanmar to a remote section of Doi Pha Hom Pok National Park. This quiet forest area called Doi Lang offers spectacular birding on both sides of the mountain, the road currently closed to complete access due to a washed-out bridge. There are wonderful vistas over range after range of forested ridges. On previous visits we have found several Thai rarities including Hume's Pheasant, Giant Nuthatch, Rusty-naped Pitta, Hodgson's Frogmouth, Gray-headed Parakeet, Whiskered Yuhina, Long-tailed Sibia, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Spot-breasted Laughingthrush, White-gorgeted Flycatcher, Black-throated Tit, Mountain Bamboo-Partridge, Chestnut Thrush, Black-headed Greenfinch and Crested Finchbill. Other great birds which have been recorded here include Himalayan Cutia and the Sapphire Flycatcher. We plan to explore both sides of the mountain to give us the best chance to see as many of these rarities as possible.

NIGHT: Sleeping Tree Hotel, Fang

March 17, Day 15: Morning at Chiang Saen; Afternoon at Chiang Rai; Flight to Bangkok. We must depart early this morning for our drive eastwards into the heart of the Golden Triangle and the lovely but ancient city of Chiang Saen, which is located on the imposing Mekong River. On nearby Chiang Saen Lake, we may encounter large numbers of Lesser Whistling-Ducks and some Indian Spotbill Ducks in addition to wintering northern Palearctic migrants. We have a good chance to see Garganey, White-browed Crake and Gray-headed Swampphen. After lunch, we will drive to Chiang Rai for our mid-afternoon flight back to Bangkok.

NIGHT: Novotel Airport Hotel, Bangkok

March 18, Day 16: Birding the Gulf of Siam. This morning we will leave early for one of the greatest shorebird spectacles on the planet. In order to explore this area's fascinating mosaic of coastal wetlands and commercial salt farms, we'll drive west and south along the Gulf of Siam. Large numbers of shorebirds congregate here in addition to a few coastal specialties. Species we may encounter include Brahminy Kite; possibly Slaty-breasted Rail; Pacific Golden and Gray plovers; Greater and Lesser sand plovers; Marsh, Wood, and Common sandpipers; Long-toed and Red-necked stints; Brown-headed Gull; Gull-billed and Whiskered terns; House Swift; Germain's Swiftlet; Collared Kingfisher; Common Tailorbird; Plain Prinia; Golden-bellied Gerygone; Long-tailed Shrike; and Brown-throated Sunbird. In addition, we may find one of the most extraordinary and endangered shorebirds, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. In recent years this blue-ribbon bird has been found wintering fairly regularly, in addition to such other shorebird gems as Nordmann's Greenshank, Asian Dowitcher, Broad-billed Sandpiper, and Great Knot. If the tide permits, we will visit Laem Pak Bia sand spit, home to the scarce Malaysian Plover and the recently re-discovered White-faced Plover. Please note that some activities will be tide-dependent.

NIGHT: Hotel Fisherman's Resort, Phetchaburi

March 19, Day 17: Laem Pak Bia to Kaeng Krachan. In the morning we will take the chance to visit some nearby sites at Laem Pak Bia to search for anything we may have missed. After it begins to warm up we will make our way to Kaeng Krachan National Park and our comfortable accommodations. In the afternoon we can visit a popular photographer's hide on the edge of the national park where small ponds of water often attract a good variety of forest birds and allow some excellent photographic opportunities. Some of the species we have seen here on recent visits include both Greater and Lesser Necklaced laughingthrushes, with luck Large Scimitar-Babbler, Siberian Blue Robin or Bar-backed Partridge.

