



Dusky Eagle Owl on a nest at Keoladeo Ghana N.P. (all photos by Dave Farrow unless otherwise indicated)

BIRDS AND TIGERS OF NORTHERN INDIA

21 NOVEMBER – 8 DECEMBER 2016

LEADER: DAVE FARROW

This year's 'Birds and Tigers of Northern India' tour was once again a very successful visual feast of avian delights. This tour is full of regional specialities and Indian subcontinent endemics, and among the many highlights were a total of 53 individual Owls seen of 9 species, including Dusky Eagle Owl on a nest, four Tawny Fish Owls and four Brown Fish Owls. We had great fortune with gamebirds, with three Cheer Pheasants plus stunning views of a pair of Koklass Pheasant, plus many Kalij Pheasants, Painted Spurfowl

and Jungle Bush-Quail. We also saw Ibisbill, Red-naped Ibis, Black-necked Stork, Sarus Cranes, Indian, Himalayan and Red-headed Vulture, Pallas's and Lesser Fish Eagles, Brown Crake, Indian and Great Stone-curlew, Yellow-wattled and White-tailed Lapwing, Black-bellied and River Tern, Painted and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, and 15 species of Woodpecker including Great Slaty, Himalayan Pied, White-naped and Himalayan Flameback. We found plenty of Slaty-headed and Plum-headed Parakeet, Black-headed Jay, a Rufous-tailed Lark, Indian Bush Lark, the holy trinity of Nepal, Pygmy and Scaly-bellied Wren-Babblers, plus Brook's Leaf Warbler, Black-faced and Booted Warbler, Black-chinned Babbler, six species of Laughingthrush including Rufous-chinned, Chestnut-bellied and White-tailed Nuthatch, Wallcreeper, Chestnut and Black-throated Thrushes, White-tailed Rubythroat, Golden Bush Robin, dapper Spotted Forktails, Blue-capped Redstart, Variable Wheatear, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Black-breasted Weaver, Altai Accentor, Brown Bullfinch, Blyth's Rosefinch (a write-in), Crested, White-capped and Red-headed Bunting. The mammals, as ever, nearly stole the show, and we had a great encounter with a Tiger at Corbett, while at Ranthambore two Leopard and a Sloth Bear were seen. Also Bengal Fox and Yellow-throated Marten were seen, and Asian Elephants. On the Chambal River we saw Gangetic River Dolphin, and many large Crocodiles in the form of Gharial and Muggers.



Kalij Pheasant male

We began our tour once all had assembled in the lobby of our Delhi hotel, launching ourselves into the Delhi traffic to reach the Sultanpur National Park. We had been forewarned that the park was now closed due to 'bird flu', however we decided to go there anyway and find whatever we could around the outskirts. On reaching the area we found our first Brown Rock Chats, Indian Roller and Ashy Prinias, and in the acacias that we could see well from just outside the perimeter wall we found Spotted Owlets, Large Grey Babblers, Lesser Whitethroat, and a couple of vocal Brook's Leaf Warblers. We also added Greater Coucal, Black Redstart, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Indian Peafowl and Shikra, while overhead we saw soaring Painted

Storks, Crested Honey Buzzard, a Eurasian Spoonbill and Black-headed Ibis. We paused for lunch here then explored some nearby fields where we found Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Crested and Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks, Paddyfield Pipits and Bank Mynas, plus our first Nilgai grazed on the margins of the fields. We then went in search of available waterbodies, and despite the rampant construction we found a very rich swamp alive with Citrine Wagtails, Rosy Pipits, Black-winged Stilts, White-tailed Lapwings, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Common Snipe, Wood Sandpipers, Temminck's and Little Stint, Red-naped and Glossy Ibis, Indian Spot-billed Duck, and a glorious pair of Sarus Cranes that dropped in and gave us a noisy display. As dusk fell we headed back into this impossibly busy city, and headed for the railway station. In the late evening we boarded the train to Ramnagar, settling into our simple bunks and were rocked to sleep as we headed through the night to the foothills of the Himalayas.



