



*Satyr Tragopan (all photos by Dave Farrow unless otherwise indicated)*

# **BHUTAN**

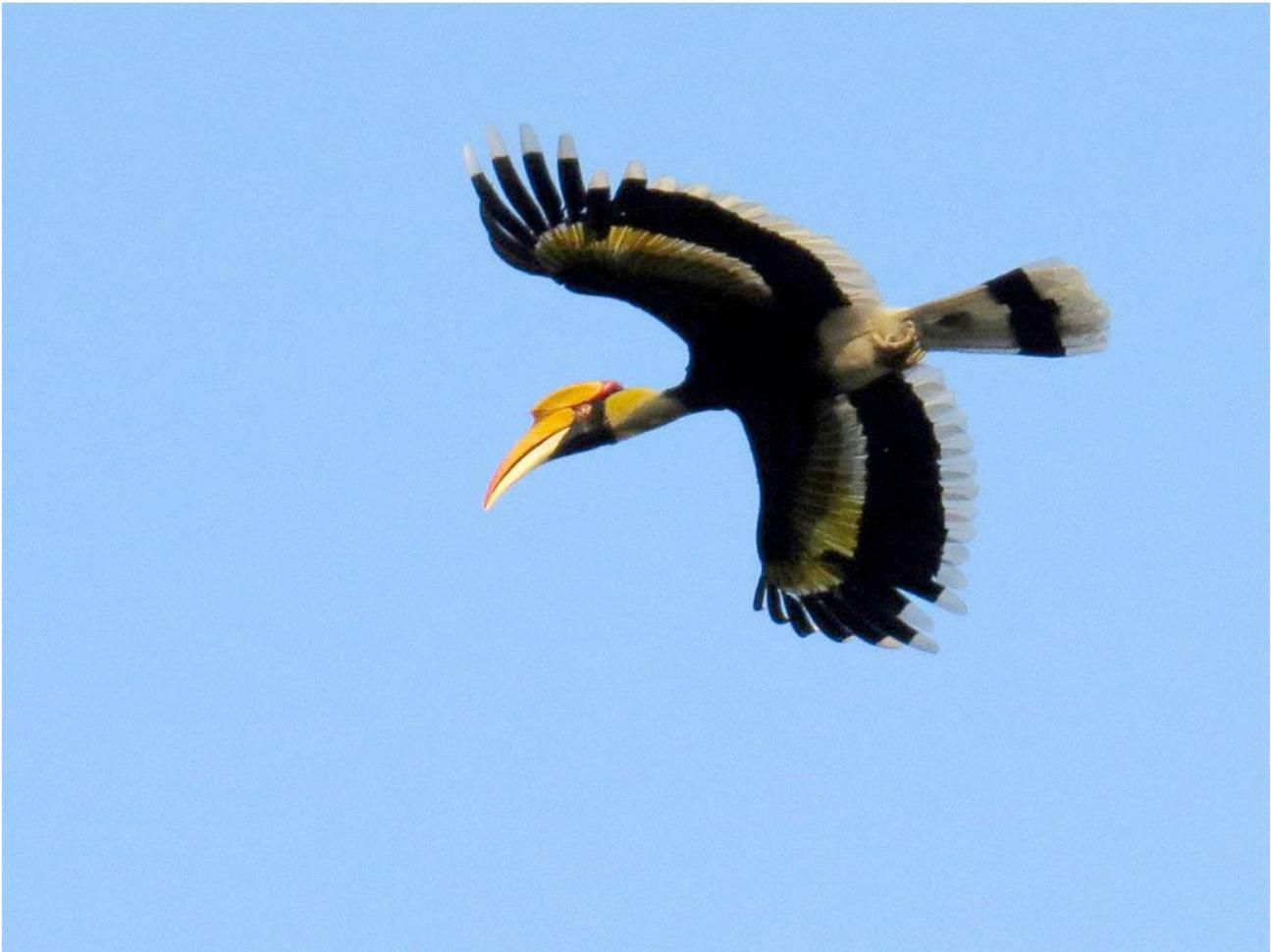
**(WITH EXTENSION TO KAZIRANGA AND NAMERI)**

**12/17 APRIL – 4 MAY 2017**

**LEADER: DAVE FARROW.**

This years' tour to Bhutan was just simply exceptional. Yes, I know we always say that, but this trip really was special. It was clearly a year of plenty, with amazing encounters with rare things and some record-breaking totals. It differed physically to previous tours in that it featured a pre-tour extension to Kaziranga and Nameri, entered Bhutan at Gelephu and then ran in reverse of the usual itinerary. In Assam we saw Swamp Francolins, Greater Adjutants, Black-necked Storks, Slender-billed Vulture, Pallas's and Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Pied Harrier, Brown Fish Owl, Sand Lark, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Spotted Bush Warbler and the rare Finn's Weaver, plus a Tiger, many Asian Elephant and Indian Rhinoceros. Crossing into Bhutan we enjoyed some very rich birding in the valleys and mountains, with eleven Beautiful Nuthatch

in a single day, a staggering number of Satyr Tragopans (twenty-three individuals!) eleven Himalayan Monal and dozens (about 56 actually) of Blood Pheasants trotting along the roadsides. We saw a host of much-wanted birds such as Black-tailed Crane, Wood and Solitary Snipes, Ibisbills, Tawny Fish Owls, Hodgson's Frogmouth, Pale-headed Woodpecker, Ward's Trogon, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, White-hooded Babbler, Slender-billed and Coral-billed Scimitar Babblers, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, six Parrotbill species including Pale-billed and Great, Long-billed Wren-babbler, Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler, Spotted Elachura (which of course is no longer a Wren-babbler), Rufous-breasted Bush Robin, Green Cochoa, Fire-capped Tit, Sapphire Flycatcher and the incomparable Spotted Laughingthrush. A big surprise was yet another Red Panda (that's two years running now) plus Smooth-coated Otters, Himalayan Gorals and Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrels.



*Great Hornbill*

Beginning our tour at the 'bottom end' we assembled at Guwahati airport, and began our journey with a trip to Guwahati Rubbish Dump. A staggering scene greeted us of Greater Adjutants and cattle sat atop the foetid hills of rubbish, with people sifting through the debris in their role as first line recyclers – a study in abject poverty! We didn't linger too long, and set a course eastwards towards Kaziranga, pausing along the way for Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Stork-billed Kingfisher and Lesser Adjutants. We arrived at our hotel in the dark and enjoyed a tasty dinner.

We began with some birding in the garden as we waited for our breakfast to be prepared, finding a fine Blue-bearded Bee-eater and some Yellow-footed Green Pigeons. We boarded jeeps and began our jeep safari into the National Park, and during the course of the day encountered a large number of birds with about 117 species recorded! High on the list were a flock of Finn's Weaver that showed well, a lifer for everyone, while all around were numerous Indian Rhinoceros, Hog Deer and Swamp Deer wild Asian Water Buffalo, and we had a wonderful encounter with a large number of Asian Elephants, a matriarchal group of females with four

small babies. We glimpsed Slender-billed Babbler, had good views of Chestnut-capped Babbler and Spotted Bush Warbler, found Black-necked and Woolly-necked Storks, Spot-billed Pelicans, Pallas's and Grey-headed Fish Eagles, Himalayan Vultures, Crested Serpent and Changeable Hawk Eagles, Pied and Hen Harriers, Greater Flameback and Grey-capped Woodpeckers, Blossom-headed, Alexandrine and Red-breasted Parakeets, Asian Barred and Spotted Owlets. The day ended with our jeeps being charged by an Indian Rhinoceros that didn't like us tailing it down the track. The drivers stood their ground and made lots of revving noise and the animal headed off into the grass.



*Greater Adjutants at Guwahati*



*Indian Rhinoceros at Kaziranga*

We made an early morning walk into the tea estate near our hotel where we found a splendid Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Common Woodshrike, Baya Weaver, and a few leeches. We returned to the National Park, eating our packed breakfast as we went, and spent the morning working our way around the grasslands and lakes. We added Ferruginous Duck, Brown Fish Owl, Oriental Dollarbird, Streak-throated Woodpecker, and watched Red-breasted Parakeets in a nest hole. We also found Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Abbott's Babbler and a Slender-billed Vulture, plus a dozen Smooth-coated Otter diving about in the shallow lakes chasing fish.



*Spot-billed Pelican and Little Cormorant, Kaziranga*

In the afternoon we returned, and had a great thrill of seeing a Tiger that was lounging on the bank of one of the lakes for long while, albeit at some distance away. We watched it rolling about on the ground until it decided to get up and disappear into the tall grass. The birding was also successful, with great views of

Swamp Francolins on the track, Hen Harrier, Golden-headed Cisticola, Striated Babblers, and numerous Rhino and Elephant scattered across the park.

Another walk into the tea gardens near our hotel produced Plaintive Cuckoo, Puff-throated Babbler, Rosy Minivet, Yellow-bellied Warbler, Large Cuckooshrike, White-browed Piculet, Black-crested Bulbul and a Great Hornbill in the tree outside the gate of our hotel. We then headed on towards Nameri, situated on the north side of the Brahmaputra. Short stops en route provided Indian Flying Fox, Grey-headed Lapwing and Intermediate Egret, and we arrived at a decidedly busy Nameri Eco Camp in time for lunch. We found a pair of Brown Boobooks in the garden, then took a walk through the scrub and open woodland to the river bank. In the dead tree by the gate we watched Common and Great Mynas, Common Hill Myna and Oriental Dollarbird all busy around their nest holes, and a Great Hornbill male came in to feed the female who was walled in to her nest, her bill tip the only part visible in the narrow slit. We also found Dusky Warbler, Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, Common Rosefinches, Tickell's Leaf Warbler, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker and Oriental Turtle Doves, and on the river we saw River Tern, Sand Lark, River Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover and Small Pratincole, and a flight of 16 Wreathed Hornbills that crossed the river at dusk. As night fell we had a great view of Large-tailed Nightjar.