NIGHT: Kaeng Krachan Lake Hill Resort, Kaeng Krachan

March 20-21, Days 18-19: Kaeng Krachan National Park. Kaeng Krachan National Park, encompassing 1,814 square miles (2,920 square kilometers), is Thailand's largest and one of its most magnificent and exciting conservation areas. Biologically rich tropical broad-leaved evergreen forests cover a large portion of the park up to approximately 3,281 feet (1,000 meters), thereafter merging into distinctly different sub-montane forest. Much of the park is extremely rugged and unexplored; however, a drivable track extends about 23 miles (36 kilometers) eastward into the park and to the highest point reached by road. This permits us fairly easy access, as well as some truly superb views out over a sea of undisturbed forest—as far as the eye can see, way into Burma. This is a rare opportunity now in Southeast Asia. Please note we will be birding in park vehicles, typically pickup trucks with four-wheel drive.

Although the days will be long (we will have to rise early in order to be at the forest by dawn), the reward of birding in one of the few remaining true wilderness areas in Southeast Asia should be more than enough compensation. We will provide lovely *al fresco* breakfasts and lunches in the field, permitting those who wish, to spend the entire day enjoying all that these wonderful forests have to offer. For those who prefer a more genteel pace, we will have sufficient vehicles along to permit those who wish to return early to our hotel and just relax, to do so.

Kaeng Krachan's forests host a fabulous array of wildlife, including some very special birds. Several species more characteristic of the humid lowland Sundaic forests occur here at the northern edge of their range. We shall search for these and a whole host of other exciting birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, other insects, and flowering plants.

Species that we may encounter include Oriental Honey-Buzzard; Crested Goshawk; Shikra; Crested Serpent-Eagle; Mountain Hawk-Eagle; Gray Peacock-Pheasant (often noisy but very difficult to see); Kalij Pheasant (always a challenge); Ferruginous Partridge (tough); Scaly-breasted and Bar-backed partridges; Red Junglefowl; Thick-billed and the elusive Yellow-vented green-pigeons; Vernal Hanging-Parrot; Chestnut-winged (rare), Indian, Banded

Bay, and Drongo cuckoos; Chestnut-breasted and Raffle's malkohas; Brown Boobook; Collared Scops-Owl; Collared Owlet; and Asian Barred Owlet. Several other, much more rarely seen owls—such as the Spot-bellied



Scaly-breasted Partridge have become reasonably reliable to see in recent years.
© Dion Hobcroft



The rather bizarre Dusky Broadbill, one of five broadbills possible to encounter in Kaeng Krachan. © Dion Hobcroft

Eagle-Owl and White-fronted Scops-owl—also occur in these forests, but the chance of seeing them is remote. We may also encounter Large-tailed Nightjar; Himalayan Swiftlet; Cook's Swift; the superb Brown-backed Needletail; Gray-rumped Treeswift; Orange-breasted and the scintillating Red-headed trogons; perhaps the gorgeous Banded, and Black-backed Dwarf kingfishers; Chestnut-headed, Blue-bearded, and possibly Red-bearded bee-eaters; Dollarbird; Rusty-cheeked, Oriental Pied, Wreathed, and Great hornbills; Great, Blue-throated, Moustached, Green-eared, and Blue-eared barbets; Speckled and White-browed piculets; woodpeckers; Common Flameback; and Dusky, Banded, Silver-breasted, Long-tailed and possibly Black-and-yellow broadbills.

Pittas are no easier here than anywhere else, but we should be alert to such species as Eared, Blue, and, at higher elevations, Rusty-naped. We will be on the lookout for Red-rumped Swallow; Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike; Ashy, Gray-chinned, and Scarlet minivets; Forest Wagtail; Common and Great ioras; Greater Green, Blue-winged, and Orange-bellied leafbirds; Black-headed, Black-crested, Stripe-throated, Flavescent, Ochraceous, Olive, Gray-eyed, and Ashy bulbuls; several kinds of drongos; Black-naped Oriole; the severely threatened Silver Oriole (rare); Asian Fairy-bluebird; Crested Jay; the peculiar Ratchet-tailed Treepie (only recently discovered here, more than two thousand kilometers from its previously known location); Common Green Magpie; Sultan Tit; Velvet-fronted Nuthatch; Buff-breasted, Abbott's, Rufous-fronted, Spot-necked and Gray-throated babblers; the bamboo specialist Collared Babbler; White-browed and Large scimitar-babblers; Greater and Lesser Necklaced, and Black-throated laughingthrushes; Brown-cheeked Fulvetta; Yellow-bellied, Plain-tailed, Eastern Crowned and Sulphur-breasted warblers; Dark-necked Tailorbird; Siberian Blue Robin; White-rumped Shama; Orange-headed Thrush; Dark-sided, Asian Brown, Verditer, Rufous-browed, Blue-and-white, Pale-blue and Gray-headed Canary flycatchers; White-throated Fantail; Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher; Ruby-cheeked Sunbird; Little Spiderhunter; Thick-billed and Yellow-vented flowerpeckers; and Hume's White-eye.

