



*Serendip Scops Owl: Voted 'Bird of the Trip'*

## **SOUTHERN INDIA & SRI LANKA**

**13/19 NOVEMBER–8 DECEMBER 2012**

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### \* Main Tour Only

We had another excellent tour to the Andaman Islands, Southern India and Sri Lanka, seeing almost all of the hoped-for endemics and regional endemics. On the Andamans we recorded 19 of the 21 endemics, while on Sri Lanka we had a clean sweep of all 33. Owls were a speciality, with 13 species seen, many of them at daytime roosts, including Andaman, Serendip and Walden's Scops Owls (the last a new split from Oriental), three boobooks, Chestnut-backed Owlet and no less than four Brown Fish Owls and four Brown Wood Owls. We also found two Ceylon Frogmouths at their daytime roost and saw six species of nightjar. Other highlights included several Black Bitterns, Painted Bush Quail, Great Thick-knee, Small Pratincole, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Indian Pitta, Pied Ground Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, White-bellied Blue and Nigiri Blue Robins (both seen superbly) and White-bellied Treepie, as well as sightings of Leopard and Sloth Bear.

Assembling (at last) at Chennai airport, we took the 2-hour flight to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. We were greeted by low, heavy clouds and light rain, but were soon in the hotel enjoying lunch overlooking the bay and seeing our first White-bellied Sea Eagle. After a short break we trundled through the sprawl that is Port Blair and heading to Chiriyatappu. On the way we stopped off at some rocky beaches and under a leaden sky saw our first Eastern Reef Egrets and Little Herons, as well as Greater Sand Plovers, Collared and Black-capped Kingfishers and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters. At length we arrived and soon heard an Andaman Crake calling. It did not show itself, but we did see our first Andaman endemic, an Andaman Serpent Eagle perched up nicely. As dusk fell (exceptionally early here, as the Andamans are on the same time zone as the rest of India), we saw a hawking Dollarbird and a pair of Greater Racket-tailed Drongos. We then moved on to a site for Andaman Nightjar, and within a couple of minutes two were sailing around overhead. Once the light had really gone the scops owls started calling, and again we did not have long to wait before we had a Walden's Scops Owl in the torch – this is a very recent split from Oriental Scops. On the way back to the hotel we stopped off for more owls, but were greeted instead by a squall and heavy rain, so apart from eye shine (which may well have belonged to Hume's Hawk-Owl), we saw nothing and made a quick retreat from home – passing numerous fireworks, as it was the last evening of the Diwali festival.



It rained heavily overnight and was still raining when we started in the morning - very early in order to make sure that we got on to the first ferry across the bay. Once ashore we stopped at an area of mangroves (it was still raining) and, after some hard work, we had good looks at a pair of Mangrove Whistlers (the old name 'Grey Thickhead' seemed appropriate for some of the members of the group at this early hour). Moving on, we picked up a selection of waders before finding a couple of fruiting trees on the edge of a village. Common Hill Mynas were soon joined by a large flock of Andaman White-headed Starlings, then by Andaman Bulbul, Asian Fairy Bluebirds and Koel, while above there was a wheeling flock of Glossy and Edible-nest Swiftlets. A little further on we worked the road at Jirkatan for most of the rest of the morning. There were large flocks of Scarlet and Small Minivets in the trees, plenty of Andaman Drongos and after some careful searching we found a couple of Andaman Cuckoo-shrikes, both of which posed for scope views, and a single Andaman Treepie. Lower down we had good views of Andaman Shama, but Andaman

*Walden's Scops Owl*



*Andaman Teal*

Crake was not so co-operative: we heard two calling but only a couple of us actually saw the bird. Another frustration was Andaman Cuckoo-Dove, which flew off before we could really get onto it. By late morning it was time to head back, but we had one more stop. At first it seemed that we would draw a blank, but then a pair of Andaman Teals flew in and settled at close range, showing well before they went to sleep. Back at the hotel, lunch was very welcome after such a long morning, as was a break! In the late afternoon we returned

to Chiriyatappu in search of owls. En route there was a large flock of Brown Needletails, and before the light faded we had really good looks at a hulking Andaman Woodpecker, then settled down to wait. It was not long before we heard the calls of an Andaman Hawk-Owl and we had a couple of views of him perched up quite high – a very diminutive boobook. While chasing the hawk-owl an Andaman Scops Owl started calling and we soon had a view of this too, although it was a back-on view as he perched up calling. The rain then started again so we made the best of it and headed back to the hotel.

We returned to Chiriyatappu early the next morning. It had rained heavily again overnight, but we were blessed with a more-or-less dry morning. Amongst the first birds that we saw were several Forest Wagtails wandering along the road, as well as a single Orange-headed Thrush and, in the trees above, an Andaman Serpent-Eagle. We saw a few more raptors during the morning, mostly rather briefly, but did manage to identify Besra and Changeable Hawk-Eagle. Canopy birds were well represented, with a couple of noisy Violet Cuckoos, both Long-tailed and Red-breasted Parakeets, Spot-breasted Woodpeckers and Andaman White-headed Starlings, while a Brown Coucal crept up into full view, but there were no pigeons apart from the 'usual' Green Imperials. We also spent quite a lot of time chasing Andaman Crakes. The first showed well to almost everyone, while the second was astonishing as it wandered up to us a couple of times and even posed for photographs. We were back at the hotel in time for an early lunch and then returned to Chiriyatappu in the late afternoon. It rained all the way and for most of the time that we were there, putting paid to any chances of finding owls. Back in town we tried for Andaman Barn Owl (the rain having almost stopped); the numerous firecrackers, even though the festival was over, made it sound more like Damascus than Port Blair and could not have helped our chances. Predictably, we drew a blank.

We took the early morning ferry again to Bamboo Flats and headed up to Mount Harriet National Park. Despite a pre-dawn shower, it was bright and almost clear, and we had high hopes. Low down on the mountain some large fruiting trees attracted a Pied Imperial Pigeon (which showed just

*Andaman Crake*



briefly) and then some Andaman Green Pigeons, which showed in bits and pieces for a while before the whole lot took off and disappeared. The same area of trees was full of birds, however, including both woodpeckers, Andaman Bulbul, White-headed Starlings and Fairy Bluebirds, while a perched Crested Serpent Eagle showed well. A little higher up we spent some time getting views of Andaman Flowerpecker and then found a flock of around fifteen Andaman Treepies mixed in with even more Andaman Drongos. Despite the fact that the treepies almost always landed in cover, we had good looks at several. Things then went downhill – we saw almost no birds during the whole of the rest of the morning, and towards midday it poured with rain. We returned to the hotel for lunch, enjoying again the spectacle as passengers, motorbikes and cars got on



and off the ferry. In the afternoon we went in search of waders, but it was raining heavily, and some of the prime spots were now flooded. We did see good numbers of Lesser Sand Plovers and Pacific Golden Plovers, but it was not till the rain eased off in the late afternoon that we lucked into several Watercocks, a Cinnamon Bittern and a couple of Pintail Snipe in some flooded fields. By dusk the rain had well and truly stopped (for a while) and we spent some time getting views of a Hume's Hawk Owl, which showed briefly at close range and gave rather more prolonged views as it sat on posts out in the fields. On the way back to town we found another sitting on roadside wires, and this showed well, despite firecrackers and street lights (although it did not think much of the torch). Back in town we tried again for Andaman Barn Owl, but again drew a blank.



We now had to work hard for our pigeons, and took the ferry across the bay again early the next morning. Driving along the road one vehicle saw no less than four Andaman Coucals jumping around in the open before reaching the forest at Jirkatang. As soon as we arrived we saw a nice flock of Andaman Green Pigeons, this time allowing scope views. We found another green pigeon later in the morning but, as for the wood pigeon and the cuckoo-dove – nothing, despite the mostly fine weather. What we did see were several mixed flocks of Andaman Drongos and Andaman Treepies, and we had excellent views of the latter, with no less than eight perching up in a group, allowing scope views. We also had nice views of Changeable Hawk-Eagle and saw at least one Two-barred Warbler before heading back to town for a late lunch. In the afternoon we returned to Chiriyatappu in search of nightbirds. We started just before dusk with a couple of 'old friends', Andaman Serpent-Eagle and Andaman Woodpecker. We then tried for Andaman Nightjar, but with no success, but we did get great looks at a Hume's Hawk-Owl. Moving on, we heard both Andaman Hawk-Owl and Andaman Scops Owl, but only saw the former briefly in flight, with no sighting of the latter. We then returned to town for one last try for Andaman Barn Owl, but again there was neither sight nor sound so we



*Andaman Treepies*

beat a retreat for the hotel and dinner.

We had one more crack at the missing endemics on our last morning. Crossing the bay again to Mount Harrier the day dawned bright and clear, and was to become the first really hot day. Time in the forest produced several 'old friends' but no wood pigeon and all too soon it was time to return to the hotel (we just squeezed onto the ferry), pack and head for the airport, the flight to Chennai and the end of the pre-tour extension.

Early the next morning we took a flight from Chennai to Coimbatore. After a good breakfast (a change from the picnics breakfasts on the Andamans) we drove to Mudumalai and our very pleasant lodge situated out in the bush. En route we saw lots of endearing Bonnet Macaques, had a close encounter with a car on the hairpins (the result was an argument rather than any physical damage) and a puncture, but we got there in the end. After a late lunch we took a short walk around the camp and saw our first specialities: Malabar Parakeets, sneaky Indian Scimitar-Babblers, Yellow-billed Babblers and Nilgiri Flowerpeckers, and also had a brief look at an Indian Pitta. Then a short after dinner walk produced good looks at Oriental Scops Owl and a Jerdon's Nightjar, which showed in flight but could not be pinned down on to a perch, as well as a roosting Tickell's Blue Flycatcher.



