



Streak-throated Barwing (all photos by Dave Farrow unless otherwise indicated)

BURMA

19 MARCH – 1/8 APRIL 2017

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This years' Birdquest tour to Burma was once again a splendid affair. We saw all eight – oh wait, there's one more now – *nine* Burmese endemics – Hooded Treepie, Jerdon's Minivet, White-throated Babbler, Burmese Bushlark, White-browed Nuthatch (the 'jewel in the crown' of the endemic birds), Burmese Bushtit, Davison's Bulbul, Burmese Collared Dove, and Irrawaddy Bulbul - the 'newest' of the set. We also found five taxa that could be described as near-endemics - Collared Myna, Striped and Brown-capped Laughingthrushes, Mount Victoria Babax, and Chin Hills Wren-Babbler. In addition to these sparkling headlines we found a great array of special birds such as White-eyed Buzzard, Rain Quail, White-tailed Stonechat and Striated Babbler at Bagan. In the varied forest habitats that lie between the Irrawaddy and the Chin Hills we found Himalayan Flameback, White-rumped Falcon, Collared Falconet, Blossom-headed and Grey-headed Parakeets, and Burmese Nuthatch. On Mount Victoria we enjoyed a splendid female Hodgson's Frogmouth, Grey-sided Thrush, White-bellied Redstart, Black-bibbed Tit, Crested Finchbill, Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Rusty-capped Fulvetta, Assam and Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Crimson-faced Liocichla, Grey Sibia, Streak-throated and

Rusty-fronted Barwings, Brown Bush-warblers and Fire-tailed Sunbirds, In the Shan State in the east of the country, at Inle Lake we saw Chinese Grassbird and numerous Jerdon's Bushchats, and in the mountain forests around Kalaw we found nest-building Burmese Yuhinas, Slender-billed Oriole, Black-tailed Crake, Pin-tailed Green-pigeon, Sapphire Flycatcher, Black-breasted Thrush, Black-headed Greenfinch, White-browed Laughingthrush, Martens's Warbler, Dark-backed Sibia, and some Collared Mynas. Our extension was altered – permission to visit the south for Gurney's Pitta was withdrawn at a late stage, so we headed further west in Chin State to Matupi, on the way to the Bangladesh border. It was a successful and bird filled few days, with endless ridges of lush montane forest remaining here for our exploration. We found Slender-billed, Spot-breasted and Coral-billed Scimitar Babblers, Grey Peacock Pheasant, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Crested Kingfisher, Dark-rumped Swift, Rufous-backed Sibia, Grey-cheeked Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker, Vivid Niltava and Long-billed Thrush, to name a few. On our return journey, a random stop produced a great surprise in the form of several Upland Pipits, a hitherto unknown population here far removed from its known range.



Brown Bullfinch

We met on a warm day in Yangon, and after enjoying our first lunch together we set off across town to the Shwedagon Pagoda. We enjoyed a peaceful circuit of the pagoda grounds, with the great spire glistening gold above adorned with a Peregrine Falcon sat high on its ledges, and the local *insolens* subspecies of House Crow contrasting with the yellow metal. A pleasant introduction to the Golden Land, with a few birds to start us off such as Asian Palm and House Swifts, Black Drongo, Red-vented Bulbul, Brown Shrike and Eastern Cattle Egret, plus some vocal Irrawaddy Squirrels.

We visited the area of Hlawga Park the next morning, a patch of secondary woodland and scrub stocked with a few introduced Sambhar and Hog Deer, not to mention some friendly Green Peafowl! We ate our breakfast al fresco in the car park, tormented by a vocal Plaintive Cuckoo until we managed a view of him flying over our heads. Then we had our first looks at the newly-split Irrawaddy Bulbul, and soon after found the rather more attractive Davison's Bulbul which showed rather well. Also we found Racket-tailed Treepie and Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, Black-headed and Black-crested Bulbul, and many Green Bee-eaters. We explored the tracks inside the park finding White-rumped Shama, Dark-necked Tailorbird, Two-barred Warbler, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo and Black-naped Orioles, while Asian Openbills began to soar on the warming air. Deeper into the park we found Oriental Darter, a flock of Ashy Minivet, Pin-striped Tit Babbler, Abbott's Babbler, and we had some great views of both White-crested and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush. On some wet areas we found Little Ringed Plover, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Chinese Pond Heron coming into breeding dress, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, and a shiny male Ruby-

throated Sunbird. Then it was time to head back and check out, and present ourselves at the airport for our onward flight to Bagan. A two-hour delay was a yawn, and we landed in Bagan after dark in the midst of a rainstorm, rather atypical here in the dry zone!

At dawn under clear skies, we stood close to one of the many spectacular pagodas, and scanned the bushes and fields for our first taste of dry zone birding. We soon found Grey-breasted Prinia and Irrawaddy Bulbul (which proved to be the most abundant bird here!) then found Vinous-breasted Starlings, Burmese Collared Dove with its yellow eye-ring, Burmese Bushlarks (also common here), and flushed our first Rain Quail – as the name might suggest, last night's downpour seemed to have made them all very vocal today. We had several encounters with Rain Quail through the morning, never seeing them on the ground but some adequate flight views were acquired, plus a lot of loud aural encounters. We did see two Barred Buttonquail on the ground, plus the endearing endemic White-throated Babbler, Siberian Rubythroat, Yellow-streaked and Thick-billed Warblers, Brown and Plain Prinias, Booted Eagle (a write-in), and had a good look at a fine male Jerdon's Minivet, one of four that appeared for a limited time only. We checked where Laggar Falcon used to breed on a large pagoda, however the spire was toppled by last year's earthquake and the birds were nowhere to be found. On a nearby pond we saw Citrine Wagtail and Spotted Redshank, Temminck's Stint, Wood and Green Sandpipers. Later we went to the jetty on the mighty Irrawaddy River, to board our boat for an afternoon cruise. On our way downstream we found Striated Babbler and White-tailed Stonechat along the grassy shoreline, Bluethroat, Small and Oriental Pratincoles, River Lapwing, Amur and Baikal White Wagtails, and numerous Sand Larks. We disembarked to explore some seasonal cultivation on an island, and had spanking views of male Pied Harrier, plenty more White-tailed Stonechats, Rain Quails, Red-throated Pipits, Oriental Skylark, Red Avadavat and Baya Weaver. We chugged back upstream to Bagan, seeing Pied Kingfisher and many Ruddy Shelduck, to round off a splendid day's dry zone birding.



Ruddy Shelduck



Pied Harrier

We headed out in the dark, crossing the Irrawaddy before dawn, and as the light came up we paused for a roadside picnic breakfast in some prime habitat. Walking down the road we soon found our target of Hooded Treepie, and were treated to a very close view of this secretive bird. Also here we saw Rufous Treepie, Plain-backed Sparrow, and Yellow-footed Green Pigeon. We continued along the road into an area of dry forest on sandy ridges, where we found Burmese Nuthatch, a Streak-throated Woodpecker that gave us a nice close show, several Shikra and Oriental Honey Buzzard, White-eyed Buzzard and Changeable Hawk Eagle, Small Minivet, Common Woodshrike, many Grey-headed Parakeets plus a few Alexandrine and Red-breasted Parakeets, and Lineated Barbet. At a shady lunchstop we enjoyed good looks at a pair of Collared Falconet, one of which was snacking on a lizard for his lunch. Along the road we came across a small forest fire that was mobbed by Indian Rollers, some sitting on the road as we tried to pass, and in some remnant roadside forest we saw Greater Flamebacks, Grey-headed Woodpecker and Greater Yellownappe. The heat was quite intense now, and as we began to climb up towards the hopefully cooler Mt Victoria we found a fine Black Baza, some Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes and a group of Yellow-eyed Babbler.

