



Wilderness Birding Adventures

## Birding Cambodia

**February 20 – March 3, 2026**

**Tour begins in Siem Reap. Tour ends in Phnom Penh.**

**Tour Price: \$5,200    Single Supplement: \$350**

For most, birding may not be the first thought that comes to mind with the mention of Cambodia, as few countries have suffered as much in modern times. However, after emerging from the grip of a harrowing war-torn 20th century, stability and a growing infrastructure have returned, welcoming conservation groups, tourists, and birders alike.

For many reasons, Cambodia may just be Southeast Asia's best-kept birding secret. Large tracts of open gallery forest in the north of the country are home to some of the rarest species in Asia. Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake, Tonle Sap, and its seasonally flooded forests provide a wetland habitat teeming with life, including the endangered Greater Adjutant and Milky Stork. Several species which are now gone from neighboring countries still cling to existence in the vast forests and expansive wetlands of Cambodia. Combine all this with regular international flights, decent roads, comfortable hotels, and delicious food and the groundwork is laid for a world-class birding experience!

Since the 1990s, several remarkable discoveries have been made in Cambodia. These exciting finds include a surviving population of Giant Ibis, one of the world's rarest birds and two newly described species, the Mekong Wagtail and Cambodian Tailorbird. Other rarities found along our route include White-shouldered Ibis, White-rumped Falcon, Bengal Florican, Pale-capped Pigeon, Rufous-winged Buzzard, and Black-headed Woodpecker. It is not surprising that Cambodia now rightfully claims its place among the list of "must-visit" birding destinations.

In addition to the country's avian treasures, the ancient history of Cambodia is entirely fascinating and has left us with the "eighth wonder of the world," the incomparable Angkor Wat. We'll visit this and other lesser-known ancient wonders on our 12-day itinerary, which weaves its way from the modern cities of Siem Reap and Phnom Penh through the ancient Angkorian ruins and remote villages of the rural north.

We've designed this itinerary to focus on Cambodia's rarest species with visits to some of our favorite locations. The first half of our itinerary is anchored by five nights in Siem Reap, with day trips five excellent locations and a return each night to our comfortable Siem Reap hotel. The middle of the tour explores the rural north. A trip on the Mekong River and the newly described Cambodian Tailorbird outside of Phnom Penh round out the trip.

## **ITINERARY**

### **Day 1, February 20:**

#### **Arrival via Siem Reap International Airport**

Arrival and transfer from the Siem Reap International Airport to our hotel. Participants will arrive throughout the day and we'll meet for dinner at our hotel at 6 PM. If you choose to arrive before the tour we can help make your arrangements to stay at the same hotel if you'd like.

Siem Reap International Airport has regular air service from many major regional hubs, including Bangkok, Seoul, Hong Kong, and Singapore. After making your travel arrangements to Siem Reap, please let us know your arrival information so we can schedule a car to pick you up at the airport. The shuttle time from the new Siem Reap Airport to the hotel is about 40-50 minutes.

Overnight in Siem Reap at the Sonalong Boutique Village and Resort.

### **Day 2, February 21:**

#### **Birding Angkor Wat: Including the Temples of Angkor Wat, Ta Prohm, and Bayon**

No trip to Cambodia, birding or otherwise, would be complete without a visit to the incomparable Angkor Wat complex. Surviving since the 12th century, this UNESCO World Heritage site is the largest religious monument in the world. Just six kilometers north of central Siem Reap, this stunning and di-

verse ancient architecture also offers excellent birding among its sprawling vegetated grounds. The open forests surrounding Angkor Wat provide easy birding and a gentle introduction on the first full day of our Cambodia tour.