Collared Falconet



Crested Kingfisher

Arriving in Ramnagar in the pre-dawn, were met by our local staff and were taken for a tasty breakfast in a nearby hotel. As the light rose over the foothills we began birding an area of dry forest alongside the Kosi River where we explored the environs of a small temple. We saw our first Crested Kingfishers, River Lapwings, Plumbeous and White-capped Redstarts, White-browed Wagtails, and a Wallcreeper feeding out on the shingle islands. We found two Nepal Wren Babblers lurking in the undergrowth, one of which showed very well, and our first busy bird flock was enticed into view with numerous Lemon-rumped Warblers, Yellow-bellied Fantail, Crimson Sunbird, White-throated Fantail, Rufous-bellied Niltava and Grey-breasted Prinia. We scanned from a bridge and found an Ibisbill feeding in the river, and were able to get closer for some great looks as it waded in the shallows in the early morning sunshine. Further up the valley we found Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker and Black-throated Bushtit, then we arrived at our hotel in time for lunch. Near to our lodge we walked down a narrow track where there were many Bar-winged Flycatcher Shrikes, Brown Dipper, and a magnificent pair of Tawny Fish Owls that we found roosting in the riverside trees. Our last birding of the day was along a stream where we enjoyed a small flock containing Himalayan Flamebacks, Black-naped Woodpeckers, a Greater Yellownape, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, Jungle Babblers, boisterous White-crested Laughingthrushes, and we watched Black-chinned Babblers and Slaty-blue Flycatchers coming down to bathe in the shallows. Altogether an excellent start to our tour.

We began the next day in the environs of our hotel, finding Coppersmith Barbet, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and Scarlet Minivet, and along the river we found Striated Heron, Brown Dipper, Black-chinned Babbler and Slaty-blue Flycatcher, plus a group of Eurasian Wild Boar. A Crimson Sunbird fed in the flowering tree in the hotel garden, before we checked out and began travelling to Dhikala, deep within Corbett National Park. We spent several hours birding our way along the forested track, enjoying the comfort that birding from an open-topped jeep affords. We were forbidden to get down from the jeeps except in designated areas, the large footprints in the dust of a passing Tiger being a good indicator why! Along the way we found a Brown Fish Owl, a pair of Tawny Fish Owls, a good number of White-rumped Spinetail, Crested Treeswift, Rufous-bellied

Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Red-headed Vulture, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Ashy Bulbul, a male White-tailed Rubythroat and Lineated Barbet. In the grasslands near our lodge at Dhikala we found Lesser Coucal, Hen Harrier, Siberian Stonechat, a Common Quail and a pair of Red Avadavat on the track, plus several Black-winged Kites. We saw some *real* Asian Elephants in the tall grass, plus some of the bizarre looking and much endangered fish-eating Crocodile, Gharial.



