



Nilgiri Laughingthrush

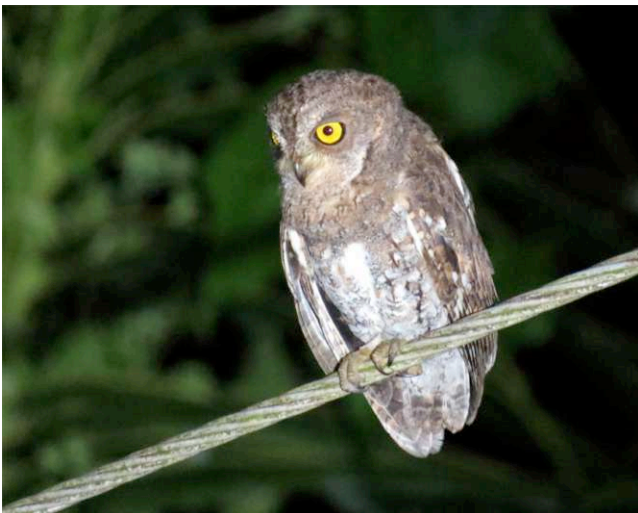
SOUTHERN INDIA & SRI LANKA INCLUDING THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

29 OCTOBER/4 - 23 NOVEMBER 2013

LEADER: DAVE FARROW

This years' tour to Southern India and Sri Lanka was once again a very successful and enjoyable affair, with almost all endemics found, and an incredible 36 individual Owls of 13 species seen. We began in the Andaman Islands where we recorded all 21 endemics, with Andaman Scops and Walden's Scops Owls, Andaman and Hume's Hawk Owls leading the way, good looks at Andaman Crake, Andaman Woodpigeon

and Andaman Cuckoo Dove, plus all others with the pre-fix 'Andaman' (although the Barn Owl was a heard only.) A rich suite of other birds was seen such as Oriental Pratincole, Long-toed Stint, Grey-headed Lapwing, Long-tailed Parakeets, Mangrove Whistler, Lanceolated and Rusty-rumped Warbler. In Southern India we birded our way from the Nilgiri Hills to the lowland forests of Kerala finding Painted Bush Quail, White-naped and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, Malabar Flameback, Malabar Trogons, Malabar Barbet and Malabar Parakeets, Oriental Scops Owl, Brown Hawk Owls, Brown Wood Owl, Ceylon Frogmouths, Grey-fronted Green Pigeons, Nilgiri Woodpigeon, Indian Pitta, Jerdon's Bushlarks, Malabar Larks, Malabar Woodshrike, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Black-and-orange, Nilgiri, Brown-breasted and Rusty-tailed Flycatchers, Nilgiri and White-bellied Blue Robin, Nilgiri and Kerala Laughingthrushes, Dark-fronted Babblers, Indian Rufous Babblers, Western Crowned Warbler, Indian Nuthatch, Indian Yellow Tit, Indian Blackbird, Malabar Whistling Thrush, Hill Swallows, Nilgiri Pipits, White-bellied Minivets, Grey-headed Bulbul, Flame-throated and Yellow-browed Bulebuls, Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Nilgiri Flowerpecker, and the stunning endemic White-bellied Treepie. Skipping across the straits to Sri Lanka we again recorded all 33 endemics, however just one was a 'heard-only'. Highlights included Crimson-backed Flameback, Green-billed Coucals, Chestnut-backed Owlet, noisy Ceylon Spurfowl, Ceylon Woodpigeons, Brown-capped Babbler, Spot-winged Ground Thrush at a nest, mixed flocks at Sinharaja containing Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes, Red-faced Malkohas and Ceylon Scimitar Babblers, the super elusive Ceylon Scaly Thrush, stunning close views of Ceylon Blue Magpies, the scarce White-faced Starling, Yellow-eared Bulbul, and our bird of the trip - Ceylon Whistling Thrush. We also saw Jerdon's Baza, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Legge's Hawk Eagle, Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Small Pratincoles, Great Thick-knees, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Malabar Trogons, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Blue-faced and Sirkeer Malkohas, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Indian Pittas, Jerdon's Leafbird, Kashmir Flycatcher, Jungle Prinia, Blyth's Pipits, Forest Wagtails, Loten's Sunbird, Black-throated Munias, and the Nightbird theme continued with more roosting Ceylon Frogmouths, Indian Little Nightjar, Jerdon's Nightjar, Indian Scops Owls, Brown Fish Owls, Brown Wood Owls, and a grand finale of a Forest Eagle Owl.



Walden's Scops Owl

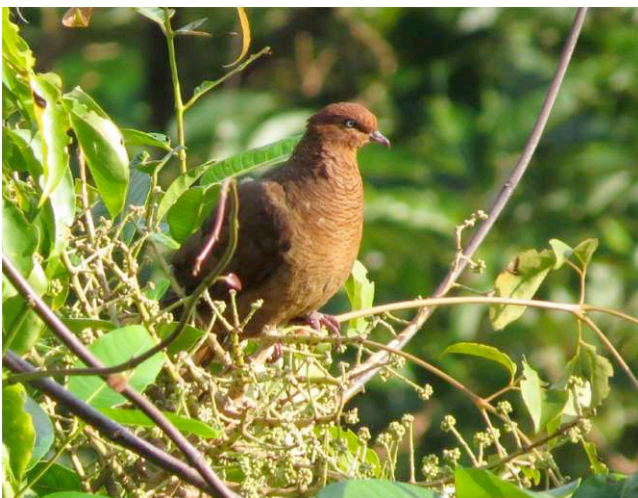


Andaman Scops Owl

We began our tour with a pre-extension to the Andaman Islands, with a flight from Chennai out across the Bay of Bengal to this fascinating archipelago. We were met on arrival by our friendly guide Vikram, and once checked-in at our well-appointed Hotel and seeing Ashy Minivet and Vernal Hanging Parrots from the veranda, we headed out to the forests of Chiriyatappu at the south end of the island. Our first endemic came swiftly with an Andaman Woodpecker, plus we found Scarlet Minivet, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Black-naped Monarch, Red-breasted and Alexandrine Parakeets, and we were tempted by the barking call of an Andaman Crake. In a swamp we found a Lanceolated Warbler (a write-in), then paused at dusk in a spot where an Andaman Nightjar appeared on cue. Our first Hume's Hawk Owl showed very well, almost as well as the newly split Walden's Scops Owl that appeared close by, sitting on a wire. An Andaman Scops Owl called from a dense thicket but could not be lured into view, a typical first encounter with the species! A good start to the tour!

We returned to Chiriyatappu the following morning and continued our hunt for endemics. We found Andaman Bulbul, an Andaman Serpent Eagle that sat spreading his wings in the early morning sun, and an Andaman Crake that ran towards us in the forest, uttering his bizarre low frequency growls. We found our first Andaman Coucal, Andaman Shama, Andaman Flowerpecker, Andaman White-headed Starlings showed beautifully in mixed flocks with Small Minivets, Andaman Drongos were seen alongside with Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, plus Long-tailed and Red-breasted Parakeets and an Indian Cuckoo. Pausing briefly for lunch in our delightful hotel, our afternoon trip across the bay was hampered by a broken ferry so we drove around to Mount Harriet, pausing at wetlands where we added Lesser Whistling Ducks, Great and Little Egrets, some Eurasian Curlews and Greater Sand Plovers. Mount Harriet was predictably quiet in the late afternoon when we arrived there, but at dusk our target of Andaman Scops Owl performed brilliantly, perching out in the open until we chose to walk away. Pleased with another successful owling sortie, we headed homeward on the ferry.

In the cool of the early morning we scanned swamps and ponds, and we found a group of Andaman Teal dabbling in a downpour, plus Grey-headed Lapwing, Watercocks, Oriental Reed Warbler and Common Greenshanks. We continued onwards to Jirkatang forest where we quickly found a couple of Andaman Treepies, and then had good looks at Andaman Cuckooshrike. Walking the road here, we reached a patch of very rich forest where one of our drivers was indicating some birds up in the trees – Andaman Woodpigeon! We had some nice looks, even if they didn't stay around too long - this often hard to find endemic was greatly appreciated. The heat and humidity were powerful today, and we headed back in the heat of the day via the ferry from Bamboo Flats. In the afternoon we returned to Chiriyatappu, where we found an immature Changeable Hawk Eagle eating an Andaman Coucal, a Violet Cuckoo calling high in the trees, some more Andaman Treepies, then searched again for Andaman Nightjar but he only offered brief looks. We found a superb Andaman Hawk Owl at close range, more Hume's Hawk Owls, and heard an Andaman Barn Owl that screeched just once from the darkness, before returning silently into the night...