On our first day on Mt Victoria we headed for the higher forests to search for the main prize, the White-browed Nuthatch. In the cool mountain air, it wasn't long before we found a pair of these apricot-sided

endemics, feeding in a tall tree by the roadside. Hurrah! Other early morning thrills were a Spot-breasted Parrotbill that sat up in the morning sun, a Brown Bush Warbler that sung its strange clicking song from the a bushlet among the grass, our first Grey Sibias, Streak-throated Barwing, Red-tailed and Bar-throated Minlas, Slaty-blue and Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, the abundant Buff-barred Warbler, Ashy-throated and Blyth's Leaf Warblers and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. Further downhill on a peaceful stretch of road we found Brown-capped and Assam Laughingthrushes, Fire-tailed and Green-tailed Sunbirds, White-browed Fulvetta, Whistler's Warbler, Yellow-bellied Fantail, Chestnut-headed Tesia, a cheeky Chin Hills Wren Babbler, Stripe-throated Yuhina, Long-tailed Minivet and Hume's Treecreepers. Walking through the pine parkland high on the mountain we found Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Burmese Bushtits, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, a Himalayan Buzzard, plus some Golden Babbler and Rufous-winged Fulvettas in the evergreen forest.



Streak-throated Woodpecker



Greater Flamebacks

Birding at lower elevations, among the secondary woodland and scrub we found a Large Hawk Cuckoo, Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, a very nice Black-breasted Thrush, and we heard a Hodgson's Frogmouth call but could not find her roosting site. We had a great view of Spotted Elachura, followed by a pair of Pygmy Wren-babbler that passed through exactly the same branches. We found Plaintive Cuckoo, Black Eagle, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, a fine songster of a Grey-crowned Warbler, our first Green-backed Tits, some furtive Rusty-capped and Nepal Fulvettas, a pair of Chin Hills Wren Babbler, Long-tailed Shrike, Slaty-backed Flycatchers, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler and Silver-eared Mesias. Returning to higher levels and the evergreen forest, we found a pair of Black-eared Shrike Babbler, a vocal Blyth's Shrike Babbler in the canopy, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Mountain Bulbul, some splendid Golden-throated Barbets, Stripe-throated Yuhina and Yellow-bellied Fantail. Later on after dinner we tried for Hodgson's Frogmouth, which initially called strongly, then refused to respond more and we were treated to a black wall of silence!

We headed back up to the high forest in the early morning and met our target of Mt Victoria Babax on the road, with three birds that skipped across the track, then we had fine views of a vocal bird that performed for us, sitting up and singing loudly. We also found Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Assam Laughingthrush, Burmese Bushtits, Yellow-browed Tit, Aberrant Bush Warbler, Fire-tailed Sunbird, a pair of Hume's Treecreepers, Brown-capped and a furtive Striped Laughingthrush, in addition to many commoner birds all active in the early morning sun. We then crossed over onto the Mindat Road and set about the rich forest habitat here, seeing a Hill Partridge that unusually showed quite well as he came trotting past us, some Broad-billed Warblers sat on open branches, several Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers, Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Red-tailed Minlas and a fine Green Shrike Babbler. Later on we found two Black-headed Shrike Babblers that were locked in some strange kind of display to each other, with much stretching and bowing. Also we saw Spot-breasted Parrotbill growling away from high in some big trees, and finished off with Great Barbets, Burmese Bushtits, Streak-throated Barwings, and a Dark-sided Flycatcher.

We walked the road through the scrubby zone, but this being the Sunday of a holiday weekend we had to contend with a large amount of traffic passing us as they headed up to the summit, covering us in clouds of dust as they did so. We did however find a Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Black-throated Prinia, and had glimpses of

Grey-bellied Tesia and Blue-winged Laughingthrush. Further uphill in the evergreen forest we found Bay and Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, White-tailed Nuthatch, a trio of Himalayan Cutia, a quartet of splendid Brown Bullfinches, Rusty-fronted Barwing, Eye-browed Thrush and a flock of Chestnut-flanked White-eye. In the afternoon we turned our attentions to the lower levels where we saw Assam Laughingthrush, glimpsed a Crimson-faced Liocichla, found two Russet Bush Warblers, and saw Striped Laughingthrushes hopping in a field.