Black-headed Jay

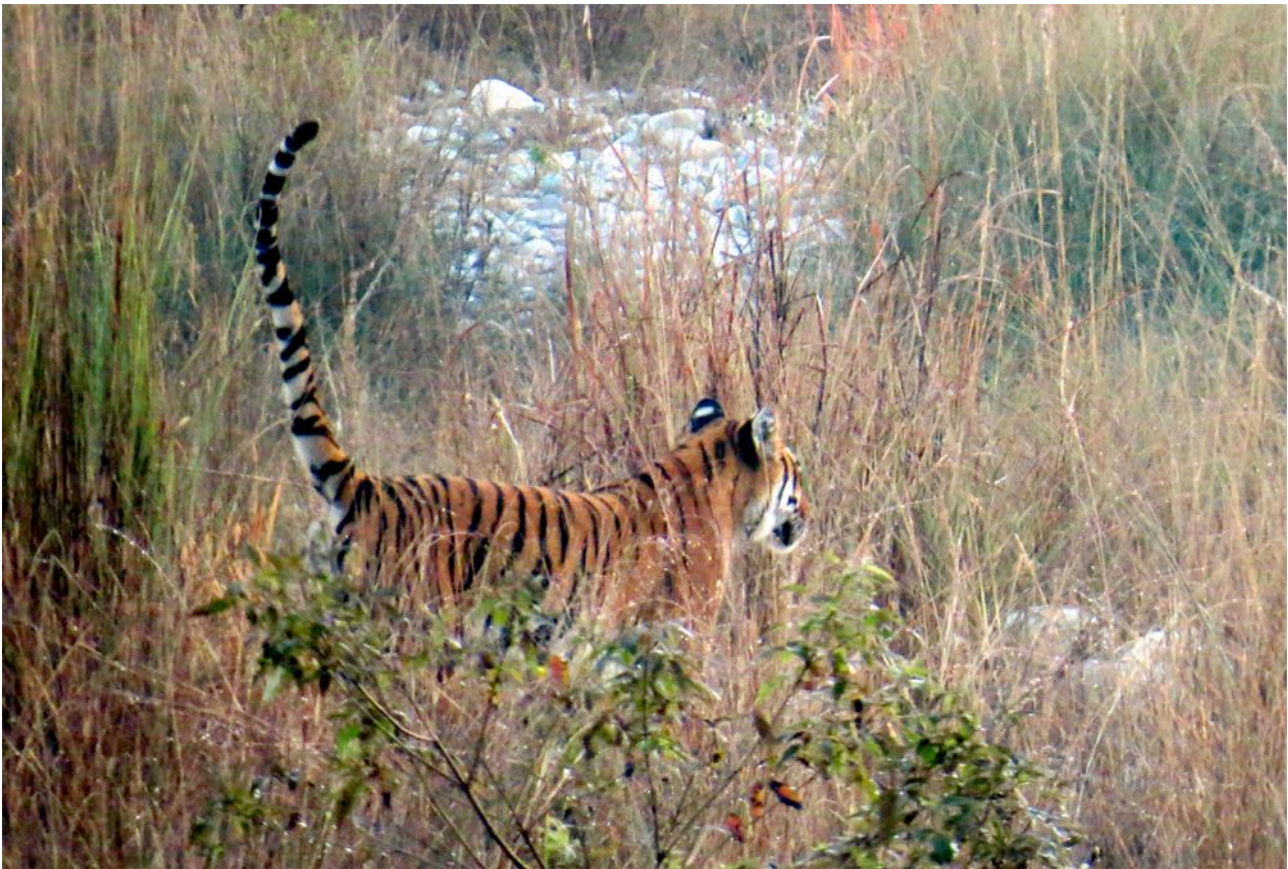


Himalayan Bulbul

We headed out at dawn across the misty grassland, and followed the sandy tracks through the surrounding jungle. Our first birds were perched Changeable Hawk Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle and a Jungle Owlet. After a short while, all hell broke loose when a Tiger skipped across the track (a brief view for the lead vehicle only), and jeeps appeared from everywhere, whizzing up and down where it was thought it would emerge, but after an hour of peering down sections of track, it became clear it wasn't going to perform. We did however see Black-throated Thrush, Lesser Fish Eagle and Long-tailed Minivet while we waited. After some time we returned for breakfast, before returning to the forest, this time finding Kalij Pheasants, Red Junglefowl, some vocal Great Slaty Woodpeckers that sat up on a high snag, another Jungle Owlet, Red-headed Vulture and Collared Falconets, and a furtive Aberrant Bush Warbler, before the enforced halt to jeep operations for the midday period. The birding from the viewing platform at our lodge, overlooking the river plain, was busy with Asian Openbill, Black and Black-necked Storks, Ruddy Shelducks, Gadwall, Eurasian Teal, Little Ringed Plover, Common Greenshank, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Eurasian Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Black-eared Kite, Bonelli's Eagle, Himalayan Buzzard and Western Osprey, River Terns and a couple of Golden Jackals that were hunting in the grass below us. In the afternoon we headed out once more in the jeeps, finding Streak-throated Woodpecker, Plum-headed Parakeets, Common Green Magpie, more Changeable Hawk Eagles, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Western Marsh and Hen Harriers, Common Quail, Greater Short-toed Lark, many Siberian Stonechats, Long-tailed Shrikes and Bright-capped Cisticola.

We were among the first jeeps to get out the next morning, and as we drove along the riverside we suddenly saw a Tiger slinking off into the bushes. We backed up and watched the track, and then saw him walk back across and into the riverside grass. Repositioning ourselves, we found a suitable vantage point overlooking the grassy river plain, and soon enough he came walking through, never looking at us, as he continued on his way, and we watched him until he was lost from view among the yellow tussocks. Wow. A great encounter, much enhanced by the very natural setting. It felt as though we could now relax somewhat, and enjoyed some great views of Crested Kingfisher, a male Crested Bunting, more Black-throated Thrushes, Yellow-eyed Babbler, a vivid male Small Niltava and a roosting Brown Fish Owl. After some breakfast back at Dhikala camp, it was time to head back out to the busy world beyond. Along the track dominated by tall Sal forests we saw Lesser Fish Eagle and Griffon Vultures, and Maroon Oriole and Red-billed Leiothrix

among bird flocks. We exited the park and headed towards our next destination, passing the town of Ramnagar on the Kosi River and climbing into the Himalayas to reach Naini Tal. The birding was rather slow through the afternoon, but we saw Steppe Eagle and Brown-fronted Woodpecker, plus a Himalayan Goral, before reaching our hotel for the next four nights.



Tiger at Corbett

We drove downhill to a slightly lower elevation on the south facing hillsides, and began our birding in the bright morning sunshine around some scrappy field edges where we had a great look at Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes and Black-headed Jays. At another site along a cool river valley we found Spotted Forktail calmly feeding along the waters edge, plus Striated Laughingthrush, and a Pygmy Wren Babbler was lured in for a viewing. Also here we found Black-lored Tit, Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Green-backed Tit, Black-throated Bushtit, Black Bulbul, Slaty-headed Parakeets, and had a fine look at a Chestnut-headed Tesia. From here we headed over to the small lake at Sat Tal, finding Brown-fronted Woodpecker and Orange-barred Leaf Warbler, and along a quiet trail we saw Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, more Spotted Forktails, Striated Heron, Blue-capped Redstart and Himalayan Bluetail. A last check around some bushy margins produced Aberrant Bush Warblers, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Russet Sparrow and two smart Black Francolins. