Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

Including Whale-watching Extension

Naturetrek Tour Report

4 - 16 November 2017



Sri Lanka Junglefowl



Common Kingfisher



Jerdon's Bush Lark



Common Emerald Dove

Report & images compiled by Saman Kumara



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Highlights

An impressive total of 33 of the 34 endemic birds of Sri Lanka were seen during this tour. We only missed Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush due to the unusual inclement weather. We managed to spot a total of 196 species of birds along with 20 mammal species and 13 species of reptiles and amphibians, making the tour an all-round success.

Day 1

Saturday 4th November

The tour started with an overnight flight from the UK to Sri Lanka.

Day 2

Sunday 5th November

Kitulgala

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 12.30pm. After meeting the leaders, we left the airport at 1.40pm. During our journey to Kitulgala we encountered Common Myna, Southern Hill Myna, Loten's Sunbird, White-rumped Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia, Red-vented Bulbul, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-throated Kingfisher, Black-headed Ibis, Asian Openbill, Yellow-billed Babbler, Indian Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Shikra, Whiskered Tern, Great Egret, Brahminy Kite, Rock Dove, Asian Palm Swift, Little Swift, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Alexandrine Parakeet, Large-billed Crow, House Crow, Sri Lanka Swallow, Black-Capped Bulbul, Large-billed Warbler, Common Tailorbird and Oriental Magpie-Robin.

Before reaching our hotel we visited the nearby village for some birding, finally arriving at 6.30pm to check in. We met for dinner at 7.30pm, after which we did our checklist and had a briefing about the next day's program before calling it a night.

Day 3

Monday 6th November

Kitulgala

We started the day at 5.30am by visiting the nearby patch of forest where sightings included Chestnut-backed Owlet, Brown-capped, Dark-fronted and Orange-billed Babblers, Oriental White-Eye, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Brown Shrike, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Green-billed Coucal, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Greater Coucal, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Brown-headed Barbet, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Common Iora, Orange Minivet, Black-capped, Black and Yellow-browed Bulbuls, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Spot-winged Thrush, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Jerdon's Leafbird, Indian Pitta, Black-rumped and Crimson-backed Flamebacks, Lesser Yellownape, White-naped Woodpecker, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Asian Palm Swift, Common Emerald Dove, White-breasted Waterhen, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Crested Honey Buzzard.

After breakfast in the hotel we set out to the Kitulgala Rainforest by crossing the river in dug-out rafts. Our birding in the forest yielded most of the birds seen earlier. We returned to the hotel for a late lunch and then set out to the nearby village, again finding mostly the same birds, but we also saw a Kangaroo Lizard.

We were back in the hotel by 6.15pm and met for dinner at 7.15 pm, which was followed by the checklist and a briefing for the next day.

Day 4

Tuesday 7th November

Nuwara Eliya

We did a pre-breakfast bird walk around Kitulgala village and saw Sri Lanka Drongo and Marshall's Iora. We returned to the hotel for breakfast. Subsequently we checked out of the hotel at 9.30am and headed to Nuwara Eliya, in the central mountains of the island, for our next two-night stay.

We reached our next hotel at 12.30pm and, after having lunch, set out to the nearby Victoria Park. Here we witnessed Sri Lanka White-Eye, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Great Tit, Dark-fronted Babbler, Purple Sunbird, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Kashmir Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher and Peregrine Falcon. After the park we visited another patch of forest.

After the visit we returned to the hotel and gathered in the restaurant to do the checklist, which was followed by dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday 8th November

Nuwara Eliya

At 4.30am we had tea/coffee and then left for Horton Plains. During our trek on the plains we saw Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, Crimson-backed Flameback, Pied Bush Chat, Black-headed Munia, Hill Swallow, Loten's Sunbird, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Zitting Cisticola, Green Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Sri Lanka White-Eye and Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon. We also saw Toque Macaque, Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Brown Mongoose, Sambar and Grizzled Giant Squirrel.

Later we visited Seetha Eliya and saw Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. We came back to the hotel at 6.30pm and, after the checklist, had dinner and went to bed.

Day 6

Thursday 9th November

Embilipitiya

After breakfast, we checked out and proceeded to Embilipitiya. En route we stopped at Surrey Bird Sanctuary where we saw Brown Wood Owl.