*Hume's Hawk Owl*

Shortly after dawn we headed out to the scrub jungle near to our lodge. One of the first things that we saw was a Spotted Owlet, followed by White-rumped Vultures, Yellow-footed Green Pigeons, Plum-headed Parakeets, Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Indian Nuthatch, Yellow-throated Sparrow and Pale-billed and Thick-billed Flowerpeckers. We spent our time scouring the scrub, and we all had good looks at White-naped Woodpecker, but the other two specialities, Grey-headed Bulbul and White-bellied Minivet, both played hard to get, and only some of us got a view. Even when nearly back at the bus birds kept appearing, however, with great views of Common Hawk-Cuckoo and Jerdon's Leafbird. By late morning it was hot, so we had a prolonged siesta, and another session in some more degraded habitat in the afternoon. This produced fantastic views of Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Crested Treeswifts and Malabar Larks. Our expert local guide then led us to a roosting Savanna Nightjar, which showed incredibly well, and towards dusk we settled down to wait for nightjars. Jerdon's flitted around a solitary tree, perching a couple of times, while Indian Jungle Nightjar played hard to get before sitting on a small tree right in front of us. With Indian Little Nightjar calling in the distance, we had a 'four nightjar day' – hard to beat anywhere.

We started before dawn the next morning and drove up in to the hills. The day dawned bright and clear as we staked out some slopes in the hope of finding Painted Bush Quail. We had a long wait, entertained by noisy Jungle Babblers and Jungle Mynas. Eventually two bush quails were seen briefly before they flew off down the slope. We had another wait



before a further sighting – two birds skulking in the bushes. We managed to get the scope on them, however, and had views of the colourful male as he potted very slowly through cover. On the way back to base for breakfast we stopped off in a small patch of forest amidst tea gardens, finding Indian Yellow Tits, White-eared Barbet and Small Sunbird. Suitably refreshed, we spent the rest of the morning in some bamboo gullies near the lodge, where we eventually all had a decent look at Grey-headed Bulbul, as well as Yellow-browed Buleuls, Indian Scimitar-Babblers, Asian Paradise-Flycatchers, Brown-cheeked Fulvettas and Puff-

*Malabar Lark*

throated Babbler, as well as a good look at Malabar Grey Hornbills. It was then time to head up to Ooty, the rather tedious journey up the winding road enlivened by a party of three Gaur almost at the roadside shortly after we left Mudumalai. On arrival we had a rather late lunch and then spent some time around the hotel garden, finding a couple of Indian Blackbirds, as well as Blyth's Reed Warbler skulking in the flowerbeds.

Our day at Ooty was a relaxed affair. We started in a small relict patch of forest, creeping through the tangled undergrowth in search of the specialities. We were soon watching a dapper Black-and-orange Orange, surely one of the smartest endemics. Remaining quiet in a tangle then produced a pair of Nilgiri Laughingthrushes, and finally, we had great views of a Nilgiri Blue Robin (aka White-bellied Shortwing). There were a few other birds to be seen, with lots of Tickell's Warblers, a Himalayan Buzzard and a Honey Buzzard that was flying too and fro, obviously in search of bees. In fact, we began to be pestered by some large bees and at it seemed wise to beat a retreat before the Honey Buzzard really wound them up. The morning ended with two Booted Eagles, light and dark morph, circling together, and in the afternoon we visited the highest peak in the Nilgiris, a popular spot with the locals. Here, amongst the stalls selling chickpea snacks and strange hats, there were loads of Grey Tits stealing tit-bits, several Black-chinned Laughingthrushes hopping around the passers by, and lots of Indian Blackbirds. We even glimpsed a Nilgiri Blue Robin amongst the rubbish. Ironically, when we moved on to some better, undisturbed habitat in the late afternoon we saw ... nothing.



*Black-chinned Laughingthrush*

Leaving Ooty early in the morning we dropped back down to the plain, stopping en route and exploring the excellent roadside habitat, which produced our first White-browed Bulbuls and a brief Blue-faced Malkoha (it would be great birding if not for the heavy traffic). We also stopped near Coimbatore, where we

passed some Spot-billed Pelicans on a roadside pool, expecting to see lots more a little further on, but the 'stake out' lake was almost dry, although it did have enough water to support Little Cormorants and Indian Shags. After a traditional South Indian style 'thali' for lunch we finally arrived at Parambikulam and our tented camp in the midst of the forests of Anamalai. Once settled in we went for a very productive walk and despite it rumbling with thunder (and raining heavily not far away), it remained dry for the rest of the day. The highlights included a pair of Black Bazas, several Grey-fronted Green Pigeons, Jungle Owlet, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Hill Mynas, White-bellied Treepie and some elusive Indian Rufous Babbler. Back at camp a quick look around before dinner produced good views of a Brown Hawk Owl, and I could not wait for the morning.

It rained heavily in the night, and then again towards dawn, and things did not look so bright at breakfast. After waiting a short while for the rain to abate we started on what was to prove a long circuit round through the forest, taking in the evergreen tract of Karian Shola. Much of the first part of the walk was birdless under leaden skies and dripping trees, but slowly, slowly, it brightened up and was almost sunny by the time that we got back for lunch. And, despite the slow start, we saw most of the important birds: Malabar Trogon played hard to get, with two or three very flighty individuals, but eventually we had one pinned down long enough to get decent looks. We found a couple White-bellied Blue Flycatchers, both females, and then a little group of Malabar White-headed Starlings. Ruby-throated Bulbuls were also elusive at first, but eventually showed well, as did beady-eyed Malabar Woodshrikes. Add to this list Southern Hill Myna, Yellow-browed Bulbul, White-bellied Treepie, Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, Small Sunbird and a very tame party of Wild Boar, and it became a respectable morning. After lunch we went on a 'bus safari'. This started slowly, with some roadside Grey Junglefowl, but after inspecting an injured snake (the guide thought it was dead and really jumped when it moved), and an ancient Teak, the mammal excitement began, with eight Gaur crossing the road and then brief but reasonable views of a Sloth Bear – a 'write-in' for Birdquest in Southern India. Moving on we found a calling Malabar Barbet which was duly



*Gaur by night*

scoped and then a party of Indian Rufous Babblers that clambered up some bamboo and showed superbly. At dusk we tried some of the local bananas and then saw around six Great Eared Nightjars cruising silently around, sometimes almost directly overhead, as they hawked for mayflies. On the drive back we came across a Brown Fish Owl on the road (it was grasping a snake) and had good looks once it had flown up into a tree. There were lots more Gaur, some right by the roadside, staring into the bus, apparently unconcerned, through the open door. There were also Sambar and Spotted Deer and, as we neared our camp, a Leopard was spotted at the side of the road. It jumped into full view for a few seconds and then was gone. The day had started as a damp squib, but ended with a bang.

well both Nilgiri and Grey Langurs together in the same trees. Once on the plains we stopped a couple of times, seeing some smart Stork-billed Kingfishers and a single Large Grey Babbler. We then entered the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, where a couple of stops along the road produced the first of four Black Eagles for the day as well as White-browed Bulbul and Jerdon's Leafbird. By now we were getting peckish so we stopped for a very good picnic lunch at the roadside. The road wound up and down and on and on towards Munnar, and shortly before reaching the town the sharp-eyed SK spotted a Nilgiri Woodpigeon from the bus. We all piled out and had great views – in fact it sat around for nearly half an hour. A short way along the road another shady corner produced our first Nilgiri Flycatchers, several Square-tailed Black Bulebuls and a pair of Kerala Laughingthrushes. We then made one more stop, which involved an uphill walk through tea plantations to another relict patch of forest. This turned up four more wood pigeons, more laughingthrushes and Nilgiri Flycatchers, as well as a female Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Hill Swallows and lots of Indian Swiftlets, but will be most memorable for the attempts to see Indian Pitta. We started conventionally enough, looking at a wet gully on the edge of the forest, but the bird was then heard calling from the tea plantation and the sight of several birders lying flat on the ground praying to the goddess pitta under the tea bushes was hilarious. In the end, a few people glimpsed the bird, but conditions were not great!

The main purpose of our visit to Munnar was to visit Eravikulam National Park, and after enjoying fabulous views of Tawny-bellied Babblers in the early morning light at our hotel, we drove up to the park entrance and boarded the first park bus of the day, bound uphill. Access is now tightly controlled – in effect it is restricted to a kilometre-long stretch of road. We had barely started walking uphill from the bus terminus, however, when we spotted a Nilgiri Pipit on the side of the track, and it went on to give great views at close range. Moving on, more visitors began to arrive, some naturally curious as to what we were looking at. It took a couple of attempts before we tracked down White-bellied Blue Robin, which was moving quietly through a tangle, but with a bit of patience we had great views of a pair at very close range. With these two species under the belt we could relax, and just in time, for there were now hordes of visitors coming up the track, and birding was getting harder and harder. The visitors did not perturb the Nilgiri Tahr, however, which were tame and obviously well used to the attention. We duly queued up for the bus back down the hill and headed back to Munnar. A stop en route did not produce any birds of note, but did witness a migration of butterflies, mostly Blue Glassy Tigers, and even in Munnar town itself this was obvious. With time to spare during the heat of the day we had a look at the colourful fruit and veg market and then a very pleasant and relaxed lunch. In the afternoon we visited a well-known lookout where the forest held plenty of birds. There were lots of Yellow-browed Bulebuls, several Small Sunbirds, a Loten's Sunbird, Little Spiderhunter, a dapper Rusty-tailed Flycatcher, female Blue-headed Rock Thrush, and both Green and Large-billed Leaf Warblers showed well. Not so the roadside Red Spurfowl, which was glimpsed by a couple of the group. Finally, back at the



*Nilgiri Wood Pigeon*

hotel an evening foray quickly produced spotlight views of two Indian Scops Owls giving their frog-like calls.