Andaman Cuckoo Dove



Andaman Woodpigeon

An early start to catch the first ferry across the bay was a peaceful way to begin the day, and as we waited alongside ladies laden with fresh fish for the market, we could see hundreds of Glossy Swiftlets leaving their roost beneath the jetties that we were stood upon. Once across, we continued to Mount Harriet, yet despite the early hour it was very quiet and remained so for much of the morning. We did however find an obliging Andaman Serpent Eagle that was sat watching the road, and a total of fifteen Forest Wagtails were counted skipping off the road as we drove up to the summit. We ate our packed breakfast at the top, and then from the watchtower here we were lucky to find an Andaman Cuckoo Dove sitting in the morning sun. This turned out to be the bird of the day, as our walk down the mountain yielded little apart from some spectacular butterflies. Back across the bay by ferry once more, on some muddy shores we found several Pacific Reef Egrets plus two Terek Sandpipers. In the afternoon we headed out to the marshes and mangroves, finding a Mangrove Whistler, a Slaty-breasted Rail that scooted across the road in front of us, Dusky Warbler, Long-

toed Stint, and some more Andaman Teal. As dusk fell, we tried a couple of places in Port Blair for the Andaman Barn Owl, but apart from another Walden's Scops Owl all was quiet, save for an increasing number of loud bangs of fireworks being set off as the festival of Diwali approaches!

With one more diurnal endemic to find, we spent another morning at Jirkatang forest. We quickly scored with a good look at an Andaman Green Pigeon that perched up for prolonged scope views. Also in this rich forest were a suite of now familiar Andaman birds, plus Asian Brown Flycatcher and Two-barred Greenish Warbler. We found a Crested Serpent Eagle of the endemic *davisoni* race, watching the paddyfields from the vantage point of a telephone pole. We had a quieter afternoon, checking various habitats down to Chiriyatappu and finding a juvenile Himalayan Cuckoo, Stork-billed and Collared Kingfishers, but further encounters with Andaman Crake were limited to sonic ones. After dark we had another look at Andaman Hawk Owl, but again drew a blank on the Barn Owl. It was the festival of Diwali tonight, so the frequent explosions did little to help!



Andaman Coucal



Andaman Teal

On final morning on South Andaman, having seen all of the forest birds, we returned to some of the marshy areas close to Port Blair. We found Curlew Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwits and Long-toed Stints, a trio of Oriental Pratincoles, Intermediate Egrets, Yellow and Chestnut Bitterns, Brahminy Kite and the ever-present White-bellied Sea Eagles with their goose-like honking calls. In the margins and thickets we had a good look at a vocal Rusty-rumped Warbler plus several Dusky Warblers, while Brown Shrikes were abundant. We concluded our Andaman birding adventure with a brief encounter with a Slaty-breasted Rail, then packed up and headed for the airport. Bidding farewell to our guide and drivers, we flew back to Chennai for an overnight stay. A little time spent in the garden of our splendid hotel produced Loten's and Purple-rumped Sunbird, Black-rumped Flameback, Greater Coucal and Asian Palm Swift among others, several of which could be observed while doing the backstroke!

Those of us taking the main tour of Southern India gathered together at Chennai airport the following morning, and together we flew to Coimbatore. Met by our affable guide 'S. K.' we boarded our bus for what turned out to be a very long journey, hampered by road closures and heavy traffic. The day was uneventful apart from an Elephant and a herd of 19 Gaur at the roadside, so it was a relief to arrive at the comforts of Jungle Hut and enjoy some fine cuisine, ready to catch up with our birding the following morning.

A full day followed, with a long walk out in the open dry country and scrub jungle that are a feature of this area. It was very birdy from the start, with Spotted Owlet, Common Woodshrike, Purple and Purple-throated Sunbirds, Indian Pygmy Woodpecker, Plum-headed Parakeets and Indian Scimitar Babbler. While we dawdled, our local guides went to check the area ahead in their search of White-bellied Minivet, and soon we received a call to say the birds had been located. We quickly trekked towards where our guide had found a pair – unfortunately he had also found some wild Elephant nearby, so we had just a quick and stealthy look

at these delightful birds before quickly moving on, so as not to cross the path of any temperamental pachyderms! Having retreated to a safe distance, we continued our birding at a more sedate pace, finding Indian Nuthatch, Crested Hawk Eagle, White-browed Bulbul, White-cheeked Barbet, many Greenish Warblers, Jacobin Cuckoo, Hume's Whitethroat, Red-rumped Swallows and Indian Blue Robin. At the end of the garden of our hotel we found Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Orange-headed Ground Thrush and Malabar Whistling Thrush. After lunch we walked to nearby bamboo thickets and saw Nilgiri Flowerpecker, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta and a roosting pair of Brown Wood Owls, and eventually located our target of Grey-headed Bulbul, getting some good views of this shy endemic. We then shifted to drier country where a Savanna Nightjar was glimpsed as he flushed from the ground, plus some Jerdon's Bushlarks, a pair of Malabar Larks, and once night had fallen we were able to find a perched Indian Jungle Nightjar that allowed close approach.



White-bellied Minivet



Indian Blackbird

The following morning we took jeeps to ascend the road that climbs the Sighur Ghat, it being too steep and narrow for our bus. En route we encountered a vexed bull Elephant on the road, which trumpeted his annoyance at being briefly bracketed by our two jeeps! We paused by a sunny hillside where we heard Painted Bush Quail calling, and scanning the slopes we suddenly we noticed a male close by, sat on top of a rock and peering at us, joined shortly afterwards by a female and two juveniles. Whoopee! Also here were Grey Tit, Ashy Prinia and Long-tailed Shrike, then we headed back down to explore more of the Jungle Hut area. We found a fine female White-naped Woodpecker, plus Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Malabar Parakeet, Booted Eagle and Indian Nuthatch, and around our lodgings we saw an Indian Pitta preening in a tree, Orange-headed Thrush, Malabar Whistling Thrush, Malabar Woodshrike, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, White-rumped Munia and Asian Brown Flycatcher. Leaving here we began our long drive up the escarpment, pausing in a patch of original forest (known as a 'shola') where we saw Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and our first Black-and-orange Flycatcher, before continuing our journey up to Ooty and our rather posh hotel.

Ooty is never the place to experience rich natural habitats, but in a corner of scrappy forest we found a confiding Nilgiri Blue Robin, a pair of Nilgiri Laughingthrush, Black-and-orange Flycatchers, and a host of *Phylloscopus* warblers that included Tickell's, Yellow-browed, Greenish, Bright Green and Large-billed Leaf Warblers, plus a brief Western Crowned Warbler, while a singing Tytler's Leaf Warbler was only heard. Also here were a horde of Oriental White-eyes, Pied Flycatcher Shrikes, Grey Tits, and we had some great looks at superb mammals such as the wookie-like Nilgiri Langurs, and vivid maroon-backed Indian Giant Squirrels. For our afternoon entertainment we visited Doddabetta Peak, the highest mountain in the Nilgiri Hills at 2637m. Here hordes of tourists thronged the paths to the top, while Nilgiri Laughingthrushes and Indian Blackbirds fed unconcernedly at the side of the path! After we had enjoyed some point-blank views of these delights, further explorations in quiet forests drew a complete blank!

We left early the next day hoping to get a good start on our long journey, yet soon after leaving town we were delayed by a traffic accident, before stopping on the lower slopes to do a little birding. We found Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Puff-throated Babbler and Orange Minivet, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater and Malabar Parakeets, without noticing the drop-off in noisy traffic coming the other way! We continued to the foot of the mountain where we hit a stationary queue of traffic, and had to sit and wait for an hour while a large fallen tree blocking the road was removed! We paused by a swampy area near Coimbatore where there were Purple and Grey Herons, Grey-headed Swamphen, Eurasian Coot and a few Egrets, before pressing on to the first checkpoint at the foot of the Anamalai Wildlife Sanctuary, *a.k.a* 'Top Slip'. While formalities were completed we found a quartet of Spotted Owlets in a large tree, then we began the crawl up to the top of the escarpment. We passed through the Kerala state border checkpoint to reach our tented camp, arriving in enough time to take a walk through the open tall forest of Parambikulam Tiger Reserve. In the late afternoon we found Jungle Owlets of the *malabaricum* race, Indian Cuckoo, White-bellied Treepie and Lesser Hill Myna, and a speculative play of the song of Oriental Scops Owl provoked a bird to come flying in, and perch right above us so we could see his rufous tones in natural light! Back at camp, after nightfall we were able to step outside and look at vocal Brown Hawk Owls above our heads, plus a pair of Indian Giant Flying Squirrels that offered us mainly ventral views.

We headed off early towards Top Slip (the Tamil Nadu side of the same forest) however the Kerala border checkpoint was not yet open, so while waiting we found our first Flame-throated Bulbul, Golden-fronted Leafbird and an Indian Pygmy Woodpecker. From Top Slip HQ we set off on a three-hour walk, although our first choice of forest block, the evergreen tract of Karian Shola, was now rather unhelpfully closed to visitors! We made a walk around some bamboo-dominated forest seeing Dark-fronted Babblers, Malabar Flameback, Malabar Trogons and a female Blue-throated Flycatcher, and back at our camp we found Malabar Barbet, a dandy Heart-spotted Woodpecker, and the stunning endemic White-bellied Treepie. In the afternoon we took another long walk through the forests on the Kerala side, which was rather quiet yet we added Common Flameback, another Malabar Trogon, three Great Hornbills and found a flock of very furtive Indian Rufous Babblers.