In addition to this wonderful profusion of birds, the relative lack of hunting in this area has resulted in the preservation of a good variety of mammals and large reptiles, not to mention some truly impressive aggregations of butterflies. Some of the mammals we have seen previously that inhabit these forests include Leopard; Asian Elephant; Sambar; Common and Fea's muntjacs; Slow Loris; Pig-tailed, Stump-tailed and Long-tailed macaques; Dusky and Banded langur; White-handed Gibbon; Dhole (Asian wild dog); Sun Bear; Yellow-throated Marten; Smooth Otter; a variety of civets; and many species of squirrels.

In recent years some entrepreneurial local people have set up a variety of wildlife hides where the group can sit on chairs in a concealed blind and watch birds and mammals come to water and food. Some truly rare birds can come in like Gray Peacock-Pheasant, Blue Pitta and Slaty-legged Crake. We will make inquiries with the local people and book some of these hides if the chances are high to see some of these secretive birds. They are excellent for photography.

NIGHTS: Kaeng Krachan Lake Hill Resort, Kaeng Krachan

March 22, Day 20: Morning at Kaeng Krachan; Afternoon Drive to Bangkok. After a final morning birding in this wonderful reserve, we will reluctantly make our way back to Bangkok for our farewell dinner.

NIGHT: Novotel Airport Hotel, Bangkok

March 23, Day 21: Departure for Home. Participants can depart at any time today.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADER: Dion Hobcroft



Dion Hobcroft has been working for VENT since 2001. He has led many tours (more than 180) to Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Bhutan, Indonesia, India, China, Southwest Pacific, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, Malawi, Myanmar, Japan, Russia, Alaska, Tanzania, Uganda, Madagascar, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Antarctic. In 2007 and 2013–2019 and 2022 alone, Dion showed more than 2,000 species of birds to VENT clients. His informative, relaxed, and educational nature, combined with sharp eyes and ears, has established Dion as a favorite of many tour participants. His fieldwork for over 40 years on birds and other terrestrial vertebrates has allowed him to amass an extraordinary knowledge of the biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region. Born in Tasmania and based in Sydney, Dion has traveled widely throughout Australasia, listing over 1,200 species, placing him in the top echelons of the region's

birders. He is very tuned-in to the songs of bird species in the Asia-Pacific region and specializes in rare and elusive species. He is delighted to show these skulking rarities to his travel companions. Dion has published several papers on field ornithology, served on national and state rare bird committees, managed *Birdline NSW*, run introduction to ornithology courses for Sydney University, and, before he traveled so continuously, was a popular speaker with various natural history societies. Dion has worked for many research and government agencies ranging from the Antarctic Division, Department of Environment NSW, Agriculture Protection WA, Taronga Zoo, Australian Museum, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industry. Dion lives in Sydney with his wife, Lise, and two children, Grace (age 21) and Daniel (age 17).