*Oriental Dollarbird*

We were across the river into the National Park early the next morning, with our objective of White-winged Wood Duck being uppermost in our mind. We headed for a discreet jungle pool but there was nothing here but a Grey-headed Fish Eagle. We continued at a more leisurely pace towards more pools, finding Barred Cuckoo Dove, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, a flyby Ashy-headed Green Pigeon, Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Greenish Warbler, Great Thick-knee, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Abbott's Babblers, and a fine Pallas's Gull that flew down river as we were waiting for the boat

across. In the afternoon we returned across the river, saw a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and Lesser Yellownape, Speckled Piculet, Black-naped Monarch, but a low rumbling from a hidden Elephant somewhere nearby meant that we had beat a hasty retreat, from the pools where we were hoping a Wood Duck might appear. Sand Larks sang their simple song in song flights over the sand bars and Small Pratincoles hawked over the river. An attractive landscape here, with the wide meandering Jia Bhorelli river bordered by a wall of tall lowland forest.

We left as soon as the staff had woken up enough to give us breakfast then we began our long journey towards Bhutan. We crossed to the south side of the Brahmaputra and headed towards Guwahati airport, pausing to scan over the Deepur Bheel where we found Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Grey-headed Swampphen, Cotton Pygmy Geese, Whiskered Tern and Red-rumped Swallow to bring our list of birds seen on the extension to 211. At Guwahati airport we retrieved a lost luggage item, then joined our Bhutanese guide Tanden and switched to two new cars. We re-crossed the Brahmaputra northwards and then headed along smooth new highways (dodging the multiple oncoming cars that hadn't figured out which side to drive on!) towards the Bhutan border at Gelephu. We completed the exit formalities for India in a small hut under a Banyan tree, with handwritten notes marking our departure from the country, and then we reached the ornate Bhutanese gate where we were greeted and ushered into a different world. Here we managed to start our Bhutan lists with Green Imperial Pigeon and Coppersmith Barbet, Indian Roller and Rose-ringed Parakeet. We checked in to our hotel and then explored this charming border town a little, stocking up on essential items, eagerly anticipating the journey ahead into the interior.



*A matriarchal group of Indian Elephant, Kaziranga*

We began our Bhutanese birding with a pre-breakfast foray along a road lined by lowland forest and scrub, finding several Indian Peafowl, Thick-billed and Pin-tailed Green Pigeons, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Large Woodshrike, Thick-billed Warbler, Long-tailed Broadbill and Lesser Yellownape, while Black Francolin called from a hidden location. We then headed into the hills, where in the foothills we saw a migrant Eurasian Wryneck, Rufous-bellied Hawk Eagle, Black Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Plain Flowerpecker, Black-chinned and Striated Yuhinas, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Yellow-vented Warbler, Rusty-fronted Barwing,

Ashy and Black-crested Bulbuls. It was rather hot today so we headed to higher elevations in the afternoon, finding cool lush forests where we saw Brown-flanked Bush Warbler, Black-throated and Green-tailed Sunbirds, Black-throated Bushtit, Yellow-cheeked Tit, and a familiar call led us to a Long-billed Wren Babbler that was lured into view at the side of the road, treating us with a superb view of its kiwi-esque character. Yellow-throated Fulvettas performed well, and we found a Rufous-throated Wren Babbler just as the light faded. We retreated to our first camp of the tour, feeling well satisfied with a great day's birding.

The next morning was gloomy with low cloud, and we headed downhill finding White-crested and Striated Laughingthrushes at the roadside as we went. We began birding in some of the lush forests at 1300m, and working our way downhill we found a busy flock with Blue-winged Laughingthrushes, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Red-faced Liocichla, Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills and Silver-eared Mesia. Suddenly we spotted a pair of Beautiful Nuthatches quietly creeping up the nearby trees, and we were able to follow them for the next hour. Another two appeared, also in a tight pair, and then one of the pairs began to show an interest in an old nest of Irrawaddy Squirrel, a ball of leaves that was likely to be a possible nest site. Buoyed by this wonderful experience, we continued downhill, and amazingly found another three Beautiful Nuthatches, plus Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, a splendid Green Cochoa, Black-throated Prinia, nest-building White-naped Yuhina, and had glimpses of Slaty-backed and Spotted Forktails, Golden-throated and Great Barbets. We headed uphill once again, into the lush hill forest not far from our camp. It was very dim due to the low cloud, but activity picked up gradually as the sky brightened and we found a Lesser Shortwing, White-throated Laughingthrushes, and then amazingly another *four* Beautiful Nuthatches, keeping in tight pairs in tall alders, and doing little loop-the-loop displays around the branches. Also we saw Himalayan Cutia, Greater Yellow-nape, Grey-winged Blackbird, Red-tailed Minla, and a White-tailed Nuthatch to make it a three Nuthatch day. And what a day it had been! We celebrated our *eleven* Beautiful Nuthatch day back at camp with some Bhutanese Whisky, and 'Ema datchi' – the national dish of chillies in cheese sauce.



*Beautiful Nuthatch*



*Long-billed Wren-babbler (photo by G. Rotzoll)*

We were greeted by rain at dawn the following morning, so as we broke camp we spent a little time around the nearby cultivation, finding a pair of Tickell's Thrush, Grey-winged Blackbird and Red-rumped Swallows, then as the skies cleared we headed uphill. On our way up to the Tama La pass we encountered Pygmy and White-gorgeted Flycatchers (both showing very well), Scarlet Finches, Chestnut-crowned, White-throated, Grey-sided and Bhutan Laughingthrushes, Sikkim Treecreeper, some gorgeous Golden-breasted Fulvettas, nest-building Rufous-winged Fulvettas, Golden Babblers, Whistler's Warbler, Black-faced Warbler and Rufous-bellied Niltava. We ate our picnic lunch under the shelter of a cafe on the pass itself as the weather took a turn for the worse, and as persistent rain and fog took hold we headed downhill. We made some stops below 1000m and found a showy pair of White-hooded Babblers, Nepal Fulvettas, Black-chinned Yuhinas, Black-throated Sunbirds, and along the river valley at 650m we saw White-throated and Ashy Bulbuls, Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes and a Great Hornbill, before rolling into our new camp, tucked away in a side valley with Pin-tailed Green Pigeon and White-crested Laughingthrush for garden birds.

We birded close to our camp in the early morning, finding some cute Rufous-faced Warblers, Grey-throated Babbler, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and Blue-bearded Bee-eater, then moved on to a bamboo rich area for the rest of the morning. We saw Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoos, White-hooded Babblers, Rufous-necked and Great Hornbills, White-browed Piculet, and a pair of Pale-headed Woodpeckers in the dense bamboo. A huge and evil looking Cobra was disturbed from the roadside by our bus, and sped away from us as fast as could. In the afternoon we repeated our searches along the same road and had a brief look at Pale-billed Parrotbill, and had excellent views of a pair of angry Chestnut-winged Cuckoos, a Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Warblers, Blue-throated Blue Flycatchers, and even more White-hooded Babblers.



*Ibisbill*

The following day was a travel day, although we hadn't anticipated quite how many hours it might take! The road surfaces were so badly broken up by the heavy trucks of the Mangdechu Hydro project, we crawled along at snails pace, taking 6 hrs to do 95km! Nevertheless we continued to add new birds and we found Himalayan Bulbul and Striated Prinia in the rain and fog, then pausing at a traditional bees nest site we found Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, in the company a pair of Blue-bearded Bee-eaters, Ashy Drongos, and a Long-tailed Broadbill that had a hanging nest just a few metres from the dense cluster of Giant Rock Bee nests, while on the raging river below were some Little Forktails. We paused in a small restaurant in Tongsa for momos, and enjoyed the ambiance of this quaint little town. We then returned to the highway, the rain abated mostly, but the carnage of the roadworks was no improvement on the previous year. We had a little time for a short stop in the high forest and added White-browed Fulvetta and Hume's Bush Warbler, and enjoyed Eurasian Magpies, Red-billed Chough and Eurasian Hoopoe around the farms of Chumey. Close to Jakar we stopped by the river and found a pair of Ibisbill, one of which landed near us and showed well at very close range. We rolled into our fine hotel at Jakar and enjoyed hot showers and wood burners in the rooms, and prepared for the next suite of camping nights.

We left our hotel after a fine breakfast of local Bumthang products, on the way out of town found Brown Parrotbills in a clump of bamboo, and had a glimpse of a Black-tailed Crake in a roadside marsh. We headed up towards the first pass, surprising a male Himalayan Monal on the road, flushing another, and spotting one on a far slope. In the high Fir forest covered in lichen we found White-winged Grosbeaks, Red Crossbill, a Collared Owlet, Snow Pigeons, White-collared Blackbird, Coal Tit and Rufous-vented Tit, Buff-barred Warbler, Rufous-vented Yuhina, Asian House Martin, Black-faced Laughingthrush and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. Along our way we also found Rufous-breasted and Alpine Accentor, Grey-sided Bush Warbler, and some stunning Blood Pheasants. Once at the Thrumsing La we were shrouded in fog and rain. The birding was quiet from here on, but we found Fire-tailed Sunbird, Hodgson's Redstart, and our first Satyr Tragopans (two females), shortly before two males trotted off the roadside. We reached our camp at Sengor, and after a cup of tea we went out in the rain and mist, and found a minimum of eight more Satyr Tragopans, to make 12 for the day!