Heart-spotted Woodpecker



Asian Brown Flycatcher

Another long journey beckoned, so we started early, but not before managing to see a Great Hornbill and a pair of Heart-spotted Woodpeckers. Once away from the hills, our route took us through open country where we saw Indian Rollers, Paddyfield Pipit, Zitting Cisticola, Large Grey Babblers, Coppersmith Barbet and a swarm of Ashy-crowned Finch Larks. We re-entered the Anamalai Tiger Reserve further to the south, driving through dry scrubby country (but forbidden to stop!) and re-crossed into Kerala where the jungle-clad hillsides became Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. A couple of short stops provided Painted Storks and Crested Hawk Eagle (before rangers ordered us to move on!) and a fine picnic at the roadside was enjoyed with a Black Eagle passing overhead. We pressed on to the tea-coated hillsides around Munnar, where a walk up a side road provided the thrill of a Nilgiri Woodpigeon feeding in a roadside tree, plus Nilgiri Flycatcher, Nilgiri Flowerpecker and Large-billed Leaf Warbler. We ended the day near to our hotel, where we found Indian

Yellow Tit, Grey-fronted Green Pigeons, Asian Fairy Bluebird, and a host of Lesser Hill Mynas, before retiring to the comfortable surrounds of our hotel set amid a cardamom plantation.

More endemics beckoned, and we bounced along a horrendous road (the main highway, that is!) to reach Eravikulam National Park, boarding a special bus that took us to the top of the access road. Large numbers of visitors were also queuing to go up so we had to rush a little to get ahead of the crowds. After some trawling around the trackside bushes we made contact with a White-bellied Blue Robin singing from the undergrowth, and he eventually showed well to us, although our strangely crouched forms across the path provoked quite a lot of interest from curious Indian tourists. At the end of 'the limit' of the proscribed walk we found Nilgiri Pipits, and several Kerala Laughingthrushes, Indian Blackbird and Hill Swallows also made an appearance, a trio of Bonelli's Eagles cruised overhead, and the mammal highlight here, Nilgiri Tahr, offered views at close range. We took the special bus down the hill again, and in a nearby corner of natural woodland we watched Nilgiri Flycatcher, Indian Yellow Tit, and more Kerala Laughingthrushes. After some lunch in the town we headed out to another area of good habitat, however the midday lull then gave way to leaden skies and rain, but we did manage to see some more Nilgiri Pipits, some Painted Bush Quail babies in the grass, a tame male Streak-throated Woodpecker and a few Dusky Crag Martins.



Ceylon Frogmouth



Kerala Laughingthrush

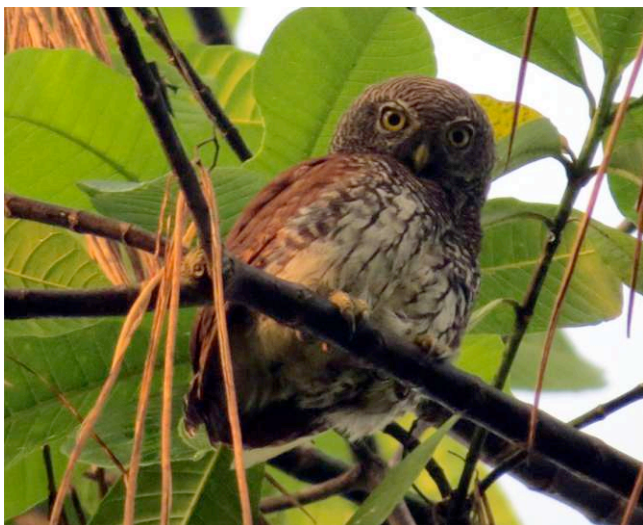
Rain and fog was threatening to make the following morning a damp squib, but we found a showy Indian Rufous Babbler near our hotel, and a fine Rusty-tailed Flycatcher that was close enough for the fog not to matter. We headed down the road to the coast, with stops producing Crested Goshawk, Flame-throated and Yellow-browed Bulbuls. We explored a patch of forest where we found a tree full of Grey-fronted Green Pigeons and Lesser Hill Mynas, and some Ashy Woodswallows popped up by our lunch stop. We continued on to Urulanthanni Forest, where with the help of the eyes of a local forest guide we were able to see three Ceylon Frogmouths at their roosts. Also here were Little Spiderhunter, a fine Western Crowned Warbler, Malabar Barbet, many Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Brown-breasted and Blue-throated Flycatchers. As the skies grew ever dimmer it was time to end our Indian birding, and head towards Cochin for our final night in Kerala. We said farewell to our guide S.K. before jetting over the straits to the island of Sri Lanka, and a whole new world of thrills.

Arriving in Colombo we reassembled in our ultimate group formation, were met by our genial hosts Perry and Chammy, and set off in our bus towards Kitulgala. Stops en route provided our first endemic in the form of Ceylon Swallow, plus we saw Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Purple Heron and a Grey Mongoose. Reaching our hotel at Kitulgala, we quickly checked in before heading out once more, to the edge of a rubber plantation. Despite the obvious habitat shortcomings, it was remarkably birdy and we saw endemic Yellow-fronted Barbet, Layard's Parakeets and Ceylon Rufous Babbler, plus a superb Crimson-backed Flameback, the red-backed local form of Black-rumped Flameback, Lesser Yellownappe, White-bellied Drongo, Crested

Treeswifts, White-browed Fantail, Plum-headed Parakeets, two splendid Indian Pittas perched up in trees, and a showy Jungle Prinia.

We had a very productive pre-breakfast foray down on the banks of the Kelani River, where we saw Ceylon Grey Hornbill, Ceylon Hanging Parrots, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Crested Serpent Eagle, Brown-capped Babbler, Ceylon Crested Drongo, Loten's Sunbird, Stork-billed Kingfisher, a pair of Green-billed Coucals, and had a superb look at two Spot-winged Ground Thrush chicks in a very open nest being fed by the parent. After breakfast we ventured across the river to the Mukandawa forest, where we had a first aural close encounter with Ceylon Spurfowl, and while waiting by an open paddyfield we saw five Legge's Hawk Eagles and two Black Eagles soaring high overhead. Chammy our guide worked hard to find roosting Serendib Scops Owls but to no avail, so we trundled back across the river in the dug-outs. After lunch we re-crossed the river on a suspension bridge and found Yellow-fronted Barbet, Greater Coucal, Indian Pygmy Woodpecker, and some more Ceylon Hanging Parrots that showed well.

We returned in the morning to the riverbank, where an Indian Pitta hopped along the path in front of us. An angry young bull broke its tether upon our approach, diverting us from our intended route, and just as we were about to give up and go back for breakfast, our target of Chestnut-backed Owlet decided to start calling to us and appeared in overhead trees as it was dive-bombed by numerous angry passerines. Our guide Chammy had gone out pre-dawn, trying to locate a Serendib Scops Owl for us, but to no avail, so we hit the road for Sinharaja. We arrived on the margins of this magnificent Biosphere Reserve at our rustic lodge, and enjoyed its immediate surrounds with its resident vocal Crested Hawk Eagle, Black-throated Munias fed in a rice paddy alongside White-rumped and Scaly-breasted Munias, Asian Paradise Flycatcher males with their fantastic tails, and demure White-browed Bulbuls. We then walked along a track through forest where we found a fine Ceylon Green Pigeon, our first Legge's Flowerpecker, Pale-billed Flowerpeckers, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, and Chammy found a pair of roosting Ceylon Frogmouths for us. The late afternoon grew quiet, and we waited till dusk, and soon Serendib Scops Owl began calling from a thicket. It showed no interest in us, remained distant, and headed off away down the valley. We would have to try another tactic...



Chestnut-backed Owlet



Crimson-backed Flameback

We drove up the hillside to the Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve in some vintage Willy's Jeeps, and our first stop was at some forest edge where we had stunning views of a very noisy Ceylon Spurfowl. We walked into the reserve on an open track, where a very tame Ceylon Junglefowl foraged around our feet! A busy bird flock held several Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes that scrubbed about noisily along with Ceylon Rufous Babbler, while in the tall trees we found four stunning Red-faced Malkoha. Also here were Ceylon Scimitar Babbler, Malabar Trogon, Black-naped Blue Monarch and several Legge's Flowerpeckers. A lengthy search for Ceylon Scaly Thrush drew a blank, then after a late lunch we made another attempt for the elusive Owl. We found a Banded Bay Cuckoo being bothered by Black Bulbuls, and when dusk came we resumed our vigil. A Serendib Scops Owl then began calling way up on a hillside. Our guide Chammy quickly ascended the

bamboo-choked slope and whistled to indicate he had found it, so we struggled up a very difficult incline, crawling on hands and knees through the undergrowth, but to no avail. The birds called frequently but remained firmly embedded in the undergrowth, gradually moving further away from us, leaving us to carefully negotiate our way down in the darkness empty handed.

