

# Sri Lanka Blue Whales & Leopards

22 -29 November 2015

---



Torque Macaque



Spinner Dolphin



Grey Langur



Red-wattled Lapwing

Report compiled by Chaminda Dilruk & Devaka Jayamanne  
Images by Chaminda Dilruk



---

Tour Leader:

Chaminda Dilruk, Devaka Jayamanne & 9 clients

## Highlights

The first day of whale watching yielded sightings of the blue whale and we got lucky with sightings of Bryde's Whales, Spinner Dolphins, Bottlenose Dolphins and Flying Fish on all three sea excursions. As the group left the ocean and ventured in to the Jungles a pair of mating leopards was spotted on the first day in Yala during an evening walk and then a second leopard the following day during safari. Overall the group scored 19 mammals, 155 birds and 11 reptiles & other species.

### Day 1

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

The group met at the airport and boarded a flight to Sri Lanka for their 10-day Blue Whale & Leopard watching tour.

### Day 2

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

The flight arrived at Colombo airport at 01.15pm and the group left the airport at 2pm. Before entering the expressway we passed by the Talangama tank where we encountered Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Cattle Egret, Intermediate Egret, Little Cormorant, Brahminy Kite and Red-wattled Lapwing. On the highway we witnessed Indian Pea Fowl, Black-winged Stilt, Common Sand Piper, Rock Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher, House Crow, Barn Swallow, Re-vented Bulbul and Common Myna.

We reached our hotel at 4.20 pm and after checking-in, some of the group joined in for an evening birding session around the hotel where we encountered Pale-billed Flower Pecker, Yellow-billed Babbler, Tailor Bird, White-bellied Drongo, Large-billed Crow, Black-hooded Oriole, Indian Swiftlet, Asian Koel, Green Imperial Pigeon, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Little Tern and Greater Crested Tern. We also see House Gecko, Land Monitor, Common Jezebel, Plain Tiger, Flying Fox and Common Crow. We came back to the hotel by 6.15pm met again in the restaurant at 7.30pm for dinner.

### Day 3

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

We started the day at 6am with tea/coffee and then went to Mirissa pier for a whale watching tour, taking our picnic breakfast with us. At the pier and in to the boat ride we encountered Striated Heron, Gull-billed Tern and Whiskered Tern. An unfortunate sighting of dead Green Turtle caught in a fishing net was a sad site for the group but after about 1 ½ in to the journey we spot our first Bryde's Whale followed by a pod of about 20 Spinner Dolphins. The majestic Blue Whale broke the surface many times and displayed its signature tail flip before diving in to the deep.

We witness a Common Garden Lizard on our way from the pier to the hotel. After lunch in the hotel we visited the Galle Fort and enjoyed views of the old colonial architecture still standing to this day while enjoying the

---

---

sunset from the ramparts. We encounter Asian Palm Swift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Paddy-field Pipit, Ashy Crowned Sparrow Lark, Rosy Starling, House Sparrow and Scaly-breasted Munia.

We headed back to the hotel at 6.25 pm and met for the checklist at 7.15pm. We had our dinner at 8.00pm after the next day's briefing.

## Day 4

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November**

Once again we had tea/coffee at 6am before going to the pier for our second day of whale watching. At the Pier we encounter Painted Francolin, Bridled Tern, and Brown Noddy before setting off on the boat. Once again we encounter Bryde's Whale very close to the boat, 2 pods of Spinner Dolphins and also Bottle Nose Dolphins. We also encounter a pair of mating Green Turtles, Flying Fish and Tuna.

We reached the hotel at 1.35pm for lunch and after lunch the group were invited to participate in the hotels Christmas cake mixing event. At 3.30pm we left for Kirala Kele forest patch. We encounter Lesser Whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Little Grebe, Darter, White-breasted Water Hen, Purple Swamp Hen, Pheasant Tailed Jacana, Greater Coucal, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Sri Lankan Swallow, Asian Paradise Fly-catcher, Palm Squirrel and a Water Monitor. Glassy Tiger, Common Tiger and Three-spot Glass Yellow butterflies were also seen here.