During the drive to our next hotel we saw Indian Roller, Woolley-necked Stork, Indian Peafowl, Crested Treeswift, Green Bee-eater, Coppersmith Barbet, Black Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle and Alpine Swift. We couldn't do any more birding thereafter as is started to rain heavily.

The evening proceeded with the usual routine of dinner, checklist and briefing before calling it a night.

Day 7

Friday 10th November

Udawalawa National Park - Sinharaja

With packed breakfast, we left the hotel and proceeded to Udawalawe National Park for a jeep safari. Encounters included Grey-breasted and Jungle Prinias, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sirkeer and Blue-faced Malkohas, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Great Cormorant, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Barred Buttonquail, Blackwinged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Whiskered Tern, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Oriental Skylark, Ashy Prinia, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Black-winged Kite, Eurasian Spoonbill, Marsh Sandpiper, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Brown Fish Owl, Painted Stork, Grey-bellied Cuckoo and Common Cuckoo. Other wildlife sighted in the park included Asian Elephant, Water Buffalo, Grey Mongoose, Land Monitor, Mugger Crocodile, Spotted Deer and a Green Vine Snake.

After lunch at the Nivahana restaurant, we proceeded to Sinharaja. We checked in at the Blue Magpie Lodge at 4.45pm and then did a bird walk in the village, spotting Serendib Scops Owl.

We met again at 7pm for our evening routine of checklist, briefing and dinner.

Day 8

Saturday 11th November

Sinharaja Rainforest

We started the day at 5.15am with tea/coffee and then proceeded to the Sinharaja rainforest in jeeps. Inside the rainforest we saw Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Sri Lanka Drongo, Red-faced Malkoha, White-faced Starling, Ashyheaded Laughingthrush, Malabar Trogon, Sri Lanka Frogmouth and Layard's Parakeet. We also saw Sri Lanka Birdwing and Sri Lanka Tree-Nymph butterflies.

We returned to the hotel at 6pm and had our dinner at 7.15pm.

Main Tour Day 9, Extension Day 1

Sunday 12th November

We started the day at 5.15am after a cup of tea, and then left for the Ketalapatala area to search for Sri Lanka Spurfowl, enjoying a very good sighting of the bird. We returned to the hotel at 9.30am.

After lunch, those on the main tour checked out and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night's stay. En route we saw Black-crowned Night Heron, Lesser Whistling Duck, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Grey-headed Swamphen, Baya Weaver and Common Moorhen. At 7pm we did a bird walk in the hotel garden and encountered five Collared Scops Owls. At 8pm we did the checklist which was followed by dinner.

Meanwhile, for those on the whale-watching extension, we also checked out after lunch but then proceeded to Weligama Fisherman's Bay Hotel. We reached the hotel at 5.30pm and met again at 7.30pm for the checklist, which was followed by dinner.

Main Tour Day 10, Extension Day 2

Monday 13th November

On the main tour, we checked out after breakfast and headed to the airport for our flight back to the UK, where our Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

Those of us on the extension started the day at 6.15am. After a cup of tea, we set out to Mirissa with our packed breakfast in search of Blue Whales. We had very good sightings of Blue Whales and Sperm Whales today. Greater and Lesser Crested Terns were also spotted on our way back to the pier.

After lunch we visited Galle fort and walked along the ramparts and old streets of the city, returning to the hotel at 7pm. We came across Whimbrel on our visit to Galle. We did the checklist at 8pm and then had dinner.

Extension Day 3

Tuesday 14th November

We started the day at 6am and left for Mirrissa for our whale-watching excursion. We saw Blue Whales again and also had a good sighting of Bryde's Whales. Pomarine Skua was also seen.

We returned to the hotel 11am and after lunch visited Kirala Kelle sanctuary, where we saw Lesser Whistling Duck, Little Grebe, Oriental Darter, Common Tern, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Common Moorhen and Whitebrowed Bulbul.

We returned to the hotel at 6.30pm, did the checklist and had dinner.

Extension Day 4

Wednesday 15th November

We started the day at 8.30am. After breakfast we left for the Kirala Kelle sanctuary again. This time sightings included Black Bittern, Striated Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron. We returned to the hotel at 11am.