Another day of fun began with some Ceylon Green Pigeon flocks and Purple-faced Leaf Monkeys around our hotel, then returning to the main forest we focussed on searching for Ceylon Scaly Thrush with the help of our guides, who have the ability to both see and hear these things when to all others the forest seems empty! After much work we managed some flight views, and some of us had a brief look at a perched bird. We also saw Brown-throated Needletails, a perched Crested Goshawk, Spot-winged Ground Thrushes, and some very friendly Ceylon Blue Magpies and Ceylon Junglefowl. We headed back down to our hotel to make an excursion to another site to search for the elusive Scops Owl. An unexpectedly long and tortuous journey (hampered by the road having been dug up) brought us to a turn off where we all piled into tuk-tuks for the last 8km. After a short walk we reached a rich patch of forest, by now it had already begun to get dark. We got very close to a calling bird lodged in the undergrowth, however a circus of barking dogs and drunks on mopeds all served to conspire against us, and to finish us off the sky flashed with lightning and the heavens opened, as if to seal our fate. All we could now do was to pick off the leeches and hope to get home safely, which was accomplished after a hair-raising tuk-tuk ride in an electric storm plus the long return bus journey.



Ceylon Spurfowl



Indian Pitta

One last ascent of the bumpy track to the Sinharaja forest, where we finally had a brief look at two White-faced Starlings, had some good views of Ceylon Hill Myna, Oriental Honey Buzzard and Crested Goshawk, and a nice surprise in the form of a pair of Jerdon's Baza – a scarce bird and a write-in for the tour, We had one last look at the Owl site (where local trackers had been searching all morning) then packed up and left. We reached our hotel at Embelipitiya for lunch, and a pair of cute Indian Scops Owls in the garden showed very nicely. On the adjacent lake were Black-winged Stilts, Spot-billed Pelicans and Whiskered Terns, then we drove to the fringes of Uda Walawe National Park where we found Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Jerdon's Bushlark, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, and as dusk fell on some swampy areas we saw Yellow Bittern, Grey-breasted Prinia, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Grey-headed Swamphen and Purple Herons.

We headed out early to Uda Walawe, and once we were loaded into 'safari jeeps' we quickly got stuck into the rich birdlife here, with Yellow-eyed Babblers, Blyth's Pipits, Jacobin and Grey-bellied Cuckoos, Jerdon's Bushlarks, some great views of Barred Buttonquails at the track side, a brief Blue-faced Malkoha, many raptors including Oriental Honey Buzzards, Booted Eagles, a fine male Pallid Harrier, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Crested Hawk Eagle and Crested Serpent Eagle. We also saw Indian Pitta, Brown Fish Owl, Lesser Adjutant, Woolly-necked, Painted and Asian Openbill Storks, and had a fine finale of two Sirkeer Cuckoos posing in a bush. Continuing this bird-filled day, in the afternoon we drove to Bundala National Park, an expanse of wetland and scrubby jungle by the coast. There were great numbers of birds

here, starting with some confiding Jerdon's Leafbirds in the car park, then we found the endemic Ceylon Woodshrike, plus flocks of Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Caspian and Gull-billed Terns, a flock of very endearing Small Pratincoles, Great Thick-knees, Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, a lone Red-necked Phalarope, Marsh Sandpipers, an Oriental Skylark, Ashy-crowned Finch Larks, a couple of Indian Reed Warblers and a Grey-headed Fish Eagle that came and sat just in front of us with his fish supper. As dusk fell, an Indian Little Nightjar began calling loudly in the car park, which came and buzzed us before sitting in the road. Jerdon's Nightjars were a little harder to pin down, but we managed to find one sat on a bush, before he returned to the thick scrub. We then headed the short distance to our pleasant hotel in Tissa, situated on the bank of one of the large lakes here.

Early morning along the lakeshores was very busy, and we began with two Slaty-breasted Rails, Indian Stone-Curlews, Pintail Snipes, Black and Yellow Bitterns both in good number, innumerable Herons and Egrets, Watercock, Grey-headed Swamphens, skeins of Indian Shags, Cotton Teal, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Brown-headed Barbets, more Ceylon Woodshrikes, some Tricoloured Munias, Marsh Crocodiles and hundreds of Indian Flying Fox. We moved on after a fine breakfast (that narrowly missed being the centrepiece of a wedding!) and headed for the mountains. We enjoyed a stop at the Surrey Tea Estate where we found some demure Ceylon Woodpigeons, and a roosting Brown Wood Owl. Pressing on to Nuwara Eliya, we went to find some of the local birds before the end of the day, finding Yellow-eared Bulbul, a stunning male Kashmir Flycatcher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, and had a brief view of a female Ceylon Whistling Thrush.



Yellow-eyed Babbler



Malabar Pied Hornbill

We made a pre-dawn drive in minibuses, to meet the dawn on Horton Plains NP. Once the ticket office had opened and allowed us in, we set about trying to find the Ceylon Whistling Thrush once more. A total success followed, with a male hopping up into a roadside tree and singing to us at length, with a furtive female also seen as it flipped across the road. Continuing along the road we found big flocks of Ceylon White-eyes, Bright Green Warblers, and eventually we all got a good look at the skulking Ceylon Bush Warbler calling from the bamboo undergrowth. Adding some further views of Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Ceylon Junglefowl, Oriental Honey Buzzard and Ceylon Scimitar Babblers, we were all done here, and headed back to the hotel before the next session. In the afternoon we walked round and around Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya town, searching for Pied Ground Thrush, but to no avail. Seven Forest Wagtails feeding together were enjoyable, but little else was seen.

Before breakfast the following day we scoured the Botanical Gardens for Pied Ground Thrush, yet again drew a blank, however the setting was very attractive, with Crimson-backed Flamebacks and Alpine Swifts in noisy flocks. We then began our journey to Kandy, pausing en route for a short tour of the Glenloch tea factory, many of us coming away with souvenir packets of their products! We arrived in Kandy at midday, to our rather eccentric hotel set amid the forest above the city, with great habitat all around even if the place itself seemed to be on its last legs! We found a few birds here such as White-bellied Drongo, Purple-rumped Sunbird and Black-hooded Oriole, before heading for the Udawattakelle Forest on the edge of the city. Here

we found Ceylon Small Barbets, which after a struggle provided some good views, plus a bird flock here had Black-naped Blue Monarch, Yellow-crowned Barbet, Bright Green Warblers, Grey Tits and Orange Minivets. As dusk approached we heard the booming call of a Forest Eagle Owl, and gave chase. It left its roost before it was dark and flew across to perch in view for us for many minutes. What a great bird – and Owl #34 of the tour! We then made a visit to the Temple of the Tooth, a visit enhanced by a very entertaining guide who pitched us into the scrum for brief views of the shrine containing the relic, making it all rather fun. Some of us may have been trying to gain blessings for our last ditch attempt to see that pesky Scops Owl – Chammy had boarded a public bus and headed for Kitulgala, to try and nail down the Owl there during the hours of darkness!

At our hotel in the jungle above Kandy, we found Brown Wood Owl calling next to the restaurant soon after dawn, where one showed quite well. Finishing our breakfast and checking out, we drove to Kitulgala and settled in by the riverbank, waiting for news from our indefatigable guide somewhere in the forest on the other side. In order to track down the roosting place of the Owl, he had followed their calls in the pre-dawn, but unfortunately the birds didn't behave in a predictable fashion, so by lunchtime it was time to call it a day and give up, eat a final peppery curry and rice, and head for Colombo. Our journey ran in into some very heavy rain, and we were glad not to be out in it! We finished our journey at Colombo airport, and headed in different directions homeward, having enjoyed four weeks of some of the best birding that South Asia has to offer.



Ceylon Whistling Thrush



Jerdon's Leafbird

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

Species which only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO)

Species which were not personally recorded by the leaders are indicated by the symbol (NL)

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A few of these seen at Bundala and Tissa.

Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* A fair few seen around the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* A few sightings in South India, more common around the Sri Lankan wetlands

Indian Shag ◊ *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Great flocks of these seen at Tissa.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* A few seen at Bundala and Tissa.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* Several birds seen around the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Frequently encountered.

Pacific Reef Heron ◊ *Egretta sacra* Some nice views of a group of up to 12 birds at Port Blair.

Great Egret *Egretta alba* Commonly encountered.

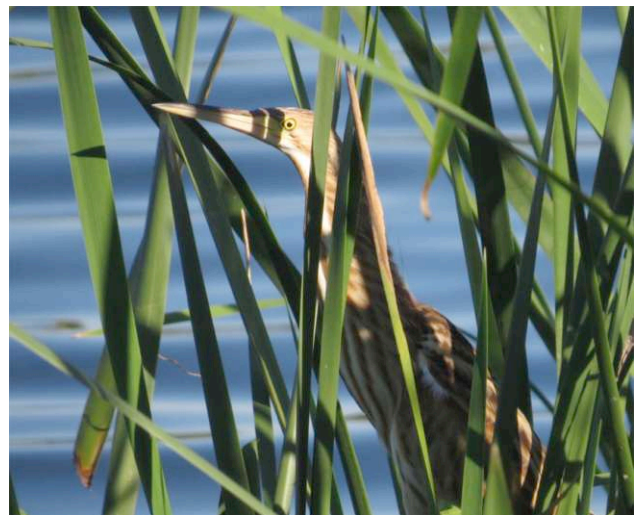
Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* Several identified along our route.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Quite a few around the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Like the above, and showing well.
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Commonly encountered.
Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* Fairly common in South India, abundant around the Sri Lankan wetlands.
Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* Birds on South Andaman were presumed to be this species.
Striated Heron *Butorides striata* Some nice views of the Andaman race, a single seen at Bundala.
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A few smart examples seen at Tissa.
Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* One on South Andaman, many around Tissa.



