



Spot-bellied Eagle Owl (Alec Gillespie) (all other photos by D.Farrow unless indicated otherwise)

SOUTHERN INDIA & SRI LANKA with the Andamans Islands

16 NOVEMBER - 12 DECEMBER 2018

LEADER: DAVE FARROW

This years' tour to Southern India and Sri Lanka was once again a very successful and enjoyable affair. A heady brew of wonderful birdlife was seen, rich in endemics, beginning with our extension to the Andaman Islands where we were able to find 20 of the 21 endemics in just three and a half days, with Andaman Masked Owl, Andaman Scops and Walden's Scops Owls, Andaman and Hume's Hawk Owls leading the way, Andaman Cuckoo Dove, great looks at Andaman Crake, plus all the others with the title 'Andaman' (with the fairly predictable exception of the Woodpigeon!) and a rich suite of other birds such as Long-tailed Parakeets and Mangrove Whistler. In Southern India we birded our way from the Nilgiri Hills to the lowland forest of Kerala finding Painted and Jungle Bush

Quails, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Malabar Flameback, Malabar Trogons, Malabar Barbet, Blue-winged Parakeet, Grey-fronted Green Pigeons, Nilgiri Woodpigeon, Indian Pitta, Jerdon's Bushlarks, Malabar Larks, Malabar Woodshrike and Malabar Whistling Thrush, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Black-and-Orange, Nilgiri, Brown-breasted and Rusty-tailed Flycatchers, Nilgiri and White-bellied Blue Robin, Wynaad, Nilgiri and Palani Laughingthrushes, Dark-fronted Babblers, Indian Rufous Babblers, Western Crowned Warbler, Indian Yellow Tit, Indian Blackbird, Hill Swallow, Nilgiri Pipit, White-bellied Minivet, the scarce Yellow-throated and Grey-headed Bulbuls, Flame-throated and Yellow-browed Bulbuls, Nilgiri Flowerpecker, Loten's Sunbird and the stunning endemic White-bellied Treepie. We also found Sri Lanka Bay Owl, a mighty Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, Brown and Mottled Wood Owls, Oriental Scops Owl and Brown Hawk Owls, Sri Lanka Frogmouths, Jungle and Jerdon's Nightjar. Skipping across the straits to Sri Lanka we had a splendid time finding all of the endemics, highlights being Serendib Scops Owl at roost, Crimson-backed and the recently-split Red-backed Flameback, Green-billed Coucals, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Sri Lanka Woodpigeons, Brown-capped Babbler, Spot-winged Ground Thrush, Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes, Red-faced Malkohas and Sri Lanka Scimitar Babblers, the super stealthy Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush, Sri Lanka Blue Magpies, the scarce White-faced Starling, Yellow-eared Bulbul, and a great encounter with a male Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. We also saw Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Small Pratincoles, Great Thick-knees, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Grey-bellied and Jacobin Cuckoo, Blue-faced and Sirkeer Malkohas, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Jerdon's Leafbird, Kashmir Flycatcher, Jungle Prinia, Blyth's Pipits, Forest Wagtails, Black-throated Munias, and the nightbird theme continued with Sri Lanka Frogmouths at roost and Indian Nightjar, Jungle Owlet and the endemic Chestnut-backed Owlet, Indian Scops Owls, Brown Fish Owl and Brown Wood Owl, in fact there were so many Owls on this tour (and almost all seen by day) that we ended up with an incredible 41 individual Owls of 18 species! Overall we recorded 392 species of birds.



Ashy Woodswallow

The first day of our tour took us from Bangalore to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands, however a tardy arrival only allowed time for us to reach the forests by dusk. We were just in time for a flyby by a female Andaman Nightjar, followed by two Hume's Hawk Owl, but Walden's Scops Owls and an Andaman Scops Owl calling from dense thickets would have to wait as just then the heavens opened, and we were forced to retreat to our hotel. The next morning we began early in the same forests at the southern end of South Andaman, where our first birds were a very large flock of Andaman Treepies, Andaman Drongo, Andaman Woodpecker and Freckle-breasted Woodpecker. We also found Black Baza, Andaman Serpent Eagle, and a Crested Serpent Eagle wrestling with a snake it had just caught. We found the endemic White-headed Starling and

Andaman Bulbul, together with Asian Fairy Bluebirds feasting in fruiting bushes. Andaman Shama eventually gave itself up, and an Andaman Crane gave some low mooing sounds from the jungle, and we had some reasonable views as it trotted along the forest floor. We also saw Andaman Coucal, and a pair of Andaman Cuckooshrikes was a nice find. The sky grew gloomy and the latter part of the day was lost to heavy rain, curtailing our night birding once again.

On another morning we headed in a different direction, to wetlands that surround the inlet where we soon found Andaman Teal, before heading up a well forested if busy road where we added Andaman Green Pigeons and Andaman Flowerpecker. In roadside mangroves we found an obliging Mangrove Whistler, on some ponds we saw Cotton Pygmy Goose, Grey-headed Swampphen, and some more Andaman Teal. We returned in the afternoon to the south end, and at dusk we had great views of Walden's Scops Owl, followed by an obliging Andaman Hawk Owl, and finally an Andaman Scops Owl, a swift hat trick of birds we had missed due to rain on the previous two evenings.

Continuing our search for the remaining endemics we enjoyed more views of Andaman Green Pigeons, plus Alexandrine Parakeets, Asian Brown Flycatcher, and slaked our thirst with sweet coconut juice. In the afternoon we birded around the rich wetlands, finding Curlew Sandpipers, Lesser Sandpipers, Yellow Bitterns, Eastern Yellow Wagtails and Red-throated Pipits, several Oriental Reed Warblers, plus Cotton Pygmy Goose, Grey-headed Swampphens, Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea Eagle. At nightfall we were very lucky to find the often elusive Andaman Masked Owl, sitting in a palm tree in a busy part of town, all quite surreal.



Andaman Masked Owl



Walden's Scops Owl

Crossing the bay on the early ferry, we jeeped up to a splendid patch of forest where we soon found Oriental Dollarbird and Andaman Cuckooshrike to kick things off. A noisy pair of Andaman Crakes on the forest floor was thrilling, then we had some nice views of our penultimate target, Andaman Cuckoo Dove. We added Arctic and Two-barred Greenish Warbler, Orange-headed Thrush and *andamana* Large Cuckooshrike. Other birds seen in our last hours on the island included Andaman Woodpecker, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Andaman Flowerpecker, plus Forest Wagtail and Andaman Coucal feeding on a rubbish tip. We headed back across the bay, picking up Terek Sandpiper and Greater Sandplover along the way, then it was time to leave our well-appointed hotel, say goodbye to our capable local guide Mr Ram Vikas, and fly back to Bangalore for the next part of the adventure. Here Satheesh, (a.k.a. 'S.K.') our guide for the next leg of our journey, joined us.