*Red Panda at Sengor (photos by Gerd Rotzoll)*

The rain that persisted through the night cleared up and we could see the mountains around our well-appointed camp as we set off down the road. Our first birds were Red-headed Bullfinch, followed by a Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler that came in for a look. A little way down the road we had a superb view of a White-browed Shortwing, then watched a Black Eagle perched on a tall stump drying off. Another Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler drew our attention, then I spotted a rusty red tail in the fir tree behind, and out popped a Red Panda! It showed well as it clambered around in the branches before climbing down and out of view, not before everyone had seen it, including our driver Tshering who came running down the road just in time to see it climbing downwards. Wow! How amazing! The birds kind of seemed less important for a while, however we went on to find a cute Bar-winged Wren-babbler that played hide and seek among the mossy branches, and a Chestnut-headed Tesia that showed very well indeed. We headed down to a bamboo rich area lower down and found Broad-billed Warbler, before the fog and rain rolled in again. We dodged around the showers and saw Whistler's Warblers, Red-tailed and Chestnut-tailed Minlas, Yellow-bellied Fantail,

Ashy-throated Leaf Warbler, Stripe-throated Yuhinas, Mrs Gould's Sunbirds, and a White-browed Fulvetta making a nest. As the fog and rain wasn't going away we returned to the higher altitudes where it was clearer, finding Hoary-throated Barwing, and later in the afternoon we saw two more male Tragopans, one of which stayed on the verge in front of our bus for a whole 25 minutes until we shooed it away. What a day!

The next morning we broke camp with the rain and low cloud still with us. We started our birding with a glimpse of a Hill Partridge, some Speckled Wood pigeons, and a Dark-rumped Rosefinch female. Further downhill we found a lively flock of Black-throated Parrotbills, Pygmy Wren-babbler and Scaly Laughingthrushes. Dropping further in elevation we heard a Ward's Trogon calling from the slope below us, and saw a male Sapphire Flycatcher, White-spectacled Warbler and more Yellow-rumped Honeyguides. The fog and rain persisted but we still managed to get good views of Rufous-throated Wren Babbler, and a noisy Lesser Cuckoo. The afternoon grew quiet and we headed onwards, seeing Capped Leaf Monkeys and a male Kalij Pheasant before rolling into our next camp.

At first light we headed straight to some of the damp and dense corners of the forest here. With several big targets on our menu, it was good to hear the loud throaty tones of a Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler coming from a roadside slope, and we soon found him sitting in the open for several minutes, long enough to put scopes on him and watch him singing with gusto. From here we headed straight up to where the forest is dominated by moss-drenched chestnut trees, and we soon found a male Ward's Trogon shooting about in the big trees, and watched appreciatively from the road above him. We headed higher up as the mist and fog receded a little, and found Black-headed Shrike-babblers, a male Gold-naped Finch, more Black-throated Parrotbills, and a Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler. Nearer to our camp we found Blue-bearded Bee-eater, a fine male Rufous-necked Hornbill, and some White-naped Yuhinas. At lower elevations alongside a scenic river we found a gorgeous Tawny Fish Owl at roost, a Black-tailed Crake sauntered across an open road, and in the fields we found Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes, Yellow-breasted Greenfinch and Crested Buntings. That evening we had a short nightdrive, where a calling female Hodgson's Frogmouth was found close to the road, turning its head around to glare at us like a little rusty demoness, plus we found two Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrels in a large overhead tree. Another epic day.



*Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler*



*Spotted Elachura*

Birding on the drier south-facing slopes we watched a pair of Spotted Elachuras engaged in some nuptial displays with one of the birds holding the wings outstretched at a 45-degree angle. We also found Pale Blue Flycatchers, White-bellied Erpornis, and enjoyed a family group of Himalayan Goral standing on the slope in the morning sun. Further uphill in the wetter zone we added Green-crowned Warbler and Ultramarine Flycatcher. At midday a swarm of Swifts appeared over our camp, with many Blyth's and several high speed White-throated Needletails. In the afternoon we explored new areas in a richly forested valley where we found yet another pair of Beautiful Nuthatches (yup, 13 now!), Rufous-bellied and Mountain Hawk Eagles, and an Asian Barred Owlet.

It was time to leave our camping behind, and after a final mountain breakfast and saying farewell to our delightful camp crew, we headed uphill towards the Thrumsing La. A couple of stops on the way produced Mountain Hawk Eagle, Alpine Accentor, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, a noisy pair of Great Parrotbill and the first ever sighting of Rufous-breasted Bush Robin on this tour, with a pair at the roadside at 3600m. We crossed the pass and paused for our picnic lunch where Fire-tailed Sunbirds zipped about the rhododendron bushes. Continuing downhill we were delayed a little while by road works and blasting, then near Ura we happened upon a Solitary Snipe feeding in the open (alongside another Snipe that totally perplexed us!), while our Blood Pheasant total for the day rose to 18! We also had superlative views of a roadside male Satyr Tragopan, plus another five today made a record breaking 22 birds for the trip. A couple of Himalayan Monal flushed from the road and an Indian Muntjac completed our day, as we rolled into Jakar for the night and enjoyed hot showers and comfortable surroundings.

We set off once again on a long bus journey, although a few birds to start us off around the Bumthang valley such as Ruddy Shelducks, Ibisbill and Brown Dipper were a nice start. Up on the high pass of the Yutong La, the road works have butchered most of the roadside habitat, however we did manage to find a fine Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler singing his heart out. We had lunch with a view of the impressive Tongsa Dzong, then continued on the most tiresome roads, crawling along on a broken road surface with massive cuttings and rock slides blighting the landscape. Once we reached the heights of the Pele La and turned off into the delightful Phobjika valley, we were back in the Bhutanese wonderland. We explored a few boggy areas bordering the forests before the end of the day, seeing Eurasian Hoopoes, Red-billed Choughs and a Black-necked Crane in a cage – a casualty from the wintering flock here recuperating in care.



*Himalayan Monal*

In the darkness of the pre-dawn we could hear Wood Snipe giving its harsh calls, only to stop calling as soon as it became light. We bashed around and eventually flushed one twice which gave some brief flight views before disappearing. Further stomping around boggy areas produced little, and as we headed out of the

valley we saw an Indian Blue Robin singing from the lichen-draped pines. Up on the Pele La we explored the quiet road through degraded forest finding numerous Himalayan Griffons, an adult Lammergeier passed overhead, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Slaty-blue Flycatchers, a splendid Fire-capped Tit, and a male Himalayan Monal showed really well, sat in a tree. Then it was time to rejoin the main highway and endure the ghastliness of the road 'construction' down to Wangdi, finding better roads along the Mo Chu river where we scanned the sandbars and found Little Stint, Mongolian and Kentish Plovers (all new for the Bhutan list), an Ibisbill with a downy chick, Eurasian Wigeon and a Western Osprey.

In the Jigme Dorji NP at Tashitang, we walked alongside the noisy river in warm broad-leaved forest. We had a great view of a Spotted Elachura singing his little heart out, and yet another Tawny Fish Owl was found at roost in a roadside tree. Also here were many Maroon Orioles, Greater Yellownape, Yellow-vented Warbler, Crested Honey Buzzard, Mountain Hawk Eagle, White-throated Laughingthrushes, however a Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush sang to us but was unwilling to show. We returned to town and had another scan of the riversides where we found a flock of 13 Common Shelduck, a male Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon and two female Falcated Duck. We then visited the Punakha Dzong, a very beautiful structure from inside and out, and our guide Tanden gave us a fascinating explanation of the life of Buddha. We walked from here across Bhutan's longest suspension bridge, albeit a slightly harrowing experience with thunderstorms circling, and gale force winds tearing down the valley that threatened to blow us off the footbridge! We then made the annual pilgrimage in search of the White-bellied Heron, which provided us with a typical encounter (a no show) but we did find a pair of *melanota* Kalij Pheasants, enjoyed a close encounter with a pair of Ibisbill and three small downy chicks, and found a Grey-bellied Cuckoo and a White-browed Wagtail.

Leaving our comfortable hotel, we began our journey to our final destination in Bhutan. We had to pause at the end of the drive for a fine Slender-billed Oriole, before continuing up to the Dochu La. We found Ultramarine Flycatcher on the way up, then on the top of the pass we saw a pair of Spotted Laughingthrush, Blue-fronted and Black Redstarts, and enjoyed a nice trail full of flowering rhododendron trees where we saw Rufous-bellied and Darjeeling Woodpeckers, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Red-billed Leiothrix, Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler, and a Hill Partridge was kind enough to give allow a view. We continued our journey to Thimphu where we had a brief drive-by city tour and photo stop, and paused at the sewage works where we saw Wood and Green Sandpipers. Along the Paro valley we scanned the river and found another Ibisbill, several River Lapwings, and in a damp area we had a great look at a Black-tailed Crake.



*Blue-fronted Redstart*



*Spotted Nutcracker*

We left in the darkness for the Chele La, the highest pass of the tour and our last days' birding. We were early enough to catch three Grey Nightjars coming off the road on the way up, before the light came up and the road began to get busy with Pheasant traffic. We started off with three smart Kalij Pheasants, a male Satyr Tragopan (our 23<sup>rd</sup>!), then the Blood Pheasants began to appear, with several small flocks seen on the roadsides. We also found two male and two female Himalayan Monal, and all this before we reached the

pass! We saw Spotted and Black-faced Laughingthrushes feeding on the frosted ground, and we greeted the 3800m pass with a loud 'Hageloh!' Jomolhari was standing tall in a clear morning sky, and we ate our breakfast on the very top of the road pass. We had clear views across to the valley of Haa, and walked along the high road finding Himalayan White-browed Rosefinches, Blue-fronted Redstarts, Greenish Warblers, Collared Grosbeaks, Spotted Nutcrackers, Eurasian Jay. At slightly lower elevations in the fir forest we found Himalayan Bluetail, White-browed Bush Robin, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Grey Crested Tit, Rufous-fronted Bushtits, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, Darjeeling Woodpecker and Yellow-billed Blue Magpies. We ate an al fresco lunch, brought up to us by caterers, then headed down to the Paro valley where we viewed the Tiger's Nest Monastery from the comfort of the valley bottom, and in a swampy area we found a Solitary Snipe, Speckled Woodpigeons, and a pair of Brown Parrotbills.

We enjoyed a final dinner together with our Bhutanese hosts, a nice way to end our wonderful tour through the mountains of this magical kingdom. It had been a spectacular journey from start to finish, a truly memorable experience that will be hard to beat!



*Black Eagle & moon*



*Doing the leech dance at Nameri N.P.*



*Indian Elephants*



*Bhutan Laughingthrush*



*Smooth-coated Otters, Punakha*



*Blood Pheasant – one of the 56 seen on the tour!*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). 2017. IOC World Bird List (v 6.4). 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 leaders are indicated by the symbol (NL)

Species which were only recorded in Assam on the main tour are indicated by the symbol (A)

Species which were only recorded on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension are indicated by the symbol (E)

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).

**Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* (E) Seen at Kaziranga and Deepur Bheel in Assam.

**Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus* One in a field at Jakar with Ruddy Shelducks.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* A flock of 13 seen on the river at Wangdi.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* A couple at Kaziranga, four at Jakar, one at Punakha.

**Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* (E) Several seen at Deepur Bheel.

**Falcated Duck** *Anas falcata* Two females at Wangdi. A write-in for Bhutan, very few records for the country.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* Seen in small groups at Kaziranga, a male at Wangdi.

**Indian Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga.  
**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga.  
**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* (E) A single at Kaziranga.  
**Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* Heard on Gelephu airstrip, also en route in Assam.  
**Swamp Francolin** ◊ *Francolinus gularis* (E) Good views of some on the tracks at Kaziranga.  
**Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica* (H) (LO) Heard during the night at our Yongkola camp.  
**Hill Partridge** ◊ *Arborophila torqueola* After many heard, a view of one on the Dochu La was welcome.  
**Rufous-throated Partridge** ◊ *Arborophila rufogularis* (H) Often heard calling from a distance.  
**Chestnut-breasted Partridge** ◊ *Arborophila mandellii* (H) Only heard, on the Tama La.  
**Blood Pheasant** ◊ *Ithaginis cruentus* Many on the Thrumsing La, a massive 38 counted on the Chele La.  
**Satyr Tragopan** ◊ *Tragopan satyra* A record total this year. See note.  
**Himalayan Monal** ◊ *Lophophorus impejanus* Seen in several places, eleven in total.  
**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus* (E) Not uncommon in Assam.  
**Kalij Pheasant** ◊ *Lophura leucomelanos* Two races seen in Bhutan, *melanota* (west) and *lathamii* (east).



*Kalij Pheasant*



*Satyr Tragopan female*

**Grey Peacock-Pheasant** ◊ *Polyplectron bicalcaratum* (H) Heard calling distantly at Tingtibi.  
**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* Six seen close to Gelephu.  
**Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans* (A) Seen commonly in Assam, also en route to Gelephu.  
**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus* (E) Several seen at Kaziranga.  
**Black-necked Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* (E) As many as six at Kaziranga.  
**Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus* (A) Small numbers in Assam, one en route to Gelephu  
**Greater Adjutant** ◊ *Leptoptilos dubius* (E) At least eighty seen at Guwahati dump, a few elsewhere.  
**Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (E) In good numbers at Kaziranga.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* (E) A single at Kaziranga.  
**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* (E) Three along the river at Nameri.  
**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* (A) Common in Assam.  
**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* (A)  
**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* (E)  
**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* (A) A few seen in Assam.  
**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* (A)  
**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* (E) A small number at Kaziranga.  
**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Common in Assam, a couple seen at Wangdi.  
**Spot-billed Pelican** ◊ *Pelecanus philippensis* (E) A flotilla of 30 seen at Kaziranga  
**Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger* (A) Numerous at Kaziranga.  
**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* (E)  
**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Some singles at Kaziranga, also one at Wangdi.  
**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* (E) A couple at Kaziranga.  
**Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus* An adult cruised overhead on the Pele La. Second record ever for the tour.  
**Crested Honey Buzzard** ◊ *Pernis ptilorhynchus* A small number in Assam, one at Tashitang near Punakha.

**Slender-billed Vulture** *Gyps tenuirostris* (E) A single seen at Kaziranga.

**Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* Multiple sightings at Kaziranga, a good number seen around Pele La.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* Seen in Assam, a few in lower elevation locations in Bhutan.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus* (E) Three seen at Kaziranga.

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus nipalensis* Regularly seen along our route in Bhutan.

**Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii* A single showed well near Gelephu.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Seen on seven different days in Bhutan.

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* Five examples seen in Bhutan.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* Regularly seen in Assam, three more in Bhutan.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Scattered sightings of singles in Bhutan.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* A migrant bird over the forest near Sengor at 2800m was unusual.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* (E) Two or more males seen at Kaziranga.

**Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos* (E) Two males and a juvenile seen at Kaziranga.

**Black-eared Kite** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* A single near the Tama La, also at Guwahati dump.

**Black Kite** *Milvus [migrans] govinda* (A) Seen at various points around Assam.

**Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (E) Several sightings at Kaziranga.

**Grey-headed Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus ichhyaetus* (E) Several sightings at Kaziranga and also at Nameri.

**Himalayan Buzzard** *Buteo burmanicus* Not uncommon in high country.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (E) Plenty at Kaziranga.

**Black-tailed Crake** *Porzana bicolor* Three seen in the mountains, at widely different elevations.

**Grey-headed Swamphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus* (E) Four or more at Deepor Bheel.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* (E)

**Great Stone-curlew (G Thick-knee)** *Esacus recurvirostris* (E) Three at Nameri were a fine sight.

**Ibisbill** *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* Several encounters, with small chicks seen at two locations.

**River Lapwing** *Vanellus duvaucelii* Seen at Nameri and on several Bhutanese rivers.



River Lapwing



Solitary Snipe

**Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus* (E) A single seen near Kaziranga.

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* Fairly common in lowland Assam, plus one at Wangdi

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Seen at Nameri and near Wangdi.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* A male at Wangdi, a write-in for the Bhutan part of the tour.

**Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian P)** *Charadrius mongolus* One in breeding plumage at Wangdi. See note.

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* (E) A few on Deepur Bheel.

**Bronze-winged Jacana** *Metopidius indicus* (E) Noted in a couple of places in Assam.

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* (LO) The quickest of glimpses, en route to the Chele La.

**Solitary Snipe** *Gallinago solitaria* Singles at Ura and Paro. The other Snipe at Ura still defies identification!

**Wood Snipe** *Gallinago nemoricola* Pre-dawn calls were heard at Phobjika, a brief flight view was all we managed.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* (E) In quite good number at Kaziranga.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* (E) (H) heard at Kaziranga.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Singles seen at Kaziranga, night migrants heard over Yongkola camp.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* A few seen along the way.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* (E) A single at Kaziranga.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* One at Wangdi, a write-in for the Bhutan part of the tour.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga

**Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea* (E) Some nice examples on the river at Nameri.

**Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G)** *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* (E) A sub-adult flew along the river at Nameri.

**River Tern** *Sterna aurantia* (E) Noted at Kaziranga and Nameri.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* (E) A few at Deepur Bheel.

**Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia*

**Snow Pigeon** ◊ *Columba leuconota* A flock of 35+ at Ura, another flock seen near our Sengor camp.

**Speckled Wood Pigeon** *Columba hodgsonii* A few sightings along the way, numerous around Paro in flocks, oddly.

**Ashy Wood Pigeon** *Columba pulchricollis* Two seen on the Dochu La.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

**Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica* (E) A few at Kaziranga.

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis*

**Barred Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia unchall* Several at Nameri, odd birds at Tama La and Punakha.

**Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* One seen at Nameri, also seen at Tingtibi.

**Ashy-headed Green Pigeon** *Treron phayrei* (E) A male flew past us at Nameri.

**Thick-billed Green Pigeon** *Treron curvirostra* A single seen above Gelephu.

**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon** *Treron phoenicopterus* (A) Quite a few seen in Assam.



*Yellow-footed Green Pigeon*

**Pin-tailed Green Pigeon** ◊ *Treron apicauda* A couple at Gelephu, more at Tingtibi.

**Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon** *Treron sphenurus* Two at Nameri, also near Jigmecholing.

**Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea* Seen flying around Gelephu, also at Nameri and Kaziranga.

**Mountain Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula badia* Only seen in the forests between Gelephu and Tama La.

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* (E) (H) Heard at Kaziranga and Nameri.

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis* Present at Gelephu, also seen in the grass at Kaziranga and Nameri.

**Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga.

**Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** *Clamator coromandus* One at Nameri, two at Tingtibi showed well.

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamys scolopaceus* Seen at Gelephu and at Punakha Dzong, also noted in Assam.

**Asian Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx maculatus* Two seen in the forests above Gelephu.

**Banded Bay Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sonneratii* (H) Heard at Tingtibi and down near Lingmethang.

**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus* (E) One seen at Kaziranga.

**Grey-bellied Cuckoo** *Cacomantis passerinus* Heard near Tingtibi, a songster seen well at Punakha.

**Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris* Seen well at Tingtibi.

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparveroides* Three seen in all, many more heard.