Yellow Bittern adult



Yellow Bittern juvenile

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* Two on South Andaman were the only ones of the trip.
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* Rather numerous at Tissa, offering great views.
Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* A flock seen at Chinnar, many more around the Sri Lankan wetlands
Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* Quite a few seen around the Sri Lankan wetlands.
Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* A few soaring birds at Uda Walawe.
Lesser Adjutant ♦ *Leptoptilos javanicus* Several birds seen well at Uda Walawe.
Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* A few seen around the Sri Lankan wetlands.
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Good numbers seen around Bundala.
Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* Seen in numbers on all three sectors of the tour.
Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus* Two at Tissa were the only ones of the tour.
Andaman Teal ♦ *Anas albogularis* Good views of eight on a South Andaman wetland.
Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* A nice surprise to see a pair at Sinharaja. A scarce bird here, also a write-in.
Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* A single seen on South Andaman.
Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Many encountered in Sri Lanka, also South India and South Andaman.
Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A couple at Uda Walawe.
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Only seen at Jungle Hut and in the adjacent lowlands while travelling.
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* A few sightings on all three sectors, more seen in Sri Lanka.
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Very visible around South Andaman, also on Sri Lanka.
Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* A couple at Uda Walawe, great close views at Bundala.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* A couple on South Andaman, one in South India, nine in Sri Lanka!
Andaman Serpent Eagle ♦ *Spilornis elgini* Great looks at two, one at Chiriyatappu and another on Mt Harriet.
Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* A sharp-looking male at Uda Walawe.
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Three seen in South India, another three in Sri Lanka.
Shikra *Accipiter badius* A couple of sightings in South India, likewise for Sri Lanka.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* A single seen near Jungle Hut.
Himalayan Buzzard ♦ *Buteo burmanicus* A single seen near Munnar.
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* One en-route to Munnar, two more over Kitulgala.
Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* Three at Eravikulam N.P., also at Jungle Hut.
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* Several seen at Uda Walawe, another at Jungle Hut.

Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus limnaeetus* A confiding juvenile at Chiriyatappu on South Andaman
Crested Hawk-Eagle ◊ *Spizaetus cirrhatus* Seen frequently in South India and Sri Lanka.
Legge's Hawk-Eagle ◊ *Spizaetus kelaarti* Five birds soaring high over Kitulgala. See note
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Odd birds seen in South India
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Two seen in South India, another three in Sri Lanka.



Andaman Serpent Eagle



Changeable Hawk Eagle

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* A small number seen in the Jungle Hut area.
Jungle Bush Quail ◊ *Perdica asiatica* (H) Heard at Jungle Hut.
Painted Bush Quail ◊ *Perdica erythrorhyncha* Superb views of 4 birds near Ooty, bathed in the morning sunshine!
Ceylon Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix bicalcarata* A good look at a very noisy female at Sinharaja.
Red Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix spadicea* (H) Some distant calls near Munnar was as close as we came.
Grey Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus sonneratii* A few of these beauties seen at Jungle Hut, Ooty and Parambikulam.
Ceylon Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus lafayetii* Not very shy at Sinharaja, a little wilder on the Horton Plains.
Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* A few seen in India, many more in Sri Lanka.
Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* Excellent views of a pair at Uda Walawe.
Andaman Crake ◊ *Rallina canningi* A good look at one at Chiriyatappu, several others heard.
Slaty-breasted Rail *Rallus striatus* A brief view of one on South Andaman, two more seen near Tissa on Sri Lanka.
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Rather common in Sri Lanka, also seen on South Andaman.
Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca* A brief glimpse of one near Tissa.
Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* Good looks at these on South Andaman and Sri Lanka.



Barred Buttonquail



Painted Bushquail

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Often encountered on South Andaman, numerous on Sri Lanka.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Seen on all sectors of our tour.
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Seen near Coimbatore, also at Bundala.
Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Many at Bundala and Tissa, not still in non-breeding plumage
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Commonly encountered on South Andaman.
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Quite a few seen at Bundala salt pans.
Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A single bird at Bundala salt pans.
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A few seen, on South Andaman and at near Tissa.
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A good number at Bundala salt pans.
Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius atrifrons* A few seen on South Andaman, many more around Bundala.
Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaulti* Quite a few seen on South Andaman.
Yellow-wattled Lapwing ◊ *Vanellus malabaricus* In good numbers at Uda Walawe and Bundala.



Terek Sandpiper



Yellow-wattled Lapwing

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* A single on South Andaman, a scarce visitor here.
Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* Remarkably few in India, more common in Sri Lanka.
Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* Seen on South Andaman, in good number at Tissa.
Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* A few seen on South Andaman.
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Regularly encountered on South Andaman, a single at Bundala salt pans.
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* A few seen on South Andaman.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Numerous on South Andaman, plus a good number at Bundala salt pans
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A few on South Andaman, many more around Bundala.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Good numbers of these elegant waders around Bundala.
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Heard at Jungle Hut, seen at Uda Walawe.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A few seen in various places on South Andaman, few elsewhere.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Rather common on South Andaman, also seen in Sri Lanka.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A single on South Andaman, a good number at Bundala salt pans.
Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Many seen around Bundala salt pans.
Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* Some nice examples on South Andaman
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Big flocks around Bundala, also seen on South Andaman.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Plenty seen in the south Sri Lankan wetlands.
Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* A single spinning about on the Bundala salt pans.
Indian Thick-knee ◊ *Burhinus indicus* Plenty found around the tanks at Tissa, also at a nearby dam.
Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris* A good number of these at Bundala.
Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Three on South Andaman were a nice surprise.
Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* A pleasing little flock of 18 at Bundala salt pans.
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Seen at Bundala and Tissa.
Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* A few seen at Bundala salt pans.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* A few at Bundala, also seen on South Andaman.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* Very numerous in southern Sri Lanka, a couple noted on South Andaman.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Good numbers at roost near Bundala.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* Available.

Nilgiri Woodpigeon ◊ *Columba elphinstonii* A single bird seen at Munnar.

Ceylon Woodpigeon ◊ *Columba torringtoni* At least four at Surrey Estate and another on Horton Plains.

Andaman Woodpigeon ◊ *Columba palumboides* Two seen well in the forest at Jirkatang.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* Common in South India and Sri Lanka.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Regularly seen on South Andaman.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Two at Jungle Hut was the only sighting.

Andaman Cuckoo Dove ◊ *Macropygia rufipennis* One seen on Mt Harriet showed well. Not vocal during our stay.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* Commonest on Sri Lanka, a few seen in South India and on South Andaman.

Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon *Treron bicinctus* Great looks at these around Uda Walawe and Bundala.

Grey-fronted Green Pigeon ◊ *Treron affinis* Seen around Munnar and en-route to Cochin.

Ceylon Green-Pigeon ◊ *Treron pompadora* Quite a few seen at Sinharaja.

Andaman Green Pigeon ◊ *Treron chloropterus* Three seen at Jirkatang, rather scarce during our visit.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea* Not uncommon on South Andaman and in Sri Lanka

Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis* Plenty on South Andaman, a few in South India.

Ceylon Hanging-Parrot ◊ *Loriculus beryllinus* Fairly common around Kitulgala and Sinharaja.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* Quite common on South Andaman, also seen at Uda Walawe.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Not uncommon in southern Sri Lanka, also seen in South India.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* Numerous at Jungle Hut, also seen at Kitulgala and Uda Walawe.

Malabar Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula columboides* Not uncommon at Parambikulam, also at Jungle Hut.

Layard's Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula calthropae* Often seen around Kitulgala and Sinharaja.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Fairly common on South Andaman.

Long-tailed Parakeet *Psittacula longicauda* Some good encounters with these on South Andaman.

Green-billed Coucal ◊ *Centropus chlororhynchos* A pair showed well at Kitulgala, another at Sinharaja was furtive.

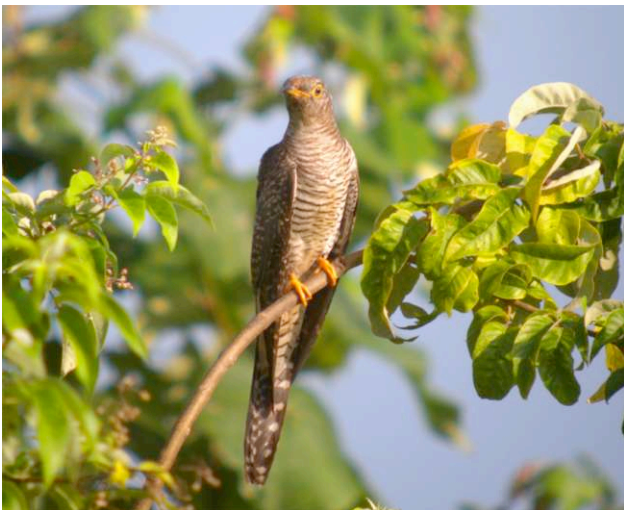
Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* Regularly encountered in South India and Sri Lanka.

Andaman Coucal ◊ *Centropus andamanensis* Frequent encounters on South Andaman

Sirkeer Malkoha ◊ *Taccocua leschenaultii* A good show by two at Uda Walawe.

Red-faced Malkoha ◊ *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* A glorious quartet of these beauties at Sinharaja.

Blue-faced Malkoha ◊ *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris* A brief look at one at Uda Walawe was the sole encounter.



Himalayan Cuckoo juvenile



Common Hawk Cuckoo

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* A flying bird seen briefly at Uda Walawe

Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied C) *Clamator jacobinus* Great looks at vocal birds at Jungle Hut and Uda Walawe.

Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea* Noted on all three sectors of our route.

Violet Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* Three vocal birds seen on South Andaman

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cuculus sonneratii* Good looks at one mobbed by Bulbuls at Sinharaja.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo ◇ *Cacomantis passerinus* Three seen at Uda Walawe.
Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo ◇ *Surniculus dicruroides* (H): Heard in Kerala and also in Sri Lanka.
Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* Good views of one at Jungle Hut, also at Top Slip.
Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* Two seen well on South Andaman, another at Parambikulam.
Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* A juvenile bird showed well on South Andaman.
Andaman Barn Owl ◇ *Tyto deroepstorffi* (H) Heard at Chiriyatappu.
Serendib Scops-Owl ◇ *Otus thilohoffmanni* (H) Heard only, at Sinharaja, on three evenings! One that got away!
Andaman Scops Owl ◇ *Otus balli* Great close views of one at Mount Harriet.
Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* A good look at one at Parambikulam at dusk, heard commonly there.
Walden's Scops Owl *Otus modestus* Great looks on our first evening at Chiriyatappu, plus another in Port Blair.
Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* Heard at Munnar, two seen roosting at Embilipitiya in the hotel garden.



Indian Scops Owl



Brown Wood Owl

Forest Eagle-Owl *Bubo nipalensis* This monster appearing on our final evening at Kandy made for a great finale.
Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* Two birds seen in flight only at Uda Walawe.
Brown Wood-Owl *Strix leptogrammica* Two at Jungle Hut, one at Surrey Estate, another two at our Kandy hotel.
Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* Nice views of four or more at Top Slip/ Parambikulam, of the *malabaricum* race.
Chestnut-backed Owlet ◇ *Glaucidium castanonotum* Initially elusive, but good looks eventually at Kitulgala.
Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* Four at Jungle Hut, four by the entrance to Top Slip.
Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* Two seen at Parambikulam, another at our Munnar hotel.
Hume's Hawk-Owl ◇ *Ninox obscura* At least five seen on South Andaman.
Andaman Hawk-Owl ◇ *Ninox affinis* The same bird seen on two evenings at Chiriyatappu.
Ceylon Frogmouth ◇ *Batrachostomus moniliger* Three seen at Urulanthanni forest, another two at Sinharaja.
Indian Jungle Nightjar ◇ *Caprimulgus indicus* A good look at a perched bird at Jungle Hut.
Jerdon's Nightjar ◇ *Caprimulgus atripennis* Two glimpsed near Jungle Hut, another seen perched at Bundala.
Andaman Nightjar ◇ *Caprimulgus andamanicus* Seen on two evenings at Chiriyatappu though only in flight.
Indian Little Nightjar ◇ *Caprimulgus asiaticus* A vocal bird at dusk at Bundala, buzzed us then perched on the road.
Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* A brief flight view of a flushed bird at Jungle Hut.
White-bellied Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* Common on South Andaman, thousands seen leaving their jetty roosts.
Indian Swiftlet ◇ *Aerodramus unicolor* Seen often over wetter forest in South India and Sri Lanka.
Edible-nest Swiftlet ◇ *Aerodramus fuciphagus* Several noted around South Andaman.
Brown-throated Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* Flocks seen on South Andaman, also at Sinharaja.
Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Seen regularly in South India and Sri Lanka.
Alpine Swift *Apus melba* Noisy flocks overhead at Nuwara Eliya.
Little Swift *Apus affinis* Seen at nests at Bundala, also seen in Kerala.
Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* Seen in numbers at Kitulgala and Uda Walawe, also at Jungle Hut
Malabar Trogon ◇ *Harpactes fasciatus* Good looks at three birds at Parambikulam, another four in Sri Lanka.
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Seen on South Andaman and Sri Lanka.
Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* Several seen on South Andaman and Sri Lanka.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Seen throughout, commonest on South Andaman.
Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* Multiple sightings on South Andaman.
Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Many seen around Uda Walawe-Bundala-Tissa wetlands.
Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni* A pair at Jungle Hut showed well.
Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Seen fairly commonly in drier country in South India and Sri Lanka
Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* Numerous on Sri Lanka, also a few on South Andaman.

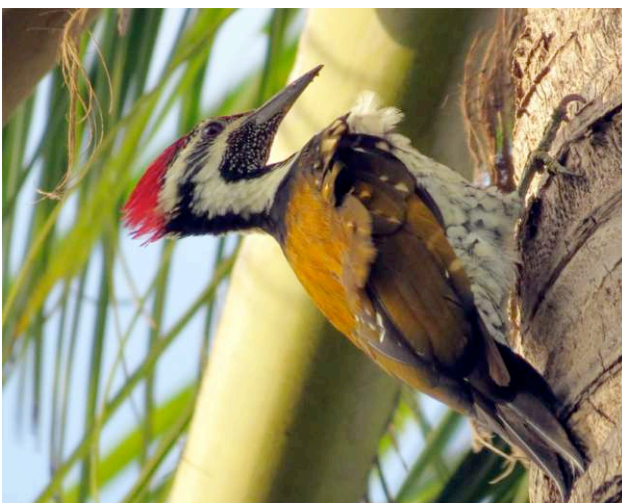


Collared Kingfisher

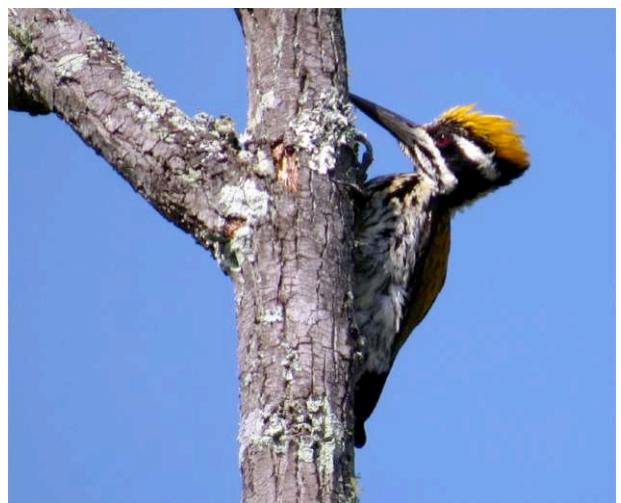


Chestnut-headed Bee-eater

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* Great looks in South India, a few on South Andaman.
Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* Quite a few seen during lowland journeys in Tamil Nadu, also at Uda Walawe.
Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* A couple seen on South Andaman.
Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A single at Jungle Hut.
Malabar Grey Hornbill ◊ *Ocyroceros griseus* Good looks at several at Jungle Hut, also in Kerala.
Ceylon Grey Hornbill ◊ *Ocyroceros gingalensis* A handful seen at Kitulgala.
Malabar Pied Hornbill ◊ *Anthracoceros coronatus* Great looks at these fine fellows at Uda Walawe.
Great Pied Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* Four seen at Parambikulam.
Brown-headed Barbet ◊ *Megalaima zeylanica* A few seen in Sri Lanka.
White-cheeked Barbet ◊ *Megalaima viridis* Frequently seen in the South Indian forests
Yellow-fronted Barbet ◊ *Megalaima flavifrons* Seen well at Kitulgala plus one or two other places.
Malabar Barbet ◊ *Megalaima malabarica* Singles seen at Parambikulam and Urulanthanni forest.
Ceylon Small Barbet ◊ *Megalaima rubricapillus* We ran this ground on our penultimate day, with three seen well.
Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* A few seen in South India and Sri Lanka.



Black-rumped Flameback



White-naped Woodpecker

Indian Pygmy Woodpecker ◊ *Dendrocopos nanus* Seen well at Jungle Hut and at Kitulgala.
Spot-breasted Pied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos analis* Plenty of good views of these on South Andaman.
Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker ◊ *Dendrocopos mahrattensis* Singles at Uda Walawe and Bundala.
Andaman Woodpecker ◊ *Dryocopus hodgei* One of the more noticeable endemics on South Andaman.
Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* Singles seen in South India, more common in wet zone Sri Lanka.
Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* A splendid male showed well near Munnar.
Common Flameback *Dinopium javanense* A female seen at Parambikulam.
Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* Regular encounters in South India and Sri Lanka. **See note.**
Malabar Flameback ◊ *Chrysocolaptes socialis* A single at Jungle Hut and two at Parambikulam. **See note.**
Crimson-backed Flameback ◊ *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* Nice looks at this beauty in Sri Lanka.
White-naped Flameback ◊ *Chrysocolaptes festivus* A female showed well at Jungle Hut.
Heart-spotted Woodpecker ◊ *Hemicircus canente* A firm favourite, great looks at a male at Parambikulam.
Indian Pitta ◊ *Pitta brachyura* Commonly heard, good views were enjoyed at Jungle Hut, Kitulgala and Uda Walawe.
Jerdon's Bushlark ◊ *Mirafra affinis* Very common at Uda Walawe, also seen at Bundala and Jungle Hut.
Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark *Eremopterix grisea* Some in lowlands near Chinnor, big flocks at Bundala.
Malabar Lark ◊ *Galerida malabarica* Two showed well on a rocky hillock at Jungle Hut.
Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* A single seen at Bundala salt pans.
Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor* A small flock seen near Munnar.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Seen on all three sections of the tour, most numerous in Sri Lanka.
Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Odd pairs seen around the shores of South Andaman.
Hill Swallow *Hirundo domicola* Seen at Eravikulam and around Nuwara Eliya, also indoors at Glenloch Tea Factory.
Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* (LO) One seen at Jungle Hut



White-browed Wagtail



Jerdon's Bushlark

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* Numerous at Jungle Hut, odd birds seen elsewhere in South India.
Ceylon Swallow ◊ *Hirundo hyperythra* Seen at various points in wet zone Sri Lanka.
Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* Notably numerous on South Andaman and in Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya.
White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* Seen in the Jungle Hut garden and one or two other spots.
Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* Some perplexing birds on South Andaman were probably these.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Seen on all three segments of the tour, this winter visitor was numerous in places.
Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Not uncommon at Uda Walawe and Bundala.
Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* Just a few seen at Uda Walawe.
Nilgiri Pipit ◊ *Anthus nilghiriensis* A pair at Eravikulam showed well, some near Munnar included presumed juvs.
Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* Seen at Parambikulam and Kitulgala.
Andaman Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina dobsoni* Nice views of several on South Andaman.
Black-headed Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina melanoptera* Singles at Jungle Hut and a couple more at Kitulgala.
Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* A pair seen from the restaurant of our Port Blair hotel was the only sighting.
Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Seen on all three segments of the tour.

White-bellied Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus erythropygus* A pair were seen well if rather briefly at Jungle Hut.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* Not uncommon on South Andaman, with notably different vocalisations...

Orange Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus flammeus* Frequently encountered in South India and Sri Lanka.

Pied Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* Occasional encounters in South India and Sri Lanka.

Malabar Woodshrike ◊ *Tephrodornis sylvicola* Four seen in the garden of Jungle Hut, a couple more in Kerala

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* Two seen at Jungle Hut.

Ceylon Woodshrike ◊ *Tephrodornis affinis* Good views at Bundala and Tissa.

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* Some real beauties seen in Sri Lanka, also at Parambikulam.

Black-naped Blue Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* A few seen on South Andaman, also some in Sri Lanka.

Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala grisola* A nice surprise when one popped into view on South Andaman.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* Seen in dry forest at Jungle Hut, also singles at Kitulgala and Kandy.

White-spotted Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura albogularis* A single at Ooty was the only one of the tour.

Grey-headed Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus priocephalus* Always tricky, we had good views of this endemic at Jungle Hut.

Andaman Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus fuscoflavescens* Frequently seen in the South Andaman forests.

Flame-throated Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus gularis* Several encounters around Parambikulam.

Black-capped Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus melanicterus* Several seen well at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Very common on South Andaman and in South India.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Common in both South India and Sri Lanka.

Yellow-eared Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus penicillatus* Great views of this lovely bird around Nuwara Eliya.



White-browed Bulbul



Ceylon Woodshrike

White-browed Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus luteolus* Nice views at Jungle Hut, Bundala etc, and at our Sinharaja hotel.

Yellow-browed Bulbul ◊ *Iole indica* In India seen at a couple of sites, more common in Sri Lanka wet zone forests.

Square-tailed Black Bulbul ◊ *Hypsipetes ganeesa* Common in both South India and Sri Lanka. **See note.**

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* Odd birds encountered in both South India and Sri Lanka

Gold-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* Regular sightings in the forest in South India and Sri Lanka

Jerdon's Leafbird ◊ *Chloropsis jerdoni* Seen at Jungle Hut, better closer views at Bundala.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Abundant on South Andaman, odd singles seen elsewhere but more in Sri Lanka

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* Several seen at Jungle Hut and no-where else.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* A few seen around Jungle Hut.

Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina* A single bird lurked at the end of the garden at Jungle Hut.

Spot-winged Ground-Thrush ◊ *Zoothera spiloptera* Several seen well at Kitulgala and Sinharaja. **See note.**

Ceylon Scaly Thrush ◊ *Zoothera imbricata* Two birds played hard to get at Sinharaja, views obtained eventually...

Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus* Confiding at Ooty, a couple more seen at Munnar. **See note.**

Ceylon Whistling-Thrush ◊ *Myophonus blighi* Outstanding views of a male at Horton Plains, two females also seen.

Malabar Whistling Thrush ◊ *Myophonus horsfieldii* Regularly encountered in South India. **See note.**

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* Regularly seen on all three sections of the tour.

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher ◊ *Muscicapa ruficauda* Great looks at a vocal bird at Munnar.

Brown-breasted Flycatcher ◊ *Muscicapa muttui* A couple in South India, more at Sinharaja and Nuwara Eliya.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* Singles at Mt Harriet and Jungle Hut.
Kashmir Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula subrubra* A male showed very well at Nuwara Eliya, others were more skulking.
Black-and-orange Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula nigrorufa* Good looks at some near Ooty, another at Eravikulam.
Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina* One at Jungle Hut.
Dusky Blue Flycatcher ◊ *Eumyias sordidus* Good views of several birds around Nuwara Eliya.
Nilgiri Flycatcher ◊ *Eumyias albicaudata* Our first at Ooty, several more seen around Munnar.
Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* Singles at Parambikulam and Urulanthanni forest.
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* Frequently encountered in South India and Sri Lanka.
Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Not uncommon at Ooty & Munnar, also at Nuwara Eliya.
Blue-headed Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus* A female near Jungle Hut, a male en-route from Ooty
Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea* Rather common by voice in South India and Sri Lanka, several seen.
Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Commonly encountered.
White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* Singles seen at Jungle Hut and Kandy.
Andaman Shama ◊ *Copsychus albiventris* Nice views of several on South Andaman.
Indian Black Robin *Saxicoloides fulcata* Noted in dry scrubby country at Jungle Hut and in Sri Lanka.



Kashmir Flycatcher



White-bellied Blue Robin

White-bellied Blue Robin ◊ *Myiomela albiventris* Great views of two confiding birds at Eravikulam.
Nilgiri Blue Robin ◊ *Myiomela major* A good close look at three in all at Ooty.
Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata* Common around tea estates etc.
Ashy-headed Laughingthrush ◊ *Garrulax cinereifrons* Small groups seen on two days at Sinharaja.
Kerala Laughingthrush ◊ *Trochalopteron fairbanki* Some confiding birds seen around Munnar.
Black-chinned Laughingthrush ◊ (Nilgiri L) *Trochalopteron cachinnans* Great close looks of many around Ooty.
Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* Singles at Parambikulam and Jungle Hut.
Brown-capped Babbler ◊ *Pellorneum fuscicapillus* Great views at Kitulgala, also in the hotel garden at Kandy.
Indian Scimitar Babbler ◊ *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* Several seen, at Jungle Hut, Ooty and Parambikulam.
Ceylon Scimitar-Babbler ◊ *Pomatorhinus melanurus* Several seen well at Sinharaja, also at Horton Plains.
Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra* Lovely views at Jungle Hut, also at Uda Walawe.
Dark-fronted Babbler ◊ *Rhopocichla atriceps* Several at Parambikulam, then more at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.
Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* Seen well at Jungle Hut, and very well at Uda Walawe.
Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi* Several seen en-route from Top Slip to Munnar, also in a field at Jungle Hut.
Indian Rufous Babbler ◊ *Turdoides subrufa* A shy fellow, being elusive at Parambikulam, better views at Munnar.
Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata* Not uncommon at Parambikulam, also seen at Jungle Hut.
Ceylon Rufous Babbler ◊ (Orange-billed B) *Turdoides rufescens* Not uncommon in wet-zone bird flocks
Yellow-billed Babbler ◊ *Turdoides affinis* Common around Jungle Hut, also frequently encountered in Sri Lanka.
Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poioicephala* Several seen around Jungle Hut, also at Top Slip.
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen in both India and Sri Lanka.
Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* Odd birds seen, at Jungle Hut, Parambikulam and Uda Walawe.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* In good number at Uda Walawe, also seen at various sites in South India.
Jungle Prinia ◇ *Prinia sylvatica* Good looks at a songster near Kitulgala, also found at Uda Walawe.
Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Occasionally encountered, most numerous at Uda Walawe.
Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* Randomly encountered in scrubby habitats.
Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler ◇ *Elaphrornis palliseri* Two birds showed fairly well after some effort at Horton Plains.
Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* A good look at one on South Andaman. A write-in.
Rusty-rumped Warbler *Locustella certhiola* Good views of a vocal bird on South Andaman.
Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Seen daily in South India, a few also in Sri Lanka
Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* A few seen well on South Andaman.