We crossed Bangalore city before it properly woke up, and made our first stop at a rocky hill near Ramanagara. Birds were in evidence immediately on our arrival, and we soon found our target of Yellow-throated Bulbul. Also here were White-browed Bulbul, Indian Robin, White-cheeked Barbet, Purple-rumped and Purple Sunbird and Blyth's Reed Warbler, Dusky Crag Martins, Red-rumped Swallow, Red Avadavats, Yellow-eyed Babblers, Long-tailed Shrike, Indian Bushlark, plus a trio of Jungle Bush Quails were flushed from the grass. We then continued south-westwards, stopping at Ranganthitoo on the Cauvery river where we took a short boat ride around islands. Here Spot-billed Pelicans and Indian Cormorants were nesting,

plus Asian Openbill, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-headed Ibis, Great Thick-knee and a Booted Eagle, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher and White-spotted Fantail lurked in the bamboo, and there were several Muggers loafing about. A relaxing lunch by the river produced River Tern, Wire-tailed Swallow and White-browed Wagtail, then along the roadsides we found some handsome Red-naped Ibis, and a couple of Asian Elephants as we passed through Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Arriving at Jungle Hut in the late afternoon, we managed to see Indian Pitta and Jerdon's Nightjar before night fell.

We woke to rain and low cloud the next morning, yet ever hopeful we headed out in the drizzle, hoping it would improve. Bird activity was good and we found many species in the open scrubby woodland here, with Plum-headed Parakeets, Common Woodshrike, White-browed and White-spotted Fantails, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Brown-capped Pygmy and Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Crested Hawk Eagle, White-bellied Drongo, Common Hawk Cuckoo. We were forced to adapt our plans as there had been recent Elephant trouble here, so we drove slowly along a road through the scrub and were fortunate enough to find a pair of White-bellied Minivets from the vehicle. Around our hotel grounds we found Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, Indian Blue Robin, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Indian Nuthatch and Indian Scimitar Babbler. In more open country we found Jerdon's Bushlark, Jungle Bush Quail, a friendly Jacobin Cuckoo, some fine Malabar Larks and after it got dark we had fantastic views of Jungle Nightjars, with a male sat on a rock at close range.



Painted Bush Quail male

The next morning the rain had abated by dawn, and our next foray was a jeep ride up the steep escarpment of the Nilgiri hills. Not far from our lodgings we had a great surprise, when we happened upon a pack of Dhole that had just killed a Spotted Deer and were in a busy swarm of russet, their heads poking up to keep an eye on us as they took their breakfast, retreating from the roadside from the road with bite-sized chunks of venison in their jaws. What a beautiful animal! Heading onwards and upwards, at around 2000m we scoured the gullied hillside for some vocal Painted Bushquails but after an hour had only been rewarded with a glimpse. Trying another site a short way down the road, we rewarded with stunning views of a trio of Bushquails, a pair with a juvenile stood on a rock preening. Also we had nice looks at a patrolling Black Eagle, and an unexpected Nilgiri Pipit appeared on the rocky hillside. Returning to the lower scrub jungle around our lodge, we found soaring White-rumped Vultures (remember them?), Bonelli's Eagles, Woolly-necked Stork, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Crested Treeswift, Indian Swiftlet, and at our lodge itself we found a

pair of Red Spurfowl, Indian Pitta, Bronzed Drongo and Lesser Yellownappe. After leaving this wonderful lodge we headed back up the hill, and spent a comical couple of hours at a popular tourist site among the crowds and souvenir stalls, where Nilgiri Laughingthrushes, Indian Blackbirds and Cinereous Tits darted in and out of the rubbish, and numerous Nilgiri Woodpigeons were close enough to allow selfies!

In the garden of one of the many Ooty hotels we found two confiding Nilgiri Blue Robins, plus Ashy Prinia, and a spanking Black-and-Orange Flycatcher. We spent the rest of the morning in scrappy habitat, however we found Western Crowned and Tickell's Leaf Warblers, more Nilgiri Laughingthrushes, another Nilgiri Blue Robin and a Nilgiri Flycatcher. The afternoons are always quieter but we added Nilgiri Flowerpecker and Blue-capped Rock Thrush, and had nice views of Nilgiri Langurs.

The next day we faced a long and circuitous journey to Munnar, that took us towards the Kerala coast before heading back inland and uphill, the result of closures of the mountain roads after damage by heavy rain. A fine lunch was enjoyed at a hotel on the way, then we spent a while exploring a nice patch of forest in the lowlands where we found Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Rusty-tailed Flycatcher, Green Warblers, Crested Honey Buzzard and Crimson-backed Sunbird. We made another stop nearer to Munnar where Southern Hill Mynas were noisy and obvious, but the rain returned and headed to Munnar and our lodgings.



Palani Laughingthrush

More rain damage was in evidence here, and a bridge on the road to Eravikulam NP had been washed out, so we crossed on foot and boarded jeeps to where we would board a shuttle bus up to the high areas. We managed to find a White-bellied Blue Robin by the bus park, then rushing to be first to the top we found it to be atypically quiet, and we watched Malabar Whistling Thrush, Palani Laughingthrushes and Indian Blackbird feeding in a shady corner. Walking up the track to the grassy slopes, Nilgiri Tahr were only visible on the very top of the high ridge above us, yet the Nilgiri Pipits showed really well at close range adjacent to the path, the reverse of the usual scenario! Returning to the lower valley, we paused at a pocket of forest by the road and saw Indian Black-lored Tit, Orange Minivet and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, before returning to town. The afternoon was best forgotten, with accidents, thick fog and roadwork delays conspiring to provide no birds at all!

Leaving our Munnar hotel with its loud dawn chorus of Malabar Whistling Thrushes, we headed down the road towards our next stop, Periyar. A few roadside stops yielded more Palani Laughingthrush, our first Brown-breasted Flycatcher, a male Indian Blue Robin and a great view of a White-bellied Blue Robin that posed perfectly. Continuing on our way we found roadside Rufous Babblers and Crested Serpent Eagles, and on arrival we took a jungle trek with local guides, and enjoyed a splendid afternoons birding where we found roosting Oriental Scops, Indian Scops and Brown Hawk Owls, Jungle Owlet of the rusty *malabaricum* race, Malabar Parakeets, Jerdon's Leafbird, Loten's Sunbird, Malabar Trogon, Malabar Flameback, Dark-fronted Babbler, Malabar Woodshrike, Malabar Barbet and Malabar Grey Hornbill.

In a different area of Periyar we crossed the lake on a shaky bamboo raft then walked with local guides through tall forest, finding a flock of Black Baza, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Woolly-necked Stork, a flowering tree full of Malabar Starlings, Malabar Trogon, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Malabar Grey Hornbill and White-bellied Treepie. Best of all however was yet another pack of Dhole, which had just killed a Sambhar on the lakeshore. We watched from fairly close range as the dogs took turns to approach the carcass, trying to rip chunks off of it. Stunning views! In the afternoon we walked on different trails and found busy bird activity, with one tree having a strange gathering of at least 28 Malabar Barbets, plus we saw Rufous Woodpecker Flame-throated Bulbul, Grey-fronted Green Pigeon and Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo. Eventually we managed to track down our primary target here, the elusive Wynaad Laughingthrush. A tough bird to find, especially when they sit in the middle of a thicket having a nap! With a little tactical encirclement, at least 15 birds were impelled to move, shooting through the bamboo and streaming across the path in front of us.



Indian Scops Owl

A final walk in the forest at Periyar was misty with threatening clouds, but the Oriental Scops Owls were still sat in the same place, and the trees were filled with Malabar Barbets, Grey-fronted Green Pigeons, Malabar Starlings and an Indian Golden Oriole, beneath a busy swarm of Indian Swiftlets. In the forest we found White-bellied Blue Flycatcher with a pair lurking in the darkest of thickets, and we stumbled upon a small group of Gaur feeding quietly in the woods. Leaving this splendid National Park we drove across the Kerala foothills to reach our rustic accommodation at Thattekad, surrounded by ponds and forest. After dark, led by

our local guide Danish, we headed to a patch of forest where we quickly came upon a calling Sri Lanka Bay Owl. Seeing it required persistence, however it was in an area of quite open woodland and after some time we were rewarded with a great view of it, peering back at us as it clung to a vertical trunk. Hurrah! Lifer for the leader.

