

Singapore's Vibrant Birdlife

By Anne Pinto-Rodrigues

In Singapore's ultra-urban environment, it is easy to forget that we share space with many species of flora and fauna. Singapore's green spots such as MacRitchie Reservoir Park, the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and various others, provide shelter to nearly 300 species of resident birds and about 100 species of migratory birds. They are an absolute delight to observe and photograph. Here are a few snapshots of the vibrant birdlife of Singapore.



A male, Pink-necked Green Pigeon (*Treron vernans*) dries himself off after the rain, photographed in the East Coast area. The male has a distinctive pink neck and this species of pigeon is predominantly fruit-eating.



A female, Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker (*Picoides moluccensis*) busy at work, photographed in the East Coast area. This is the smallest woodpecker species found in Singapore with the adult measuring about 12cm. It is usually seen moving rapidly on tree trunks and branches.



A White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) stuck in a downpour, photographed in the East Coast area. It is a large kingfisher species, with the adult measuring about 30cm. It is a tree kingfisher, feeding on a wide variety of prey, including smaller birds.



A colourful Coppersmith Barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala*) enjoys the afternoon sun, photographed in the East Coast area. The Coppersmith Barbet has a metallic sounding call, reminiscent of a hammer hitting a copper sheet. Hence the name.



A Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus goiavier*) warms up after the rain, photographed in the East Coast area. One of the most common birds in Singapore, the Yellow-vented Bulbul is a fruit eater and plays an important role in seed dispersal.



A pair of Collared Kingfishers (*Todiramphus chloris*), photographed in the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. This is a mid-sized kingfisher with the female appearing greener than the male. They are known for their aggressive behaviour towards other birds and even land animals.



A male, Laced Woodpecker (*Picus vittatus*) photographed in the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. The male of the species has a red crown while the female's is black. In addition to eating insects off tree trunks like most woodpeckers, this species is also known to forage on the ground.



A female, Olive-backed Sunbird (*Nectarinia jugularis*) photographed in the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. The male is more colourful, with a metallic blue-black face and upper chest. They feed primarily on nectar with the help of their long, slender bills.

Anne Pinto-Rodrigues is a birdwatching enthusiast and writes about her birdwatching experiences on her blog No Roads Barred (www.noroadbarred.wordpress.com)

All photos by the author