Best of Vietnam Birding & Culture

Start: Ho Chi Minh City 13 April 2027 **Small Group Tour:** Max 10 Passengers

Ends: Hanoi 28 April 2027 **Duration:** 16 days

Coates Wildlife Trip Dossier

Discover Vietnam's Wild Beauty and Rich Heritage

Vietnam is often celebrated for its rich culture and history, but it is also a hidden gem brimming with some of Southeast Asia's most sought-after birds and rare mammals. Our adventure takes you from the lush waterways of the Mekong Delta and the lowland jungles of Cat Tien to the cool highlands of Dalat and the ancient forests of Cuc Phuong. Along the way, you'll seek out dazzling endemics like the Collared Laughingthrush and Vietnamese Greenfinch and marvel at the vibrant Bar-bellied and Blue-rumped Pittas.

The adventure isn't just about birds; we also hope for encounters with rare primates like Delacour's Langur and Buff-cheeked Gibbon, dazzling reptiles such as Tokay Gecko and the Indochinese Flying Lizard and mammals from the diminutive Lesser Mouse Deer to Gaur, the largest species of wild cattle. Each day brings fresh landscapes and experiences, ranging from sampan rides through the Mekong's bird-rich wetlands to serene forest trails filled with birdsong and the rustle of wildlife.

Xung Khiem Pavilion, Hue

Highlights

Day 1	**Ho Chi Minh City** Arrive in Vietnam and explore the city's iconic colonial landmarks and bustling Ben Thanh Market.
Day 2	**Mekong Delta** Cruise the tranquil waterways of the Mekong Delta, visit riverside villages and experience local life aboard a traditional river barge.
Days 3- 4	**Cat Tien National Park** Discover one of Vietnam's premier wildlife reserves, renowned for its exceptional birdlife, primates and tropical rainforest.
Days 5-8	**Di Linh & Dalat Plateau** Explore the montane forests of Vietnam's Central Highlands in search of the region's many endemic birds, while enjoying the cool mountain scenery around Dalat.
Days 9-10	**Hoi An** Fly to Central Vietnam and explore the beautifully preserved UNESCO World Heritage town of Hoi An, including the ancient Cham temples of My Son.
Days 11-12	**Hue & Hanoi** Visit the former imperial capital of Hue before flying to Hanoi to discover Vietnam's vibrant capital city.
Days 13-14	**Cuc Phuong National Park** Enjoy two days birdwatching in Vietnam's oldest national park, home to limestone forests, rare birds and diverse wildlife.
Day 15	**Van Long Nature Reserve & Hanoi** Cruise through Van Long Nature Reserve in search of the endangered Delacour's Langur before returning to Hanoi for a city tour.
Day 16	**Hanoi** Transfer to the airport for your onward flight home.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Ho Chi Minh City

Arrive at Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat International Airport and transfer to your accommodation. In the afternoon, explore key city landmarks including Notre Dame Cathedral, the Old Saigon Post Office, the former Presidential Palace, and Ben Thanh Market.

Overnight: Ho Chi Minh City. Meals: D

Day 2: Ho Chi Minh City to Mekong Delta

After breakfast, leave Ho Chi Minh City and head south by road to Can Tho in the Mekong Delta. Upon arrival in Can Tho, board our comfortable, traditional wooden barge and enjoy a welcome drink with the crew. After checking in, lunch will be served on board as we set off downstream on the Hau River towards Mang Thit. Relax on deck and take in the lush tropical scenery of the vibrant delta waterways, fruit orchards, and sugarcane fields. A visit to a village along the banks of the River Mang Thít offers a chance to experience the local way of life and warm hospitality. After returning on board, enjoy a pre-dinner drink on the upper deck as the sun sets before dinner.

Overnight: On board the Mekong Eyes Cruise. Meals: B, L & D

Day 3: Mekong Delta to Cat Tien National Park (via Ho Chi Minh City)

Enjoy breakfast while cruising to Cai Be. Explore the peaceful backwaters by sampan and visit a local handicraft market. Disembark and head back to Ho Chi Minh City, stopping for lunch along the way. Continue to Cat Tien National Park, which hosts a variety of birds and mammals, including Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Green Peafowl, and several species of primates.

Overnight: Cat Tien National Park. Meals: B, L & D

Day 4: Cat Tien National Park

A full day of birding at Cat Tien National Park. Excellent trails start right at the park headquarters, while areas further afield, such as Crocodile Lake, can be reached by park jeeps. Spectacular avian delights in Cat Tien's semi-evergreen forest include Germain's Peacock-pheasant, Siamese Fireback, Blue-rumped and Bar-bellied Pittas, Dusky, Black-and-red and Banded Broadbills, Orange-breasted Trogon, and Great, Oriental Pied and Wreathed Hornbills. Cat Tien is woodpecker heaven, with 17 species on the park list, including Heart-spotted, Pale-headed, Black-and-buff, Great Slaty and White-bellied. Lesser Adjutant, Asian Woollyneck and Crested Serpent-eagle can often be seen circling over the forest.