Crossing the Periyar River where Ashy Woodswallows lined the wires in a huddle, we explored a very rich area of humid lowland forest. From a rocky clearing we watched numerous birds at the forest edge including Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Flame-throated Bulbul, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Indian Golden Oriole, then down in the valley we saw a splendid pair of Sri Lanka Frogmouth roosting back to back. Moving to another area we found shy Grey-headed Bulebuls, a male Blue-throated Flycatcher, two roosting Brown Wood Owls and a roosting Mottled Wood Owl. After nightfall we made a final foray where we saw a stupendous Spot-bellied Eagle Owl sat high in a tree, although he was shy of the light and didn't stay for long.

The next day, those leaving the tour here were waved off in the pre-dawn darkness, when the bus took them the short distance to the airport. Those of us remaining birded the woodland close to our hotel, where we had additional views of Grey-headed Bulbul, Jungle Owlet, Crimson-backed Sunbird, Brown-breasted Flycatcher and Large-billed Leaf Warbler. We made the leisurely drive to Cochin Airport, pausing for an excellent Malabar lunch before saying goodbye to Satheesh. We flew the short way to Colombo in Sri Lanka and the next leg of our adventure, where we met Saman, yet another excellent guide. Arriving late at our accommodation close to Sinharaja Forest Reserve, we had a short night before the next day of thrills.



Serendib Scops Owl

We drove pre-dawn down a bumpy track to where a small house sat in the forest, and positioned ourselves inside it, looking out onto the yard. Spot-winged Thrushes appeared (our first endemic) a Slaty-legged Crake showed well, followed soon after by a pair of the much-wanted Sri Lanka Spurfowl that foraged in the gloom. We also were treated to good views of endemic Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes and Orange-billed Babblers. Nearby we added Chestnut-backed Owlet and Green-billed Coucal, then after some breakfast we were led

up a steep overgrown slope to view a roosting Serendib Scops Owl, sat quite openly and giving us great views. It sounds so easy, but a dedicated local guide had been out before dawn in order to follow the Owl to where it was going to roost, but even once it was light it would have been like finding a needle in a haystack. His efforts were much appreciated! A few more endemics before lunch included Sri Lanka Swallow, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, plus a soaring Legge's Hawk Eagle, Crested Hawk Eagle and Brown Shrike. After midday we ascended the slope to the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, collecting Yellow-fronted and Brown-headed Barbets en route. Up in the forest we saw another roosting Sri Lanka Frogmouth, and a pair of Red-faced Malkoha surprised us to end the day on 19 endemics, not bad for a first day in the country!

Our second day was quite different! We began well with a good look at the scarce White-faced Starling, plus Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Legge's Flowerpecker, and a gorgeous white male Indian Paradise Flycatcher. We then entered the forest reserve proper, and began our hunt for Sri Lanka Thrush. Several hours later we had seen little more than a flight view, and then the heavens opened...

We returned to the forest reserve once more, in search of the elusive Sri Lanka Thrush. In contrast to the previous day, we soon found two lurking near the path, although just flight views and a hind view as they hopped away into the undergrowth was the best on offer. Further on down the trail however we ran into another (with the essential assistance of our local guides who could *actually* hear the high pitched call note!) which then showed well, feeding along a dark and muddy streambed, yet still barely discernible from the dirt it was flicking around! Returning along the trail we saw Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Crimson-backed Flameback, Malabar Trogon, a brief view of yet another Sri Lanka Thrush (to make four for the day!), Black-capped Bulbul and Pale-billed Flowerpecker. Then it was time to pack up and head to our next destination, a three-hour drive on windy narrow roads to Uda Walawe. We spent a pleasant afternoon birding around the lakeshore and scrub where we saw White-bellied Sea Eagle, Booted Eagles, Sri Lanka Swallows, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Jungle Prinia, Yellow-eyed Babblers, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Indian Thick-knee, Grey-headed Wagtails, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, Painted Stork, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, and at dusk we had a great view of Indian Nightjar perched and in flight.



Ashy-headed Laughingthrush



Jacobin Cuckoo

A rather easy day followed, starting with a morning jeep safari around Udawalawe National Park. Unfortunately a very popular tourist pastime now, the number of jeeps cruising the tracks was staggering. The birds still obliged however, and we saw Blyth's Pipits, Jerdon's Bushlarks, Grey-breasted, Plain and Jungle Prinias, Tawny-bellied Babblers, Blue-faced and Sirkeer Malkohas, Jacobin and Grey-bellied Cuckoos, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Baya Weavers at their nests, White-browed Fantail, Hume's Whitethroat, Rosy Starlings, and a surprise thrill of Marshall's Iora. In addition were many glorious Indian Peafowl, Golden Jackal and a handful of Asian Elephants. After lunch we drove the relatively short distance to Bundala National Park for another jeep safari, where waterbirds and waders abounded. We found Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, Marsh Sandpipers, Kentish, Common and Little Ringed, Greater and Lesser Sandplovers, Great and Indian Thick-knees, Small Pratincole, Eurasian Spoonbills, Lesser and Greater Crested, Caspian and

Little Terns, Pintailed Snipe, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Indian Reed Warblers, a murmuration of Rosy Starlings, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks, Tricoloured Munias, Ruddy Mongoose and Tufted Grey Langurs.

Near to our hotel in Tissa we explored the area around one of the reservoirs, where we found Yellow Bittern, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, and some local youths showed us roosting Brown Fish Owl, two Indian Scops Owls and a Jungle Owlet. Pushing on to the mountains, we paused at the Surrey Estate where we saw a roosting Brown Wood Owl, plus Loten's Sunbird and a friendly pair of endemic Brown-capped Babblers, then closer to Nuwara Eliya we saw Sri Lanka White-eye. At dusk we waited in a stream gully at the roadside, and had great views of a male Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush that popped out into the open. We checked in to a rather nice boutique hotel for the night, at 1900m somewhat cooler than our previous lodgings.

We headed up towards Horton Plains National Park, on the way making stops at the roadside where there was a gathering of Sri Lanka Woodpigeons, perched up in roadside trees. Nearby we happened upon a spanking male Kashmir Flycatcher, had good looks at Dull-blue Flycatcher, and along the road we found a trio of Crimson-backed Flamebacks. Entering the park proper, we found endemic Yellow-eared Bulbuls and Sri Lanka White-eyes, had great views of four Sri Lanka Bush Warblers, plus Large-billed Leaf Warblers and Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike. We timed it well, as on our return the cloud rolled in and it started raining, but not before we had seen a fine male Indian Blue Robin. Back in town we visited the Victoria Park for the afternoon, where we found another male Kashmir Flycatcher, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, more Sri Lanka White-eyes, and eventually found our main quarry of Pied Thrush, with three males lurking under a bush, and a Slaty-legged Crake was also glimpsed. Just around the corner we found a Pied Thrush male, sitting in the open on the shore of the stream, and after many minutes of viewing he flew up into one of the tall trees - followed by a total of seven other Pied Thrushes that came out of the bushes! Still time for one more good bird before it got dark, an Indian Pitta hopped around in a dark corner.