We'll begin the day early, leaving the hotel around 5 AM and arriving in the pre-dawn to look for Brown Boobook and Asian Barred Owlet. We'll then spend the rest of the morning birding the forested grounds and gardens. Angkor Wat, the main attraction of the Angkor Archaeological Park, is surrounded by mature dry forest and undergrowth, offering habitat for common species and the odd rarity, including: Oriental Darter, Hainan Blue, Taiga and Asian Brown Flycatchers, White-throated Rock-Thrush, Black Baza, Blue Rock Thrush, Forest Wagtail, Olive-backed Pipit, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Coppersmith Barbet, Ashy Minivet, Yellow-browed and Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler, raucous Red-breasted and Alexandrine Parakeets, and White-crested Laughingthrush.

By late morning, the birding will have cooled off and we'll spend the rest of the day touring the impressive ancient temples. Our local leader is also a licensed temple guide and we'll tour a few of the most spectacular and famous structures, including Ta Prohm, Bayon Temple, and Angkor Wat Temple.

Overnight in Siem Reap at the Sonalong Boutique Village and Resort.

### **Day 3, February 22:**

#### **Prek Toal Waterbird Colonies and Tonle Sap**

Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary lies on the northwest shore of Tonle Sap Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. The Prek Toal area consists of seasonally inundated freshwater swamp forest with incredibly high botanical diversity. Short tree shrub makes up most of the landscape, forming a dense understory with scattered large trees, which provide the vital nesting ground for large water birds.

In Cambodia and throughout South East Asia, Prek Toal is unmatched for the numbers of endangered water birds it supports during the dry season (December-March). Our visit will be timed perfectly to coincide with an incredible concentration of wintering waterbirds, including a number of rare and difficult to find species.

The sanctuary harbors seven species of global conservation significance: Spot-billed Pelican, Milky and Painted Storks, Lesser Adjutant, Greater Adjutant, Black-headed Ibis, and Oriental Darter and has a globally significant population of Grey-headed Fish Eagle. Since the Core Reserve was declared in 2002 and came under the protection of the Cambodian Ministry of Environment as advised by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the numbers of all the above species have fortunately increased.

To reach the reserve we'll begin early (about 5:30 AM) with a short drive from our hotel in Siem Reap, followed by about an hour-long boat trip to Prek Toal Village. Here we'll board a second boat to head into the Core Reserve, birding along the way. In the Core Reserve, we'll visit the bird observation towers which provide a fantastic vantage of the entire area. After lunch, we may have an opportunity to take a tour of the floating village on Tonle Sap. Breakfast will be a boxed breakfast served on board the first boat and lunch will be at a restaurant in the floating village. Dinner will be at a restaurant in Siem Reap.

Overnight in Siem Reap at the Sonalong Boutique Village and Resort.

#### **Day 4, February 23:**

#### **Ang Trapaeng Thmor Sarus Crane Reserve**

In addition to being a staging ground for more than 300 Sarus Cranes during the dry season, over 200 species of birds have been recorded at the Ang Trapaeng Thmor Reserve (ATT), of which 18 are classified as globally or near globally threatened. The area is a mix of open fields, wetlands, gallery forests, and a large trapaeng, or reservoir, which was created with slave labor under the Khmer Rouge. The main birding area is about 90 minutes drive from the hotel and we'll leave around 5 AM to get there at daylight. We'll make many productive stops today to bird much of this habitat from on or near the roads. We'll also take a couple of short walks into the forest to look for roosting owls and other species. Spotted Owlet, Spotted Wood Owl, Eastern Barn Owl, and Barred Owlet all reside in the forests of ATT and we've had great success in past trips finding several of these at day roosts.

During the dry season, several Black-necked Storks frequent the site along with many of the large water birds seen at Prek Toal, including Black-headed Ibis, Milky and Painted Storks, Spot-billed Pelican, Oriental Darter Asian Openbill, and Greater and Lesser Adjutants. Several pairs of Bengal Floricans breed here during the dry months, though they are quite wary. Other grassland specialists that we may encounter include Red Avadavat, Blue-breasted Quail, and Pied and Eastern Marsh Harrier. The marshy edges of the reservoir hold Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacana and Gray-headed Swampphen. We sometimes find Comb Ducks lurking along the wooded edge of the reservoir.