We headed back to the hotel by 5.50pm and did the checklist at 7.00pm followed by a special cocktail party leading to dinner.

## Day 5

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

Today we had tea/coffee at 6.00am and reached the pier at 6.20am to board our boat. At the pier we see many coral fish along with an Angel Fish. Indian Cormorant and Lesser Crested Tern were also spotted here. In the ocean we once again see Bryde's Whales and many Spinner Dolphins along with Flying Fish and Tuna.

We returned to the hotel for lunch at 12.15pm, and then at 3.15 pm we left for some birding at Kirala Forest. Here we encountered Garganey, Eurasian Spoon Bill, Baya Weaver Bird, White-rumped Munia, Oriental Honey-Buzzard and a Grey Mongoose.

The group also witnessed the traditional fishing style of Stilt Fishing in the Weligama area.

We returned to the hotel 6.45pm and after the checklist had dinner at 7.45pm.

## Day 6

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November**

At 6.30 am we did a small pre-breakfast birding around the hotel garden where we see many of the birds encountered before along with a Purple-faced Leaf Monkey. After breakfast we checked out of the hotel at 8.30 am and proceeded to Yala for our next 3 nights stay. En-route to Yala we encounter Northern Pin-tail, Black-Crowned Night Heron, Grey Heron, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Himalayan Buzzard, Greater Thick-knee, Grey Plover, Lesser-sand Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Red Shank, Marsh Sand Piper, Green Sand Piper, Curlew Sand Piper and a Forest Green Garden Lizard.

---

---

We did more birding in Bundala National Park area and also visited a Buddhist Temple where we had the opportunity to take a few photos. We reached the hotel at 2.40pm and after late lunch once again did a small walk around the hotel. We see Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Indian Pitta, Spot Billed Pelican and Jerdon's & Indian Nightjar.

We were fortunate enough to get a view of a pair of mating Leopards at a distance along with Ruddy Mongoose, Black-naped Hare, Wild Boar, Wild Buffalo, Rock Python and Mugger Crocodile.

We did the checklist at 7.30pm and concluded the day with dinner.

## Day 7

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November

We left the hotel at 5.15am after tea/coffee for our first safari. We took a picnic breakfast and lunch with us. Today we encountered Barred Button Quail, the very rare Black-necked Stork, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Pacific Golden Plover, Little-ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Pin-tailed and Common Snipe, Wood Sandpiper, Ruddy Turn Stone, White-winged Tern, Jacobin Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Blue-faced Malkoha, Sirkeer Malkoha, Crested-Tree Swift, Coppersmith Barbet, Malabar Pied Horn Bill, Yellow Crowned Wood Pecker, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Oriental Sky Lark, White-browed Bulbul, White-browed Fantail, Yellow-eyed Babbler and Oriental White-eye. Torque Macaque, Grey Langur, Golden Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose, Leopard, Elephant, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Samba Deer, Water Buffalo and Black-naped Hare were also encountered.

We returned to the hotel at 6.50pm and did the checklist at 7.45pm followed by dinner.

## Day 8

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November

We left the hotel 5.30am, again with picnic breakfast, and entered the Yala park at 6am. We encounter Brown-headed Barbet, Jungle Prinia, Ashy Prinia, Blythe's Reed Warbler, Brahminy Starling, Loten's Sunbird and also a Fan-throated Lizard along with many mammals which we encountered the previous day. Large Orange Tip, White Orange Tip, Egg Fly and Blue Glassy Tiger were some of the butterfly's we encountered today.

We returned to the hotel at 1.30pm for lunch. After relaxing till 4.30pm we did another walk around the hotel premises and encounter most of the species seen before.

We did the checklist at 7.00pm and proceeded for dinner at 7.30pm.