**Common Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx varius* (A) (H) One heard en route to Gelephu.

**Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo** ◇ *Hierococcyx nisicolor* A good look at one near Jigmecholing.

**Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus* One seen on the Lingmethang Road, another near Punakha.

**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* (E) One seen at Kaziranga, others heard in numerous locations.

**Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus* Just one seen, many others heard in the mountains.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Heard in many montane locations, one seen at Ura.

**Mountain Scops Owl** ◇ *Otus spilocephalus* (H) Heard distantly around Tingtibi and Yongkola.

**Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis* (E) One spotted at Kaziranga, despite being in fairly deep cover :)

**Tawny Fish Owl** ◇ *Ketupa flavipes* A fine example on the Lingmethang Road, another at roost near Punakha. A++.



Tawny Fish Owl

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**Himalayan Owl** ◇ *Strix nivicolium* (H) Three heard near Sengor, the closest of them refusing to come closer.

**Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei* One seen on the Ura-Sheltang La, another at 3700m on the Chele La.

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides* Several seen at Kaziranga, four more in Bhutan.

**Spotted Owlet** *Athene brama* (E) A couple seen at Kaziranga.

**Brown Hawk-Owl (B Boobook) *Ninox scutulata*** (E) A pair roosting above our cabins at Nameri Eco-camp.

**Hodgson's Frogmouth *Batrachostomus hodgsoni*** A vocal female showed really well at Yongkola.

**Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka*** Three seen on the drive up to the Chele La.

**Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*** (E) Two seen near the Jia Bhorelli river at Nameri.

**Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*** Only seen on two days, the weather likely to have kept them away.

**White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*** A few small groups seen over the mountains and forests.

**Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasensis*** Seen in Assam and the Gelephu area.

**Blyth's Swift *Apus leuconyx*** Regularly seen in Bhutan, a local breeder.

**House Swift *Apus nipalensis*** Plenty seen in Assam, also in Gelephu town.

**Ward's Trogon** ◊ ***Harpactes wardi*** A pair seen well on the Lingmethang Road, the male posing for us in the mist.

**Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*** Seen commonly at Kaziranga, also at Nameri and Gelephu.

**Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*** (E) A pair at Nameri with nest hole showed nicely, also seen at Kaziranga.

**Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*** (A) Some seen in Assam, including a fly-by en route to Gelephu.

**Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda*** (E) (H) Heard calling in the forest at Nameri.

**White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*** Some in lowland Bhutan, many across the border.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

**Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris*** A pair seen on the slow road to Tongsa, another two seen around Punakha.

**Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*** (E)

**Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis athertoni*** Seen in our Kaziranga hotel garden, plus six in a day around Tingtibi.

**Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*** (E)

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*** (E) A few around the wetlands at Kaziranga.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*** (E) Rather common at Nameri, also seen at Kaziranga.

**Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*** Seen fairly often in the high mountain areas, usually close to cultivation.

**Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*** In good numbers in the southern valleys of Bhutan and lowland Assam.

**Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*** Singles seen at Nameri and Gelephu.

**Rufous-necked Hornbill** ◊ ***Aceros nipalensis*** A few seen from Gelephu to Tingtibi, a couple of males near Yongkola.

**Wreathed Hornbill *Rhyticeros undulatus*** One near Gelephu, sixteen counted going to roost at Nameri.

**Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens*** Not uncommon at lower elevations in the south and on the Lingmethang Road.

**Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus*** Plenty of sightings in Assam, also found at Gelephu.

**Golden-throated Barbet *Psilopogon franklinii*** Seen in the warmer broad-leaved forests at mid to lower elevations.

**Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus*** Common in Assam, a couple noted in Bhutan.

**Blue-eared Barbet *Psilopogon duvaucelii*** One seen in the forests above Gelephu.

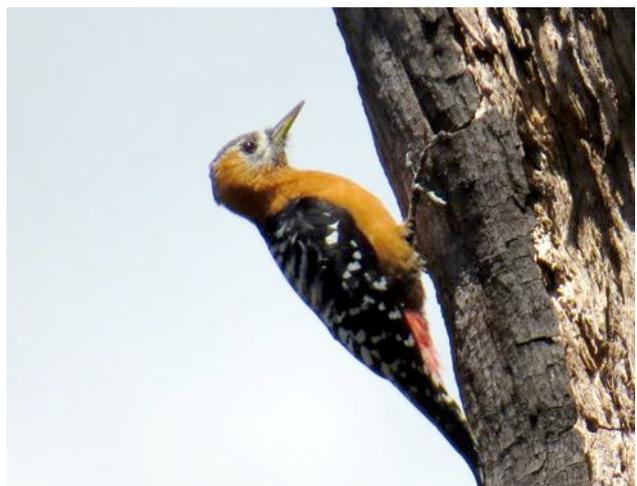
**Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*** One at the Gelephu border crossing was the only sighting.

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** ◊ ***Indicator xanthonotus*** Seen in three locations, plus some errant birds in the forest.

**Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*** Great looks at one in a tree near to Gelephu. Second ever on tour, once in 1999.



*Eurasian Wryneck*



*Rufous-bellied Woodpecker*

**Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*** (E) One seen at Nameri.

**White-browed Piculet *Sasia ochracea*** Two seen in bamboo at Kaziranga, one at Tingtibi.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Yungipicus canicapillus* A scattering of sightings at lower elevations.

**Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** ◊ *Dryobates cathpharius* A male seen well at close range near Yongkola.

**Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* Singles seen on the Pele La and Dochu La.

**Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos macei* Three at Nameri, a female seen at Tingtibi.

**Darjeeling Woodpecker** ◊ *Dendrocopos darjellensis* A handful seen in the higher elevation forests.

**Greater Yellownape** *Chrysophlegma flavinucha* Seen near Jigmecholing and in the forests near Punakha.

**Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus* Several sightings along our way.

**Streak-throated Woodpecker** *Picus xanthopygaeus* (E) A male at Kaziranga showed well.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

**Greater Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* (E) Not uncommon at Nameri, also at Kaziranga.

**Pale-headed Woodpecker** ◊ *Gecinulus grantia* A pair near Tingtibi showed fairly well, if a little furtive.

**Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* Just a single sighting, near Punakha.

**Rufous Woodpecker** *Micropternus brachyurus* Singles at Nameri and Tingtibi, a pair near Punakha.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* One seen somewhere on a long journey from Tingtibi to Jakar!

**Blossom-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula roseata* (E) Five seen at Kaziranga.

**Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri* Big numbers at Kaziranga, also seen at Nameri and Gelephu.

**Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria* Four seen at Gelephu, also present at Kaziranga.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* Seen often in Assam, also at Gelephu.

**Vernal Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus vernalis* (E) One or more seen at Nameri.



*Red-breasted Parakeet*



*Lesser Cuckoo*

**Long-tailed Broadbill** *Psarisomus dalhousiae* Some seen around Gelephu, a nest at Bubja close to bees nests!

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus*

**Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis virgatus* A pair at Gelephu, one at Tingtibi.

**Common Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* (E) One seen in the tea gardens at Kaziranga.

**Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus* A few in Assam, one at Gelephu.

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia* (E)

**Large Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei* Seen in Assam and also at Gelephu.

**Black-winged Cuckooshrike** *Coracina melaschistos*

**Rosy Minivet** ◊ *Pericrocotus roseus* One seen in the tea gardens at Kaziranga.

**Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris* A few seen in warmer broad-leaved forests.

**Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus* The commoner Minivet at higher altitude and in pine habitats

**Short-billed Minivet** *Pericrocotus brevirostris* Seen around the Tama La forests, also on the Lingmethang Road.

**Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus speciosus*

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* A couple in Assam and a single at Gelephu.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Seen around cultivation, typically at lower elevations than the following species

**Grey-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus* Seen at all altitudes as breeding birds ascended to the higher elevations.

**White-bellied Erpornis** *Erpornis zantholeuca* A couple seen on the Lingmethang Road.

**Black-headed Shrike-Babbler** ◊ *Pteruthius rufiventer* Two males seen on the Lingmethang Road. See note.  
**Blyth's Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius aeralatus* (H) Heard on two or three occasions on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Green Shrike-Babbler** ◊ *Pteruthius xanthochlorus* A couple seen near Sengor.  
**Black-eared Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius melanotis* A few seen in suitably rich forests.  
**Slender-billed Oriole** ◊ *Oriolus tenuirostris* A single between Tingtibi and Tongsa, another two at Punakha.  
**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* (E) A single at Kaziranga.  
**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus* Frequently encountered in Assam, also heard at Gelephu.  
**Maroon Oriole** *Oriolus traillii* A few good examples seen, especially in the Jigme Dorji National Park near Punakha.  
**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Common in Assam, also at Gelephu plus a vagrant at 3000m at Phobjika.  
**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*  
**Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus* Not uncommon in lower elevation forests in Bhutan.  
**Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus remifer* Seen near Jigmecholing, also on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus* A few seen at lower elevations.  
**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus* A single at Gelephu.