Overnight at Cat Tien National Park. Meals: B, L & D

Day 5: Cat Tien National Park to Di Linh

Enjoy an early morning of birdwatching before heading to the Dalat Plateau. The afternoon is devoted to birdwatching at a forested mountain pass known locally as Deo Suoi Lanh, just a short drive from Di Linh. The montane evergreen forest at Deo Suoi Lanh offers an excellent opportunity to familiarise yourself with some of the specialities of the Dalat Plateau, including Maroon Oriole, Grey-crowned Tit, Black-headed Parrotbill, Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes, and Yellow-billed Nuthatch.

Overnight: Di Linh. Meals: B, L & D

Day 6: Di Linh to Dalat

Return to Deo Suoi Lanh for morning birdwatching, seeking species such as Bar-backed Partridge, Blue Pitta, and Indochinese Green Magpie. After lunch, continue north along Highway 20 to the bustling hill resort of Dalat and start exploring some of the exciting birding sites around town.

Overnight: Dalat. Meals: B, L & D

Days 7–8: Dalat

Two days of birding in the montane evergreen and coniferous forests around Dalat include visits to Mount Lang Bian, the shores of Ho Tuyen Lam and the Ta Nung Valley.

The Dalat Plateau is one of the endemic hotspots of South-East Asia. It is home to many unique species and subspecies, including the Dalat Shrike-babbler, Annam Minivet, Annam Prinia, Annam Grasshopper-warbler, Black-crowned Fulvetta, Collared Laughingthrush, Grey-crowned Crocias, Langbian and Annam Sunbirds, and Vietnamese Greenfinch. Other local specialities comprise Lowe's Green-pigeon, Red-vented, Necklaced and Annam Barbets, Rusty-naped and Blue Pittas, Slender-billed Oriole, Yellow-crowned Green Magpie, Langbian Tit, Brown-backed Bulbul, and Grey-crowned Tit. The Black-headed Parrotbill, Vietnamese Cutia, Black-hooded and White-cheeked Laughingthrushes, White-spectacled Sibia, Plain Minla, Manipur Treecreeper, Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Langbian Lesser Shortwing, and Red Crossbill are also notable.

Mammals found in the forests of the Dalat Plateau include Black Giant and Pallas's Squirrels and the chipmunk-like Cambodian Striped Squirrel.

Overnights: Dalat. Meals: B, L & D

Day 9: Dalat to Hoi An (via & Danang)

An early morning transfer to Dalat Airport to arrive in good time for the 07:50 flight to Danang in

Central Vietnam. On arrival at Danang, transfer the 25 km to Hoi An by road. Hoi An was a major trading port in the 17th and 18th centuries, and its architecture and relaxed lifestyle have changed little over the years.

In the afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the ancient town centre to visit former merchants' houses, the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge, a Chinese communal hall and the colourful market.
Overnight at Hoi An. Meals: B, L & D

Day 10: Hoi An

Depart Hoi An after breakfast for a half-day tour to the capital and religious centre of the former Champa Kingdom, My Son. Here, 40 km south-west of Hoi An, in a lush green valley, are dozens of red brick towers and sanctuaries dating from between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The afternoon is at leisure in Hoi An.
Overnight at Hoi An. Meals: B, L & D

Day 11: Hoi An to Hue

Depart Hoi An after a leisurely breakfast, driving north to the former imperial capital of Hue. Transfer to hotel on arrival and in the afternoon visit the elaborate mausoleums of emperors Tu Duc and Khai Dinh on the banks of the Perfume River. Overnight at Hue.
Overnight: Hue. Meals: B, L & D

Day 12: Hue to Hanoi

A morning cultural tour of Hue features the Imperial Citadel, where the Nguyen Dynasty ruled from 1802 to 1945, and Thien Mu Pagoda, renowned for its seven-tiered tower. In the early afternoon, catch a flight to Hanoi and transfer to the hotel upon arrival.
Overnight: Hanoi. Meals: B, L & D

Day 13: Hanoi to Cuc Phuong National Park

After breakfast, head south from Hanoi to Cuc Phuong National Park, which is a three-hour drive away. As the first national park established in Vietnam, Cuc Phuong features limestone hills blanketed in primary rainforest. The best birdwatching occurs at the park's centre, where several excellent trails, such as the Loop Trail and the Valley Trail, can be explored. The main road through the park can also be very productive for overwintering thrushes, especially early in the morning.
Overnight: Cuc Phuong National Park. Meals: B, L & D

Day 14: Cuc Phuong National Park

A full-day birding experience at Cuc Phuong features specialities such as the elusive Red-collared Woodpecker, Pied Falconet, Bar-bellied Pitta, Blue-rumped Pitta, Eared Pitta, Silver-breasted Broadbill, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, White-winged Magpie, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava, Limestone Leaf-warbler, and Greyish Limestone-babbler. Huge Black Giant Squirrels are occasionally spotted feeding in the forest canopy, while snakes found here include the King Cobra.
Overnight: Cuc Phuong National Park. Meals: B, L & D