Kashmir Flycatcher



Dull-blue Flycatcher

Despite persistent rain, a pre-breakfast return to Victoria Park managed to produce views of six Pied Thrushes, and a confiding Forest Wagtail. We continued to Kitulgala, back into the wet zone lowlands, where a productive afternoon was spent on the valley slopes among rubber trees and tea plantations. Here we found our penultimate endemic, Crimson-fronted Barbet, also several Crested Honey Buzzards, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrots, Layard's Parakeets, Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, White-rumped and Scaly-breasted Munias, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Jungle Prinia, Orange-billed and Yellow-billed Babblers, and the very last bird of the day was the last endemic that we needed (and also the last endemic to be split), a fine male Red-backed Flameback. Bingo!

A rather leisurely day followed, and we revisited some the endemic birds that we had seen previously. Down on the riverbank in the early morning we had a good view of a Chestnut-backed Owlet and Brown-backed Needletails drinking from the river, and crossing to the Makandawa forest on the other side we saw Legge's Flowerpecker, Jerdon's Leafbird and Malabar Trogon. We were greedy for seconds of Serendib Scops Owl,

however the roosting bird could not be found, with obvious disturbance by people around the regular roost places likely to have contributed to it moving elsewhere. With just one pair known at this site, the pressures are obvious.

Among the gardens and secondary woodland that line the riversides, in the afternoon we found Tawny-bellied Babblers, Black-capped and Yellow-browed Bulbuls, Southern Hill Mynas, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbills, some stunning Red-backed Flamebacks, Stork-billed Kingfisher and two Banded Bay Cuckoos singing from the same dead tree, while in the early morning the misty landscape was alive with song and we saw confiding Brown-capped Babblers, a shy Green-billed Coucal keeping the company of Greater Coucal, and a White-browed Bulbul with a fledged juvenile. Later we made the journey to the old capital of Kandy, and after settling in to our well-appointed hotel we visited the Udawattakale Sanctuary, a grove of forest right in the city. We found more Brown-capped Babblers, Forest Wagtail, White-rumped Shama, some showy Sri Lanka Scimitar Babblers, Black-naped Monarchs, Indian Paradise Flycatchers, and a jewel of an Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher.

After an early morning pilgrimage to the Temple of the Tooth, we made the journey from Kandy to the airport. So ended our three-part odyssey across South Asia, so rich in endemic birds, in some great landscapes and all fuelled by some excellent cuisine. Its a real pleasure to travel in this part of the world, and special thanks should go to our local staff for their help in making this such a great trip; Mr Vikas in Port Blair, 'S.K.' Sattesh in Kerala, and Saman in Sri Lanka.



Fungi at Periyar



Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Thattekad

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

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

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

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

BIRDS

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* seen on all three sections of the tour, big number near Thattekad.

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* A few seen at Sippighat on South Andaman.

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* A small number seen in southern India.

Andaman Teal ◊ *Anas albogularis* At least a dozen seen on South Andaman wetlands.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* (H) Heard at Jungle Hut.

Jungle Bush Quail ◊ *Perdicula asiatica* Three flushed at Ramnagara, another trio at Jungle Hut.

Painted Bush Quail ◊ *Perdicula erythrorhyncha* Wonderful views of a pair with a juvenile near Ooty.

Red Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix spadicea* A pair lurking under bamboo at Jungle Hut.

Sri Lanka Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix bicalcarata* A great look at a pair at Sinharaja, plus a pair in the forest there.

Grey Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus sonneratii* Such a handsome bird, seen at various sites in southern India

Sri Lanka Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus lafayetii* Seen at various sites, tame at Sinharaja!

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* A few seen around Mudumalai, plentiful in dry zone Sri Lanka.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A small number seen in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* Seen at Ranganthittoo and in the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* Scattered sightings in southern India and Sri Lanka.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Seen at Jungle Hut and Periyar, and also Sri Lanka.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Seen at Ranganthittoo and in the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Red-naped Ibis ♦ *Pseudibis papillosa* Several along the road from Mysore to Mudumalai, with good looks at a pair.



Red-naped Ibis



Asian Openbill

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Seen at Ranganthittoo and in the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* Several seen on South Andaman, a single at Tissa on Sri Lanka.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* A single seen on South Andaman.

Black Bittern ♦ *Dupetor flavicollis* Two seen at Bundala on Sri Lanka.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Occasional sightings along our route.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A few on the Andamans, a single at Ranganthittoo.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* A 'daily bird' in India and Sri Lanka.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* A few on South Andaman assumed to be this species.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Commonly available.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Not uncommon on the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A few seen on the Sri Lankan wetlands.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Frequent sightings along our route.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* Frequent sightings along our route.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Frequent sightings along our route.

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra* A few nice examples seen on South Andaman.

Spot-billed Pelican ♦ *Pelecanus philippensis* Superb examples at Ranganthittoo, also seen on Sri Lanka.

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* Frequent sightings along our route.

Indian Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Nice looks at Ranganthittoo, many at some Sri Lankan wetlands.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* A few sightings along the way.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* a few seen in suitable habitats.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Just one seen, at Bundala in Sri Lanka.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Some in Karnataka, also in Sri Lanka.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Several singles in S. India, six at Kitulgala.

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* A single at Chiriyatappu, small flocks in the forests at Periyar and Thattekad.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* Two or more soaring near Jungle Hut were a rare sight.

Indian Vulture ♦ *Gyps indicus* One sat on a nest at the Vulture Sanctuary at Ramnagara.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* One *davisoni* seen on the Andamans, several on other sectors of the tour.

Andaman Serpent Eagle ♦ *Spilornis elgini* Two or three seen in the forest at Chiriyatappu.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus [cirrhatus] limnaeetus* One at Chiriyatappu, two at Kalathang.

Crested Hawk-Eagle ♦ *Nisaetus [cirrhatus] cirrhatus* Seen at Jungle Hut and in Sri Lanka.

Legge's Hawk-Eagle ♦ *Nisaetus kelaarti* A single of these huge fellows soaring at Sinharaja.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Good views of a couple in southern India.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* Singles at Ranganthittoo and Ooty, also at Udawalawe.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* Two seen near Jungle Hut.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Splendid close views of a confiding bird at Doddabetta.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* A couple of singles along our route.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* A single at Jungle Hut.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* One seen at Ramnagara.
Black Kite *Milvus [migrans] govinda* Numerous in Karnataka, a few elsewhere.
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* A scattering of sightings around our route.
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Several seen on South Andaman, several more in Sri Lanka.
Grey-headed Fish Eagle ♦ *Haliaeetus ichthyaetus* A single sitting in a tree at Tissa on Sri Lanka.
Himalayan Buzzard ♦ *Buteo burmanicus* Just one seen, near Munnar.