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for this tour is **\$10,245** per person in double occupancy from Bangkok. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 3 to dinner on Day 20, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground and air transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does not include airfare from your home to Bangkok and return, airport departure taxes (typically included in ticket pricing), alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,075**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure (August 6, 2023). If you prefer to pay your deposits using a credit card, the deposits must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (October 5, 2023) prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 210 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 209 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

210 days or more before departure date
209 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant's refund will be:

Your deposit(s) minus \$500*
No refund of the deposits, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your **hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion**, and a “**Cancel for Any Reason**” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. The primary medical expense benefit is available to U.S. residents only. For this reason, non-U.S. residents will pay an adjusted premium when purchasing a comprehensive policy, which includes all of the other benefits available to U.S. residents. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Concerns about COVID-19 may present uncertainty for those holding travel insurance policies or who are considering future travel and purchasing such insurance. Redpoint features a **Coronavirus FAQ page** on its website that addresses questions and concerns regarding its travel insurance and the impact of COVID-19. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of topics such as policy coverage and limitations, policy modifications, cancellation, refunds, and more.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ page** at the following link:

https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/

Additionally, some countries maintain COVID-19 entry requirements, including mandates to purchase travel insurance covering medical expenses due to COVID-19 illness and in case of quarantine. Ripcord’s comprehensive travel insurance plans are designed to satisfy the various country-specific travel insurance entry requirements. Those who purchase a Ripcord policy will receive a “letter of confirmation” that affirms that the policy satisfies such requirements.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler’s consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

DOCUMENTS: In order for U.S. citizens to enter Thailand, a U.S. passport that is valid at least six months after departure from Thailand must be presented upon entry into the country. For stays of 30 days or less, a visa is not required. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

CLIMATE: During the tour, you will experience a wide range of temperatures and climate, from the 80s and high 90s in the lowlands, to as low as the 30s at higher elevations. We may encounter some rain, but at this time of the year, this is an uncommon event. Generally, it will be cool in the morning and warm to hot and humid at midday. As soon as we ascend to the hill forests such as those of Khao Yai National Park, it will become noticeably more comfortable in terms of both humidity and temperature. A sweater for the evening, especially if we go on a night drive, will be necessary. Temperatures are similar in the north around Chiang Mai; however, the early

mornings on top of Doi Ang Khang, Doi Lang and Doi Inthanon are often quite cold for the first couple of hours, and a thick, warm sweater, jacket, hat and gloves are recommended.

CLOTHING: Lightweight, dull-colored field clothing is recommended throughout. This includes several pairs of pants and cool, comfortable shirts. Long-sleeved shirts, a dull-colored hat, and sunglasses are recommended for protection from the sun and mosquitoes. Long socks are very useful, so that you can tuck in your pants and further avoid biting insects. A good rain jacket is advisable, as is a collapsible umbrella. Dress will be casual, although you may prefer something slightly dressier for the hotels in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. PLEASE, absolutely no light or bright colors. Dark, muted colors help to prevent spooking the birds, particularly when we are in the forest, and thus enable you to see the special birds and mammals.

Please remember Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country and rather conservative about standards of dress, especially when in the areas of temples.

BOOTS: Although there will be few, if any, really rigorous walks or uphill jaunts, we may infrequently encounter mud, slippery surfaces and stony ground. Add that to the fact that you are on your feet for much of the day, and it is most important that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. Light-weight (Gore-Tex or some similar material) boots that come up to the ankle and have a good lug-sole are ideal. Many people are apprehensive that these will be too heavy; this is not true. The protection, grip, and day-long comfort that such boots afford are far superior to the seemingly comfortable sneakers/training shoes.

DIFFICULTY: In general, our tour of Thailand is easy and not especially physically demanding. Most of the time we will be walking on level ground either on paved or unpaved roads or tracks and very occasionally trails. At one or two sites such as at Doi Chiang Dao and Kaeng Krachan, there may be some uphill walking but this is infrequent and will always be at a gentle pace with regular stops. Again, this will not be especially physically demanding.