We should make it back to Siem Reap in the afternoon with time to check out a local bat roost near our hotel where both Large and Lyle's fruit bats can be observed. Dinner at a local Siem Reap restaurant.

Overnight in Siem Reap at Sonalong Boutique Village and Resort.

## **Day 5, February 24:**

### **Changkan Roi**

Aaron scouted this newly developed birding site before our 2024 trip and we are very excited to add Changkan Roi to our itinerary for the first time in 2026. Changkan Roi is located in an excellent piece of evergreen forest in Siem Reap Province. Here, the local villagers, along with assistance from SVC, have developed two forest birding blinds. With regular feeding and observation these blinds have produced incredible results. The two main attractions here are Bar-bellied Pitta and the near-mythical Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo, both of which have proven to be regular since first discovered here in 2023. Other possibilities include Siamese Flameback, Scaly-breasted Partridge, Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher, Siberian Blue Robin, Asian Emerald Dove, Puff-throated Babbler, and Large-billed Scimitar Babbler.

We'll need to our hotel in Siem Reap very early this morning (around 4:30AM) to make the 90-minute drive north to Changkan Roi and be situated in the first blind by dawn. Much of today's birding is focused around the two excellent blinds of Changkan Roi, but we will make a couple walks in the forest to break up the day of birding. Breakfast will be in the field and lunch provided by the Changkan Roi Eco-tourism project. Dinner at a local Siem Reap restaurant.

Overnight in Siem Reap at Sonalong Boutique Village and Resort.

## **Day 6, February 25:**

### **Birding the Prolay Grasslands in the Morning. Tmatboey in the Afternoon**

The critically endangered Bengal Florican can be found in the Prolay Grasslands north of Tonle Sap Lake, and this striking bustard is the focus of our visit to these grasslands. If we arrive early (5 AM departure from the hotel), finding the florican is usually straightforward here, as they display in the early morning by leaping above the grassland. At this early hour, the grasslands are alive with bird song and activity. A songbird specialty of the site is Manchurian Reed Warbler, a winter visitor that can often be found in the tall grass away from water. Greater-spotted and Imperial Eagles also winter in the area in small numbers along with Eastern Marsh Harrier, Pied Harrier, Black Kite, and Peregrine Falcon.

After our early morning visit to the Prolay Grasslands, we'll head toward the forests of Tmatboey. Tmatboey is an isolated village of 220 families located in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. Tmatboey supports globally important breeding populations of two critically endangered Ibis species: the Giant Ibis and the White-shouldered Ibis. Because of this, it is the site of a unique community ecotourism project established by the Ministry of Environment and the Wildlife Con-

servation Society's (WCS) Cambodia Program. The Tmatboey Ibis Project aims to directly link birding tourism, bird conservation, and community development. A conservation contribution is levied on each visitor (included in your tour cost), which is used for infrastructure improvements and other development projects, as part of the agreement with WCS to conserve wildlife and maintain natural habitats.

**Breakfast today in the field. Lunch at a local restaurant. Dinner at the Tmatboey Ecolodge.**

The Tmatboey ecolodge is comprised of a central open air dining building and surrounding bungalows. The bungalows—basic, but comfortable—have electricity and hot running water. However, the entire ecolodge is currently being renovated with a target completion date of July 2025. If the construction stays on schedule we should be treated with greatly upgraded facilities.

**Overnight at Tmatboey Ecolodge.**

## **Day 7, February 26:**

### **Tmatboey Ecolodge**

Tmatboey is one of the most important birding sites in Cambodia and has always been a favorite location of ours, so on this itinerary, we'll spend three nights here. At Tmatboey, we'll bird a variety of habitats in a tapestry of open woodlands, seasonally-inundated grasslands, deciduous dipterocarp forest, and scattered wetlands. This landscape supports an unparalleled assemblage of threatened bird and mammal species and is perhaps the richest remaining example of the characteristic deciduous dipterocarp forest in Cambodia.