Hodgson's Frogmouth



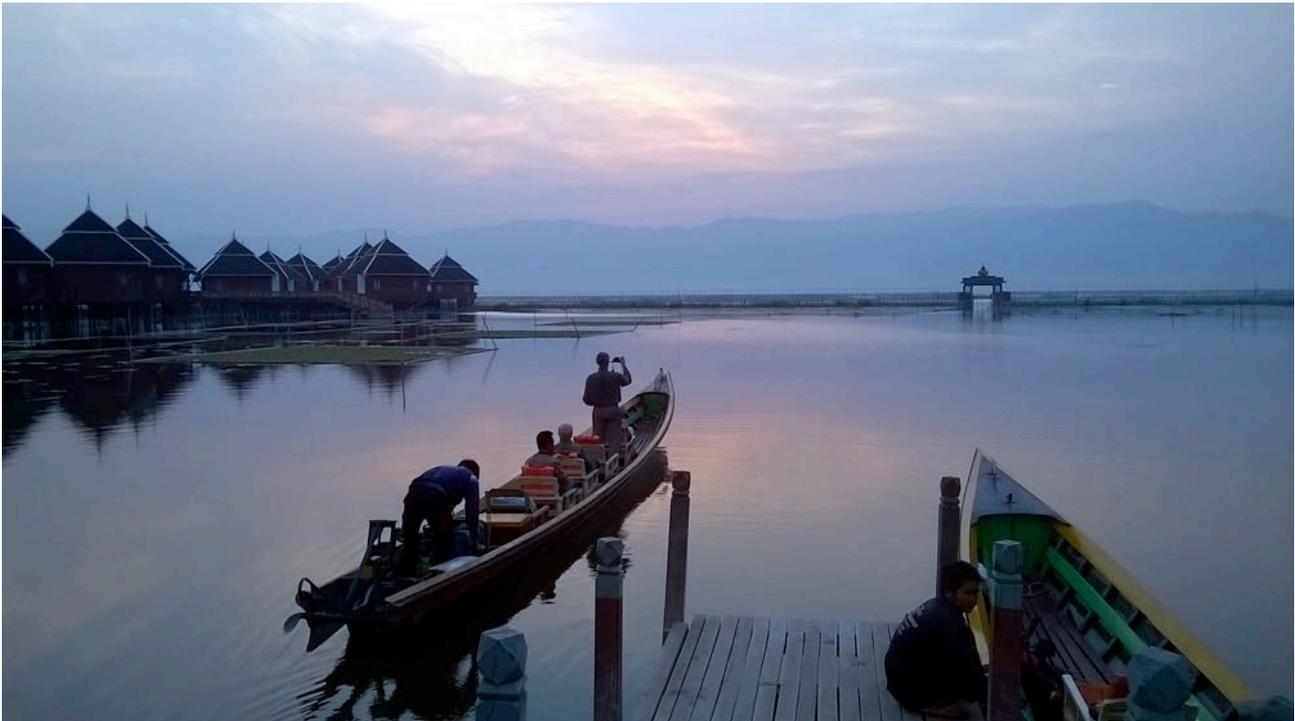
Mount Victoria Babax

We tried once more pre-dawn along the so-called Frogmouth trail, where we had a good view of a vocal Grey Nightjar, but the Frogmouth called just once as she went to roost and that was that... After some breakfast we birded along the road finding some compliant Rusty-capped Fulvetta, a pair of Crimson-faced Liocichlas that made a brief appearance, and a Spot-winged Grosbeak that gave us a flyby. Also we found Chin Hills Wren Babbler, Daurian Redstart, and a tree full of Barbets with both Great and Golden-throated present. In the evergreen zone we found some Grey-sided Thrushes, both Bar-tailed and Hume's Treecreepers almost alongside, and Chestnut-vented, White-tailed and White-browed Nuthatches to make a three Nuthatch day. It was a hot bright day and the cicadas were in full flow, but we found two Ashy Woodpeckers that sat posed for a close scope view, a pair of Black-bibbed Tit, and a pair of White-browed Nuthatch with a tiny nest-hole, the female barely able to squeeze herself out of it! A quieter afternoon, but we glimpsed some Blue-winged Laughingthrushes, plus a furtive Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler. In the evening we made another attempt to see a Hodgson's Frogmouth at an alternate site, and were stunned by an immediate response of a female that came straight in, and sat in the open glaring at us, all orange and spotted white. Wow! We also surprised a Masked Palm Civet that skipped off the road. Thank you Mount Victoria, for all your avian gifts!

We left Mount Victoria early the next morning, returning to the lowlands, and had a first birding stop at an overlook across a river bed where we saw River Lapwings with two small chicks, and Greater Painted Snipe. Further along the road we flushed Chinese Francolin, saw Blossom-headed Parakeets, plus more Grey-headed and Alexandrine Parakeets, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker and a pair of Himalayan Flameback that sneaked about furtively. We also found Black Baza and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta and a couple of Crested Honey Buzzard. We scoured the dry dipterocarp woodland once again, finding Burmese Nuthatch, Common Woodshrike, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon and Black-winged Cuckooshrike, but it was one of our drivers that spotted our target of White-rumped Falcon, and his call had us racing back down the road. Fortunately it stayed put, and we all had great views of a male of these hard-to-find birds, sat on its perch. Bird activity dropped off as the heat built up and we headed for Bagan, with a late afternoon foray around the bushes where we found many of the typical local birds such as White-throated Babbler and Burmese Bushlarks, and a Spotted Owlet lurking in the pagoda grounds.

We left the baking heat of Bagan and flew to Heho in eastern Burma, driving the short distance from here to Inle Lake. From our well-positioned hotel on the shore of the lake we set off in longtail boats for some lunch,

to a restaurant with a balcony that provided a good viewpoint to watch Oriental Pratincoles and Glossy Ibises passing by. We went for a long cruise around the lake finding Black-winged Kite, Pied Harrier, White-vented Mynas, Brown-headed Gulls, Striated Grassbirds and Indian Reed Warblers. Along the shores we enjoyed a waterbird colony with many Asian Openbills, Little Cormorants, Glossy Ibises on nests, and Intermediate Egrets looking exotic in full breeding dress with black bills and a mantle of plumes. At the south end of the lake in the reeds and swamps we found Purple Herons, Wood Sandpipers and Spotted Redshanks, Grey-headed Swampheens with little black chicks and breeding plumage Pheasant-tailed Jacana. In the late afternoon along reedy creeks we saw several fine male Jerdon's Bushchats, Chestnut-capped Babbler, Yellow-bellied Prinia and a Cinnamon Bittern, while large numbers of Yellow and Citrine Wagtails passed overhead, plus a few Red-throated Pipits and a Rosy Pipit, all heading for their roost somewhere beyond.



Dawn at Inle Lake

Another go along the reedy creeks in the early morning was successful in finding two Chinese Grass Babblers, numerous Jerdon's Bushchats and a couple of Black-browed Reed Warblers. We left here and drove towards Kalaw, en route finding our first Black-collared Starlings, Wire-tailed Swallows at a nest, and Grey and Citrine Wagtails. On reaching our very pleasant hotel in Kalaw, with Black-collared Starlings in the garden, we headed out into the surrounding wooded hills where we had a great close encounter with vocal Burmese Yuhinas, found a fruiting tree with Pin-tailed and Thick-billed Green Pigeons, plus Dark-backed Sibia, Blue-throated Barbet, Brown-breasted Bulbul, and in scrubby fields we found White-browed Laughingthrushes, White-browed Scimitar Babbler and Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo. In the pines we found Burmese Shrike, had some brief views of Black-headed Greenfinch, and enjoyed a dapper Black-breasted Thrush singing from a treetop.

We visited the remnant evergreen forest that surrounds the Yayayekan reservoir, setting off at dawn through the pinewoods and fields. We found Slender-billed Orioles, Black-collared Starlings, Chestnut-tailed Starlings, Striated Grassbirds, Yellow-streaked Warblers, Eurasian Jays of the race *leucotis*, and in a small paddyfield we found a confiding Black-tailed Crake. Once in the forest, we found some white-headed Black Bulbuls, Yunnan Fulvetta, Small Niltava, Large Woodshrike, Burmese Yuhinas building a nest in the same tree as a male Sapphire Flycatcher, Davison's Leaf Warbler, Marten's Warbler, and a male Red-headed Trogon, before our picnic lunch arrived on the back of a motorbike. Walking back up the trail, we found a Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Puff-throated Babbler, and in the open country we saw Burmese Shrikes, a singing Black-headed Greenfinch on a distant tree, and a Cook's Swift overhead.



Black-tailed Crake



Brown-breasted Bulbul

The next morning it was time to leave our fine hotel in the pine clad hills of Kalaw, and set off for Heho airport. A short way down the road we happened upon a flowering tree that was a magnet for Starlings, and here we finally found Collared Myna, at least four together with White-vented Myna and Vinous-breasted Starlings. Hurrah! At the airport we checked in for our flights, two of us ending our tour here and flying on to Yangon, saying farewell to the rest of us who were flying to Bagan to continue on our extension to the west. We arrived in Bagan to be reunited with Thiri and our squad of drivers, and immediately headed out across the river on the long bridge at Pakokku, and headed away across the hot plains. A few short stops en route produced a Freckle-breasted Pied Woodpecker, a Long-billed Pipit in a tree, Blue Rock Thrush, Brown Shrike and Brown Prinia. On reaching Mindat we explored the outskirts of this sizeable sprawling town where we found a total of three Spot-throated Babblers, two of which did the rare thing of jumping out into the open, plus Blue-throated Barbet, Rufescent Prinia and Hume's Leaf Warbler. We dined in a small downtown restaurant before turning in, prepping ourselves for a long day in the saddle.

An early getaway for our long journey today, we headed westwards along the road to Matupi, apprehensive about the state of the road with recent reports of the journey taking as much as 12 hours due to extensive roadworks. We sped past the first construction area before they had started work, and found ourselves on a wonderful forested ridge with dense bamboo understorey where we found a gorgeous pair of Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers. Continuing along the way we soon found the roadworks with diggers and bulldozers every few kilometres, repeatedly delayed as we had to wait until they had cleared the road of rubble. We found a quiet stretch for our lunch, in another bamboo rich area where a Brown Bush Warbler jumped out just next to us and a pair of Spot-breasted Parrotbills showed rather well. A pair of Assam Laughingthrush put on a good show, and further down the road at lower altitudes we found a Bianchi's Warbler. We ploughed through more rubble-strewn roadworks, and reached our accommodation in the middle of the town of Matupi. We settled in and relaxed, in eager anticipation of our explorations tomorrow. Sleep did not come easy though, as a nightmarish caterwauling from the adjacent building continued long into the night, so loud that there was no escape! We could be forgiven for thinking it was some weird Chin tribe punk club next door, but come the morning we discovered it was funeral singing (presumably intended to bring the dead back to life!).