After lunch we checked out and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night's stay. At 7pm we did a bird walk in the hotel garden and encountered Brown Hawk-Owl and Collared Scops Owls. We did the checklist at 8pm followed by dinner.

Extension Day 5

Thursday 16th November

After breakfast we checked out and proceeded to the airport in time for our flight back to the UK, where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

Species Lists

Birds (Some previous or alternative names in brackets; Endemics in bold)

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Lesser Whistling Duck	Dendrocygna javanica
2	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	Galloperdix bicalcarata
3	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	Gallus lafayettii
4	Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus
5	Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis
6	Painted Stork	Mycteria leucocephala
7	Asian Openbill	Anastomus oscitans
8	Woolly-necked Stork	Ciconia episcopus
9	Lesser Adjutant	Leptoptilos javanicus
10	Black-headed Ibis	Threskiornis melanocephalus
11	Eurasian Spoonbill	Platalea leucorodia
12	Black Bittern	Dupetor flavicollis
13	Black-crowned Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax
14	Striated Heron	Butorides striata
15	Indian Pond Heron	Ardeola grayii
16	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus
17	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea
18	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea
19	Great Egret	Ardea alba
20	Intermediate Egret	Egretta intermedia
21	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta
22	Spot-billed Pelican	Pelecanus philippensis
23	Little Cormorant	Microcarbo niger
24	Indian Cormorant	Phalacrocorax fuscicollis
25	Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo
26	Oriental Darter	Anhinga melanogaster
27	Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus
28	Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental Honey-buzzard)	Pernis ptilorhynchus
29	Crested Serpent Eagle	Spilornis cheela
30	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	Nisaetus cirrhatus
31	Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle	Lophotriorchis kienerii
32	Black Eagle	Ictinaetus malaiensis
33	Shikra	Accipiter badius
34	Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus
35	White-bellied Sea Eagle	Haliaeetus leucogaster
36	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	Haliaeetus ichthyaetus
37	Slaty-legged Crake	Rallina eurizonoides
38	Himalayan Buzzard	Buteo buteo burmanicus
39	White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus
40	Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus
41	Barred Buttonquail	Turnix suscitator
42	Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus
43	Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus
44	Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius
45	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	Hydrophasianus chirurgus
46	Pin-tailed Snipe	Gallinago stenura
47	Common Redshank	Tringa totanus
48	Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis
49	Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia
50	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola

Common name Scientific name

	Common name	Scientific name
51	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos
52	Greater Crested Tern	Thalasseus bergii
53	Lesser Crested Tern	Thalasseus bengalensis
54	Common Tern	Sterna hirundo
55	Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybrida
56	Rock Dove (Common Pigeon)	Columba livia
57	Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	Columba torringtoniae
58	Spotted Dove	Spilopelia chinensis
59	Common Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove)	Chalcophaps indica
60	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	Treron bicinctus
61	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	Treron pompadora
62	Green Imperial Pigeon	Ducula aenea
63	Green-billed Coucal	Centropus chlororhynchos
64	Greater Coucal	Centropus sinensis
65	Sirkeer Malkoha	Taccocua leschenaultii
66	Red-faced Malkoha	Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus
67	Blue-faced Malkoha	Phaenicophaeus viridirostris
68	Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied Cuckoo)	Clamator jacobinus
69	Asian Koel	Eudynamys scolopaceus
70	Banded Bay Cuckoo	Cacomantis sonneratii
71	Grey-bellied Cuckoo (Plaintive Cuckoo)	Cacomantis passerinus
72	Common Cuckoo (Eurasian Cuckoo)	Cuculus canorus
73	Serendib Scops Owl	Otus thilohoffmanni
74	Indian Scops Owl (Collared Scops Owl)	Otus bakkamoena
75	Brown Fish Owl	Ketupa zeylonensis
76	Brown Wood Owl	Strix leptogrammica
77	Chestnut-backed Owlet	Glaucidium castanotum
78	Brown Hawk-Owl	Ninox scutulata
79	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	Batrachostomus moniliger
80	Crested Treeswift (Gray-rumped Treeswift)	Hemiprocne coronata
81	Indian Swiftlet	Aerodramus unicolor
82	Asian Palm Swift	Cypsiurus balasiensis
83	Alpine Swift	Tachymarptis melba
84	Little Swift (House Swift)	Apus affinis
85	Malabar Trogon	Harpactes fasciatus
86	Indian Roller	Coracias benghalensis
87	Stork-billed Kingfisher	Pelargopsis capensis
88	White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis
89	Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis
90	Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher	Ceyx erithaca
91	Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis
92	Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater)	Merops orientalis
93	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	Merops philippinus
94	Malabar Pied Hornbill	Anthracoceros coronatus
95	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	Ocyceros gingalensis
96	Brown-headed Barbet	Psilopogon zeylanicus
97	Yellow-fronted Barbet	Psilopogon flavifrons
98	Crimson-fronted Barbet	Psilopogon rubricapillus
99	Coppersmith Barbet	Psilopogon haemacephalus
100	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	Dendrocopos nanus
101	Lesser Yellownape	Picus chlorolophus
102	Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback)	Dinopium benghalense
103	Crimson-backed Flameback(Crimson-backed Goldenback)	Chrysocolaptes stricklandi