Grey Crested Tit



Indian Blue Robin

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis*  
**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* Singles at Tingtibi and Nameri.  
**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Singles of the race *interstinctus* at Dochu La and Chele La.  
**Yellow-billed Blue Magpie** ◊ *Urocissa flavirostris*  
**Common Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis* Seen well near Gelephu, flying around over the forests!  
**Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* (E) A few seen in Assam.  
**Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae* Regularly seen, numerous at Tingtibi.  
**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* Seen in number around the Bumthang valleys.  
**Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Seen in higher forests, good numbers on the Chele La.  
**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* A pleasant addition to the higher cultivated valleys.  
**House Crow** *Corvus splendens* Common around Assamese towns, also at Gelephu plus a single in Thimphu.  
**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* No picnic would be the same without these fellows!  
**Eastern Jungle Crow** *Corvus leuillanti* Fairly common in Assam, two seen at Gelephu.  
**Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* A few seen in higher elevation forests.  
**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*  
**Fire-capped Tit** ◊ *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* Two seen on the Pele La were a pleasant and colourful surprise.  
**Yellow-browed Tit** ◊ *Sylviparus modestus* Seen mostly at higher elevations, one near Tama La.  
**Sultan Tit** *Melanochlora sultanea* Seen on two days in the forests above Gelephu. Gorgeous!  
**Rufous-vented Tit** *Periparus rubidiventris* Only in the highest elevation forests, numerous around the Chele La.  
**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*  
**Grey Crested Tit** ◊ *Lophophanes dichrous* Good looks at these on the higher passes.  
**Cinereous Tit (Grey T)** *Parus cinereus* A few in Assam, one at Gelephu.  
**Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus*  
**Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Machlolophus spilonotus*

**Bengal Bush Lark** *Mirafra assamica* (E) Some good looks at these pretty fellows along the way.  
**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* A few heard, one seen at Jakar.  
**Sand Lark** ◊ *Alaudala raytal* (E) Some lovely songsters over the sand bar at Nameri, a good site for this species.  
**Striated Bulbul** *Pycnonotus striatus*  
**Black-crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus flaviventris*  
**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus* (E)  
**Himalayan Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys* Seen only in dry valley bottoms near Tingtibi and Lingmethang.  
**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*  
**White-throated Bulbul** ◊ *Alophoixus flaveolus* A.k.a. Lemon meringue Bulbul, seen at Nameri and Tingtibi.  
**Mountain Bulbul** *Ixos mcclllandii* A few seen in warmer lower elevation forests in Bhutan.  
**Ashy Bulbul** *Hemixos flava* A few seen between Gelephu and Tingtibi.  
**Black Bulbul (Himalayan B B)** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*



Mountain Bulbul



Himalayan Bulbul

**Grey-throated Martin** *Riparia chinensis* (E) Seen commonly at Kaziranga and Nameri.  
**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* (E) A single at Nameri.  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus* A small group near Ura.  
**Nepal House Martin** ◊ *Delichon nipalense* A nice roadside colony was enjoyed on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* A small number in Bhutan's southern valleys.  
**Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler** *Pnoepyga albiventer* Three in all seen,  
**Pygmy Wren-babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla* One showed well on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Yellow-bellied Warbler** *Abroscopus superciliaris*  
**Rufous-faced Warbler** ◊ *Abroscopus albogularis* Four seen on one day at Tingtibi.  
**Black-faced Warbler** ◊ *Abroscopus schisticeps* Some good sightings on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Mountain Tailorbird** *Phyllergates cuculatus* A single seen in bamboo on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Broad-billed Warbler** ◊ *Tickellia hodgsoni* Great close views of one on the Lingmethang Road in a bamboo thicket.  
**Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** *Horornis fortipes*  
**Hume's Bush Warbler** ◊ *Horornis brunescens* An obliging songster at Phobjika.  
**Grey-bellied Tesia** ◊ *Tesia cyaniventer* Three seen and more heard along the Lingmethang Road.  
**Slaty-bellied Tesia** ◊ *Tesia olivea* Great views of two in the forests above Gelephu.  
**Grey-sided Bush Warbler** ◊ *Cettia brunnifrons* Regular encounters, common on the Pele La.  
**Chestnut-headed Tesia** ◊ *Cettia castaneocoronata* Common by voice at Sengor, good views of a friendly individual.  
**Black-throated Bushtit** *Aegithalos concinnus* Often seen between Gelephu and Tingtibi.  
**Rufous-fronted Bushtit** ◊ *Aegithalos iouschistos* Finally found at the Chele La, eluding us till then.  
**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (E) Seen in scrub at Nameri.  
**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis* Seen regularly in a range of elevations, all migrants going higher.  
**Buff-barred Warbler** *Phylloscopus pulcher*  
**Ashy-throated Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis*

**Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus chloronotus* Not uncommon in the higher elevations.  
**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Seen plus several heard at Kaziranga, also heard near Gelephu.  
**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* One seen in the forests above Gelephu.  
**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A few seen at lower elevations, singing on territory on the Chele La.



Greenish Warbler



Grey-sided Bush Warbler

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Two newly arrived and vocal birds seen in higher forests.  
**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*  
**Yellow-vented Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus cantator* Regular sightings in lower elevation forests in Bhutan.  
**Grey-hooded Warbler** *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*  
**White-spectacled Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus affinis* Some sneaky vocal birds seen in bamboo on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Green-crowned Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus burkii* A couple on the Lingmethang Road were the only ones seen.  
**Whistler's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus whistleri* Multiple sightings in the higher forests.  
**Grey-cheeked Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus poliogenys* Seen fairly often in the humid broad-leaved evergreen forests.  
**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps* Not uncommon in the broad-leaved evergreen forests.  
**Thick-billed Warbler** *Iduna aedon* One seen well at Gelephu, a write-in for the Bhutan section.  
**Spotted Bush Warbler** *Locustella thoracica* (E) A good look at this skulker in the grass at Kaziranga.  
**Baikal Bush Warbler** *Locustella davidi* (E) (H) Heard calling at Kaziranga.  
**Striated Grassbird** *Megalurus palustris* (E) A few at Kaziranga, another at Nameri.  
**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* (E) Only at Kaziranga.  
**Golden-headed Cisticola** *Cisticola exilis* (E) A singing bird in the grass at Kaziranga.  
**Striated Prinia** *Prinia crinigera*  
**Black-throated Prinia** *Prinia atrogularis*  
**Yellow-bellied Prinia** *Prinia flaviventris* (E)  
**Ashy Prinia** *Prinia socialis* (E) (NL)  
**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata* (E)  
**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*  
**Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys* Seen at Jigmecholing and Punakha.  
**White-browed Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* Two pairs seen in the Tingtibi area.  
**Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* A pair seen on one day only on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◇ *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus* Great looks at these in the Gelephu forests. See note.  
**Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◇ *Pomatorhinus superciliaris* Two seen well at Sengor, just before the Red Panda!  
**Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler** ◇ *Spelaeornis caudatus* Three seen, performing well on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Bar-winged Wren-Babbler** ◇ *Spelaeornis troglodytoides* A close encounter with one on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler** ◇ *Sphenocichla humei* A superb encounter near Yongkola, scope views too.  
**Grey-throated Babbler** *Stachyris nigriceps*  
**Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyridopsis ruficeps*  
**Golden Babbler** *Stachyridopsis chrysaea*  
**Pin-striped Tit-Babbler** *Macronus gularis* (E)

**Chestnut-capped Babbler** *Timalia pileata* (E) A few seen in tall grass at Kaziranga.  
**Yellow-throated Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe cinerea* Great close views of these in the humid broad-leaved forests.  
**Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneiceps*  
**Nepal Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe nipalensis*  
**White-hooded Babbler** *Gampsorhynchus rufulus* Positively numerous in the bamboo around Tingtibi.  
**Long-billed Wren-Babbler** ◇ *Rimator malacoptilus* A great look at this mini-kiwi near the Tama La.  
**Abbott's Babbler** *Malacocincla abbotti* (E) A few seen in the Assam forests.  
**Puff-throated Babbler** *Pellorneum ruficeps* (E)  
**Striated Babbler** ◇ *Turdoides earlei* (E) A group of six or more seen in the grass at Kaziranga.  
**Slender-billed Babbler** ◇ *Turdoides longirostris* (E) A single shy bird was glimpsed in the grass at Kaziranga.  
**Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striata* A small number at Gelephu.  
**White-crested Laughingthrush** *Garrulax leucolophus*  
**Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax rufogularis* (H) Singing back to us at Punakha, never coming closer...  
**Spotted Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax ocellatus* Some great views of these exquisite birds on the high passes.



Spotted Laughingthrush



White-crested Laughingthrush

**White-throated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax albogularis*  
**Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax monileger* Seen at Gelephu and Tingtibi.  
**Rufous-necked Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax ruficollis* Seen at Kaziranga, also around our Tingtibi camp.  
**Grey-sided Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax caerulatus* Two seen on the Tama La were the only sightings on our tour.  
**Striated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax striatus*  
**Bhutan Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron imbricatum* Just on seen, near the Tama La.  
**Blue-winged Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron squamatum* Multiple sightings in the Gelephu – Tama La section.  
**Scaly Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron subunicolor* Seen on two dates on the Lingmethang road.  
**Black-faced Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron affine* The higher elevation Laughingthrush.  
**Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*  
**Himalayan Cutia** ◇ *Cutia nipalensis* Good views on two dates in the humid broad-leaved forests.  
**Blue-winged Minla** *Minla cyanouroptera*  
**Bar-throated Minla (Chestnut-tailed M)** *Minla strigula*  
**Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta*  
**Red-faced Liocichla** ◇ (Crimson-faced L) *Liocichla phoenicea* Three seen near Gelephu, another at Yongkola.  
**Rusty-fronted Barwing** ◇ *Actinodura egertoni* Not uncommon in the humid broad-leaved forests.  
**Hoary-throated Barwing** ◇ *Actinodura nipalensis* Just a couple of singles seen, on the Lingmethang road  
**Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argenteauris*  
**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea* A small flock seen feeding in rhododendron flowers on the Dochu La.  
**Rufous Sibia** ◇ (Black-capped S) *Heterophasia capistrata*  
**Long-tailed Sibia** ◇ *Heterophasia picaoides* Just one, in the forests above Gelephu.  
**Golden-breasted Fulvetta** ◇ *Lioparus chrysotis* Great looks at a party on the Tama La.  
**White-browed Fulvetta** *Fulvetta vinipectus*

**Great Parrotbill** ◇ *Conostoma aemodium* A lively pair seen in the forest near Sengor.

**Brown Parrotbill** ◇ *Cholornis unicolor* Two at Jakar, one at Phobjika, two at Paro. A good showing this year.

**Black-throated Parrotbill** ◇ *Suthora [nipalensis] humii* Two small flocks seen in the bamboo near Sengor.



*Black-throated Parrotbill*



*Slender-billed Scimitar*

*Babbler*



*Golden-breasted Fulvetta*



*White-browed Fulvetta*

**Pale-billed Parrotbill** ◇ (Lesser Rufous-headed P) *Chleuasicus atrosuperciliaris* One briefly at Tingtibi.

**White-breasted Parrotbill** ◇ (Greater Rufous-headed P) *Psittiparus ruficeps* Seen well around Jigmecholing.

**Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Psittiparus gularis* A few in the forests between Gelephu and Tingtibi.

