



**BIRDING TOURS THAILAND:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



PASSPORT AND VISA

Some visitors may require a visa depending on the country of origin or length of stay. Please check your government's advice. Your passport must be valid for a period of at least six months after the date of your arrival in Thailand. Please make sure that there is at least one full empty page available in your passport. Also please bring a photocopy of your passport, to be kept in a different location from your passport, in case of loss or damage.

In the north of the country we bird near the Myanmar (Burma) border, and we pass through a number of military roadblocks, where identification will likely need to be shown.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you purchase trip and cancellation insurance to protect yourself against accidents, medical, illness, loss of valuables, luggage, etc., and travel interruptions or delays of all kinds.

HEALTH

Please consult your doctor regarding any vaccine requirements. All travelers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters (e.g. tetanus). There is no risk of yellow fever transmission in Thailand; however, there is a certificate requirement if travelers have visited or come from the following countries: <http://www.who.int/ith/2015-ith-annex1.pdf?ua=1>. Some travelers may require Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, and Rabies vaccinations. The risk of malaria is considered low, though you should seek the recommendations of your doctor. Please read <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/thailand> carefully.

Sunscreen should be carried, and a hat should be worn to protect from the powerful rays of the sun, with sunglasses to help prevent glare. A plentiful supply of water should be carried at all times to maintain hydration. Insect repellent is recommended.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered with medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this trip. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high. Please notify us at the time of registering for these tours of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs and update emergency services if required.

CURRENCY

Thai Baht. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted, including for drawing cash from ATM's (as everywhere, bank charges may apply). Note: USD/EUR/GBP cannot be used for purchases. We will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon our arrival and in the various cities we pass through.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

Thailand has a tropical climate with a dry season (September-June) and a wet season (July-October). We will experience a range of temperatures on the tour, including some cold mornings in the mountains such as Doi Lang and Doi Inthanon. The birding sites around Bangkok and Chiang Mai can be hot and humid. There is always a chance of rainfall.

ELECTRICITY

The electricity is 220V, and a variety two-pronged round or flat plugs are used, ITA Types A, B, C, and O. Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances. Please also check whether your devices are 220V-compatible; if not you need a converter.

LENGTH OF DRIVES

There are a couple of days in which there are moderate drives (circa four hours). Drives are broken up where possible with birding stops and stops for refreshments etc.

WHAT TO BRING

Clothing

These are not fashion statement trips! Casual and informal dress is fine in the hotels/motels. Loose lightweight field clothing works best, with a warm fleece or jacket for cooler weather. Shorts/trousers and T-shirts are fine. You will also need to bring some warmer clothing, certainly a minimum of a warm fleece and a rain jacket. Rain is always a possibility, so an umbrella and/or rain gear is always useful to have. Early mornings can feel chilly in some areas, so come prepared, especially in the northern mountains at higher elevations.

Sunglasses, a hat and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are useful, especially around the wader sites near Bangkok, where there is little shelter from the sun. A pair of trousers or a long skirt and a long-sleeved shirt should be included to help protect against forest vegetation and the sun. Swimwear can be brought, as there are swimming pools at some of the hotels/motels.

We would recommend lightweight walking boots when out on foot. You might like to consider sandals/trainers (tennis shoes) for use in the vehicles and for walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels and lodges.

Do not forget

Binoculars, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names of these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses, camera, flashlight (torches), batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for rechargeable batteries if required), converter plug set if needed and plug adaptors, alarm clock, money pouch, field guide(s), daypacks Your guide will have a Swarovski telescope; however, if you have your own scope it is recommended that you bring it too, as this will speed up the observation of waders (shorebirds).

Key Documents and Cash

Passports, your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of which can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency, credit cards - see info above, USD, EUR, or GBP can be exchanged into Thai Baht if you prefer not to simply draw from ATM's. Cash for drinks, gifts, tips, items of a personal nature, etc., is not included in the tour price.

LUGGAGE

Due to restricted space in the vehicles please pack as lightly as possible. A medium soft-sided duffel bag (not the hard-sided cases) works best for packing in the vehicles. This allows us to better fit the bags. Please bring a daypack to keep items that you wish to use or need on a daily basis.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

There are several dangerous animals in Thailand such as tiger and leopard; however, the chance of seeing either of these beautiful creatures is very low. The most real risk is posed by Asian Elephants, which we may see in either Kaeng Krachan and/or Khao Yai. We endeavor to see these animals but remain a respectful distance from them. There are 85 species of venomous snakes in Thailand, so all snakes should be viewed from a safe distance, with care taken when walking in forests (e.g. check where you are putting your hands and feet).

CRIME

Thailand is generally a safe place to travel with very friendly people. However, as anywhere in the world it is advisable to take care and remain cautious and observant for the unexpected, especially in busy areas of Bangkok and Chiang Mai.

LANGUAGE

Thai is the main language but English is widely spoken.

FIELD GUIDES

Birds

A Field Guide to the Birds of Thailand – Craig Robson (2004, reprint 2013). New Holland/Helm.

A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia – Craig Robson (2011), New Holland/Helm.

Mammals

A Field Guide to the Mammals of South-East Asia – Charles M Francis (2008). New Holland.

Reptiles

A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-East Asia – Indraneil Das (2015). Bloomsbury Natural History.

SOUND RECORDINGS

A wide-range of CDs with bird songs (e.g. Birds of Tropical Asia) is available online or as apps and are a recommended tool for learning bird calls. In addition it is possible to download bird calls from the excellent Xeno Canto website <http://www.xeno-canto.org/>.