Indian Vulture



White-rumped Vulture

Andaman Crake ♦ *Rallina canningi* A great pair at Chiriyatappu, another friendly and vocal duo at Kalathang.
Slaty-legged Crake ♦ *Rallina eurizonoides* A good view at Sinharaja, another at Victoria Park.
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Seen in suitable habitat in various places.
Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* A couple seen on South Andaman.
Grey-headed Swampfen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Seen on wetlands on all three sections of the tour.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Numerous on the Andamans, a couple more in Sri Lanka.
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Some seen on roadside wetlands near Coimbatore.
Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* Several seen at Udawalawe and Bundala in Sri Lanka.
Indian Stone-curlew ♦ *Burhinus indicus* Ten together by the lake at Udawalawe.
Great Stone-curlew ♦ *Esacus recurvirostris* One at Ranganthittoo, many at Bundala in Sri Lanka.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Numerous on Sri Lankan coastal wetlands.
Yellow-wattled Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus malabaricus* Several seen around Udawalawe and Bundala.
Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* Not uncommon in typical habitat in Sri Lanka.
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* In number on South Andaman and at Bundala.
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Some at Bundala.
Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A couple seen at Bundala,
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A single bird seen at Bundala.
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Only seen at Bundala where they were numerous.
Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius [mongolus] atrifrons* Good numbers at Bundala, also seen at Sippighat.
Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* A small number identified at both Sippighat and Bundala.
Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* A few distantly ay Coimbatore, several more in Sri Lanka.
Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* A couple on a roadside tank in Kerala.
Whimbrel *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Not uncommon in tidal habitats on the Andamans, a single at Bundala.
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* A single at Sippighat.
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Hundreds at Bundala.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* At least eight at Bundala.
Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Also at Bundala, five at least.
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Small flocks at Sippighat and Bundala.
Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Hundreds seen at Bundala.
Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* Good views at Periyar, also seen on South Andaman and Sri Lanka.
Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* A single at Port Blair.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Seen on the Andamans and Sri Lanka in suitable habitats.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A few seen on freshwater habitats in South India and Sri Lanka.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Seen in suitable habitat in the Andamans and Sri Lanka.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* A good number at Bundala.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A small number seen at Udawalawe and Bundala.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Two at Bundala.
Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* At least ten of these cuties at Bundala.
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* A few seen at Udawalawe and Bundala..
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* A sizable flock at Bundala.
Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Fifteen seen with the above at Bundala.
Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* Two seen with the above at Bundala.
River Tern *Sterna aurantia* One seen on the Cauveri river at Srirangapatna.
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Seen on South Andaman and Sri Lanka.
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Numerous on the Sri Lankan coastal wetlands.
White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* A small number seen with the above in Sri Lanka.
Rock Dove *Columba livia* Feral Pigeon available.



Nilgiri Wood Pigeon

Nilgiri Wood Pigeon ♦ *Columba elphinstonii* Superb close looks at many at Ooty.
Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon ♦ *Columba torringtoniae* A minimum of sixteen perched birds on the way to Horton Plains.
Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* Six in a tree at Thattekad, local race *erythrocephala*.
Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* A few at Jungle Hut in the rain.
Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Not uncommon on South Andaman.
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* Commonly available.
Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Only seen in the dry country between Bangalore and Ooty.
Andaman Cuckoo-Dove ♦ *Macropygia rufipennis* Two seen at Kalathang on our last morning were well received.
Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* Seen in forest on all three sections of the tour.
Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicinctus* Numerous around Udawalawe.
Sri Lanka Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron pompadora* Several seen at Sinharaja and Kitulgala.
Grey-fronted Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron affinis* Quite a few sightings at Periyar and Thattekad.

Andaman Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron chloropterus* Found in good number at Chiriyatappu.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea* Common and numerous on South Andaman, also in Sri Lankan forests.

Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia* Some small flocks seen flying around Periyar.

Green-billed Coucal ♦ *Centropus chlororhynchus* Nice views on our first morning in Sri Lanka.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* This refers to 'Southern' Coucal, found from Periyar southwards.

Andaman Coucal ♦ *Centropus andamanensis* Several nice sightings on South Andaman.

Sirkeer Malkoha ♦ *Taccocua leschenaultii* Great views of a pair at Udawalawe.

Red-faced Malkoha ♦ *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* Just seen once at Sinharaja, a pair in a mixed flock.

Blue-faced Malkoha ♦ *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris* Good views of one at Udawalawe.

Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied C) *Clamator jacobinus* A tame bird at Jungle Hut, several more at Udawalawe.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Some seen and heard on S. Andaman and on Sri Lanka.

Violet Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* (H) Heard on a couple of days at Chiriyatappu.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii* Two males singing from the same dead tree at Kitulgala.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo ♦ *Cacomantis passerinus* A few seen around Udawalawe.

Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo ♦ *Surniculus dicruroides* One seen at Periyar.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* A couple seen at Jungle Hut, a single at Kitulgala.

Andaman Masked Owl ♦ *Tyto deroepstorffi* Great looks at one in Port Blair, sat in a palm, hunting around paddies.

Sri Lanka Bay Owl ♦ *Phodilus assimilis* Hurrah! Finally, on my list! See note.

Serendib Scops Owl ♦ *Otus thilohoffmanni* Superb views at roost at Sinharaja. See note.

Andaman Scops Owl ♦ *Otus balli* One calling bird seen well at Chiriyatappu.

Indian Scops Owl ♦ *Otus bakkamoena* One in daytime at Periyar, a pair in a garden at Tissa in Sri Lanka.

Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* Two at roost on three consecutive days at Periyar.

Walden's Scops Owl ♦ *Otus [sunia] modestus* One seen very well at Chiriyatappu, many heard.

Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl ♦ *Bubo nipalensis* A good look at Thattekad of this great Owl sat in a tall tree.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* A single at roost at Tissa in Sri Lanka.



Mottled Wood Owl



Brown Wood Owl

Mottled Wood Owl ♦ *Strix ocellata* A handsome example at roost near Thattekad.

Brown Wood Owl ♦ *Strix leptogrammica* Great views at Thattekad, another seen in the Sri Lankan hills.

Jungle Owlet ♦ *Glaucidium radiatum* Several examples of *malabaricum* at Periyar and Thattekad, a single at Tissa.

Chestnut-backed Owlet ♦ *Glaucidium castanotum* One on our first morning at Sinharaja, another at Kitulgala.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* Just four seen, around Jungle Hut.

Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* Two seen at roost high in a tree at Periyar.

Hume's Hawk-Owl ♦ *Ninox obscura* Two seen on our first night on the Andamans, before the rain...

Andaman Hawk-Owl ♦ *Ninox affinis* One seen well at Chiriyatappu.

Sri Lanka Frogmouth ♦ *Batrachostomus moniliger* An exquisite pair at Thattekad, a female at Sinharaja.

Jungle Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus indicus* A superb close view of a male at Jungle Hut, one of a pair.

Jerdon's Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus atripennis* A good view of a male at Jungle Hut, a female also present.

Andaman Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus andamanicus* A close view of a female at Chiriyatappu.

Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* Heard at Jungle Hut, great views by torchlight at Udawalawe.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* A few at Mudumalai, also seen in Sri Lanka.
Plume-toed Swiftlet ♦ *Collocalia affinis* Common on South Andaman. See note.
Indian Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus unicolor* Quite widespread in Sri Lanka, also numerous at Periyar..
Edible-nest Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus fuciphagus* A fair number seen on South Andaman.
White-rumped Spinetail ♦ *Zoonavena sylvatica* (NL) Seen at Periyar.
Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* Small groups seen over forest on South Andaman.
Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* A few seen at various points along our route.
Little Swift *Apus affinis* A few widely scattered sightings.



Jungle Nightjar



Malabar Trogon

Malabar Trogon ♦ *Harpactes fasciatus* Several sightings in Kerala and Sri Lanka.
Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* Odd birds seen in southern India and Sri Lanka.
Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* A few seen on the Andamans, also two at Thattekad.
Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* Odd birds seen on each section of our tour.
White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Commonly available.
Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* Nice views of some good examples on South Andaman.
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Odd birds seen on each section of our tour, race *taprobanus* in south India.
Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx [erithaca] erithaca* The last addition to the list, a fine example at Kandy.
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* One at Jungle Hut, several at Bundala.
Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Not uncommon in drier country such as Jungle Hut or coastal Sri Lanka.
Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* Frequent in open country.
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* Odd birds seen in Kerala, also a few in Sri Lanka.
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Singles seen at Ranganthittoo and Jungle Hut.
Malabar Pied Hornbill ♦ *Anthraceroceros coronatus* Some fine beasts seen sat up at Udawalawe.
Malabar Grey Hornbill ♦ *Ocyrceros griseus* Several seen at Periyar and Thattekad.
Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill ♦ *Ocyrceros gingalensis* A few seen well in wet zone Sri Lankan forests
Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyrceros birostris* One seen at Ranganthittoo was a write-in...
Brown-headed Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon zeylanicus* A few sightings in Sri Lanka.
White-cheeked Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon viridis* Widespread and regularly seen in southern India.
Yellow-fronted Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon flavifrons* Quite common and visible in wet zone forests of Sri Lanka.
Crimson-fronted Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon rubricapillus* A good look at one at Kitulgala.
Malabar Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon malabaricus* Many seen at Thattekad and Periyar, including 29+ in one tree!
Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* Seen at Jungle Hut and Udawalawe.
Heart-spotted Woodpecker ♦ *Hemicircus canente* A couple of sightings in the forests of Kerala.
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker ♦ *Yungipicus nanus* Multiples seen at Jungle Hut, Thattekad and Kitulgala.
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker ♦ *Leiopicus mahrattensis* Nice examples at jungle Hut and Udawalawe.
Freckle-breasted Woodpecker ♦ *Dendrocopos analis* Seen on South Andaman with mixed feeding flocks.
Andaman Woodpecker ♦ *Dryocopus hodgei* At least four seen and more heard on South Andaman.
Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* A few examples seen in South India and Sri Lanka.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* Fairly common around Jungle Hut and at Periyar.
Red-backed Flameback ♦ *Dinopium psarodes* The last Sri Lankan endemic, several seen at Kitulgala and Kandy.
Malabar Flameback ♦ *Chrysocolaptes [guttacristatus] socialis* A few seen around Periyar.
Crimson-backed Flameback ♦ *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* Several seen at various localities in Sri Lanka.
White-naped Woodpecker ♦ *Chrysocolaptes festivus* (H) Heard only, at Jungle Hut.
Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus* A vocal bird showed at Periyar.



Heart-spotted Woodpecker



Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A few noted along our route.
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Singles noted at Jungle Hut and Periyar.
Plum-headed Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula cyanocephala* Seen well around Jungle Hut, more fleetingly at other sites.
Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Not uncommon on South Andaman.
Long-tailed Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula longicauda* Several encounters with these smart parrots on South Andaman.
Blue-winged Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula columboides* Quite numerous and showy around Periyar.
Layard's Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula calthrapae* Seen in wet forest at Sinharaja and Kitulgala.
Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* A few seen on South Andaman and also at Udawalawe.
Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Seen at Ramanagara, also in dry zone Sri Lanka.
Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis* Multiple sightings on South Andaman and in South India.
Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot ♦ *Loriculus beryllinus* Quite confiding and frequently noted on the Sri Lanka section.
Indian Pitta ♦ *Pitta brachyura* Good views, at Jungle Hut and at several Sri Lankan localities.
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* A few scattered sightings along our route.
Malabar Woodshrike *Tephrodornis sylvicola* Seen briefly at Periyar, seen well at Thattekad.
Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* A small flock seen at Jungle Hut.
Sri Lanka Woodshrike ♦ *Tephrodornis affinis* Two seen well at Udawalawe.
Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* A cute huddle of 18 birds seen on a wire at Thattekad.
Common lora *Aegithina tiphia* A few seen in South India and Sri Lanka
Marshall's lora ♦ *Aegithina nigrolutea* A nice surprise to find this at Udawalawe, at least three seen.
White-bellied Minivet ♦ *Pericrocotus erythropygius* A handsome pair at the roadside near Jungle Hut.
Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Common in forest on South Andaman, a few at Jungle Hut.
Orange Minivet ♦ *Pericrocotus flammeus* Seen in several places in South India and Sri Lanka.
Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* Seen on South Andaman on a number of occasions.
Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* A pair on South Andaman, race *andamana*, also a single at Periyar.
Andaman Cuckooshrike ♦ *Coracina dobsoni* A pair at Chiriyatappu, another pair at Kalathang.
Black-headed Cuckooshrike ♦ *Lalage melanoptera* Odd birds at Jungle Hut, Thattekad and Kitulgala.
Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala cinerea* A great view of one in roadside mangroves on South Andaman.
Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Common on South Andaman, quite a few seen on Sri Lanka.
Bay-backed Shrike ♦ *Lanius vittatus* Only found at Jungle Hut where quite common.
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Quite a few seen in the Mudumalai area.
Indian Golden Oriole ♦ *Oriolus kundoo* A small number seen around Periyar and Thattekad.
Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Fairly common in forest on South Andaman.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Regular sightings at Periyar and on Sri Lanka.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* A few on South Andaman, more in Karnataka.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Not uncommon in good forest.

White-bellied Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus caerulescens* Common in scrub jungle around Mudumalai, also at Kitulgala.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* A few seen in forest in South India.

Andaman Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus andamanensis* Fairly common in forest on South Andaman.



Sri Lanka Woodshrike



White-bellied Minivet



Marshall's Iora



Cinereous Tit

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Common and visible on the Andamans, also in south India.

Sri Lanka Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus lophorinus* Only seen at Sinharaja.

White-spotted Fantail ♦ *Rhipidura albogularis* Several seen at sites from Bangalore to Ooty.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* Seen in dry country at Jungle Hut and Udawalawe.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* Seen on all three sections of the tour.

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* Some great examples seen. See note.

Sri Lanka Blue Magpie ♦ *Urocissa ornata* Some smart examples seen around Sinharaja.

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

White-bellied Treepie ♦ *Dendrocitta leucogastra* Only seen at Periyar where we found several.

Andaman Treepie ♦ *Dendrocitta bayleii* Some big flocks seen in the Andaman forests.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Common in many places.

Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus leuallantii* Present on the Andamans.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus* Common throughout south India and Sri Lanka.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* A few seen at Ooty and Munnar.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus* Seen in several places in south India, also high up in Sri Lanka.

Indian Black-lored Tit ♦ *Machlolophus aplonotus* A pair seen at Munnar, one more at Periyar.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark ♦ *Eremopterix griseus* Good numbers on the dry areas at Bundala.
Indian Bushlark *Mirafra erythroptera* A single at Ramanagara was notable.
Jerdon's Bush Lark ♦ *Mirafra affinis* Seen at Jungle Hut, more numerous at Udawalawe.
Malabar Lark ♦ *Galerida malabarica* A flock of six seen at Jungle Hut.
Grey-headed Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus priocephalus* We finally found this elusive bird at Thattekad.