## Day 9

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November

We left the hotel at 8.15am after breakfast and proceeded to Colombo via Tissamaharama. We encounter many Giant Fruit Bats roosting in a tree and we also saw a few ancient temples in the vicinity. At Debarawewa area we encountered Yellow Bittern, Eurasian Thick-knee, Lesser Goldenback, Crimson-backed Goldenback, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Jerdon's Leaf Bird, Zitting Zisticola, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Asian Brown Fly Catcher, Thick-billed Flower Pecker and Stork-billed Kingfisher.

We reached the airport hotel at 6.45pm and had dinner soon afterwards.

---

After breakfast the group left the hotel at 9.45am in time to catch their flight back to the UK.

## Species Lists

### Mammals

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
1	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
2	Grey Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>
3	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Presbytis vetulus</i>
4	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
5	Indian Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
6	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
7	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
8	Indian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
9	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
10	Spotted Deer (Chital)	<i>Cervus axis</i>
11	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
12	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>
13	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
14	Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
15	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
16	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
17	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>
18	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>
19	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>

### Reptiles & Other

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
1	Land Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
2	Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>
3	Fan-throat Lizard	<i>Sitana ponticeriana</i>
4	Common Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
5	Green Forest Lizard	<i>Calotes calotes</i>
6	Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
7	Rock Python	<i>Python molurus</i>
8	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
9	Flying Fish	<i>Cheilopogon spilopterus</i>
10	Tuna	<i>Thunnini</i>
11	Regal Angel Fish	<i>Pygoplites dicanthus</i>

## Birds

	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>
1	Painted Francolin	<i>Francolin pictus</i>
2	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
3	<b>Sri Lanka Junglefowl</b>	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
4	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
5	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
6	Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
7	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
8	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
9	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
10	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
11	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>
12	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
13	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
14	Yellow Bittern	<i>Lxobrychus sinensis</i>
15	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
16	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
17	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
18	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
19	Purpul Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
20	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
21	Great Egret	<i>casmerodius albus</i>
22	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
24	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
25	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
26	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
27	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
28	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
29	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
30	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
31	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
32	White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
33	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
34	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
35	Himalayan Buzzard, Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo(buteo) burmanicus</i>
36	Changeble Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
37	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
38	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
39	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
40	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
41	Indian Thick-knee, Eurasian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus(oediconemus) indicus</i>
42	Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
43	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>

44	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
45	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
46	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
47	Gray Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
48	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
49	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
50	Lesser sand Plover, Mongolian Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>
51	Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>
52	Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>
53	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
54	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
55	Common Red shank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
56	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
57	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
58	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
59	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
60	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
61	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
62	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
63	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
64	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
65	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
66	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis,</i>
67	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
68	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
69	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
70	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
71	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>
72	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
73	Common Pigeon, Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
74	Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
75	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
76	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
77	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
78	Jacobin Cuckoo, Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
79	Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>
80	Asian Koel	<i>Endynamys scolopacerus</i>
81	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>
82	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>
83	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
84	Jerdon's Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i>
85	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>
86	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</i>
87	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
88	House Swift, Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>



89	Crested Treeswift , Gray-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
90	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
91	Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
92	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
93	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
94	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
95	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
96	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
97	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
98	Common Hoopoe, Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
99	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
100	<b>Crimson-fronted Barbet</b>	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
101	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
102	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
103	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
104	Lesser Goldenback, Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
105	Crimson-backed Goldenback, Crimson-back Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes(lucidus) stricklandi</i>
106	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
107	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis (pondicerianus) affinis</i>
108	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
109	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
110	Long-tailed Shrike, Rufous- backed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>
111	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
112	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
113	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
114	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
115	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
116	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
117	Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis (daurica) hyperythra</i>
118	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
119	Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
120	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
121	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
122	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
123	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
124	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
125	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
126	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
127	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
128	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
129	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
130	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
131	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
132	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
133	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>

---

134	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
135	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
136	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
137	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
138	Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>
139	Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>
140	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
141	Indian Robin, Black-backed Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
142	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
143	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
144	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
145	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
146	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
147	Loten's Sunbird, Long-billed Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>
148	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
149	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
150	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
151	Indian Silverbill, White-throated Silverbill	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>
152	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
153	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
154	Black-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>
155	Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>

---