Tmatboey is one of only two known nesting sites for Giant Ibis, which nest in large trees in the forest away from the village. We hope to see them at their roost trees or foraging at seasonal pools. Occasionally a nest is accessible during our stay. White-shouldered Ibis are found closer to the village where they are reliant on the grassland clearings among the dipterocarp forest. Woolly-necked Stork is relatively common here and can sometimes be seen in flocks of over 40. Indian Spotted Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, and White-rumped Falcon occur at low densities.

**Overnight at Tmatboey Ecolodge.**

## **Day 8, February 27:**

### **Tmatboey Ecolodge**

We'll have a second full day to enjoy the habitats at Tmatboey and work on more difficult targets, like Pale-capped Pigeon, which occurs here in low-densities. An amazing diversity of woodpeckers calls Tmatboey home, including the world's largest woodpecker, the Great Slaty Woodpecker and rarer finds like Yellow-crowned and Black-headed Woodpecker.

Tmatboey is one of the flagship ecotourism projects in Cambodia and it strives to connect local villagers to the lodge by providing income and financial incentives for conservation. Local villagers, now trained as bird guides, have made a special effort to find owls on their day roosts, and with their assistance, we have a great opportunity to find a long list of owls here, including Brown Fish Owl, Spotted and Brown Wood Owl, Spotted Owlet, and Collared and Oriental Scops Owl.

Overnight at Tmatboey Ecolodge.

## **Day 9, February 28:**

### **Tmatboey to Boeng Toal**

After our final morning at Tmatboey, we'll make an afternoon drive to Boeng Toal, near Dongphlet in the Chhep Protected Forest. Wall tents will be set up for the night by the Dongphlet Village Ecotourism Committee members. Here we'll observe another example of WCS helping to promote conservation through economic incentives. The influx of birding tourism to this site is helping reinforce the importance of preserving habitats and wildlife and providing an economic incentive to do so.

Our campsite at Boeng Toal is close to the village of Dongphlet in Chepp district but is within Preah Vihear Protected Forest, and the area around the "Vulture Restaurant" allows access to excellent dry deciduous forest containing many of the same species found at Tmatboey. We'll take a late afternoon walk through the forest where we may get our first views of three species of vulture.

Overnight in a tent camp at Boeng Toal.

## **Day 10, March 1:**

### **Morning at the Vulture Restaurant of Boeng Toal. Afternoon drive to Kratie.**

The “Vulture Restaurant” is exactly that, a feeding program set up by WCS to help sustain three critically endangered species of vulture: Red-headed, White-rumped, and Slender-billed Vultures. The world populations of these vultures have suffered dramatically from diclofenac poisoning, a veterinary drug commonly given to cattle. This has caused a drastic decline in the populations of Asian vultures. Fortunately, in Cambodia cattle are not given this drug, allowing Cambodia to hang on to a small, but stable populations of vultures.

Before dawn, we’ll make our way to a blind positioned not far from the Vulture Restaurant. Up to 70 vultures may be present, often competing for the carcass with golden jackal and dhol (a species of wild dog). After leaving the blind we may have some time to bird the dry forests for any species that we may have missed at Tmatboey.

In the late morning, we leave Boeng Toal and head toward Kratie, arriving there in the afternoon. We’ll stop at a small marsh near Kratie, where we may see large numbers of weavers including Asian Golden and Streaked Weaver and other wetland birds.

Overnight in Kratie at the Mekong Dolphin Hotel.

## **Day 11, March 2:**

### **Morning in Kratie for Mekong Wagtail and Irrawaddy Dolphin.**

### **Afternoon to Phnom Penh via the Cambodian Tailorbird**

In the early morning we’ll leave our hotel and board a boat on the Mekong River to look for the Mekong Wagtail, a regional endemic first described for science in 2001. This wagtail is restricted to channel island habitats where we may also find Indian Spot-billed Duck, Little Ringed-Plover, and Golden-bellied Gerygone. Plying the quiet channels of the braided Mekong River will also provide us with the opportunity to see the rare Irrawaddy dolphins that frequent this part of the river.