At most of the places we visit, especially in the warm, tropical lowlands, it will be important to be in the field before dawn so that we can hear the birds singing as the day starts up. In several cases, including some very critical species, this may be our only opportunity to discover if they are present or not. In addition, it can be a very good time to catch the occasional nightjar, owl or even nocturnal mammal. Typically, we return to our hotel or lodge for lunch and then rest up and re-charge our batteries before going out again in the late afternoon. This is not wasting good birding time because bird activity is virtually nil during the heat of the day and by re-charging our batteries and concentrating our efforts at the most optimal time of day, we will be in good shape to properly enjoy whatever comes our way.

LAUNDRY: Twenty four-hour laundry facilities are available at all of our accommodations.

HEALTH: Sanitation throughout Thailand is relatively good compared to most tropical areas of the world; however, it is advisable to treat water outside of the large, modern hotels with caution. Ideally, stick to bottled drinks, tea, and coffee. You should not eat salads and uncooked vegetables outside of the good hotels.

Malaria is present but rare, and participants are advised to take the advice of their doctor with regard to the form of prophylactic to use. There are currently three prophylaxis commonly prescribed: Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. Vaccinations for cholera, typhoid, and tetanus should be current. Please check with your physician or local travel clinic for more detailed information. Your doctor will advise you on the above and any further medication you may need.

VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

INTERNET AVAILABILITY: Wi-Fi is available at most locations on this tour.

LUGGAGE: The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

When traveling, it is suggested that you wear clothing and a pair of shoes suitable for birding in case your baggage is delayed, although this is a rare event.

Liquid restrictions apply on domestic flights and the same items that are not allowed to travel in the USA are prohibited on domestic flights in Thailand like scissors and other sharp items, larger tubes of tooth paste, sunscreen and insect repellent. Please put these in your checked bag as well as your tripod. Valuable items like essential medications, telescopes, binoculars, cameras and computers should always travel in your carry-on.

On occasion, luggage can be sent with our drivers between locations so you will not have to check your bags on the domestic flights. In this case, you will only need to take what you will need for one or two nights (toothbrush, binoculars, etc.)

The Novotel Airport Hotel in Bangkok has luggage storage facilities.

ACCOMMODATION: Most of our hotels rank among some of the loveliest hotels in Asia and offer internet facilities of varying speed. Accommodations in Doi Inthanon and Kaeng Krachan are clean, comfortable and air-conditioned with private bathroom facilities. In the Kaeng Krachan Lake Hill Resort, we are staying in quite a remote, jungle location and the accommodation is easily the best available. They do have limited internet facilities. All of the hotels offer laundry service.

CURRENCY: The unit of currency is the Baht (pronounced BART). It is a good idea to carry several small-denomination bills for personal purchases. You can easily exchange currency at all major hotels and airports which offer varying rates. A good alternative is to use automatic teller machines, though there will often be a small charge for the convenience but a good exchange rate. International credit cards are accepted at most hotels, but rarely elsewhere. It is a good idea to let your credit card provider be aware that you will be traveling so they do not cancel your card when charges start coming in from overseas!

EQUIPMENT:

- **Binoculars.** Of course, a good pair of binoculars is essential, and many people may want to take a spare pair in case of accident or theft. The same advice applies for people who wear glasses or contact lenses.
- **Spotting scope.** Your tour leader will have a spotting scope. However, you are welcome to and **in fact strongly encouraged** to bring your own. This will be very useful at a number of locations in Thailand.
- **Duffel bags.** One or two small duffel bags can be extremely useful for short trips, and these can be packed in your luggage when not in use. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and documents in your carry-on bag.
- **A belt pack or daypack** will be handy for books, sunscreen, repellents, camera, etc. Other items of use include a flashlight or headlamp and batteries with spare bulbs, a water bottle, a collapsible umbrella, wash cloth, camera, and a notebook and pen/pencil.