Day 15: Cuc Phuong to Hanoi via Van Long Nature Reserve

Depart Cuc Phuong after breakfast for the journey back to Hanoi, stopping along the way at Van Long Nature Reserve to take a sampan through flooded rice fields to the dramatic limestone cliffs that are home to the critically endangered endemic primate, Delacour's Langur. Several fascinating bird species can also be found here, including the White-browed Crake, and during the winter months, there are often large numbers of storks, herons, and waterfowl. Continue to Hanoi and check into the hotel. In the afternoon, enjoy a leisurely city tour of this unique Asian capital, a city renowned for its temples, lakes, and tree-lined boulevards.

Overnight: Hanoi. Meals: B, L & D

Day 16: Departure from Hanoi

Enjoy your leisure time in Hanoi before your transfer to Noi Bai International Airport for your departure flight. Meals: B

NOTE: The above itinerary may be varied according to conditions and advice

Cat Tien National Park

Tour Cost:	AUD $11,375.00	Per Person Twin Share
	AUD $ 1,525.00	Single Supplement

Tour Payments

- Deposit: At the time of booking, AUD $1200.00 per person
- Final Payment: On or before **13 February 2027**

Notes:

The deposit is non-refundable, and the final payment is non-refundable after **13 February 2027**

Groups of six or more participants will be accompanied by an Australian tour escort. Our local Vietnamese naturalist guide will lead groups of fewer than six passengers.

Prices are based on all known costs and current exchange rates. Any significant changes beyond our control may be passed on to participants.

Travel insurance covering all payments is **essential**.

Included

- Local Naturalist /Birding Guide
- Land content as set out in the itinerary;
- Fast-track immigration service on arrival at Ho Chi Minh City
- Airport transfers by private air-conditioned vehicles with drivers.
- Accommodation and meals from Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 16.
- Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An, My Son, Hue and Hanoi tours with an English-speaking guide and entrance fees.
- Mekong Delta overnight cruise including lunch, dinner, breakfast and sightseeing tours with a local guide.
- Domestic flights from Dalat to Danang & Hue to Hanoi
- One drink with meals included (apart from Wine and Spirits)

Not Included

- Visa and international airfares to Ho Chi Minh City and from Hanoi
- Travel insurance policy that includes emergency medical evacuation and tour cancellation before travel to Vietnam
- All other private expenses;
- Personal expenses, such as telephone calls, laundry and any other personal expenses.

General Tour Information

Flights:

The tour starts in Ho Chi Minh City and ends in Hanoi. The international airfare is not included in the tour price. You can book your flights online, or your travel agent can assist with the booking.
Please ensure you arrive in Ho Chi Minh City on or **before 13 April 2027** and depart **on or after 28 April 2027**. Once you've made your bookings, please send us a copy of your flight itinerary.

Pre & Post Tour Accommodation:

The tour includes accommodation on day 1 and the last night (day 15). Please contact us if you'd like to stay extra days before or after the tour.

Visa & Passport:

Australian residents will need an eVisa for stays of up to 90 days. You can log in and apply online **at https://thithucdientu.gov.vn/login**
Your passport must be valid for at least three months from the date of entry.

If you don't have an Australian passport, please contact the office or your travel agent to determine your specific requirements.

Travel Insurance:

Before travelling to Vietnam, it is essential to obtain a travel insurance policy that covers emergency medical evacuation and tour cancellation.

Accommodation:

Ho Chi Minh City: Icon Saigon Hotel
Mekong Delta: Bassac Cruises
Cat Tien National Park: Cat Tien HQ Guest House
Di Linh: Ivory Falls Resort
Dalat: Dreams Hotel
Hoi An: Betel Garden Resort
Hue: Orchid Hotel
Hanoi: Hong Ngoc Cochinchine Hotel
Cuc Phuong National Park: Cuc Phuong HQ Guest House

Meals:

The itinerary includes all meals (B = breakfast, L = lunch, and D = dinner). We can generally accommodate special dietary requirements with prior notice. Please get in touch with the office if you have any special dietary needs, as a surcharge may apply.

Weather:

May is one of the best months to travel in Vietnam. The country is divided into three regions, each offering slightly different weather. The central region is at its best, while the south is slowly approaching its wet season. The north also starts to see more rain, although temperatures rise as it moves into its hot, sticky summer. Rainfall throughout the country generally occurs in short downpours during the mid to late afternoons.

Clothing:

Your pre-departure information, sent about one month before departure, will include a suggested list of items to pack

Bar-bellied Pitta

To make a booking or for further information, please contact:

Coates Wildlife Tours
"Specialist in nature tours since 1986"

Address: P.O. Box 1208, Booragoon, WA, 6954

Mobile: Tom Grove 0414958266 **Mobile**: Sylvia Grove 0400218169

Email: info@coateswildlifetours.com.au Web: www.coateswildlifetours.com.au