We drove north along the highway towards Hakha the following morning, and explored a trail through some rich forest on a north facing slope. We were greeted by a Black Eagle, Crested Honey Buzzard, and a busy flock of Black-faced Warblers and Rusty-capped Fulvetas. Below us in the valley we could hear Grey Peacock Pheasant, we had a fairly typical encounter with a Lesser Shortwing, and saw two of the several calling Grey-bellied Tesias. We found Large Niltava, Rufous-backed Sibia, Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Rusty-fronted Barwings, some exquisite Coral-billed Scimitar Babblers, while we could hear Hoolock Gibbons on the higher ridges. We found a pair of Grey-cheeked Warblers, (a range extension) a Crested Serpent Eagle soared overhead, and on the roadsides we saw Blue Rock Thrush and Streaked Spiderhunter. In the afternoon we headed out along the road to the west, where the hillsides were drenched with gorgeous forest. We walked a couple of kilometers of road finding more Rufous-backed Sibia, Mountain Imperial and Ashy Wood Pigeons (neither seeming very shy despite the obvious hunting pressure here),

Barred Cuckoo Dove, two male Vivid Niltava, Grey Treepie, Large Hawk Cuckoo, many Golden-throated Barbets and hordes of Whiskered Yuhina.



Little Pied Flycatcher



Dark-sided Flycatcher

In another direction, we headed up a scrubby valley along a trail at 1350m. We had a good start with two Mountain Bamboo Partridges on the track in front of us, then a Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler showed very well (dangerously well considering the local lads that had just passed us on a motorbike sporting long-barreled guns!) We had some brief views of a Long-billed Thrush, found Striped Laughingthrush, many Streaked Spiderhunters, and a single Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler. The skies rapidly blackened and the wind howled down the valley, so we were obliged to rapidly retreat as the rain lashed down and lightning cracked overhead. Reaching our vehicles we retreated to where we had forded the river, and paused on the far side. After a coffee break under a tarpaulin hastily strung up from the trees, we explored the interesting river valley that appeared to hold the complete suite of river birds, with Slaty-backed and Little Forktails, Plumbeous Water and White-capped Redstart, Brown Dippers, nest building Blue Whistling Thrushes, and a Crested Kingfisher. Also here we found Maroon Oriole, Rufescent Prinia, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Crested Serpent Eagle, Crested Honey Buzzard, Bay Woodpecker and Great Barbet. A small flock of Dark-rumped Swift were a nice surprise, clearly pushed down by the weather. The rain abated, the skies cleared, and then we headed uphill to the ridge top forest. Walking a trail at 1650m we were trying to see Blue-winged Laughingthrush, when suddenly a Grey Peacock Pheasant appeared, standing on the path behind us in full view for a few seconds before it scuttled up the bank. Walking further we met mixed bird flocks, and we saw Rufous-winged and Rusty capped Fulvettas, Rufous-backed Sibias, Nepal Fulvettas, Mountain Tailorbird and Assam Laughingthrush. The skies darkened once more and the day drew to a close, and we headed back down to our digs for the night.

We returned to waterfall trail the next morning, where we found a hepatic female Plaintive Cuckoo, had excellent views of Crimson-faced Liocichlas, saw several Spot-winged Grosbeaks, an gorgeous Spotted Forktail, Chestnut-tailed Starlings, Banded Bay Cuckoo, had more good looks at Spot-breasted and Coral-billed Scimitar Babblers, a small flock of Striated Yuhina, and plenty of Crested Honey Buzzards. In the afternoon we returned to the Paletwa Road, full of promise but didn't add anything new, but enjoyed further views of Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Grey-chinned Minivet, White-tailed Nuthatches, Blyth's and Black-eared Shrike Babblers, and Yellow-cheeked Tit. A Leopard called briefly, and we found tracks in the mud of a smaller cat species.



Upland Pipit

We returned to the forested roadsides in the early morning, finding a nice White-tailed Robin, and Large Hawk Cuckoo. The forests were a little quieter under a bright sky, but a Red-headed Trogon popped out briefly, we saw Large and Vivid Niltavas, a singing Orange-headed Thrush, and a Snowy-browed Flycatcher in a thicket. We hurried back to town and collected our luggage before beginning our long journey towards Mindat. Thankful the rain and thunder had moved on, we followed the course of the road in dry conditions, with roadworks slowing our progress at every turn. Counting the heavy machinery, we passed 85 diggers and 41 bulldozers! We paused in some high country for lunch at the roadside, and a vaguely familiar song was heard coming from the top of the roadside pine – Upland Pipit? An unmistakable sound, the bird did a little song flight, but could not be relocated over the next hour. A quick check of the fieldguide revealed the closest part of its range to be in Nepal, yet here it was. Time pressure and uncertainty over road conditions impelled us to continue, yet just a couple of kilometres down the road I heard another Pipit through the car window, and out we jumped. We saw one over a grassy ridge doing songflights and landing out of view, then the sound of the song closer to hand revealed itself as a bird in the adjacent bush to us, singing and showing itself in its full streaky glory. Upland Pipit? It might not be a Gurney's Pitta, but I think we had just discovered a previously unknown population of the species here in the Chin Hills. Buoyed by our encounter we pressed on through the worst of the roadworks and through bamboo-rich forest to Mindat, arriving in time for dinner, cold beer and a comfortable hotel.



Montane forests near Mindat

Early rising once more, we drove up the forested ridge from Mindat to altitudes of 2500m and began our birding along a narrow sidetrack that followed the ridge. We found Brown-capped and Assam Laughingthrushes, several Scaly-breasted Wren-Babblers sang from gullies and by the third attempt at seeing one we all had acceptable views. A Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker was a welcome find, and along the roadsides we found a cute Pygmy Flycatcher and Darjeeling Woodpecker. Returning towards Mindat we disturbed a large Python from the verge that rapidly slithered downhill, never quite showing itself except for sections of its thick torso. Next up was a hot drive to Bagan, and along the route we saw a Chinese Francolin nonchalantly cross the road, pausing on the verge until the first vehicle had gone by, then crossing in front of the second! A Hooded Treepie was also seen, flying across and perching briefly before continuing its peregrinations. We eventually crossed the Irrawaddy and headed for our hotel, with a last dinner sitting outside where we recorded temperatures of 34 degrees C!

We left early one more time, today just to Nyaung U airport at Bagan where we boarded an ATR72 that took us first to Mandalay, then to Heho, and finally to Yangon where our tour ended. After farewells we parted company and went our separate ways, happy with a successful trip, with a big thanks to Thiri for being such a great guide and hostess for our journey around this fabulous country. While we may not have been able to travel to the south on our extension, we had a rare opportunity to go birding in a seldom-visited part of the world, with outstanding scenery and large amounts of intact forest.



Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon



House Crow



Hooded Treepie



Hodgson's Frogmouth female on Mt Victoria.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). IOC World Bird Names. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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

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

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader 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).

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Good numbers along the Irrawaddy at Bagan.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A couple seen at Inle Lake.

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* Seen at Hlawga, Inle and Bagan.

Chinese Francolin *Francolinus pintadeanus* A jaywalking bird between Mindat and Bagan was well received!

Rain Quail ◊ *Coturnix coromandelica* Multiple flight views at Bagan where they were vocal and numerous.

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola* A surprise success on Mt Victoria, one seen well.

Rufous-throated Partridge *Arborophila rufogularis* (E) (H) Heard on two days in the Matupi area.