We left Munnar early the next morning, with Indian Scimitar-Babblers and Black Bulbuls in the gardens to bid us farewell. Our first stop was at the Red Spurflower spot, where we heard the bird at close range but the cover was just too thick to get even a glimpse. What we did see was Heart-spotted Woodpecker and a male Loten's Sunbird that sat in full view, preening, for quite some time. We then moved on to a very productive, if noisy, patch of roadside forest, where we spent most of the rest of the morning. Here we saw a fine Banded Bay Cuckoo (and heard a second bird), an Indian Blue Robin, and at last got good looks at Dark-fronted Babblers. It was a very birdy spot, and we also saw the local race of Lesser Yellow-nape, Malabar Cuckoo-shrike, Flame-throated Bulbul, Malabar White-headed Starlings, three species of drongo and, at the nearby river, Blue-tailed Bee-eater. After an excellent lunch we headed off to one of SK's sites for the frogmouth, supposedly on the basis of a recent sighting, but despite very careful searching the bird could not be found. What we did see was Malabar Flameback (a recent split from Greater Flameback, and proving in the end a better find than the frogmouth would have been) and a fine male Malabar Trogon. It was then time to finish our Indian adventures and sit back for the drive to Cochin, made more 'exciting' by a large traffic jam due to roadworks and a long wait at a level crossing.



*Indian Scops Owl*

We were at Cochin airport bright and early the following morning for the flight to Colombo in Sri Lanka, which was 30 minutes early. Met by our very able new guide Chami and his team, we were soon on our way to Kitulgala, seeing Asian Openbill, Crested Serpent-Eagle and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters en route. Once checked in and rested we headed out to a viewpoint amidst rubber plantations. This was an excellent choice, as we were soon watching our first endemics: Yellow-fronted and Ceylon Small Barbets, Ceylon Hanging-Parrot and Layard's Parakeets. Before long we were also watching (and scoping) an Indian Pitta, which sat in full view for 10 minutes; ironic after all the time we had spent searching in India. Other notable birds were Indian Swiftlet, Ceylon Swallow (with its brick-red underparts, a split from Red-rumped), Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Ceylon Rufous and Tawny-bellied Babblers, with a Ruddy Mongoose stalking a Black-naped Hare as extra amusement. All too soon it was time to return to the hotel for a shower, beer and bed.

Our full day at Kitulgala started with a superb pre-breakfast walk. Almost before we had started we were watching a Spot-winged Thrush sitting in the open in the early morning light. Next came Chestnut-backed Owlet, with one perched up for fine views and another calling nearby. They were followed by a pair of Ceylon Grey Hornbills perched up in a bare tree, and then we went in search of Green-billed Coucal. These were a little elusive to start with, but eventually we all had a good look at them, including their pale lime-green bills. After breakfast we entered the forest proper, crossing the river via the small ferryboat and picking up Black-capped, Yellow-browed and Square-tailed Black Bulbuls in the process. Our main target for the morning was Serendip Scops Owl and we were 'parked' in an open area while our guide headed off into the forest in search of a roosting bird. We waited, and we waited. A Brown-capped Babbler showed briefly, but insisted on keeping to thick cover despite the fact that it seemed to be almost at our feet. A little party of Dark-fronted Babblers were more obliging, and we also saw a Malabar Trogon. Then, at last, Shami emerged from the forest with a thumbs-up and it was not long before we had the scope on a pair of Serendip Scops. One was in full view, the other mostly obscured, and we were able to enjoy prolonged views of this strange-looking owl, which was to be voted 'Bird of the Trip'. After this a short search for a roosting frogmouth was not successful, but no-one could complain after such a stunning bird, and it was a merry band that made its way back for lunch. In the afternoon we had a short walk in some scrubby cultivation, crossing the river via a long suspension bridge. This produced Ceylon Crested Drongos, great views of Lesser Yellow-nape, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-billed and Orange-billed Babblers and two more Spot-winged Thrushes.

We had time for an early morning stroll before we left Kitulgala and this was notable for really great views of Brown-



capped Babbler, which sat and stared at us for quite some time. Once fed, we loaded the bus and headed off for Sinharaja, picking up more Asian Openbill Storks and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters en route and arriving in time for lunch. Proceedings were interrupted by a succession of raptors, however, with Rufous-bellied Eagle, Black Eagle, Crested Honey Buzzard, a young Crested Hawk Eagle perched right by the dining area, and a soaring Legge's Hawk-Eagle. Nearby trees also produced a Sri Lanka Myna, which allowed close study, and after lunch we had a lovely little Brown-breasted Flycatcher feeding quietly behind the kitchen and our first Purple-faced Leaf Monkeys. After a siesta we walked up hill to an area of scrappy forest, cultivation and scrub. Chammi disappeared into the bushes and came back a few minutes later to lead us to a roosting female Ceylon Frogmouth. Low down and in good light, and almost completely unobscured, we had a great view. Next was Legge's Flowerpecker, which finally showed well, and then another stake-out, this time for Ceylon Spurfowl. At least two birds came in and walked right past us, but some of the group were facing the wrong way and by the end of the session success could only be scored at sixty per cent. On the way back down to the lodge we had a scope view of a Banded Bay Cuckoo, and then it was definitely time for a beer.



*Brown-capped Babbler*

After an early breakfast the next morning we drove up the bumpy track to Sinharaja World Heritage Site, getting good views of a Spot-winged Thrush en route. The bulk of the day was spent walking along the more or less level trail (an old logging track, dating from the near destruction of the site in the 1980s). It was generally rather quiet, but with hard work we saw most of the specialities. The first mixed species foraging flock contained some easy-to-see Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes and a not so easy to see Red-faced Malkoha, which kept high and spent most of the time in cover. Next was a smart Crimson-backed Flameback, then a party of Ceylon Blue Magpies that eventually showed well. Why we spent so much time on the latter is a mystery, as a little further on was *the* stake-out, where around ten Blue



*Ceylon Blue Magpie – extraordinarily tame at Sinharaja*

Magpies came to bread, almost feeding out of the hand and posing for great photos. At the same place there were some very tame Ceylon Junglefowl, which did feed out of the hand, again getting everyone's camera going. Things then became more difficult, however, as we spent a lot of time chasing Ceylon Scaly Thrush. These kept to cover but, with some hard work by the guides, we all had a decent look at this very scaly, very cinnamon thrush. By now it was past lunchtime, but on the way back we made time to visit another roosting female Ceylon Frogmouth, which was closer and even better looking than the first. Add to these Crested Goshawk, Malabar Trogon, Brown Needletail, several Brown-breasted Flycatchers, Large-billed Leaf-Warbler and Ceylon Hill Mynas, and it had been a good morning. Over a late lunch we had more views of soaring Legge's Hawk-Eagle, and a late afternoon walk produced Ceylon Scimitar-Babbler, Purple-faced Leaf Monkeys and Layard's Striped Squirrels.

We headed back up to the park early the next morning, and this paid off when we found two White-faced Starlings perched up on a snag. They were distant, but the scope afforded decent views. We then started along the trail and pretty soon we found the first of the day's Red-faced Malkohas. This species had not shown well to everyone, and as the views got better and better we could all be fully satisfied with the experience. We also had very nice views of Spot-winged Thrushes, Ceylon Scimitar-Babblers and Dark-fronted Babblers, as well as the amazingly confiding Ceylon Junglefowls and Blue Magpies. Ceylon Spurfowl were also seen but, as usual, they were very shy. On the way back we had a brief look at an Indian Blue Robin, but the day had not provided even a glimpse of Scaly Thrush. We had lunch at 'Martin's', near the entrance, and then drove down to the lodge. En route a minor fault with one of the jeeps gave us a chance to scan for raptors, but



*Red-faced Malkoha*

apart from Oriental Honey-Buzzards and Crested Hawk-Eagle, there was little of interest, so we headed back for a brief siesta. In the late afternoon the '40 per cent' headed back up the hill in search of Ceylon Spurfowl. After a short wait we were treated to great views of both male and female at close range, the male resplendent with bold white streaks and red bill and facial skin. The day was not yet over, however, for after dinner we went in search of Ceylon Bay Owl, despite warnings that the chances were slim. Indeed, the site we visited was a hot spot for leeches and we heard a couple of Ceylon Frogmouths, but the owl remained silent, if it was there at all.

Before leaving Sinharaja we had a short pre-breakfast stroll, adding White-browed Bulbul of to our Sinharaja list. We then bade goodbye to the charming lodge and drove to Embilipitiya. Most of the journey was along winding roads with cultivation, tea gardens and patches of forest, and we picked up a few raptors, while a stop at some rice fields eventually yielded a flock of Black-throated Munias, which were unfortunately scared off by the farmer. Once we had arrived at the hotel and checked in, a quick look in the gardens produced a pair of roosting Indian Scops Owls, but not before Chami had demonstrated

our shortcomings when it came to spotting birds! In the afternoon we drove, via a series of roadside tanks, to the edge of Uda Walawe National Park. This produced a slew of new birds, including Painted Storks, Eurasian Spoonbills, a very brief Black Bittern, good looks (at last) at Spot-billed Pelicans, Indian Thick-knee and Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns. In the surrounding bushes we found lots of Little Green Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Orange-breasted Green Pigeons and Yellow-eyed Babblers, as well as Plain and Ashy Prinias, Zitting Cisticola, Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike and Thick-billed Flowerpecker.