After lunch in Kratie, we’ll travel to Phnom Penh, Cambodia’s bustling capital city for our final night. Today’s drive is the longest of the trip, but we’ll make a couple birding stops along the way, including a stop to look for the newly discovered Cambodian Tailorbird. This Cambodian endemic was not discovered until 2009 and was formally described for science in 2013! It is found only in the floodplain wetlands where the mighty Mekong river meets the Tonle Sap and Bassac Rivers. This area is also excellent



for open-country species such as Plain-backed Sparrow and we often see large waterbirds such as Oriental Darter and Painted Stork. In the scrub where the tailorbird is found, we should also see a range of winter visitors, such as Black-browed Reed-warbler, Brown Shrike and Siberian Rubythroat.

Night in Phnom Penh at the Duong Chan Hotel.

## **Day 12, March 3:**

### **Departure day**

Farewell breakfast and transfer to the Phnom Penh International Airport for your flight home.

## **TOUR DETAILS**

We are very pleased to partner with the Sam Veasna Center (SVC) for this tour. SVC is a Cambodian non-profit conservation organization whose goal is to provide alternative sustainable livelihoods from ecotourism for the communities that live in and around critical conservation areas. The ecolodges that we'll use are a direct result of SVC's efforts and help to conserve Cambodia's riches by employing local guides, cooks, and support staff for our tour. A portion of your tour fee goes to support these conservation and community development efforts.

**LEADERS:** Aaron Lang and a Mony Sang from SVC.

**Group Size:** 7 participants

**TOUR COST:** \$5,200; Single Supplement: \$350

Note: Single supplement may not be available at Tmatboey and Boeng Toal (4 nights total)

**TOUR BEGINS:** Siem Reap, Cambodia

**TOUR ENDS:** Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**THE PRICE INCLUDES:** Guides, airport transfers, ground transportation throughout the tour, lodging, and all meals (beginning with dinner on the evening of February 20 and ending with breakfast on March 3), entrance fees to temples, parks and reserves, and conservation contributions.

**NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE:** Your travel to/from Cambodia, visa fees, airport tax, trip insurance, alcoholic beverages, laundry, phone calls, other personal expenses, and tips for local guide and drivers.

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** A deposit of \$1,000 is required upon registration. The remaining balance is due 90 days prior to the tour (November 20, 2025.)

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** If you must cancel, your deposit and any payments (minus a \$100 administrative fee) will be refunded with notification to us at least 120 days prior to departure (October 20, 2025.) With 90-119 days notice of cancellation, all but your deposit will be refunded. With less than 90 days notice, no refund is available. We recommend that you obtain travel insurance.

**TRIP CANCELLATION/TRAVEL INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend trip insurance. Trip cancellation insurance covers you if you have to cancel. Travel insurance provides coverages for medical, theft, etc. during your travels. To shop for either, check out [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com).

**TOUR PACE AND STYLE:** Generally speaking this tour moderately physically demanding. Birding will be done primarily by walking along roads and trails through forests and grasslands, mostly on level ground. Expect to walk more than five miles per day, sometimes on uneven or rugged ground. We'll also bird a bit from vehicles, and boats on two occasions. Because Cambodia is a hot country, it will be often be necessary to be in the field before dawn to catch the birds when they are most active. Most days we'll leave the hotel between 5 and 5:30 AM, occasionally earlier. During the heat of the day when birding is usually quite slow, we'll return to our accommodations when possible and rest up before heading back out in the afternoon and evening.

**CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT:** We will be in Cambodia during the dry season (December to March). Expect daytime temperatures in the 80s (F), occasionally higher. Nighttime temperatures are typically in the mid 60s though occasionally a cold snap will drop to the mid-50s. Rain is unlikely, but possible.