Mountain Bamboo Partridge ◊ *Bambusicola fytchii* Two seen in the open near Matupi.
Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* (H) Heard at Hlawga Park.
Grey Peacock Pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum* (E) A surprise sighting near Matupi of a female in the open.
Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* Some comically tame birds at Hlawga Park. Introduced, obviously!
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A couple of sightings.
Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* Nice breeding colonies at Inle, also seen at Hlawga.
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (E) One soaring en route to Matupi.
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Numerous at Inle with breeding colonies observed.



Intermediate Egret



Glossy Ibis

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* A few seen at Inle Lake.
Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* One at Inle Lake, a write-in.
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* (NL) One at Inle Lake.
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A small number at Hlawga and Inle.
Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* Several in breeding dress seen at Inle Lake.
Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* Seen in breeding dress at Hlawga and Inle.
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A single flying over the Shwedagon.
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A few seen at Inle Lake.
Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* A small number at Inle, also at Hlawga.
Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* Nesting at Inle, sporting dark bills and mantle plumes. Lovely.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
[Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* Two at Hlawga, with clipped wings! Introduced...]
Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* Numerous at Inle Lake.
Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* A single at Hlawga Park.
Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A few at Inle Lake and around Bagan.
Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Frequent sightings in the Chin Hills.
Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* Two sightings in the foothills of Mt Victoria.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* Two in lowlands en route to Mt Victoria, also seen on the extension.
Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* Two seen en route to Mt Victoria.
Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* (E) Four individuals seen around Matupi.
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Several sightings on Mt Victoria and in the Chin Hills.
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* A dark morph bird seen at Bagan. A write-in.
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* A few singles encountered.
Shikra *Accipiter badius* Quite numerous in dry forests.
Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* Two seen at Inle Lake, another at Bagan.
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* A female seen briefly high on Mt Victoria, a write-in.
Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* Multiple sightings of both smart males and females at Bagan and Inle.
White-eyed Buzzard ◊ *Butastur teesa* A single perched bird seen at Bagan.
Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus* A few sightings at Mt Victoria.



Shikra



Black-winged Kite

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Black-tailed Crane ♦ *Porzana bicolor* Splendid looks at one at Kalaw, preening in the open.

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Several at Inle Lake where one had small black chicks.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* Several seen in fields around Bagan, one or two seen well on the ground.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* A couple of pairs, one with chicks, seen near Saw.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* A distant bird plus a fly-over at Inle Lake.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Four seen along the Irrawaddy at Bagan.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* A female lurking in some river pools near Saw. A write-in.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Numerous at Inle, some in breeding dress.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* Three seen in flight at Inle Lake.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* One at Bagan and a flock at Inle Lake.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* A single at Bagan.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* A flock on the Irrawaddy at Bagan, also seen in numbers at Inle.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* Twenty or more on the Irrawaddy at Bagan.

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* Numerous on Inle Lake.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Ashy Wood Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis* A couple on Mt Victoria showed well, a single at Matupi.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* A few examples seen in forests both east and west.

Burmese Collared Dove ♦ *Streptopelia [decaocto] xanthocyclus* A dry zone endemic. See note.

Red Turtle Dove (R Collared-dove) *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Small numbers only, in several localities.

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Barred Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia unchall* (E) Several sightings in the forests around Matupi.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* A single in flight at Kalaw.

Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra* Good views of some near Kalaw.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicopterus* Seen in dry forests west of the Irrawaddy, also near Kalaw.

Pin-tailed Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron apicauda* A couple near Kalaw, more around Matupi.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenurus* Three on Mt Victoria, another at Kalaw.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea* Three in dry forest between Saw and Kazunma.



Green Imperial Pigeon



Burmese Collared Dove

Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia* Not uncommon around Matupi, surprisingly.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* A single at Inle Lake.

Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis* Odd birds seen in lowland forest.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* (H) Heard only, in many localities.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii* (E) A single songster showed at Matupi.

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* One seen well at Mt Victoria, a hepatic bird at Matupi.

Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* Close views of one at Kalaw.



Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo



Large Hawk-Cuckoo

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveroides* A couple seen along our way, often heard.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* (H) Heard on Mt Victoria.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (H)

Mountain Scops Owl *Otus spilocephalus* (H) Heard distantly on Mt Victoria.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* Heard often, one seen well near Matupi.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* One in lowland forest near Saw.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* A single at Bagan.

Hodgson's Frogmouth ♦ ***Batrachostomus hodgsoni*** Hurrah! Great views of a female on Mt Victoria.

Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka* A male showed fairly well on Mt Victoria.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* Two in lowland forest en route to Mt Victoria.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Cook's Swift ♦ ***Apus cooki*** A few seen at Inle Lake and Kalaw.

Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda* (E) A small flock seen between rain squalls near Matupi.
House Swift *Apus nipalensis* Plentiful around the Shwedagon.
Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus* A male at Yayayekan reservoir, another near Matupi.
Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* Common in the dry zone.
White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* (E) A male seen well on a river near Matupi.
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A couple along the Irrawaddy at Bagan.



Golden-throated Barbet

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*
Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* A small number seen in the lowlands and at Inle.
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* A single at the foot of Mt Victoria.
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A few seen in more open country along the way.
Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* (NL) One at Hlawga.
Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* Frequent on Mt Victoria, also present around Matupi.
Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus* A few seen in dry forests between Kazunma and Saw.
Golden-throated Barbet *Psilopogon franklinii* Seen frequently in montane forests.
Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus* Seen at Kalaw, also on the extension.
Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* A few sightings in the lowlands.
Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* Three of four birds seen at Inle Lake.
Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* A single seen at Yayayekan reservoir.
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* A single seen near Saw, another on the extension.



Stripe-breasted Woodpecker



Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

- Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** *Leiopicus mahrattensis* A single near Kazunma.
Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Dryobates cathpharius* (E) Two seen near Matupi.
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* Fairly common on Mt Victoria.
Freckle-breasted Woodpecker ◊ (Spot-b W) *Dendrocopos analis* (E) One seen in dry country en route to Mindat.
Stripe-breasted Woodpecker ◊ *Dendrocopos atratus* Three on Mt Victoria, another near Matupi.
Darjeeling Woodpecker *Dendrocopos darjellensis* (E) A female seen near Mindat.
Greater Yellownappe *Chrysophlegma flavinucha* Two seen in lowland forest en route to Mt Victoria.
Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* A female seen in dry forest near Kazunma.
Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* A female seen in dry forest near Kazunma.
Himalayan Flameback ◊ *Dinopium shorii* A pair seen in lowland forest near Saw.
Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* Seen near Kalaw, and in lowland forest west of the Irrawaddy.
Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* Two seen on Mt Victoria.
Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus* A male seen en route between Bagan and Saw.
Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* (H) Calling in dry forest near Kazunma.
White-rumped Falcon ◊ *Polihierax insignis* After much searching, one of our drivers spotted a male near Kazunma.
Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens* Two seen at a picnic stop en route to Mt Victoria.



White-rumped Falcon



Collared Falconet

- Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Two at the Shwedagon.
Grey-headed Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula finschii* Very numerous and visible in forests between Bagan and Mt Victoria.
Blossom-headed Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula roseata* A dozen or more seen near Saw.
Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Not uncommon in the dry forest between Bagan and Mt Victoria.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* A few seen in the dry forest between Bagan and Mt Victoria.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* (NL) Two near Kazunma.

Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae* (E) Multiple sightings of these delightful birds around Matupi.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* A couple of singles seen along our route.

Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis virgatus* One at Yayayekan, a write-in.

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* Pairs seen in the dry forest between Bagan and Mt Victoria.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* Seen at Bagan and Kalaw.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* Common at Bagan and elsewhere in the lowlands.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* Singles seen in dry forest near Kazunma, also at Kalaw.

Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Coracina melaschistos* A few seen along our route, several around Matupi.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* Eight seen at Hlawga Park showed well.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Small groups seen in dry forest near Kazunma.

Jerdon's Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus albifrons* Four seen in scrub near Sitsanar pagoda at Bagan. See note.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* (E) A couple of pairs seen around Matupi.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* The most frequently observed Minivet in the hills.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* A few seen around Kalaw and Matupi.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

Burmese Shrike *Lanius colluriooides* A few seen at Kalaw, also in the Matupi area.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler ◊ *Pteruthius rufiventer* Two males at Mt Victoria. See note.

Blyth's Shrike-babbler *Pteruthius aeralatus* A few seen on Mt Victoria and around Matupi.

Green Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus* Singles seen on Mt Victoria and near Mindat.

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius melanotis* Seen regularly in the montane forests.

Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris* Some nice examples seen near Kalaw.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* A few seen in lowland localities.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Several seen in dry forests between Mt Victoria and Bagan

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* Seen at Kalaw, also near Matupi.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* A few seen around Kalaw and Matupi.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* A few seen at Yayayekan and more in the Matupi area.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Seen at lower altitudes such as Hlawga Park and Kazunma.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* Regular sightings in the montane forests.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* A single seen in dry forest near Kazunma.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Some examples of the white cheeked *leucotis* race at Kalaw.

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris* Some seen at higher elevations on Mt Victoria.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha* (H) Heard at Kalaw.

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* (E) (H) Heard in the forests around Matupi.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* A few seen in lowland forests west of the Irrawaddy.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* (E) Two or three seen near Matupi.

Racket-tailed Treepie *Crypsirina temia* Five seen at Hlawga Park.

Hooded Treepie ◊ *Crypsirina cucullata* One seen well near Kazunma, two at Sitsanar. See note.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* The dark *insolens* race is an interesting one. See note.

Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus levaillantii*

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* Not uncommon in the montane forests.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Regular sightings in the montane forests.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* A few in the montane forests on Mt Victoria.

Black-bibbed Tit ◊ *Poecile hypermelaenus* A pair seen on Mt Victoria, eventually!

Japanese Tit *Parus minor* Several seen singing from the pines around Kalaw.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*

Yellow-cheeked Tit *Machlolophus spilonotus* (E)

Burmese Bush Lark ◊ *Mirafra microptera* Common in the dry zone around Bagan.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Seen in fields along the Irrawaddy, also at Inle and en route to Matupi.

Sand Lark ◊ *Alaudala raytal* Numerous in typical habitat along the Irrawaddy at Bagan.

Crested Finchbill ◊ *Spizixos canifrons* Remarkably common on Mt Victoria and around Matupi.
Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus* Like the above, in good numbers especially on Mt Victoria.
Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus atriceps* Not uncommon at Hlawga Park.
Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus flaviventris* Seen at Hlawga Park, odd birds elsewhere
Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*
Brown-breasted Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Three seen at Kalaw, a restricted range species.
Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Typically common, with some interesting birds at Kalaw. See note.
Davison's Bulbul *Pycnonotus [finlaysoni] davisoni* At least seven of this new split seen at Hlawga Park.
Flavescent Bulbul *Pycnonotus flavescens* A few seen at Kalaw, Mt Victoria and around Matupi.
Irrawaddy Bulbul *Pycnonotus blanfordi* A new split from Streak-eared Bulbul, common in the dry zone and Yangon.



Sand Lark



Irrawaddy Bulbul (photo by P. Tizzard)

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mccllellandii* Several sightings in the montane forests.
Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* (H) Heard only at Kalaw.
Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Scattered sightings. Some white-headed *leucocephalus* birds at Kalaw.
Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* Seen in number at Bagan
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Not uncommon at Inle Lake.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Seen near Saw and Heho.
Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus* Seen in numbers over Mt Victoria.
Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* This species or the following seen frequently. Identified near Matupi.
Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata* Identified at Kalaw.
Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer* One glimpsed on Mt Victoria, better views near Mindat.
Pygmy Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla* Three seen on one day at Mt Victoria.
Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps* A busy flock on Mt Victoria, also found near Matupi.
Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cuculatus* Singles seen on Mt Victoria and near Matupi.
Broad-billed Warbler ◊ *Tickellia hodgsoni* Two seen well in bamboo on Mt Victoria.
Brown-flanked Bush Warbler *Horornis fortipes* One seen well on Mt Victoria, others heard there.
Aberrant Bush Warbler *Horornis flavolivaceus* A few seen higher up on Mt Victoria
Grey-bellied Tesia *Tesia cyaniventer* One on Mt Victoria, a few more seen around Matupi.
Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea* One of these feisty fellows showed very well at Kalaw.
Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia castaneocoronata* Remarkably common on Mt Victoria.
Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* A flock seen at Kalaw, also near Matupi.
Burmese Bushtit ◊ *Aegithalos sharpei* Several groups seen in the higher forests on Mt Victoria.
Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* A single bird seen at Kalaw.
Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus subaffinis* (H) Heard calling from dense herbage on Mt Victoria.
Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* Not uncommon at Bagan, also at Kalaw and Mt Victoria.
Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* Remarkably abundant on Mt Victoria.
Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A few seen on Mt Victoria and elsewhere.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* Three seen, more often heard.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* A few seen, several heard.



Brown Bush Warbler



Plain Prinia

Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Several seen at Hlawga Park.

Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* Fairly common and visible on Mt Victoria.

Davison's Leaf Warbler \diamond *Phylloscopus davisoni* Fairly common at Yayayekan.

Sichuan Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus forresti* A single seen on Mt Victoria.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*

Grey-crowned Warbler *Seicercus tephrocephalus* Some on Mt Victoria, a sweet songster showed well.

Whistler's Warbler \diamond *Seicercus whistleri* Just a couple seen on Mt Victoria, another near Mindat.

Bianchi's Warbler *Seicercus valentini* (E) A couple seen in the Matupi area.

Martens's Warbler \diamond *Seicercus omeiensis* Two at Kalaw seen well.

Grey-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys* (E) A pair found near Matupi, additional birds heard. See note.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps*

Clamorous Reed Warbler (Indian R W) *Acrocephalus [stentoreus] brunescens* A few seen at Inle Lake.

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* At least three at Inle Lake.

Thick-billed Warbler *Iduna aedon* A couple at Bagan and another near Saw.

Russet Bush Warbler *Locustella mandelli* Two birds teased from the undergrowth on Mt Victoria.

Brown Bush Warbler \diamond *Locustella luteoventris* Great views of one on our first morning on Mt Victoria.

Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris* Not uncommon at Inle Lake, also around cultivation at Kalaw.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A couple along the Irrawaddy at Bagan.

Brown Prinia \diamond *Prinia polychroa* Seen at Bagan and Kalaw.

Black-throated Prinia *Prinia atrogularis* Seen on Mt Victoria and near Mindat.

Hill Prinia *Prinia superciliaris* (H) Heard at Kalaw.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens* (E) Seen at Mindat and near Matupi.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* Common at Bagan, also seen elsewhere.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Common at Inle Lake.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Several around Bagan, also at Inle Lake.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Dark-necked Tailorbird *Orthotomus atrogularis* Seen well at Hlawga Park.