Early the next day we headed for Uda Walawe National Park proper and had a very productive jeep safari that took up most of the morning. There were some waterbirds, with Painted, Woolly-necked and Lesser Adjutant Storks, Great Cormorants and Indian Shags, but we concentrated on the scrubby grassland, which was very productive. Highlights included a few Barred Buttonquails, Sirkeer Malkoha, Grey-bellied Cuckoos, dozens of Little Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpeckers, Jerdon's Bushlark (by the dozen), Blyth's Pipits, Grey-breasted, Ashy, Plain and Jungle Prinias, Indian Silverbill, Tricoloured Munia and Rosy Starlings. Raptors were also well-represented, with Oriental Honey-Buzzard, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Besra, Booted Eagle and dozens of Crested Hawk Eagles. Many of the last appeared to be juveniles, and we were watching a Brown Mongoose when it was pounced upon by a juvenile hawk-eagle. Needless to say, the mongoose saw off its inept attacker immediately! Other mammals of note included several Golden Jackals and lots and lots of Indian Elephants. Perhaps the most memorable Elephant was a young female, which very carefully grubbed up some soils with its toes, picked it up with the very tip of its trunk and threw it backwards over its back, repeating this procedure again and again. After an early lunch we then headed off to Bundala National Park, where we again transferred to jeeps. The focus here was on waterbirds, although we did manage to find Jacobin Cuckoo, Indian Pitta, Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark, Oriental Skylark and, best of all, Ceylon Woodshrike. There were hundreds of Garganeys, as well as a few Northern Pintails, dozens of Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, and a whole mass of waders, including Black-tailed Godwits, Pacific Golden Plovers, Greater and Lesser Sandpipers, Kentish Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilts and, best of all, single Red-necked Phalarope and Red-necked Stint, as well as five gorgeous Little Pratincoles and fifteen or more Great Stone Plovers. Terns were well-represented too, with Caspian, Crested, Lesser Crested, Gull-billed,



*Woolly-necked Stork*

Little, Whiskered and White-winged. There was several Yellow Bitterns around and towards dusk, after having seen two Ruddy-breasted Crakes, with had smashing views of a Black Bittern standing out in the open at close range. Amongst other wildlife some very lively Grey Langurs were notable, as were Soft-shelled Terrapins and some impressive Muggars. Finally, at dusk, we taped in a Jerdon's Nightjar and saw several Little Indian Nightjars on the road before heading off to Tissa and our hotel at the end of a very full day.

An early morning excursion to the Tissa wetlands produced more good views of Black Bittern, with around five seen in flight and more briefly at rest, a Cinnamon Bittern, several Yellow Bitterns, Black-crowned Night Herons and a few Cotton Teal. After breakfast we had another look at the tank, finding a fine adult Grey-headed Fish Eagle, while some nearby secluded trees eventually produced great views of a Brown Fish Owl glaring down at us from under its heavy brows. We then headed for the hills, stopping for lunch at a restaurant with a fine panoramic view, as well as Black Eagle and Oriental Honey-Buzzard. In the afternoon our first stop was at the Surrey Tea Estate, a well-known spot for Brown Wood Owl and Ceylon Wood Pigeon. After a short while we located an owl, but it was hard to see well, but a second bird was much



*Black Bittern*

more obliging and sat in almost perfect full view. We also saw the wood pigeon, and again it took a while to get a good look, but eventually one sat out in the open, allowing prolonged views. We then headed up to Nuwara Eliya and our hilltop hotel, with time for one last stop.... This proved serendipitous, for within a few metres we found a male Ceylon Whistling Thrush sat in a tangle. It seemed quite tame, though reluctant to leave cover, and gave some good views as the light slowly failed. After this it was hard to convince anyone that this is Sri Lanka's hardest endemic, a bird that is seldom seen well.

We left the hotel before dawn for our expedition to Horton Plains. It was not only dark, however, but very misty, and this set the tone for the morning. We started birding with a couple of Indian Blackbirds bouncing around on some short turf, but after this it was very, very quiet, with very few birds seen or heard as the mist swirled around in the wind. We did find several little flocks of Ceylon White-eyes, but it was not until after our picnic breakfast that we found Yellow-eared Bulbul, a really smart endemic. Dull-blue Flycatcher followed, and this left Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, which we spent a lot of time looking and listening for. Eventually, we had a couple of glimpses of one in a thicket, and after some frustration our prayers were answered when not one but two emerged to perform to perfection in the open for ten minutes. A Ceylon Wood Pigeon flew in and perched in full view for good measure, and we had done it – seen all 33 Sri Lankan endemics. As the fog thickened we sat back for the twisty drive back to the hotel, and the weather now worsened, with rain as well as mist. In the afternoon we visited Victoria Park. The mist had cleared but it was alternately drizzling and raining, so we had a rather damp session. We saw several Forest Wagtails and had good views of an Indian Pitta, but Pied Ground Thrush was elusive and only showed to some of the group before we left.

The next day dawned dull and foggy with drizzle. We first tried again for Ceylon Scaly Thrush, but drew a blank, although we did see a Sri Lanka Bush Warbler. Then it was back to Victoria Park. Conditions were a little brighter, but at first it seemed that we were out of luck. Then a Pied Ground Thrush was seen, and we went on to have scope views, with up to four birds present. Sieghard then spotted a Kashmir Red-breasted Flycatcher and we had great looks at a pair as they darted about in the undergrowth. Well pleased, it was then back for breakfast and packing, and then we bid farewell to the highlands. Driving down to Kandy we stopped off at a tea factory where, as



*Ceylon Wood Pigeon*

well as a quick guided tour and a free cup of tea, produced good views of Hill Swallow. Our hotel in Kandy was situated at the end of a long and winding road and set amidst open forest – one of the first birds that we saw was Ceylon Wood Pigeon.

In the afternoon we drove to Udawattakelle, where a long, slow walk through the forest produced a smart Crimson-backed Woodpecker, White-rumped Shama, a pair of roosting Brown Wood Owls and then, towards dusk, a pair of Brown Fish Owls. We also saw a large Rat Snake and an Indian Muntjac, but there was no sign of Forest Eagle Owl (apart from a single distant call).

Before breakfast on our last day in Sri Lanka we had a look at the lodge gardens, where the highlights were more good looks at Ceylon Wood Pigeon and some smart male Indian Blue Robins. On the way to the airport we visited the Temple of the Tooth, a wonderful Buddhist shrine packed with devotees

and tourists, had an excellent lunch, and even had time to look at a small marshy area near the airport. It was then time to go our separate ways and to bid fare well to our knowledgeable, enthusiastic and eagle-eyed guide Chami at the end of a great trip to a fascinating and bird-filled part of the world.



*Kashmir Flycatcher*



*Ceylon Frogmouth*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species that were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species that were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species that were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species that were seen on the pre-tour extension only are indicated by the symbol (Ex)

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A couple at Tissa.

**Spot-billed Pelican** *Pelecanus philippensis* Good views at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Little Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax niger* Scattered in small numbers.

**Indian Shag** *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* First seen near Coimbatore, then a few at Uda Walawe and lots at Bundala.



*Indian Shag; what were presumed to be Chinese Pond Herons were seen in small numbers on South Andaman*

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Nesting at Uda Walawe.

**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* The first was at Parambikulam, then at Uda Walawe and Bundala, with lots at Tissa.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Widespread in small numbers.

**Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern Reef Egret)** *Egretta sacra* Several on the Andamans, both light and dark phase.

**Great Egret** *Egretta alba* Widespread, but seldom many numbers. In full breeding colours at Bundala.

**Intermediate Egret** *Mesophox intermedia* Widespread in good numbers.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* A scatter.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* One at Coimbatore, then a couple at Uda Walawe and Bundala, with more at Tissa.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Widespread in small numbers.

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* Widespread in small numbers.

**Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus* Three in winter plumage on the Andamans were presumably this species.

**Striated Heron (Little H)** *Butorides striata* Several on the Andamans and one at Bundala.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Around a dozen at Tissa.

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen by Stephen on the Andamans, then c. 10 at Bundala and again at Tissa.

**Chestnut Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* One in rice fields on the Andamans and one at Tissa.

**Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* Seen poorly at Uda Walawe, then brilliant views at Bundala and around 5 at Tissa.

**Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* Good numbers at Uda Walawe, Bundala and Tissa.

**Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans* Seen en route to Kitulgala and Sinharaja, then a few around Bundala and Tissa.

**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus* Two at Uda Walawe,

**Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus* Three or four at Uda Walawe,

**Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Small numbers around Bundala, and rather commoner at Tissa.

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*** A couple at Uda Walawe, then good numbers at Bundala and a few at Tissa.

**Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*** Good numbers on the Andamans, near Cochin and in Sri Lanka.

**Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*** 4 on the Andamans, 1 en route to Cochin, 4 near Bundala and 10 at Tissa.

**Andaman Teal *Anas albogularis*** A lovely pair near Port Blair.

**Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*** About eight at Bundala.

**Garganey *Anas querquedula*** Several hundred at Bundala.

**Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*** A nice pair at Parambikulam.

**Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*** Scattered in Southern India and Sri Lanka, with several at Sinharaja.

**Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*** Seen especially well at Uda Walawe.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans*** Rather few seen in Southern India, with none in Sri Lanka.

**Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*** Small numbers throughout.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*** Lots on the Andamans, with odd ones at Uda Walawe, Bundala & Tissa.

**Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*** Adults seen well at Uda Walawe and Tissa.

**White-rumped Vulture (Indian W-backed V) *Gyps bengalensis*** Several at Mudumalai.

**Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*** One or two on the Andamans, around Mudumalai, Sinharaja,

**Andaman Serpent Eagle *Spilornis elgini*** Several sightings of this very dark species on the Andamans.

**Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*** A male briefly at Uda Walawe.

**Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*** At least two at Sinharaja.

**Shikra *Accipiter badius*** A good scatter, with especially good views at Parambikulam.

**Besra Sparrowhawk (Besra) *Accipiter virgatus*** A male on the Andamans and seen well at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*** One at Ooty.

**Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*** Several around Munnar and on Sri Lanka, with some great views.

**Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*** A pair at Ooty and a light phase at Uda Walawe.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii*** One at Sinharaja.

**Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus limnaeetus*** Several on the Andamans, with good views of a perched bird.

**Crested Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*** A couple at Sinharaja, including a very tame juv, then lots at Uda Walawe.



*The varied guises of Crested Hawk Eagle*

**Legge's Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus kelaarti*** Two soaring birds at Sinharaja.

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*** One at Parambikulam.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*** First seen at Mudumalai, then a scatter.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*** One Chatham Wharf on the Andamans was very pale, with one as we left Ooty.

**Painted Bush Quail *Perdica erythrorhyncha*** Four near Mudumalai played hard to get, but we nailed them in the end.

**Ceylon Spurfowl *Galloperdix bicalcarata*** Two sightings at Sinharaja, with good views of this shy species.

**Red Spurfowl *Galloperdix spadicea*** Seen briefly by a few of the group at Munnar,

**Grey Junglefowl *Gallus sonneratii*** Heard at Mudumalai and seen at Ooty and Parambikulam.  
**Ceylon Junglefowl (Sri Lanka J) *Gallus lafayetii*** Very tame at Sinharaja, with a few elsewhere.



Ceylon Junglefowl: remarkably tame at Sinharaja

**Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*** Especially conspicuous at Uda Walawe and Bundala, with males in display.  
**Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*** Several at Uda Walawe.  
**Andaman Crake *Rallina canningi*** At least four seen, and everyone had a good look at this forest floor skulker.  
**White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*** Scattered sightings throughout.  
**Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca*** Two towards dusk at Bundala.  
**Watercock *Gallinix cinerea* (Ex)** At least four flushed from rice fields on the Andamans.  
**Grey-headed Swampfen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*** Good numbers on the Andamans, Uda Walawe, Bundala and Tissa.  
**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*** Several at Bundala and Tissa.  
**Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra*** A few on the Andamans, and also seen near Bundala.  
**Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*** One on the Andamans, then lots around Bundala and Tissa.  
**Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*** Good numbers on the Andamans and around 250 at Bundala.  
**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*** A handful at Bundala.  
**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*** One at Bundala.  
**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*** At least three at Bundala.  
**Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius atrifrons*** Good numbers on the Andamans, then hundreds at Bundala.  
**Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaulti*** A few on the Andamans, with good numbers at Bundala.  
**Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*** Four near Jungle Hut then 6 at Uda Walawe.  
**Red-wattled Lapwing (R-w Plover) *Vanellus indicus*** Scattered in Southern India and Sri Lanka.  
**Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*** Three on the Andamans.  
**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*** At least one at Bundala (and quite a few snipe sp. Seen as well).  
**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*** At least 500 at Bundala.  
**Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*** Common on the Andamans, with one at Bundala.  
**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*** Three or four on the Andamans, looking very big!  
**Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*** Common on the Andamans and at Bundala.  
**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*** A scatter.  
**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*** At least a dozen at Bundala.  
**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (NL)** One at Jungle Hut.  
**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*** A scatter, with a few at Bundala.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*** Scattered in small numbers.  
**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*** Several on the Andamans and one at Bundala.  
**Little Stint *Calidris minuta*** At least 50 at Bundala.  
**Rufous-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*** One was identified at Bundala.  
**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*** Perhaps a thousand at Bundala.  
**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*** A couple at Uda Walawe, then hundreds at Bundala and a few at Tissa.  
**Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*** One at Bundala was a nice surprise.  
**Indian Stone-Curlew *Burhinus indicus*** Several at Uda Walawe.  
**Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris*** Perhaps as many as 20 at Bundala.  
**Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*** Five at Bundala showed superbly.



*Small Pratincole – a highlight of our visit to Bundala.*

**Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*** At least four at Bundala.  
**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*** Small numbers at Uda Walawe and Bundala.  
**Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*** Around 20 at Bundala.  
**Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*** Around 20 at Bundala.  
**Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*** One at Bundala.  
**Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*** Around 50 at Bundala and a few at Tissa.  
**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*** One near the airport on the last day.  
**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*** Abundant at Uda Walawe and Bundala.  
**White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*** Around 30 at Bundala.  
**Rock Pigeon (R Dove) *Columba livia*** Widespread in small numbers.  
**Nilgiri Woodpigeon *Columba elphinstonii*** At least 5 around Munnar, with great scope views.  
**Ceylon Woodpigeon *Columba torringtoni*** Around four at the Surrey Estate and one at Horton Plains.  
**Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*** Conspicuous at Parambikulam and common on Sri Lanka.  
**Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*** (Ex) Good numbers on the Andamans.  
**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*** A few around Jungle Hut were the only ones seen.  
**Andaman Cuckoo Dove *Macropygia rufipennis*** (Ex) A couple seen briefly in flight.  
**Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*** A few on the Andamans, then a scatter, but seen especially well at Sinharaja.  
**Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon *Treron bicinctus*** Nice views at Uda Walawe.  
**Grey-fronted Green Pigeon *Treron affinis*** Around ten at Parambikulam and a couple at Munnar.  
**Ceylon Green-Pigeon *Treron pompadora*** Several at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.  
**Andaman Green Pigeon *Treron chloropterus*** (Ex) A couple of flocks on the Andamans, with good scope views.  
**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*** Several at Mudumalai,  
**Pied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula bicolor*** (Ex) One seen briefly on the Andamans.  
**Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*** Common on the Andamans and Sri Lanka.  
**Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*** Good views on the Andamans, then common on the mainland.



**Ceylon Hanging-Parrot *Loriculus beryllinus*** Lots at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.  
**Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*** Small numbers on the Andamans, also seen at Kitulgala.  
**Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*** The first was at Kitulgala, then lots at Uda Walawe, Bundala and Tissa.  
**Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*** Common at Mudumalai and also seen at Parambikulam.  
**Malabar Parakeet *Psittacula columboides*** Good views at Mudumalai, Parambikulam and Munnar.  
**Layard's Parakeet *Psittacula calthropae*** First seen at Kitulgala, then better views at Sinharaja.  
**Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* (Ex)** Good numbers on the Andamans.  
**Long-tailed Parakeet *Psittacula longicauda* (Ex)** Nice views on the Andamans.  
**Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchos*** Good looks at 2 at Kitulgala,  
**Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*** First seen at Mudumalai, then a scatter.  
**Andaman Coucal *Centropus andamanensis* (Ex)** Lots heard and several seen on the Andamans.



*Andaman Coucal (left) and Sirkeer Malkoha*

**Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultii*** A couple at Uda Walawe showed well.  
**Red-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*** Seen at Sinharaja, with excellent views on the second day.  
**Blue-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*** One seen briefly on the descent from Ooty.  
**Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied C) *Clamator jacobinus*** Three showed well at Bundala.  
**Asian Koel (Common Kitulgala) *Eudynamis scolopacea*** Several on the Andamans, then a good scatter.  
**Violet Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* (Ex)** Nice views of three on the Andamans.  
**Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cuculus sonneratii*** One seen en route to Cochin, and also seen at Sinharaja.  
**Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*** Several at Uda Walawe.  
**Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius*** Scope views at Mudumalai,  
**Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* (H Ex)** Heard on the Andamans.  
**Serendib Scops-Owl *Otus thilohoffmanni*** Fantastic views of a roosting pair at Kitulgala.  
**Andaman Scops Owl *Otus balli* (Ex)** One seen on the Andamans.  
**Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia*** One seen well at the camp at Mudumalai, and heard at Parambikulam,  
**Walden's Scops Owl *Otus modestus* (Ex)** One seen well on the first evening on the Andamans. A very recent split.  
**Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*** Two spotlighted at Munnar, then two in the hotel garden at Embilipitiya.  
**Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*** 1 on the night drive at Parambikulam, roosting bird at Tissa and a pair at Udawattekelle.  
**Brown Wood-Owl *Strix leptogrammica*** Pairs at the Surrey Estate, with great looks at the second bird, also at Udawattekelle.  
**Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*** Seen well at Parambikulam and heard at Munnar.  
**Chestnut-backed Owlet *Glaucidium castanonotum*** Good views at Kitulgala.  
**Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*** One at Mudumalai.  
**Brown Hawk-Owl (Bundala Boobook) *Ninox scutulata*** One showed well at the camp at Parambikulam.  
**Hume's Hawk-Owl *Ninox obscura* (Ex)** .Four seen on the Andamans, around rice fields and coconut palms!  
**Andaman Hawk-Owl *Ninox affinis* (Ex)** One seen on the Andamans.  
**Ceylon Frogmouth (Sri Lanka F) *Batrachostomus moniliger*** Great looks at two roosting females at Sinharaja.