Kerala Laughingthrush



Brown-capped Babbler

Indian Reed Warbler ◇ *Acrocephalus brunnescens* Two seen at dusk in Bundala N.P.
Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Several seen around the marshes on South Andaman.
Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* Plenty seen in mixed flocks at Ooty.
Yellow-browed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* At least two birds at Ooty.
Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Present throughout in South India, most numerous at Jungle Hut.
Bright Green Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus nitidus* Very common by voice in Sri Lankan forests, fewer in South India.
Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* A small number seen on South Andaman.
Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Seen and often heard at Ooty, Munnar, Kitulgala & Sinharaja.
Tytler's Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus tytleri* (H) A single singing at Ooty remained unseen.
Western Crowned Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus occipitalis* A brief view at Ooty, much better looks in Kerala.
Indian Broad-tailed Grass Warbler ◇ *Schoenicola platyurus* (H): Heard to call a couple of times near Munnar.
Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea* Skulkers at Jungle Hut were seen moderately well.
Indian Yellow Tit ◇ *Parus aplonotus* A few seen in the Munnar area.
Cinereous Tit (Grey Tit) *Parus cinereus* Most numerous at Ooty and on the Horton Plains, a few elsewhere.
Indian Nuthatch ◇ *Sitta castanea* Two singles seen near Jungle Hut.
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* Frequently encountered in both South India and Sri Lanka.
Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile* (NL) One seen at Uda Walawe



Legge's Flowerpecker



Nilgiri Flowerpecker

- Legge's Flowerpecker** ◇ *Dicaeum vincens* Quite a few seen in the Sinharaja area.
Pale-billed Flowerpecker ◇ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* Seen frequently in Sri Lanka, a few also in South India.
Nilgiri Flowerpecker ◇ *Dicaeum concolor* Regularly seen along our route in South India.
Andaman Flowerpecker ◇ *Dicaeum virescens* Not uncommon on South Andaman.
Purple-rumped Sunbird ◇ *Leptocoma zeylonica* Frequently seen along our route in South India and Sri Lanka.
Small Sunbird ◇ *Leptocoma minima* Some good looks at Naduvattam, numerous in Kerala.
Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* Regularly seen on South Andaman.
Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Numerous at Jungle Hut, also seen at Uda Walawe and Bundala.
Loten's Sunbird ◇ *Cinnyris lotenius* Three in the Chennai hotel garden, others at Kitulgala and Bundala



Grey Tit



Black-faced Munia

- Little Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera longirostra* A single vocal fellow at Urulanthanni.
Ceylon White-eye ◇ *Zosterops ceylonensis* Some large vocal flocks were swarming around on the Horton Plains.
Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* A handful on South Andaman and Sri Lanka, frequent in South India.
Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* (NL) Seen in the garden of our Chennai hotel.
White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* Numerous on South Andaman and in Sri Lanka.
Black-throated Munia ◇ *Lonchura kelaarti* Several showed well at Sinharaja.
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Seen in South India and Sri Lanka.
Tricoloured Munia *Lonchura malacca* Several small groups at Uda Walawe, a couple more at Tissa.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Always welcome!
Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis* Quite a few seen on one day only, at Jungle Hut.
Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* A few seen at Uda Walawe and with big nests seen at Tissa.
White-faced Starling ◇ *Sturnia albofrontata* Typically scarce at Sinharaja, with three seen between us.

Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabarica* Two seen at Jungle Hut were this, not the following sp as was called.

Malabar White-headed Starling *Sturnus blythii* (NL) Seen at Parambikulam.

Andaman White-headed Starling ◊ *Sturnus erythropygius* In good numbers on South Andaman.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum* Only seen at Jungle Hut where they were numerous.

Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus* A few seen in flight at Bundala.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* Widespread and common.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* Locally numerous in South India.

Ceylon Hill-Myna ◊ *Gracula ptilogenys* Good looks at several eventually at Sinharaja.

Lesser Hill Myna ◊ *Gracula indica* Good numbers at Munnar and elsewhere in South India, fewer in Sri Lanka

Indian Golden Oriole ◊ *Oriolus kundoo* A single male flew by near Top Slip.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Common on South Andaman.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Commonly encountered in Sri Lanka, just a couple in South India.

Asian Fairy-Bluebird *Irena puella* Frequently seen on South Andaman, at pair at Munnar.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Very few seen.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Occasionally seen in South India, a single at Uda Walawe

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* Fairly common in wet zone Sri Lanka, also seen in scrub at Jungle Hut

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* A few around Jungle Hut and Top Slip/Parambikulam.

Andaman Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus andamanensis* Fairly numerous in the Andaman forests.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Fairly common on South Andaman, fewer seen in South India.

Ceylon Crested Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus lophorinus* Rather few seen at Kitulgala and Sinharaja.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* A few seen along the way in Kerala, also at Kitulgala and Bundala.

Ceylon Blue Magpie ◊ *Urocissa ornata* Beautiful and friendly at Sinharaja!

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* A few seen in South Indian forests.

White-bellied Treepie ◊ *Dendrocitta leucogastra* Several of these fine beasts at Top Slip/Parambikulam.

Andaman Treepie ◊ *Dendrocitta bayleyi* A few sightings on South Andaman, often brief.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Seen throughout, close to human habitation

Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus levaillantii* Small numbers seen on South Andaman.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus* Seen throughout South India, and in Sri Lanka where often numerous



Ceylon Blue Magpie

MAMMALS

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* Seen at Jungle Hut and Bundala.

Indian Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica* A couple of races seen, the confiding Ooty ones were the most gorgeous.

Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura* A buffy brown one seen in Chinnar, blacker ones in wet zone Sri Lanka.

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

Indian Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum* Common in Sri Lanka, a few seen in India.

Dusky Palm Squirrel *Funambulus sublineatus* Seen in the Western Ghats and also at Nuwara Eliya.

Indian Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista philippensis* Two seen above our camp at Parambikulam.

Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* A brief view of one at Bundala.

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* One at Jungle Hut and a couple more at Kitulgala.

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii* One at Uda Walawe.

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* Singles seen at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* One seen from the Blue Magpie at Sinharaja.

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* A massive roost at Tissa, also common around Uda Walawe.

Southern Plains Grey Langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri* Seen around Jungle Hut, Chinnar and Top Slip

Tufted Grey Langur *Semnopithecus priam* Good views at Uda Walawe and Bundala.

Purple-faced Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus vetulus* Vocal and visible at Kitulgala, Sinharaja and Nuwara Eliya.

Nilgiri Langur *Trachypithecus johnii* Many seen from Ooty down to Kerala.

Toque Macaque *Macaca sinica* Occasional sightings in Sri Lanka.

Bonnet Macaque *Macaca radiata* Locally common in South India.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Seen at Jungle Hut and Parambikulam.

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* A single at Parambikulam, a small herd at Horton Plains.

Chital *Axis axis* Many at Jungle Hut and Parambikulam, also at Uda Walawe.

Nilgiri Tahr *Hemitragus hylocrius* Not uncommon at Eravikulam, though some were too close!

Gaur *Bos gaurus* A herd of 19 near Jungle Hut, five seen at Parambikulam.

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* A few around Jungle Hut including one on the road, many at Uda Walawe.



Nilgiri Tahr



Tufted Grey Langur

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2012. IOC World Bird Names (v2.11). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Legge's Hawk-Eagle ◇ *Spizaetus kelaarti* A recent split from Mountain Hawk Eagle, they occur in both Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* The *psarodes* race birds in Sri Lanka rather curiously show crimson backs, just like its larger cousin the Crimson-backed Flameback.

Malabar Flameback ◇ *Chrysocolaptes socialis* Split since my last visit, it is separated from Greater Flameback by call among other things, although it is not split by IOC.

Square-tailed Black Bulbul ◇ *Hypsipetes ganeesa* The birds in Sri Lanka definitely differ vocally from the birds in South India.

Spot-winged Ground-Thrush ◇ *Zoothera spiloptera* A great encounter at Kitulgala with an open nest with two chicks, slapped messily on top of a large palm frond. The young were fairly well grown and probably wouldn't fit within the cup of sticks for much longer!

Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus* Birds seen at Ooty were of the *simillimus* race, at Munnar they were of the *bourdilloni* race.

Malabar Whistling Thrush ◇ *Myophonus horsfieldii* In Salim Ali's 'Handbook to the Birds of India and Pakistan' he offers an alternate name, the 'Whistling or Idle Schoolboy'.



Clipper