Spot-breasted Parrotbill



Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler

- Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus erythrogeus* (H) Heard at Kalaw.
- Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus mcclellandi* (E) Seen well and often in the Matupi area.
- White-browed Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* Seen well around Kalaw.
- Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* Several sightings on Mt Victoria.
- Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus* (E) Several sightings around Matupi. See note.
- Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus superciliaris* (E) Great looks at a vocal pair near Mindat.
- Chin Hills Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Spelaeornis oatesi* Several good views on Mt Victoria, also several heard around Matupi.
- Grey-throated Babbler** *Stachyris nigriceps* (E) A couple seen near Matupi.
- Golden Babbler** *Stachyridopsis chrysaea*
- Pin-striped Tit-Babbler** *Macronus gularis* Two at Hlawga Park.
- Chestnut-capped Babbler** *Timalia pileata* Seen in the grass at Inle Lake.
- Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneiceps*
- Rusty-capped Fulvetta** ◊ *Alcippe dubia* Good views eventually on Mt Victoria, easier viewing around Matupi.
- Brown-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe poioicephala* A few seen between Saw and Kazunma.
- Yunnan Fulvetta** ◊ *Alcippe fratercula* Three seen at Yayayekan.
- Nepal Fulvetta** ◊ *Alcippe nipalensis* A small number on Mt Victoria and around Matupi.
- Abbott's Babbler** *Malacocincla abbotti* One at Hlawga Park.
- Chinese Grassbird** ◊ (C Grass-babbler) *Graminicola striatus* Two seen at Inle Lake. See note.
- Spot-throated Babbler** *Pellorneum albiventre* (E) Seen well at Mindat, three birds in all.
- Puff-throated Babbler** *Pellorneum ruficeps* Two watched calmly feeding on the forest floor at Yayayekan.
- Striated Babbler** ◊ *Turdoides earlei* Four birds seen on grassy islands along the Irrawaddy.
- White-throated Babbler** ◊ *Turdoides gularis* An endearing endemic, fairly common around Bagan.
- Mount Victoria Babax** ◊ *Babax woodi* At least four of these vocal character birds seen on Mt Victoria.
- White-crested Laughingthrush** *Garrulax leucolophus* A group of 6+ seen well at Hlawga Park.
- Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax monileger* Great views at Hlawga, also seen near Saw.
- White-browed Laughingthrush** *Garrulax sannio* Good views of several at Kalaw.
- Striped Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron virgatum* Seen well on Mt Victoria, also near Matupi.
- Brown-capped Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron austeni* A few on Mt Victoria, also seen near Mindat.
- Blue-winged Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron squamatum* Furtive birds at Mt Victoria, also seen near Matupi.
- Assam Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron chrysopterum*
- Himalayan Cutia** *Cutia nipalensis* Three seen in the evergreen forest on Mt Victoria.
- Blue-winged Minla** *Minla cyanouroptera*
- Bar-throated Minla (Chestnut-tailed M)** *Minla strigula*
- Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta* Regular sightings in the higher forest on Mt Victoria.
- Red-faced Liocichla** ◊ *Liocichla phoenicea* Skulkers seen on Mt Victoria, more showy near Matupi.
- Rusty-fronted Barwing** ◊ *Actinodura egertoni* Seen a couple of times on Mt Victoria, regularly around Matupi.
- Streak-throated Barwing** ◊ *Actinodura waldeni* Seen on two days on Mt Victoria in the higher forest.
- Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argentauris*
- Rufous-backed Sibia** *Heterophasia annectans* (E) Good views of this great bird in the forests around Matupi.

Grey Sibia ◇ *Heterophasia gracilis*

Dark-backed Sibia ◇ *Heterophasia melanoleuca* Several seen well around Kalaw.

White-browed Fulvetta *Fulvetta vinipectus*

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* Two seen in fields near Bagan.

Grey-headed Parrotbill *Psittiparus gularis* (E) (H) Heard calling along the Bondela trail near Matupi.

Spot-breasted Parrotbill ◇ *Paradoxornis guttaticollis* Three sightings on Mt Victoria, great looks en route to Matupi.

Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps* (E) Small flocks seen on two occasions near Matupi.

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*

Burmese Yuhina ◇ *Yuhina humilis* Great views of multiple birds at Kalaw. See note.



Red-tailed Minla



Burmese Yuhina (photo by P. Tizzard)

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis* Not uncommon in the higher elevation forest on Mt Victoria.

Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythropleurus* A large flock in the evergreen forest on Mt Victoria.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* Just one seen, at Kalaw.

Spotted Elachura ◇ (S Wren-Babbler) *Elachura formosa* Great views of one on Mt Victoria, others heard.

Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *Sitta nagaensis* Seen daily on Mt Victoria.

Burmese Nuthatch ◇ (Neglected N) *Sitta neglecta* A pair in the dry forest near Kazunma.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* Present on Mt Victoria, seen on three occasions.

White-browed Nuthatch ◇ *Sitta victoriae* Possibly the best of the endemics. See note.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* Two seen en route from Saw to Kazunma, to make a Five-Nuthatch-Trip!

Bar-tailed Treecreeper *Certhia himalayana* Several seen well in the open pine parkland on Mt Victoria.

Hume's Treecreeper *Certhia manipurensis* Favouring the evergreen on Mt Victoria, a couple in the Matupi area.

Great Myna (White-vented M) *Acridotheres grandis* In good number around Inle and Kalaw.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* Common at Bagan, also elsewhere in the lowlands.

Collared Myna ◇ *Acridotheres albocinctus* After thinking we had dipped, four seen en route to Heho airport.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Vinous-breasted Starling ◇ *Acridotheres burmannicus* The red-billed nominate race, common at Bagan.

Black-collared Starling ◇ *Gracupica nigricollis* Quite a few around Kalaw.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica* Small flocks at Kalaw and around Matupi.

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* (E) A singing male on our last morning in the Matupi forests.

Long-billed Thrush *Zoothera monticola* (E) A brief view of one near Matupi.

Black-breasted Thrush ◇ *Turdus dissimilis* A pair on Mt Victoria, a fine male singing at Kalaw.



Black-breasted Thrush



Daurian Redstart

- Grey-sided Thrush** ◇ *Turdus feae* A small furtive flock on Mt Victoria showed quite well.
- Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* A single on Mt Victoria, another seen near Matupi.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*
- White-rumped Shama** *Copsychus malabaricus* A few seen at Hlawga Park.
- Dark-sided Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*
- Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui* One at Yayayekan, a write-in.
- Hill Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis banyumas* At least three males singing at Yayayekan.
- Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides* (E) A male near Matupi
- Rufous-bellied Niltava** *Niltava sundara* Three males seen on Mt Victoria.
- Vivid Niltava** ◇ *Niltava vivida* (E) Three males seen in the forests around Matupi.
- Large Niltava** *Niltava grandis* Heard on Mt Victoria, several seen in the Matupi forests.
- Small Niltava** *Niltava macgrigoriae* A singing male showed well at Kalaw.
- Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus* Common in the montane forests, a nest found at Kalaw.
- Lesser Shortwing** *Brachypteryx leucophris* Heard at Kalaw, seen near Matupi.
- Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* A couple at Bagan, more seen at Inle Lake.
- White-bellied Redstart** ◇ *Luscinia phaenicuroides* A female seen briefly on Mt Victoria.
- Siberian Rubythroat** *Calliope calliope* A male seen at Bagan, others heard along our way.
- Himalayan Bluetail** *Tarsiger rufilatus* Multiple sightings on Mt Victoria, also near Mindat.
- Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* (E) A brief glimpse of one near Matupi.
- Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* (E) Two seen on a river near Matupi where nesting suspected.
- Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* (E) Great views of a one along the Bondela trail near Matupi.
- Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus* A single on Mt Victoria, more seen around Matupi.
- Slaty-backed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hodgsonii* Not uncommon in places on Mt Victoria.
- Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophitata* Numerous in the higher elevations of Mt Victoria
- Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* A few seen, mostly in the lowlands.
- Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* (E) A singing male in the forest near Matupi.
- Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* Rather common in the montane forests.
- Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor* Seen regularly on Mt Victoria, also near Mindat.
- Sapphire Flycatcher** ◇ *Ficedula sapphira* A male at Yayayekan, in the same tree as the Burmese Yuhina nest.
- Pygmy Flycatcher** ◇ *Muscicapella hodgsoni* (E) A close encounter with a singing male near Mindat.
- Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureoreus* Scattered sightings, at Bagan, Kalaw and Mt Victoria.
- Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis* Fairly common at higher elevation on Mt Victoria.
- Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* (E) Several found on rivers in the Matupi area.
- White-capped Redstart** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* (E) Quite a few seen on the extension.
- Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* (E) A handful seen along roadsides, both in the dry zone and at Matupi.
- Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* Common in the montane forests.
- Siberian/Stejneger's Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus/stejnegeri* A small number seen at Inle Lake.