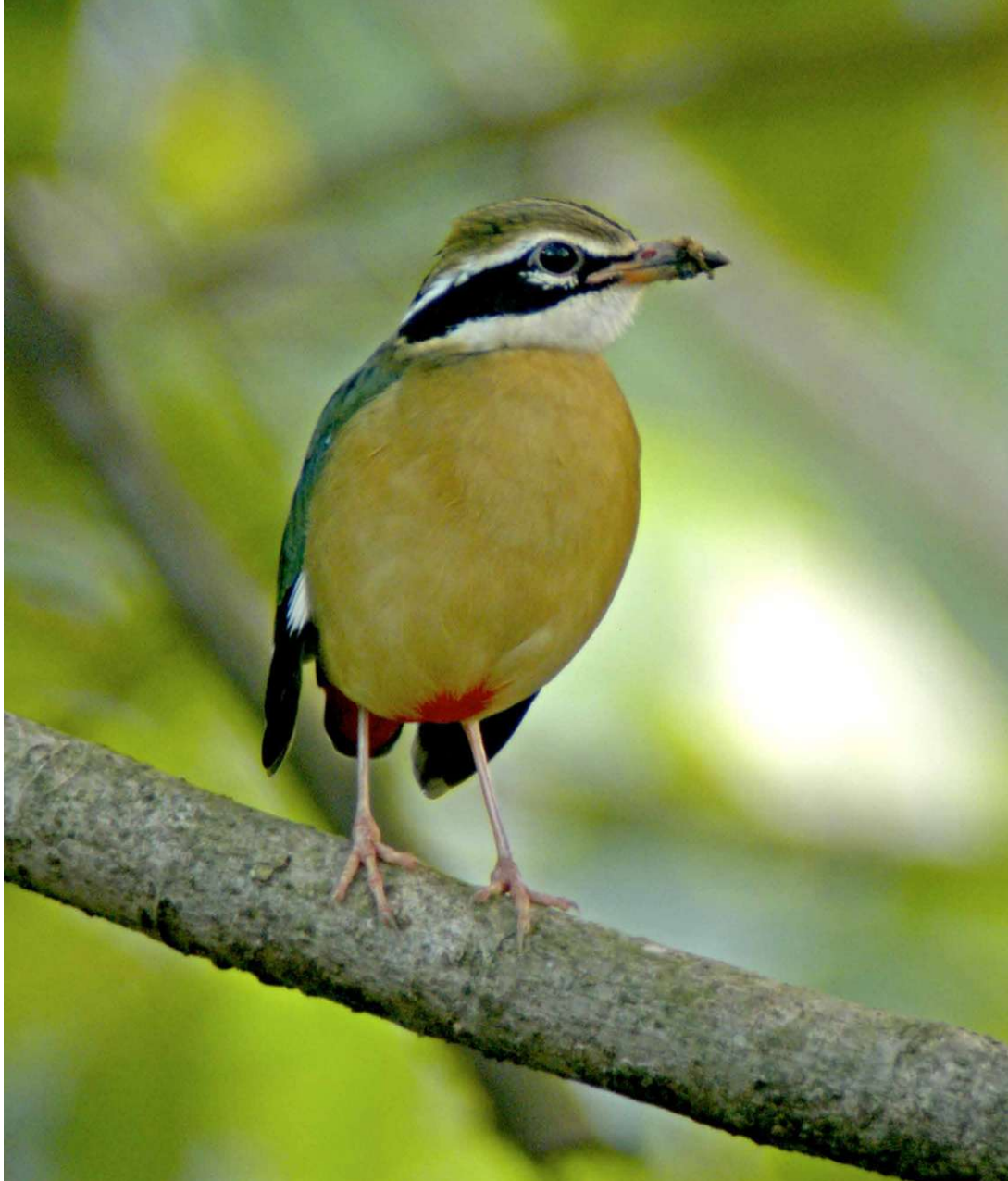
*Brown Fish Owl roosting (left) and active at dusk.*

- Great Eared Nightjar *Eurostopodus macrotis*** At least six seen at dusk at Parambikulam.
- Indian Jungle Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*** After some hard work one showed well near Mudumalai.
- Jerdon's Nightjar *Caprimulgus atripennis*** A couple seen at Mudumalai, then one at dusk at Bundala.
- Andaman Nightjar *Caprimulgus andamanicus* (Ex)** Two seen on the first evening on the Andamans.
- Indian Little Nightjar (Indian N) *Caprimulgus asiaticus*** Heard at Mudumalai and several seen at dusk at Bundala.
- Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis*** Superb views of a roosting bird at Mudumalai,
- White-bellied Swiftlet (Glossy Swiftlet) *Collocalia esculenta* (Ex)** Common on the Andamans.
- Indian Swiftlet *Aerodramus unicolor*** First seen at Parambikulam, then 100 plus at Munnar, and lots on Sri Lanka.
- Edible-nest Swiftlet *Aerodramus fuciphagus* (Ex)** Good numbers on the Andamans.
- Brown-throated Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*** Several flocks on the Andamans, Parambikulam and Sinharaja.
- Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*** Scattered sightings.
- Alpine Swift *Apus melba*** A couple near Coimbatore, then 100 plus for some of the group at Munnar.
- Little Swift *Apus affinis*** Scattered sightings.
- Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*** Several at Mudumalai, Sinharaja, and seen well perched at Bundala.
- Malabar Trogon *Harpactes fasciatus*** Seen well at Parambikulam, en route to Cochin, Kitulgala and Sinharaja.
- Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*** A couple on the Andamans, and great views at Kitulgala and Uda Walawe.
- Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*** Three en route to Munnar, then at Kitulgala, Sinharaja and Tissa.
- White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*** Scattered in small numbers.
- Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* (Ex)** One on the Andamans.
- Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* (Ex)** Common on the Andamans.
- Lesser Pied Kingfisher (Pied Kingfisher) *Ceryle rudis*** Several at Uda Walawe and Tissa.
- Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*** Lots at Uda Walawe and Bundala.
- Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*** Several on the Andamans and en route to Cochin, with lots on Sri Lanka.
- Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*** One at Mudumalai, the several around Ooty and Parambikulam.
- Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*** A scatter from the bus, also seen at Parambikulam and Uda Walawe.



Malabar Trogon (left) and Malabar Pied Hornbill

- Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* (Ex)** A couple on the Andamans.
- Common Hoopoe (Eurasian H) *Upupa epops*** A scatter.
- Malabar Grey Hornbill *Ocyroceros griseus*** A couple at Mudumalai, also seen at Parambikulam,
- Ceylon Grey Hornbill *Ocyroceros gingalensis*** First seen at Kitulgala, then at Sinharaja,
- Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus*** Several seen well at Uda Walawe and a couple near Tissa.
- Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica*** First seen at Kitulgala, then at Sinharaja, Uda Walawe Tissa.
- White-cheeked Barbet *Megalaima viridis*** Several around Mudumalai, Ooty and Parambikulam.
- Yellow-fronted Barbet *Megalaima flavifrons*** Lots at Kitulgala and Sinharaja with a few elsewhere.
- Malabar Barbet *Megalaima malabarica*** First seen at Parambikulam, then heard at Munnar.
- Ceylon Small Barbet (Crimson-fronted Bundala) *Megalaima rubricapillus*** Seen at Kitulgala.
- Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*** Common in the peninsula and on Sri Lanka at Uda Walawe.
- Indian Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nanus*** A couple at Mudumalai and Parambikulam.
- Spot-breasted Pied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos analis* (Ex)** Several on the Andamans.
- Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker (Y-crowned W) *Dendrocopos mahrattensis*** Several at Uda Walawe and Bundala.
- Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*** Good views of 2 at Mudumalai.
- Andaman Woodpecker *Dryocopus hodgei* (Ex)** Several on the Andamans – what a beast!
- Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*** Seen well en route to Cochin, the several at Kitulgala and Sinharaja. See Note.
- Common Flameback *Dinopium javanense*** A few at Parambikulam.
- Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*** Several at Mudumalai, Parambikulam, Kitulgala and Uda Walawe.
- Malabar Flameback *Chrysocolaptes socialis*** Two en route to Cochin. See note.
- Crimson-backed Flameback *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*** Seen very nicely at Sinharaja and also at Udawattekelle.
- White-naped Flameback *Chrysocolaptes festivus*** Two seen near Mudumalai,
- Heart-spotted Woodpecker *Hemicircus canente*** A nice pair at Parambikulam and seen very well at Munnar.
- Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*** One at the lodge at Mudumalai, and great views at Kitulgala and Bundala and Nuwara Eliya.
- Jerdon's Bushlark *Mirafra affinis*** Abundant at Uda Walawe.
- Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark (A-c Sparrow-Lark) *Eremopterix grisea*** Around 4 at Uda Walawe and 30 at Bundala.
- Malabar Lark *Galerida malabarica*** Great views of several in the afternoon at Mudumalai.
- Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*** Several showed well at Bundala.
- Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor*** Several around Mudumalai.



*Indian Pitta showed very well.*

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*** A few on the Andamans, and especially common on Sri Lanka.

**House Swallow (Pacific S) *Hirundo tahitica*** (Ex) Common on the Andamans.

**Hill Swallow *Hirundo domicola*** Four at Ooty, then good numbers around Munnar and at Udawattekelle.

**Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*** Common around Mudumalai with lots on the wires en route to Cochin.

**Ceylon Swallow *Hirundo hyperythra*** Lovely views at Kitulgala, also seen at Sinharaja and

**Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*** Great views on the Andamans, with several at Nuwara Eliya.

**White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis*** Lots at Mudumalai.

**Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi*** Lots on the Andamans, then hundreds at Uda Walawe,

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*** Seen on the Andamans, then a scatter.

**Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*** A couple at Mudumalai, and lots at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*** Around a dozen at Uda Walawe.

**Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*** At least four around Mudumalai.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*** One on roadside wires as we left Parambikulam. A 'write-in'.

**Nilgiri Pipit *Anthus nilghiriensis*** Great looks at one at Munnar.

**Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei*** A few on the Andamans, also seen en route to Cochin.

**Andaman Cuckooshrike *Coracina dobsoni*** (Ex) Seen well on the Andamans.

**Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Coracina melanoptera*** Several around Mudumalai, then one at Uda Walawe.

**Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*** Common on the Andamans and in Southern India, with a few on Sri Lanka.

**White-bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygius*** A very elusive pair at Mudumalai were seen by a couple of the group.

**Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus*** (Ex) Small numbers on the Andamans.

**Orange Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*** Seen in small numbers at all sites in southern India and Sri Lanka.

**Pied Flycatcher-shrike (Bar-winged F-s) *Hemipus picatus*** Seen by Siegard at Parambikulam, then by all at Kitulgala.

**Malabar Woodshrike *Tephrodornis sylvicola*** Good looks at Parambikulam.

**Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*** Several around Mudumalai.

**Ceylon Woodshrike (Sri Lanka W) *Tephrodornis affinis*** Three around the car park at Bundala.

**Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*** Several around Mudumalai, Parambikulam and common at Sinharaja.

**Black-naped Blue Monarch (Bundala-n Monarch) *Hypothymis azurea*** Several on the Andamans, then a scatter.

**Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala grisola* (Ex)** Two showed well (eventually) on the Andamans.

**White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*** Several around Mudumalai, then one at Uda Walawe.

**White-spotted Fantail (Spot-breasted F) *Rhipidura albogularis*** Several around Mudumalai.

**Grey-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus priocephalus*** After some hard work, we all got views at Mudumalai.

**Andaman Bulbul *Pycnonotus fuscoflavescens* (Ex)** Just a few on the Andamans, almost always singles.

**Flame-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus gularis*** Seen well at Parambikulam and en route to Cochin.

**Black-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*** First seen at Kitulgala, then at Sinharaja.

**Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*** Very common on the Andamans and in southern India.

**Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*** Especially abundant in southern India and Sri Lanka.

**Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus*** A few in the mist on the Horton Plains.

**White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*** A couple as we left Ooty and also seen at Chinnar, Sinharaja and Bundala.

**Yellow-browed Bulbul *Iole indica*** Seen at Mudumalai, Parambikulam, Munnar, Kitulgala, Sinharaja and Udawattekelle.

**Square-tailed Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes ganeesa*** One at Ooty then good numbers around Munnar, Kitulgala.

**Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*** Scattered in Southern India and Sri Lanka.

**Gold-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*** A few at Parambikulam, Munnar and en route to Cochin.

**Jerdon's Leafbird *Chloropsis jerdoni*** Several around Mudumalai and at Chinnor, then at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*** On the Andamans some resembled the race *lucionensis*. A few in S India, more on Sri Lanka.

**Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*** Several around Mudumalai.

**Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*** Scattered in open country in Southern India.

**Pied Ground-Thrush *Zoothera wardii*** Seen in Victoria Park at Nuwara Eliya, with four birds on the second day..

**Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*** One on the Andamans, one seen briefly by Simon en route to Cochin.

**Spot-winged Ground-Thrush *Zoothera spiloptera*** Great views of at least 3 at Kitulgala, and up to 5 a day at Sinharaja.



*Spot-winged Ground-Thrush showed well at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.*

**Ceylon Scaly Thrush (Sri Lanka T) *Zoothera imbricata*** Brief views of at least 2 at Sinharaja.

**Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus*** Lots around Ooty, then a few on the Horton Plains.

**Ceylon Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus blighi*** A male near Nuwara Eliya.

**Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii*** First seen at Parambikulam, then at Munnar.

**Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*** A couple on the Andamans, then scattered in small numbers.

**Rusty-tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda*** Good looks at one at Munnar.

**Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*** Good numbers at Sinharaja.



*The delightful Brown-breasted Flycatcher was common at Sinharaja.*

**Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra*** Great views of a male at Victoria Park, Newara Eliya.

**Black-and-orange Flycatcher *Ficedula nigrorufa*** Two or three at Ooty.

**Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*** One at Mudumalai and one en route to Cochin.

**Dusky Blue Flycatcher (Dull Blue F) *Eumyias sordidus*** One on the Horton Plains.

**Nilgiri Flycatcher *Eumyias albicaudata*** Several around Munnar, with some great views; much brighter than the book.

**White-bellied Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis pallipes*** Two females at Parambikulam.

**Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*** A female at Parambikulam.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*** Small numbers in Southern India and Sri Lanka.

**Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*** One on the Andamans and a few on the main tour.

**Blue-headed Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus*** Two females at Munnar.

**Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*** Seen en route to Cochin, at Sinharaja, and 1-2 nice males at the lodge at Kandy.

**Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*** Scattered throughout.

**White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*** One at Mudumalai and another at Udawattekelle.

**Andaman Shama *Copsychus albiventris* (Ex)** Good views of a few on the Andamans.

**Indian Black Robin (Indian R) *Saxicoloides fulicata*** Common around Mudumalai, with several at Uda Walawe.

**White-bellied Blue Robin *Myiomela albiventris*** Great views of a pair near Munnar.

**Nilgiri Blue Robin *Myiomela major*** Great views of one at close range at Ooty, with another seen briefly.

**Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*** Several around Mudumalai, Ooty, and on the Horton Plains.

**Ashy-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax cinereifrons*** Seen nicely at Sinharaja.

**Kerala Laughingthrush (Grey-breasted L) *Trochalopteron fairbanki*** Good numbers around Munnar.

**Black-chinned Laughingthrush (Nilgiri L) *Trochalopteron cachinnans*** Good looks at several at Ooty.

**Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*** Great views at Mudumalai.

**Brown-capped Babbler *Pellorneum fuscicapillus*** Seen superbly at Kitulgala and heard at Sinharaja.

**Indian Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*** Good looks at Mudumalai, Ooty and Munnar.

**Ceylon Scimitar-Babbler (Sri Lanka S-Bundala) *Pomatorhinus melanurus*** Good views of several at Sinharaja.

**Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra*** Fantastic views in the hotel garden at Munnar.

**Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps*** Seen en route to Cochin, then very well at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.

**Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*** Several at Uda Walawe.

**Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi*** One by the road as we left Parambikulam.

**Indian Rufous Babbler (Rufous Bundala) *Turdoides subrufa*** Good views on the second afternoon at Parambikulam.

**Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata*** Common in Southern India.



*Nilgiri Blue Robin (left) and White-bellied Blue Robin both showed well; they were once 'lumped' and thought to be shortwings.*

- Ceylon Rufous Babbler (Orange-billed B) *Turdoides rufescens*** Lots at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.  
**Yellow-billed Babbler *Turdoides affinis*** Common around Mudumalai, Chinnar and in Sri Lanka.  
**Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poioicephala*** Several around Mudumalai, Parambikulam and Munnar.  
**Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*** Lots at Uda Walawe and a couple on the Horton Plains.  
**Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*** Seen near Munnar, then a few at Uda Walawe.  
**Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*** Several around Mudumalai, then lots at Uda Walawe.  
**Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica*** Seen well at Uda Walawe.  
**Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*** A few at Uda Walawe and Tissa.  
**Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*** A scatter.



*Cute Dark-fronted Babblers at Sinharaja.*



*Sri Lankan Bush Warbler showed well (in the end); the iris is red in males, whitish in females*

- Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler *Elaphornis palliseri*** Eventually, brilliant views at the Horton Plains.
- Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*** Common in southern India but just a couple in Sri Lanka.
- Indian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus brunnescens*** Several at Bundala and Tissa.
- Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*** Good numbers at Ooty.
- Yellow-browed Leaf Warbler (Yellow-browed W) *Phylloscopus inornatus* (H):** Heard at Ooty.
- Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*** Common in Southern India, but most were heard only.
- Bright Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*** Seen well at Munnar, and some calling birds on Sri Lanka were probably this.
- Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* (Ex)** One or two seen and others heard on the Andamans.
- Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*** Seen well at Munnar, Sinharaja and Udawattekelle.
- Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea*** A few around Mudumalai.
- Indian Yellow Tit *Parus aplonotus*** Several around Mudumalai and Munnar.
- Grey Tit *Parus cinereus*** Lots at Ooty, with a few in Sri Lanka.
- Indian Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*** Several around Mudumalai.
- Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*** Lots at Ooty, Parambikulam, Munnar, Sinharaja,
- Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*** Three or four around Mudumalai, then one at Uda Walawe.
- Legge's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens*** Seen at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.
- Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*** Common around Mudumalai and abundant on Sri Lanka.
- Nilgiri Flowerpecker *Dicaeum concolor*** Several around Mudumalai, one at Parambikulam and several at Munnar.
- Andaman Flowerpecker *Dicaeum virescens* (Ex)** Several seen well on the Andamans.
- Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica*** Several around Mudumalai, then common on Sri Lanka.
- Small Sunbird *Leptocoma minima*** Seen near Mudumalai, at Parambikulam, and especially well at Munnar.
- Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* (Ex)** Surprisingly few on the Andamans.
- Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*** Several around Mudumalai, then at Uda Walawe, Bundala,
- Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenius*** A nice male at Munnar, also seen at Kitulgala and Uda Walawe.
- Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*** One at Munnar and a couple en route to Cochin.
- Ceylon White-eye (Sri Lanka W-e) *Zosterops ceylonensis*** Good numbers at Horton Plans.
- Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*** A couple on the Andamans, then a few in southern India and Sri Lanka.
- Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R) *Carpodacus erythrinus* (LO)** See briefly at Mudumalai.



**Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica*** Around 4 at Uda Walawe,  
**White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*** A few around Kitulgala, lots at Sinharaja,  
**Black-throated Munia *Lonchura kelaarti*** Around 15 in rice fields as we left Sinharaja.  
**Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*** Several around Mudumalai, Sinharaja, Uda Walawe and the airport.  
**Tricoloured Munia (Black-headed M) *Lonchura malacca*** Good numbers at Uda Walawe and Bundala.  
**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*** Smaller numbers than expected, but seen throughout.  
**Yellow-throated Sparrow (Chestnut-shouldered Petronia) *Petronia xanthocollis*** A couple around Mudumalai.  
**White-faced Starling *Sturnia albobfrontata*** Two showed nicely, if a little distant, at Sinharaja.  
**Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabarica*** A couple at Parambikulam.  
**Malabar White-headed Starling *Sturnus blythii*** Several at Parambikulam and en route to Cochin.  
**Andaman White-headed Starling *Sturnus erythropygius* (Ex)** Lots of these lovely little critters on the Andamans.  
**Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum*** Common around Mudumalai, then seen by Sieghard at Uda Walawe.  
**Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured S) *Sturnus roseus*** A few at Uda Walawe.  
**Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*** Common on the Andamans, and then throughout.  
**Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*** Several around Mudumalai.  
**Ceylon Hill-Myna *Gracula ptilogenys*** Good numbers at Sinharaja, where scoped on the first afternoon at the lodge.  
**Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* (Ex)** Good views of several on the Andamans.  
**Lesser Hill Myna *Gracula indica*** Good numbers at Parambikulam, Munnar, Kitulgala,  
**Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo*** A couple around Mudumalai and Parambikulam, also en route to Cochin.  
**Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* (Ex)** Several on the Andamans.  
**Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*** A couple at Parambikulam and a good scatter in Sri Lanka.  
**Asian Fairy-Bluebird *Irena puella*** Several on the Andamans, almost all females, then common around Mudumalai.  
**Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*** Seen in surprisingly small numbers in southern India.  
**Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*** A couple around Mudumalai and en route to Cochin.  
**White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*** Several around Mudumalai, then lots at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.  
**Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*** Several around Mudumalai, Parambikulam, en route to Cochin,  
**Andaman Drongo *Dicrurus andamanensis* (Ex)** Very common on the Andamans.  
**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*** Common on the Andamans, and lots at Parambikulam.  
**Ceylon Crested Drongo (Sri Lanka D) *Dicrurus lophorinus*** First seen at Kitulgala, then a couple at Sinharaja.  
**Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*** Four at Munnar and lots on the wires at one of the rivers en route to Cochin.  
**Ceylon Blue Magpie *Urocissa ornata*** Ridiculously tame at Sinharaja.



**Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*** Several around Mudumalai, Parambikulam and Munnar.

**White-bellied Treepie *Dendrocitta leucogastra*** Nice views at Parambikulam.

**Andaman Treepie *Dendrocitta bayleyi* (Ex)** Great views on the Andamans, with several flocks showing well.



*Andaman Treepie can be hard to see well ....*

**House Crow *Corvus splendens*** Seen on the Andamans

**Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus levaillantii* (Ex)** Lots on the Andamans.

**Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus*** Abundant in many places on the peninsula.

## NOTES

**Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus***

The form in Peninsula India, *chlorigaster*, and Sri Lanka, *wellsi*, are distinctive and together may represent a distinct species; Rasmussen and Anderton state, however, that further study is needed.

**Malabar Flameback *Chrysocolaptes socialis***

A recent split from Greater Flameback *C. lucidus*.

## MAMMALS

**Indian Hare (Black-naped H) *Lepus nigricollis*** Seen at Mudumalai, Kitulgala, Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Indian Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica*** Several around Mudumalai and Parambikulam.

**Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel (Grizzled Indian S) *Ratufa macroura*** First seen at Kitulgala, then several at Sinharaja.

**Layard's Palm Squirrel *Funambulus layardi*** Several at Sinharaja.

**Indian Palm Squirrel (Three-striped P S) *Funambulus palmarum*** Seen well at Munnar, then lots in Sri Lanka.

**Dusky Palm Squirrel (D Striped S) *Funambulus sublineatus*** One at Parambikulam and also seen at Munnar.

**Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus* (NL)** One or two on the Andamans.

**Western House Mouse *Mus domesticus* (NL)** Seen by Stepehn in his room at Parambikulam.

**Leopard *Panthera pardus*** One at Parambikulam showed well, if briefly.

**Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus* (NL)** Several around Mudumalai.

**Short-tailed Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus*** One at Uda Walawe had a lucky escape from a Hawk Eagle. See Note.

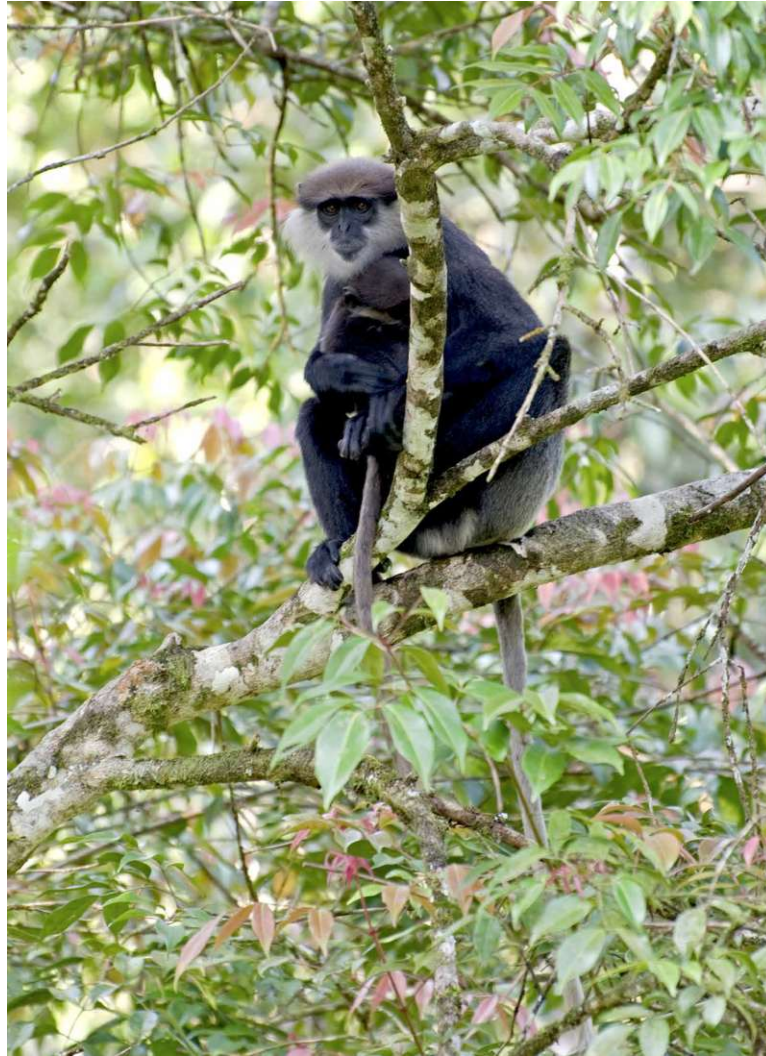
**Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*** A couple at Sinharaja.

**Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*** Several at Uda Walawe.

**Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*** One seen quite well in the late afternoon at Parambikulam.

**Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*** A few from the bus en route to Cochin.

**Southern Plains Grey Langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri*** Several around Mudumalai.



*Purple-faced Leaf Monkey at Sinharaja.*

**Tufted Grey Langur *Semnopithecus priam*** Lots around Uda Walawe and Bundala.

**Purple-faced Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus vetulus*** A nice troop by the lodge at Sinharaja.

**Nilgiri Langur *Trachypithecus johnii*** Great views at Parambikulam.

**Toque Macaque (T Monkey) *Macaca sinica*** First seen at Sinharaja, then a scatter.

**Bonnet Macaque *Macaca radiata*** Common and endearing on the mainland.

**Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*** Lots at Parambikulam and one at Udawattekelle.

**Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer) *Muntiacus muntjak*** One at Udawattekelle.

**Sambar *Cervus unicolor*** Around 15 at Parambikulam, 1 at Munnar, 1 at Sinharaja and 3 tame animals at Horton Plains.

**Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis*** Common around Mudumalai, Parambikulam, Bundala,

**Nilgiri Tahr *Hemitragus hylocrius*** At least seven at Munnar.

**Gaur (Indian Bison) *Bos gaurus*** Three by the road as we left Mudumalai, then 25 or more at Parambikulam.

**Asian Elephant (Indian E) *Elephas maximus*** Heard at Mudumalai, then lots at Uda Walawe.

## NOTES

**Short-tailed Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus***

This was identified at the time as Indian Brown Mongoose *H. fuscus*, but this is usually treated as a race of Short-tailed Mongoose.

## BIRD OF THE TRIP

- 1 Serendip Scops Owl
- 2 Ceylon Spurfowl
- 3= Red-faced Malkoha
- Ceylon Frogmouth
- Indian Pitta
- Pied Ground Thrush

A total of 23 species received at least one vote.



*Ceylon Frogmouth and Brown Wood Owl: two star 'nightbirds' seen well by day.*