MISCELLANEOUS: Be sure to bring all necessary prescription drugs, as well as aspirin, antacids, and a supply of antihistamines should you develop a cold. Items such as toothpaste, deodorant, soap, cosmetics, sunscreen, and sunglasses should be brought with you but can also be easily purchased. For those using electric shavers or other powered devices, please remember that electrical power in Thailand is 220 volts. You may need an adapter for

your equipment. Insects such as **mosquitoes**, sand-flies, and leeches can occasionally, but just locally (and rarely in Thailand), be a problem. This is best dealt with by wearing long-sleeved shirts of sufficient thickness and density of weave that the “bugs” cannot bite through, and long trousers tucked into long socks. We also recommend *Cutter* lotion in the squeeze bottle or pump-style *Off!*

Electricity: The electric current is 220V at 50 hertz (cycles). Despite the reliability of power in Thailand, it is always a good idea to carry a small flashlight or headlamp just in case; spare bulbs and batteries are essential.

Weights and measures: Generally, the metric system is used, although the imperial system is understood.

Time: When it is midnight in Los Angeles, it will be 3:00 p.m. in Bangkok.

Language: Thai is a tonal language and consequently very difficult for English speakers to learn. Many people throughout Thailand speak some level of English. Elsewhere, older people may not and some of the people in the north such as the Karen and Hmong hill-tribes will only speak their local dialect.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Whatever you do, bring sufficient digital memory cards with you. Characteristically in tropical forest areas, photographing wildlife, in particular birds, will be difficult; however, there will be several times when we are in more open country when the lighting is better and the opportunities can be surprisingly good. Thailand has some wonderfully striking and unusual scenery, and we will visit some superb sites. When photographing people, it is courteous to ask first, a smile helps greatly, and if the subject declines, please do not force the issue.

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

We also recommend Andrew Isles bookstore for the Asia-Pacific region at www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/. Andrew can also often obtain difficult to find and out of print books.

Insight Guides: Thailand. Singapore: Apa Productions, most recent edition. All Apa productions are superbly produced with magnificent photographs. They also contain a good list of other references for those people wishing to read in more detail on Thai history, culture and religion.

Cummings, J. & S. Martin. *Thailand*. Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, most recent edition. A very useful travel guide.

Francis, C.M. *Mammals of Thailand and South-East Asia*. Bangkok: Asia Books New Holland Publishers, 2008. The best field guide to the mammals of the country. Recommended.

Graham, M. and P. Round. *Thailand's Vanishing Flora and Fauna*. Bangkok: Finance One Public Company, 1994.

Lekagul, B. and J.A. McNeely. *Mammals of Thailand*. Bangkok: The Assoc. Cons. Wild., 1977 (Out of print).

Lekagul, B. *et al.* *Field Guide to the Butterflies of Thailand*. Bangkok: Assoc. Cons. Wild., 1977.

Lekagul, B. and P. D. Round. *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand*. Bangkok: Saha Karn Bhaet, 1991.

McNeely, J. A. and Wachtel, P. S. *Soul of the Tiger—Searching for Nature's Answers in Exotic Southeast Asia*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Parr, J. W. K. *Large Mammals of Thailand*. Thailand: Sarakadee Press, 2003.

Robson, C. *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-east Asia*. UK: New Holland Publishers, most recent edition.

Robson, C. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Thailand*. UK: New Holland Publishers, most recent edition. **This is the field guide you should carry with you on the tour or Treesucon's guide (see below). Both detail and illustrate all the species you will encounter on this Thailand tour.**

Round, P. *Resident Forest Birds in Thailand: Their Status and Conservation*. ICBP Monograph No 2. Cambridge: ICBP, 1988. Available from ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, England.

Treesucon, U. & Limparungpattanakj, W. *Birds of Thailand*. Lynx Edicions and BirdLife International. **Excellent new field guide with up-to-date taxonomy. Highly recommended and as good as Robson in the field with less confusing plates and text.**

Whitmore, T.C. *Tropical Rainforests of the Far East*. 2nd. Edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1984. A superb account of the vegetation communities and their constituent plants, trees, soils etc. in South-East Asia.

Wyatt, D. K. *Thailand: A Short History*. Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich, 1984.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e., railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on May 31, 2023 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons

for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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