Common name Scientific name 104 Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus 105 Lavard's Parakeet Psittacula calthrapae 106 Alexandrine Parakeet Psittacula eupatria 107 Rose-ringed Parakeet Psittacula krameri 108 Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot Loriculus beryllinus 109 Indian Pitta Pitta brachyura 110 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike Hemipus picatus 111 Sri Lanka Woodshrike Tephrodornis affinis 112 Common Iora Aegithina tiphia 113 Marshall's Iora Aegithina nigrolutea 114 Black-headed Cuckooshrike Coracina melanoptera 115 Small Minivet Pericrocotus cinnamomeus 116 Orange Minivet (Scarlet/Flame Minivet) Pericrocotus flammeus 117 Brown Shrike Lanius cristatus 118 Black-hooded Oriole Oriolus xanthornus 119 White-bellied Drongo Dicrurus caerulescens 120 Sri Lanka Drongo (Sri Lanka Crested Drongo) Dicrurus Iophorinus 121 White-browed Fantail Rhipidura aureola 122 Black-naped Monarch Hypothymis azurea 123 Indian Paradise Flycatcher (Asian Paradise Flycatcher) Terpsiphone paradisi Sri Lanka Blue Magpie Urocissa ornata 124 Corvus splendens 125 House Crow 126 Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed Crow) Corvus culminatus Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher 127 Culicicapa ceylonensis 128 **Great Tit** Parus major 129 Jerdon's Bush Lark Mirafra affinis 130 Oriental Skylark Alauda gulgula 131 **Black-capped Bulbul** Pycnonotus melanicterus 132 Red-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus cafer Yellow-eared Bulbul Pycnonotus penicillatus 133 White-browed Bulbul Pycnonotus luteolus 134 Yellow-browed Bulbul Acritillas indica 135 Hypsipetes leucocephalus 136 Black Bulbul Hirundo rustica 137 Barn Swallow 138 Hill Swallow Hirundo domicola Sri Lanka Swallow Cecropis hyperythra 139 140 Green Warbler Phylloscopus nitidus 141 Greenish Warbler Phylloscopus trochiloides Phylloscopus magnirostris 142 Large-billed Leaf Warbler 143 Blyth's Reed Warbler Acrocephalus dumetorum Sri Lanka Bush Warbler 144 Elaphrornis palliseri 145 Zitting Cisticola Cisticola juncidis 146 Prinia hodgsonii Grey-breasted Prinia Prinia sylvatica 147 Jungle Prinia 148 Ashy Prinia Prinia socialis 149 Plain Prinia Prinia inornata 150 Common Tailorbird Orthotomus sutorius 151 Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler Pomatorhinus melanurus Grey-headed Swamphen (Purple Swamphen) 152 Porphyrio poliocephalus 153 Tawny-bellied Babbler Dumetia hyperythra 154 Dark-fronted Babbler Rhopocichla atriceps