**Striated Yuhina** *Yuhina castaniceps* Fairly common in the forests between Gelephu and Tingtibi, also Yongkola.

**White-naped Yuhina** ◇ *Yuhina bakeri* These are delightful, seen on two dates in the humid broad-leaved forests.

**Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis*

**Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* In good number on the upper half of the Lingmethang Road.

**Rufous-vented Yuhina** *Yuhina occipitalis* Rather common on the high passes.

**Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta* Seen twice at lower elevations at Tingtibi and near Gelephu.

**Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*

**Asian Fairy-bluebird** *Irena puella* Singles at Nameri and near Gelephu.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

**Spotted Elachura** ◇ (S Wren-Babbler) *Elachura formosa* Displaying birds at Yongkola, a fine songster at Punakha.

**Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* (H)

**Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** *Sitta cinnamoventris*

**White-tailed Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta himalayensis*

**Beautiful Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta formosa* Wow! See note.

**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis* (E)

**Hodgson's Treecreeper** *Certhia hodgsoni* Seen near Ura, also Sengor and the Chele La.  
**Rusty-flanked Treecreeper** ◊ *Certhia nipalensis* A fine specimen seen on the Pele La.  
**Sikkim Treecreeper** ◊ *Certhia discolor* Seen a couple of times in the Tama La area.  
**Common Hill Myna** *Gracula religiosa* Some in Assam, two at Gelephu.  
**Great Myna (White-vented M)** *Acridotheres grandis* Two at Jigmecholing, also at Gelephu and Nameri.  
**Jungle Myna** *Acridotheres fuscus* Seen commonly in Assam, two at Gelephu.  
**Bank Myna** ◊ *Acridotheres ginginianus* (E) Just two seen at Kaziranga, more found in photos of large mammals!  
**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*  
**Pied Myna (Asian P Starling)** *Gracupica contra* Common in Assam, up to Gelephu town.  
**Chestnut-tailed Starling (Grey-headed S)** *Sturnia malabarica* Seen commonly in Assam, also in the Gelephu area.  
**Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* (NL) (E) One seen near Guwahati.  
**Long-tailed Thrush** *Zoothera dixonii* (H) Some songsters heard on the Chele La, singing from steep forest.  
**Long-billed Thrush** ◊ *Zoothera monticola* (H) One sang in the late afternoon near Jigmecholing.  
**Tickell's Thrush** *Turdus unicolor* Great looks at a pair in the rain near our Jigmecholing camp.  
**White-collared Blackbird** ◊ *Turdus albocinctus* Frequent sightings in the higher elevation forests.  
**Grey-winged Blackbird** ◊ *Turdus boulboul* A couple of males seen near our camp at Jigmecholing.  
**Green Cochoa** *Cochoa viridis* An exciting find in the forests above Gelephu.  
**Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*  
**White-rumped Shama** *Copsychus malabaricus* (E) Two seen in Assam.  
**Dark-sided Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*  
**Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea* One seen well on the Tama La.  
**White-gorgeted Flycatcher** ◊ *Anthipes monileger* Atypically quick and easy views of one near the Tama La.  
**Pale Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis unicolor* Seen well near Yongkola, two singing males sitting up in the open.  
**Pale-chinned Blue Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis poliogenys* (E) A good look at this sweet songster at Kaziranga.  
**Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides* Great looks near Tingtibi, also near Gelephu.



*Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher*

**Rufous-bellied Niltava** *Niltava sundara*  
**Large Niltava** *Niltava grandis* Seen well on two days on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Small Niltava** *Niltava macgrigoriae* A few good sightings in the humid broad-leaved forests.  
**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus*  
**Lesser Shortwing** *Brachypteryx leucophris* One seen well near our Jigmecholing camp.  
**White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana* A stunning display by a male at Sengor.  
**Indian Blue Robin** *Larvivora brunnea* A singing male at Phobjika.  
**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* (E) One at Kaziranga.  
**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope* (E) (H) Heard in the grass at Kaziranga.  
**White-tailed Robin** *Myiomela leucura* A male crossed the road near Yongkola.  
**White-browed Bush Robin** ◊ *Tarsiger indicus* One seen on the Chele La, another near Sengor.  
**Rufous-breasted Bush Robin** *Tarsiger hyperythrus* A surprise find of a pair on the Thrumsing La. A write-in.  
**Himalayan Bluetail** *Tarsiger rufilatus* Seen on the higher passes at Ura, Thrumsing and Chele La.  
**Little Forktail** ◊ *Enicurus scouleri* Three birds seen at Bubja was the only sighting.  
**Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* Two furtive birds seen briefly near Jigmecholing.  
**Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* One glimpsed with the above species was our only contact.  
**Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus*  
**Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophiate*  
**Taiga Flycatcher (Red-throated F)** *Ficedula albicilla*  
**Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* A male seen along the Lingmethang Road.  
**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni*  
**Ultramarine Flycatcher** *Ficedula superciliaris* One seen well at Yongkola, another male showed near the Dochu La.  
**Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor*  
**Sapphire Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula sapphira* Good views of a territorial male on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Pygmy Flycatcher** *Muscicapella hodgsoni* Two males seen near the Tama La, one showed well eventually.  
**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* (E) A male on the Dochu La was an unexpected migrant.  
**Hodgson's Redstart** ◊ *Phoenicurus hodgsoni* A couple of females seen along the Lingmethang Road.  
**Blue-fronted Redstart** ◊ *Phoenicurus frontalis* Seen on the Pele La, Dochu La and several at the Chele La.  
**Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*  
**White-capped Redstart** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*  
**Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* Seen often, usually in higher forests, along the road cuttings.  
**Blue-capped Rock Thrush** *Monticola cinclorhyncha* Rather common along some roadsides at warmer elevations.  
**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* Not uncommon at Kaziranga, a couple at Gelephu.  
**Grey Bush Chat** *Saxicola ferreus*  
**Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii* Single birds seen at Jakar and Wangdi.  
**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*  
**Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*



Mrs. Gould's Sunbird



Green-tailed Sunbird

Yellow-vented Flowerpecker *Dicaeum chrysorrheum* (E) (NL)  
 Plain Flowerpecker *Dicaeum minullum* Seen near Gelephu and Tingtibi, also at Nameri..  
 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*  
 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum* (E)  
 Mrs. Gould's Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga gouldiae* Some gorgeous examples seen around Thrumsing La and at Chele La.  
 Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis*  
 Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*  
 Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* Seen at Tingtibi, near Gelephu and at Kaziranga.  
 Fire-tailed Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga ignicauda* Several seen only at the higher levels of the Thrumsing La.  
 Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra* (H) Heard near Gelephu.  
 Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*  
 House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (E) Seen in Assam only.  
 Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* A colourful addition to the higher valleys and passes.



Alpine Accentor



Russet Sparrow

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*  
 Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* (E)  
 Finn's Weaver *Ploceus megarhynchus* (E) Two flocks in the grass at Kaziranga, a lifer for all including the leader.  
 White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* A flock seen at Tingtibi.  
 Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* A few seen along the road over the Thrumsing La going both out and back.  
 Rufous-breasted Accentor ◊ *Prunella strophiata* A handful seen at Ura, Thrumsing La and Chele La.  
 Western Yellow Wagtail\* (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* (E) A few seen at Kaziranga.  
 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (E) Not uncommon in Assam.  
 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*  
 White Wagtail (Amur W) *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* (E)  
 White Wagtail (Himalayan W) *Motacilla [alba] alboides*  
 White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* One sat on a shed at Punakha, only third ever on the tour.  
 Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* A few in Assam, a couple at Gelephu.  
 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*  
 Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* Seen in number at Kaziranga, a couple in a meadow at Jakar.  
 Collared Grosbeak ◊ *Mycerobas affinis* Only found on the Chele La where they were vocal and in good number.  
 Spot-winged Grosbeak ◊ *Mycerobas melanozanthos* A quartet near Tama La, one near Sengor.  
 White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes* Several good encounters on several of the high passes.  
 Red-headed Bullfinch ◊ *Pyrrhula erythrocephala* Good looks at several near Sengor.  
 Golden-naped Finch ◊ *Pyrrhoptectes epauletta* A male seen feeding along the sides of the Lingmethang Road.  
 Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola* A flock near Ura, a couple on Chele La.  
 Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
 Scarlet Finch ◊ *Carpodacus sipahi* Seen in good number at Tama La and Yongkola areas.  
 Dark-rumped Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus edwardsii* A female showed well near Sengor, a pair in rhododendron there.  
 Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus thura* Only found on Chele La where they were numerous.

**Yellow-breasted Greenfinch (Himalayan G) *Chloris spinoides*** A group of birds in fields near Lingmethang.  
**Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*** Numerous near Ura, smaller numbers seen on other high passes.  
**Crested Bunting ◊ *Emberiza lathami*** Smart males seen in a couple of locations near cultivation.