Loose-fitting clothing in natural, subdued colors are best, giving protection from the sun and mosquitoes. Comfortable lightweight hiking shoes/boots are essential. A light jacket is all you might need for cool evenings. Other essentials to bring: sunscreen, insect repellent, flashlight, alarm clock, small day-pack, binoculars, and bird book. Your leaders will have scopes, but you're welcome to travel with your own as well. Make sure you travel with your binoculars and medications in your carry-on in case of any delay or loss of your baggage. If you're arriving in Cambodia early, Siem Reap is a large city and most things such as sunscreen, insect repellent, toiletries, and clothing can be purchased there.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD:** The hotels that we'll stay in very comfortable, well-run hotels that incorporate Khmer culture and offer many of the same amenities you would expect from hotels in developed countries. The community eco-lodge at Tmatboey is more rustic and is described in the itinerary, although renovations here are scheduled to be completed prior to our tour. At Boeng Toal we will spend one night camping in "safari-type" wall tents and sleep on cots. Food outside the cosmopolitan centers of Siem Reap and Phnom Penh is generally Khmer. Khmer cuisine incorporates local produce, meat, and fish. You'll find similarities with the more internationally known Thai cuisine, but Khmer dishes have a uniquely Cambodian feel and often lack the fiery spice of Thai food. Bottled and/or filtered water will be carried with us and available throughout the tour.

**REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure date and a one-month tourist visa are required for entry into Cambodia. Most nationalities (including the US and Canada) receive this on arrival at Siem Reap airport, and at all land borders for a fee of \$35. One passport-sized photo (2 inches x 2 inches) is required. It is also possible, though not necessary, to arrange a visa through Cambodian embassies overseas or an online e-visa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH:** All participants should bring a good quantity of all their prescription and over the counter drugs and medical supplies. Away from Siem Reap and Phnom Penh it will be difficult to find even the most common over the counter drugs. In the case of serious injury or illness, evacuation to Bangkok or elsewhere might be required, as definitive medical care in Cambodia is limited. If your health insurance doesn't cover emergency evacuation internationally, you might consider getting a temporary coverage plan. Global Rescue is one company that offers such plans. (<https://www.globalrescue.com/partner/samveasna/>)

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and typhoid. Dengue is present in urban areas but is less prevalent during the dry season (December-March). Malaria risk is present throughout the year in all forested and rural areas and malaria precautions are considered essential for participation in this tour, including mosquito avoidance (long sleeves, bug spray) and also anti-malarial prophylactics. A chloroquine-resistant strain of malaria occurs in Cambodia so make sure to consult your physician regarding anti-malarial prophylactics for specific use in Cambodia, (and for general health advice) at least four to six weeks prior to departure.

Vaccination against Covid-19 is no longer required by the Cambodian government and they also no longer require testing or quarantine on arrival.

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) website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/cambodia>.

**CURRENCY:** The official currency of Cambodia is the riel, but US dollars (USD) are ubiquitously accepted throughout the country and prices in many restaurants and shops are listed in USD, although change is frequently given back to you in riel. The exchange rate is approximately 4000 riel/1 USD. ATM's are widely available in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, giving USD against most credit and even debit cards though a fee is incurred for using an international card. Large bills may be difficult to break, especially outside of the cities, and we recommend having plenty of \$1 and \$5 notes on hand for low-cost items in small towns and villages.

**TIPPING:** While people in the tourism industry are accustomed to tips from their clients, tipping in Cambodia has no set rules and normally people tip according to their satisfaction with the provided services.

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

Robson, Craig. A Guide to the Birds of Southeast Asia. Princeton University Press, 2005.

Das, I. A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-East Asia. London, UK: New Holland. 2010.

Francis, C. A Field Guide to the mammals of Thailand and South-East Asia. UK: New Holland. 2008.

Ray, N. Cambodia. Lonely Planet: Melbourne, 2002.