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Pellorneum fuscocapillus

Turdoides rufescens

Brown-capped Babbler

Orange-billed Babbler

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Scientific name

Numenius phaeopus

157 Yellow-billed Babbler Turdoides affinis Ashy-headed Laughingthrush Garrulax cinereifrons 158 159 Yellow-eyed Babbler Chrysomma sinense 160 Oriental White-Eye Zosterops palpebrosus 161 Sri Lanka White-Eye Zosterops ceylonensis 162 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch Sitta frontalis Sri Lanka Hill Myna (Sri Lanka Myna) 163 Gracula ptilogenys 164 Southern Hill Myna (Lesser Hill Myna) Gracula indica 165 Common Myna Acridotheres tristis Sturnornis albofrontatus 166 White-faced Starling 167 Rosy Starling Pastor roseus 168 **Spot-winged Thrush** Geokichla spiloptera 169 Indian Blackbird Turdus simillimus 170 Indian Robin Copsychus fulicatus 171 Oriental Magpie-Robin Copsychus saularis 172 Brown-breasted Flycatcher Muscicapa muttui Tickell's Blue Flycatcher Cyornis tickelliae 173 174 **Dull-blue Flycatcher** Eumyias sordidus 175 Indian Blue Robin Larvivora brunnea 176 Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush Myophonus blighi Ficedula subrubra 177 Kashmir Flycatcher Pied Bush Chat Saxicola caprata 178 179 Chloropsis jerdoni Jerdon's Leafbird Legge's Flowerpecker (White-throated Flowerpecker) 180 Dicaeum vincens 181 Pale-billed Flowerpecker Dicaeum erythrorhynchos 182 Purple-rumped Sunbird Leptocoma zeylonica 183 Purple Sunbird Cinnyris asiaticus 184 Loten's Sunbird Cinnyris lotenius 185 House Sparrow Passer domesticus Ploceus philippinus 186 Baya Weaver 187 White-rumped Munia Lonchura striata 188 Lonchura punctulata Scaly-breasted Munia 189 Lonchura kelaarti Black-throated Munia Lonchura malacca 190 Tricolored Munia (Black-headed Munia) 191 Forest Wagtail Dendronanthus indicus Motacilla flava Western Yellow Wagtail 192 Motacilla cinerea 193 Grey Wagtail Anthus rufulus 194 Paddyfield Pipit 195 Pomarine Skua Stercorarius pomarinus

Mammal List

Whimbrel

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Common name

Common name Scientific name

1	Toque Macaque	Macaca sinica
2	Grey Langur	Semnopithecus (Presbytis) entellus
3	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	Trachypithecus (Presbytis) vetulus
4	Common Otter	Lutra lutra
5	Grey Mongoose	Herpestes edwardsii
6	Ruddy Mongoose	Herpestes smithii
7	Brown Mongoose	Herpestes fuscus
8	Asian Elephant	Elephas maximus
9	Mouse Deer	Tragulus meminna

Scientific name

Scientific name

Common name

10 Spotted Deer Cervus axis 11 Sambar Cervus unicolor 12 Water Buffalo Bubalus Bubalis 13 Indian Palm Squirrel Funambulus palmarum 14 Grizzled Giant Squirrel Ratufa macroura **Dusky Striped Squirrel** Funambulus sublineatus Indian Hare(Black-naped Hare) 16 Lepus nigricollis 17 Indian Flying Fox Pteropus gigantea 18 Blue Whale Balaenoptera musculus 19 Sperm Whale Physeter macrocephalus 20 Bryde's Whale Balaenoptera edeni

Reptile & Amphibian List

Common name

1 Ahaetulla nasuta Green Vine Snake 2 Bengal (Land) Monitor Varanus bengalensis 3 Asian Water Monitor Varanus salvator 4 Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard Calotes versicolor 5 Green Garden Lizard Calotes calotes 6 Black-cheek Lizard Calotes nigrilabris 7 Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard Otocryptis wiegmanni 8 Rhinoceros-horned Lizard Ceratophora stoddartii Hump-nosed Lizard Lyriocephalus scutatus 10 Mugger Crocodile Crocodylus palustris Soft-shelled Terrapin Lissemys punctata Common House Gecko 12 Hemidactylus frenatus Common Skink Eutropis carinata