*Dark-rumped Rosefinch female*



*Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch female*



*Blue-throated Barbet*



*Maroon Oriole*



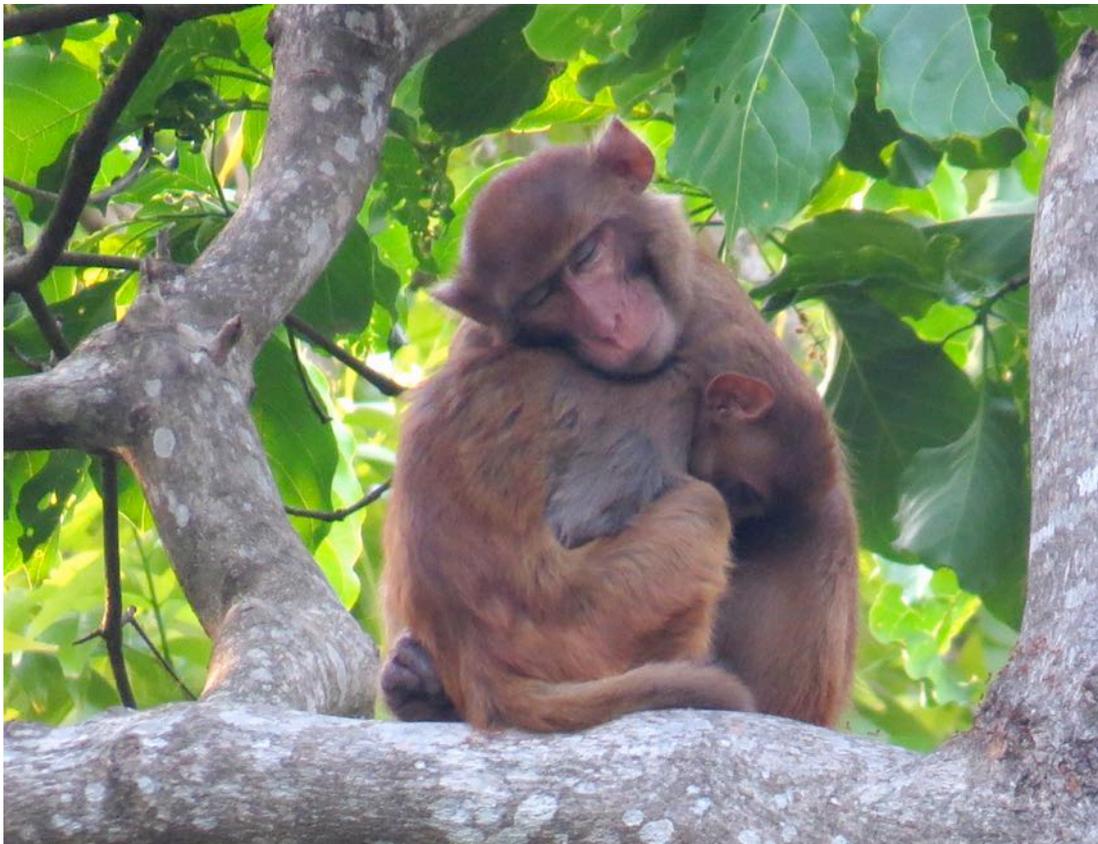
*Common Windmill*



*Glassy Bluebottle*

## MAMMALS

- Moupin Pika** *Ochotona thibetana* Quite a few seen on the Chele La.
- Black Giant Squirrel** *Ratufa bicolor* Multiple sightings in lower elevation forests.
- Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel** *Dremomys lokriah* Quite a few seen in higher forests, often on the ground.
- Irrawaddy Squirrel** *Callosciurus pygerythrus* Seen in Assam and Tingtibi, ball-like nests of leaves seen from this sp.
- Himalayan Striped Squirrel** *Tamiops mccllellandii* A handful seen in the montane forests.
- Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrel** *Petaurista magnificus* A gorgeous pair at Yongkola.
- Tiger** *Panthera tigris* (E) After smelling one nearby, a distant look at 1 lolling about by a lake at Kaziranga. Amazing!
- Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* One seen on the airport at Jakar. Possibly just the second record for the tour.
- Smooth-coated Otter** *Lutra perspicillata* Some great encounters at Kaziranga, even better were seven at Punakha.
- Yellow-throated Marten** *Martes flavigula* Three seen on the Lingmethang Road, another at Punakha.
- Red Panda** *Ailurus fulgens* Just. Awesome. See note.
- Nepal Grey Langur** *Semnopithecus schistaceus* A male licking the road at the Chele La.
- Golden Leaf Monkey (G Langur)** *Trachypithecus geei* Plenty seen, from Gelephu to Tongsa.
- Capped Leaf Monkey (C Langur)** *Trachypithecus pileatus* A group at Nameri, two troops seen near Yongkola.
- Assam Macaque** *Macaca assamensis* Regular sightings in Bhutan.
- Rhesus Macaque** *Macaca mulatta* (E) Seen in Assam at various locations.
- Eurasian Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa* (E) A small number seen at Kaziranga.
- Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)** *Muntiacus muntjak* A total of four seen, at Kaziranga and also in the mountains.
- Swamp Deer** *Cervus duvauceli* (E) A good number at Kaziranga.
- Sambar** *Cervus unicolor* (E) Just three seen, at Kaziranga.
- Hog Deer** *Axis porcinus* (E) Common at Kaziranga.
- Common Goral (Himalayan G)** *Nemorhaedus goral* One at Tingtibi, a mother and two juveniles seen at Yongkola.
- Wild Water Buffalo** *Bubalus arnee* (E) About 15 seen on both days at Kaziranga.
- Indian Rhinoceros** *Rhinoceros unicornis* (E) Rather numerous at Kaziranga, with some great encounters.
- Indian Elephant** *Elephas maximus* (E) A large herd at Kaziranga was magical, with many small calves.



Rhesus Macaque, Nameri

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2016. IOC World Bird Names (v2.11). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

### **Satyr Tragopan** *Tragopan satyra*

An extraordinary year for these, with 23 individual birds seen, mostly males, and almost all seen on the roadsides. They were all between 2800m and 3400m. Our 'bird-of-the-trip'.

### **Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian P)** *Charadrius mongolus*

One in breeding plumage at Wangdi was a first for the Bhutan section of the tour, and a Bhutan lifer for the leader.

### **Black-headed Shrike-Babbler** ◊ *Pteruthius rufiventer*

Two males seen on the Lingmethang Road, making strange displays to each other inside a bush, with lots of stretching and bowing. I witnessed the same display between two males in Burma just one month previously.

### **Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

A great look at some of these near Gelephu forests, they are of the nominate black crowned subspecies, rather different to other subspecies in appearance and also in voice.

### **Beautiful Nuthatch** ◊ *Sitta formosa*

Following on from a year when we missed them completely, I was a little worried about being able to find them. To find eleven in a day plus a probable nest site was just wonderful, and we were able to observe almost all were in tight pairs, with some 'loop-the-loop' displays as they circled the branches.

### **Red Panda** *Ailurus fulgens*

So, on top of the all the great birds that we found, we saw this wonderful creature! It was the second in two years, and it was fitting that the same crew of Tanden, Tshering Lambo and Jigme (& DF) were all present to see it for a second year running. Our number two 'bird-of-the-trip'!

## **Bird-of-the-Trip**

- |                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Satyr Tragopan.                 | 29 points |
| 2. Red Panda.                      | 20 points |
| 3. Blood Pheasant.                 | 17 points |
| 4. Himalayan Monal.                | 13 points |
| 5. Beautiful Nuthatch.             | 12 points |
| 6. Black-throated Parrotbill.      | 9 points  |
| 7. Hodgson's Frogmouth / or Tiger. | 8 points  |



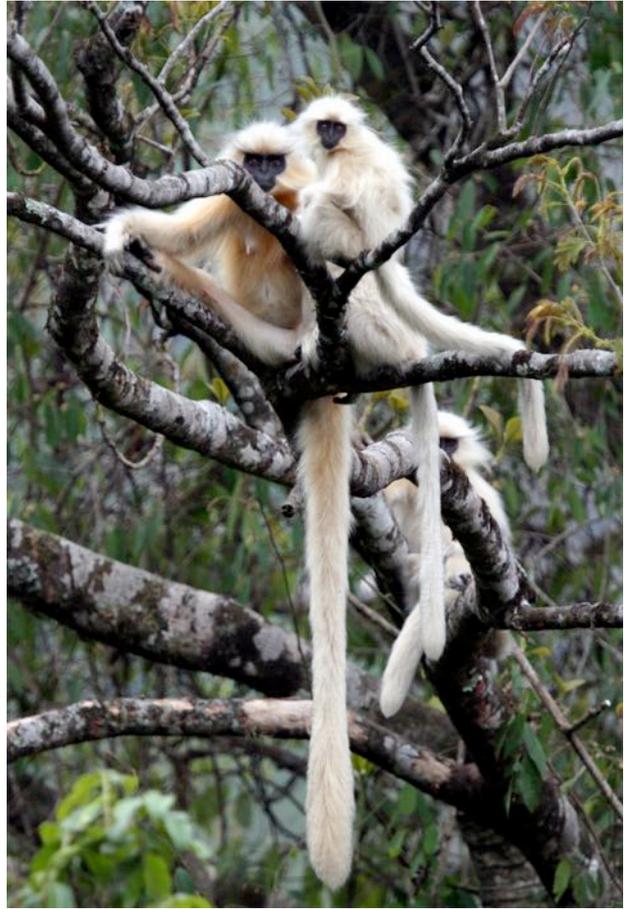
*Tiger lazing around at Kaziranga*



*The 'A' team*



*Begonia*



*Golden Langur*