Pied Bush Chat



White-tailed Stonechat

White-tailed Stonechat *Saxicola leucurus* Rather numerous along the Irrawaddy at Bagan, at least 15 seen.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

Jerdon's Bush Chat *Saxicola jerdoni* Quite numerous at Inle Lake, many good views.

Grey Bush Chat *Saxicola ferreus*

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* (E) Two or more seen on rivers near Matupi.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* Three in dry woodland near Saw.

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* Two at Kalaw, another two near Matupi.

Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum melanoxanthum* (E) A welcome late find in high forest near Mindat.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum* A few sightings at Hlawga and in dry woodland near Kazunma.

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis* A male at Hlawga, two at lower elevations on Mt Victoria.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Not uncommon at Bagan and other dry zone wooded areas.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* Many at Hlawga Park.

Mrs. Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae* A few sightings on Mt Victoria.

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* Seen regularly in the montane forests.

Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata* Three at Kalaw.

Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda* Quite numerous on Mt Victoria, also seen at higher elevations near Mindat.



Fire-tailed Sunbird



White-browed Nuthatch

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna* Frequent sightings around Matupi, heard at Kalaw.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Big roost flights at Inle, also present at Bagan and Yangon.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* A couple on Mt Victoria, a single at Kalaw.

Plain-backed Sparrow *Passer flaveolus* Fairly common in the dry lowlands on the Irrawaddy plain.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* A flock seen at Bagan
Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* Singles seen at Bagan and Inle Lake.
White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* (NL) Five seen near Saw.
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*
Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* A single identified at Bagan.
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis/macronyx* Big numbers at Inle, presumed this.
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Good numbers at Inle Lake, a single seen at Bagan.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
White Wagtail (Baikal W) *Motacilla [alba] baicalensis* A few seen at Bagan.
White Wagtail (Amur W) *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* A single at Bagan.
Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Three seen in typical habitats.
Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (E) A single sitting in a tree en route to Mindat.
Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* A single flyover at Inle.
Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* Seen around fields at Bagan, also some flyovers at Inle.
Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus* (E) The big surprise of the tour extension. See note.



Upland Pipit



Paddyfield Pipit

Spot-winged Grosbeak ◇ *Mycerobas melanozanthos* Three on Mt Victoria, six near Matupi showed much better.
Brown Bullfinch ◇ *Pyrrhula nipalensis* A quartet of birds in the evergreen forest on Mt Victoria.
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* A few seen on Mt Victoria and at Kalaw.
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Chloris spinoides* (NL) One seen on Mt Victoria.
Black-headed Greenfinch ◇ *Chloris ambigua* Multiple birds seen at Kalaw, some perched eventually!
Crested Bunting *Emberiza lathami* One at Kalaw, many more in the Matupi area where clearly breeding.
Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* A single on Mt Victoria.

MAMMALS

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah* The small dark ones often seen on the ground

Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraeus* A few noted on Mt Victoria and around Matupi.

Finlayson's Squirrel (Variable S) *Callosciurus finlaysoni* (NL) One at Kalaw.

Irrawaddy Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus* Seen often around Bagan and at Yangon.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops mccllellandii* The tiny one seen at Mt Victoria and in the Matupi forests.

Indochinese Ground Squirrel *Menetes berdmorei* A couple of sightings, on Mt Victoria and at Kalaw.

Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata* A brief look at one at night on Mt Victoria.

Leopard Cat *Prionailurus bengalensis* One scampered along the road and down a bank on Mt Victoria.

Leopard *Panthera pardus* (E) (H) Heard near Matupi.

Stump-tailed Macaque (Bear M) *Macaca arctoides* Some very shy animals near Matupi.

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* At vermin levels in Hlawga Park.

Hoolock Gibbon *Hylobates hoolock* (E) (H) Nice to hear these in a couple of places around Matupi.

Northern Tree-Shrew *Tupaia belangeri* One at Kalaw.

Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer) *Muntiacus muntjak* (E) (H) Heard barking in the Matupi forests.

Sambar (introduced) *Cervus unicolor* Lots at Hlawga.

Hog Deer (introduced) *Axis porcinus* Lots at Hlawga.



Orange Oakleaf



Indian Red Admiral

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Burmese Collared Dove ◇ *Streptopelia [decaocto] xanthocyclus*

Some authors have suggested that this form, which is restricted to the central valleys of Burma and shows marked morphological differences, merits specific status. It looks good to me!

Jerdon's Minivet ◇ *Pericrocotus albifrons*

We were lucky to find the birds that we did, as we had not a sniff of any more along our route. Probably the hardest of the endemics to find, due to its furtive and yet restless nature. This species was formerly lumped in White-bellied Minivet *P. erythropygus*.

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler ◇ *Pteruthius rufiventer*

Two males at Mt Victoria seemed to be facing off, and making some strange body movements, bowing and stretching in a kind of threat display. I saw exactly the same thing on my subsequent tour in Bhutan.

Hooded Treepie ◇ *Crypsirina cucullata*

One near Kazunma, two at Sitsanar on our second visit in the afternoon, and another seen between Mindat and the river. Not as hard to find as the Minivet, but still difficult and very missable!

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

The dark *insolens* race has a different call to other House Crows in my opinion, to my ears very much like the Screampillar (look up '<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uWTDbfZHQo>')

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

The birds at Kalaw are unusual, and are supposed to be hybrids between Red-vented and Sooty-headed Bulbul *P. aurigaster*.

Grey-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys*

A pair found near Matupi represent a range extension of the species known breeding range.

Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

The birds seen near Matupi are of the *phayrei* subspecies (which includes *formosus*), very different to the nominate black-crowned Himalayan birds, and with some very different calls..

Chinese Grassbird ◇ (**C Grass-babbler**) *Graminicola striatus*

Two seen in the grass at Inle Lake on the second attempt. Some authors lump this species in Rufous-rumped Grassbird (or Grass-babbler) *G. bengalensis*. The combined species was formerly considered to be a warbler, under the common name Rufous-rumped Grassbird. Recent DNA based taxonomic research however shows it to be a babbler.

Burmese Yuhina ◇ *Yuhina humilis*

Great views of multiple birds at Kalaw, a lifer for the leader. The nest found at Yayayekan was interesting, and conformed to the description in Robson's South-east Asia guide.

White-browed Nuthatch ◇ *Sitta victoriae*

Possibly the best of the endemics, we had multiple sightings, with at least four pairs if not more, and two nests noted.

Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*

The big surprise of the tour extension. Having found and then lost the first songster, I was very glad we found more, with one songfliting over a grassy hillside, and then amazingly one close one coming into the adjacent bush where we were able to study and photograph it. Another was seen from the vehicle further down the same road, so it would appear to be a population of them present here. It is definitely the first records for Burma, and probably for South-east Asia, the nearest population being in central Nepal or South-west China.



Evening sky at Bagan