Andaman Bulbul



Flame-throated Bulbul

Andaman Bulbul *Pycnonotus fuscoflavescens* Not uncommon in the forests of South Andaman.
Black-capped Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus melanicterus* Multiple encounters in wet zone forests on Sri Lanka.
Flame-throated Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus gularis* Good looks at these nice birds at Periyar and Thattekad.
Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Common and numerous throughout the Andamans and south India.
Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Common in south India and Sri Lanka.
Yellow-throated Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* A pair seen well at Ramanagara.
Yellow-eared Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus penicillatus* Several seen around the Horton Plains and Nuwara Eliya.
White-browed Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus luteolus* Some seen at Ramanagara, another with juvenile at Kitulgala.
Yellow-browed Bulbul ♦ *Acritillas indica* A few in South India, more visible in Sri Lanka.
Square-tailed Bulbul ♦ *Hypsipetes ganeesa* A few around Ooty and Munnar, more visible in Sri Lanka.
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Two seen at Sippighat.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Seen commonly on the Andamans and Sri Lanka, fewer in south India.
Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* A few noted on the Andamans.
Hill Swallow ♦ *Hirundo domicola* Seen at Jungle Hut in the rain, also at Kalhatty, Munnar and Horton Plains.
Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* A couple seen over the Cauveri river at Srirangapatnam.
Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* A few seen over the rocky hills at Ramanagara.
Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Plenty at Mudumalai, Periyar and Thattekad, also seen on south Andaman.
Sri Lanka Swallow ♦ *Cecropis hyperythra* Regular sightings on our circuit.
Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* (H) Heard calling at Ooty.
Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* Good views of multiples at Ooty.
Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Seen on south Andaman.
Green Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus nitidus* Common in the forests of Kerala, fewer in Sri Lanka.
Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* A couple found at Kalathang on South Andaman.
Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Common in places in south India, typically at higher elevations.
Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris* A few seen in Kerala, also in Sri Lanka.
Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* One seen high in big trees at Kalathang on the Andamans.
Western Crowned Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus occipitalis* One seen in Cairnhill Forest at Ooty.
Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* Several popped out of the wet thickets at Sippighat.
Clamorous Reed Warbler ♦ *Acrocephalus [stentoreus] brunnescens* Seen well at Bundala.
Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Regular sightings in south India, numerous at Jungle Hut.
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola* (H) At least one heard at Sippighat on South Andaman.
Sri Lanka Bush Warbler ♦ *Elaphrornis palliseri* Good views of four in the undergrowth at Horton Plains.
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen at Udawalawe.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* A few seen at Udawalawe.

Jungle Prinia ♦ *Prinia sylvatica* Good views at Udawalawe, also in tea plantations at Kitulgala.

Ashy Prinia ♦ *Prinia socialis* Common around Udawalawe, a few noted in south India..

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* A few seen along our route in south India and Sri Lanka.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* A few seen in south India and Sri Lanka.

Indian Scimitar Babbler ♦ *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* Several seen, at Jungle Hut, Munnar and Periyar.

Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler ♦ *Pomatorhinus melanurus* Seen well at Sinharaja and Kandy.

Tawny-bellied Babbler ♦ *Dumetia hyperythra* Nice views at Udawalawe and Kitulgala.

Dark-fronted Babbler ♦ *Rhopocichla atriceps* Seen well at Periyar, a few more in Sri Lanka.

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poioicephala* One seen at Jungle Hut.

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* Some seen at Periyar.

Brown-capped Babbler ♦ *Pellorneum fuscicapillus* Friendly examples at Surrey Estate, Kitulgala, also at Kandy.



Rufous Babbler

Rufous Babbler ♦ *Turdoides subrufa* Excellent views at the roadside near Periyar, more in the forest there.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata* Seen around Periyar and Thattekad.

Orange-billed Babbler ♦ *Turdoides rufescens* A noisy feature of wet zone forests in Sri Lanka.

Yellow-billed Babbler ♦ *Turdoides affinis* Seen in number around Mudumalai, common and visible in Sri Lanka.

Ashy-headed Laughingthrush ♦ *Garrulax cinereifrons* Great looks on our first morning at Sinharaja.

Wynaad Laughingthrush ♦ *Garrulax delesserti* Eventually... It took a lot of effort to find these shy birds! See note.

Nilgiri Laughingthrush ♦ *Montecincla cachinnans* Great looks at these around Ooty.

Palani Laughingthrush ♦ *Montecincla fairbanki* Great looks at these around Munnar. (previously Kerala L'thrush)

Hume's Whitethroat ♦ *Sylvia althaea* A single at Jungle Hut, another at Udawalawe.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* A couple at Ramanagara, more in Sri Lanka at Udawalawe.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* Seen on all three sectors of our tour.

Sri Lanka White-eye ♦ *Zosterops ceylonensis* Nice views of a few of these in the forests around Nuwara Eliya.

Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella* Regular sightings in lowland forest in south India and the Andamans.

Indian Nuthatch ♦ *Sitta castanea* Several seen in the dry forests around Jungle Hut.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* Seen in several places in south India and Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Hill Myna ♦ *Gracula ptilogenys* Just one sighting, at Sinharaja.

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* Seen at one site on South Andaman.

Southern Hill Myna ♦ *Gracula indica* Good numbers from Munnar southwards and also in Sri Lankan forests.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* Not uncommon around Jungle Hut and at Periyar.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* A daily bird away from forest.

White-headed Starling ♦ *Sturnia erythropygia* Several good encounters with birds in flocks on South Andaman.

Malabar Starling ♦ *Sturnia blythii* A few at Mudumalai, good numbers at Periyar and Thattekad.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* Numerous and visible around Jungle Hut, a single at Udawalawe.

White-faced Starling ♦ *Sturnornis albofrontatus* One allowed us a good look in a tall tree at Sinharaja.

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* Hundreds in a swarm at Bundala, also good numbers at Udawalawe.

Pied Thrush ♦ *Geokichla wardii* Eight? You're kidding! Fantastic views of fantastic birds in Victoria Park.

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* Good views at Kalathang, Jungle Hut and Thattekad.

Spot-winged Thrush ♦ *Geokichla spiloptera* A familiar face at Sinharaja, Kitulgala and Kandy, often heard.

Sri Lanka Thrush ♦ (Ceylon Scaly T) *Zoothera imbricata* After a day and a half of trying! See note.

Indian Blackbird ♦ *Turdus simillimus* A couple at Ooty (nominate) and a couple more at Munnar (*bourdilloni*).

Indian Robin *Copsychus fulicatus* Seen in dry country around Jungle Hut, also in Sri Lanka.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Seen throughout.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* A vocal male seen at Kandy.

Andaman Shama ♦ *Copsychus albiventris* Common by voice, allowing a series of glimpses sometimes!

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* A few scattered singles.

Brown-breasted Flycatcher ♦ *Muscicapa muttui* Frequent sightings from Munnar southwards, many at Sinharaja.

White-bellied Blue Flycatcher ♦ *Cyornis pallidipes* A pair in dark forest at Periyar. Near the Gaur.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* Seen regularly in good habitat in south India and Sri Lanka.

Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* A single male at Thattekad.

Dull-blue Flycatcher ♦ *Eumyias sordidus* A few around Horton Plains, nice views of our first.

Nilgiri Flycatcher ♦ *Eumyias albicaudatus* Seen at Ooty and Munnar, plus an unexpected one at Jungle Hut.

Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea* Good views of vocal males at Munnar and Horton Plains.

Nilgiri Blue Robin ♦ *Sholicola major* Great views of two in a hotel garden in Ooty, another in forest there.



Malabar Whistling Thrush



White-bellied Blue Robin

White-bellied Blue Robin ♦ *Sholicola albiventris* A couple of glimpses, then a showy male near Munnar.

Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush ♦ *Myophonus blighi* Rare views of a male by a roaring stream near Nuwara Eliya..

Malabar Whistling Thrush ♦ *Myophonus horsfieldii* Serenading us at Munnar. See note.

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula ruficauda* First seen at Neriamangalam, then more at Periyar.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* A few sightings around Jungle Hut

Kashmir Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula subrubra* Smart males seen at Pattipola and Victoria Park in Sri Lanka.

Black-and-orange Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula nigrorufa* Great close views at Ooty, another at Munnar.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* One at Ramanagara was the only sighting.

Blue-capped Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhyncha* Single males seen at Ooty and near Munnar.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* The only sighting was of one at Sippighat, South Andaman.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata* Not uncommon in higher elevation open country and tea estates.

Jerdon's Leafbird ♦ *Chloropsis jerdoni* Seen well at Periyar, some more in Sri Lanka.
Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* One seen near Thattekad.
Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile* A couple seen zipping about at Udawalawe.
Legge's Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum vincens* A couple of good looks at Sinharaja, also seen at Kitulgala.
Pale-billed Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* Common in Sri Lanka plus a couple seen in Kerala.
Nilgiri Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum concolor* Seen at Ooty, Periyar and Thattekad.
Andaman Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum virescens* Several seen at a couple of sites on South Andaman.
Purple-rumped Sunbird ♦ *Leptocoma zeylonica* Commoner in Sri Lanka, a few seen in southern India.



Loten's Sunbird (Alec Gillespie)



Crimson-backed Sunbird (Alec Gillespie)

Crimson-backed Sunbird ♦ (Small S) *Leptocoma minima* Often hard to find, we saw many around Thattekad.
Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Irregularly scattered sightings along our route.
Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* A few seen on South Andaman.
Loten's Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris lotenius* Some fine examples of this long-billed birds seen in Kerala and Sri Lanka.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Present in typical habitats along our tour route.
Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocolis* Only in the scrub jungle around Jungle Hut, where numerous.
Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* A single seen at Udawalawe.
Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* A busy colony seen at Udawalawe.
Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* A small group at Ramanagara was a nice find.
Indian Silverbill ♦ *Euodice malabarica* A couple of sightings around Jungle Hut.
White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* Seen several time sin Sri Lanka, once in Kerala.
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Seen in Sri Lanka and at Jungle Hut.
Black-throated Munia ♦ *Lonchura kelaarti* A brief sighting at Sinharaja.
Tricolored Munia ♦ *Lonchura malacca* Nice flocks at Bundala.
Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* A couple on the Andamans, great views at Nuwara Eliya.
Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Western Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's W) *Motacilla [flava] beema* One seen at Bundala.
Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi* Numerous in Sri Lankan wetlands.
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* A few seen on South Andaman.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Regular sightings.
White-browed Wagtail ♦ *Motacilla maderaspatensis* A few sightings in south India.
Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Numerous at Bundala, a couple at Horton Plains.
Blyth's Pipit ♦ *Anthus godlewskii* Some nice examples seen well at Udawalawe.
Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Two seen near Jungle Hut.
Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* A couple of nice examples seen at Sippighat on South Andaman.
Nilgiri Pipit ♦ *Anthus nilghiriensis* Crippling views of two by the path at an atypically quiet Rajamalai.
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* One seen at Munnar.



Brown-breasted Flycatcher



Black-and-orange Flycatcher



Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush (Alec Gillespie)



Nilgiri Blue Robin (Alec Gillespie)



Nilgiri Pipit



Blyth's Pipit



A & C Gillespie

Sri Lanka Bay Owl at Thattekad (Alec Gillespie)



Crested Goshawk at Ooty.



Gaur at Periyar



Rafting at Periyar

MAMMALS

Asian Elephant (Indian E) *Elephas maximus* Seen at Jungle Hut and Udawalawe.

Bonnet Macaque *Macaca radiata* Common in places in south India.

Toque Macaque *Macaca sinica* Common in places in Sri Lanka.

Southern Plains Gray Langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri* A few seen in south India.

Tufted Gray Langur *Semnopithecus priam* A few seen in Sri Lanka.

Nilgiri Langur *Trachypithecus johnii* Some good looks at these handsome devils in south India.

Purple-faced Langur *Trachypithecus vetulus* Seen on a number of occasions in Sri Lanka, with mad calls!

Indian Hare (Black-naped H) *Lepus nigricollis* Odd singles seen in both south India and Sri Lanka.

[**Indian Crested Porcupine *Hystrix indica*** An impressive stool at Periyar.]

Common Palm Squirrel (Three-striped P S) *Funambulus palmarum*

Five-striped Palm Squirrel (Northern Palm S) *Funambulus pennantii*

Dusky-striped Squirrel *Funambulus sublineatus* Frequently seen in south India and Sri Lanka.

Indian Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica* Often seen and heard in south India.

Grizzled Giant Squirrel (Grizzled Indian S) *Ratufa macroura* Seen in the highlands of Sri Lanka.

[**Tiger *Panthera tigris*** Fairly fresh prints along a trail at Periyar.]

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* Seen at Jungle Hut.

Indian Brown Mongoose *Herpestes fuscus* A couple seen at Kitulgala.

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii* Four seen at Bundala.

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* Three seen at Udawalawe.

Dhole *Cuon alpinus* Two packs of 7-8 seen, one with Chital prey at Jungle Hut, with Sambhar prey at Periyar.

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* One at Bundala.

Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis* Many at Jungle Hut, a few at Udawalawe.

Northern Red Muntjac *Muntiacus vaginalis* One at Dodabetta, one at Periyar, two at Kandy.

Sambar *Rusa unicolor* Seen at Horton Plains, and at Periyar where it was breakfast for hungry Dhole!

Gaur (Indian Bison) *Bos gaurus* Great looks at a small herd at Periyar.

Nilgiri Tahr *Nilgiritragus hylocrius* Unusually distant this year at Rajamalai.

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* Many at Jungle Hut and Periyar, also in Sri Lanka.

Blyth's Flying Fox *Pteropus melanotus* One or more by a jetty at Port Blair.



Dhole at Periyar (Alec Gillespie)

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). 2018. IOC World Bird Names (v8.2). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Sri Lanka Bay Owl ♦ *Phodilus assimilis* Hurrah! Finally, on my list! After many hours searching at other sites, I was very happy to finally see this rare Owl. It seemed a lot easier to find than its congener, Oriental Bay Owl, however the gentle terrain and open forest helped.

Serendib Scops Owl ♦ *Otus thilohoffmanni* An unexpectedly early score, on our first day in Sri Lanka. A very scarce bird, and without the efforts of Dineshka the Owl hunter, it would have been very hard to find!

Plume-toed Swiftlet *Collocalia affinis* A split out of White-bellied/Glossy Swiftlet.

Malabar Flameback ♦ *Chrysocolaptes [guttacristatus] socialis* Sometimes split, it is separated from Greater Flameback by call among other things, although it is not split by IOC.

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* In Sri Lanka the local *ceylonensis* race is rufous and has a very long crest, several white males seen there would be nominate wintering birds from the peninsula. Some however showed a mix of features...

Wynaad Laughingthrush ♦ *Garrulax delesserti* A really hard bird to find, especially when they sit in the middle of a thicket having a nap! I was especially glad to see these, having missed it on my previous visit. To see such a group (15+) shooting through the bamboo (after a little coaxing from S.K!) was especially pleasing.

Sri Lanka Thrush ♦ (Ceylon Scaly T) *Zoothera imbricata* Another hard bird to get, we spent most of a day creeping around its known haunts, our guides sometimes able to hear its high-pitched call, but the best we could manage was a glimpse in flight. It was one of those inexplicably quiet forest days, so different to the following morning when we saw four individuals, one of which performed very well for us.

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



Tamil Yeoman



Three-spot Grass Yellow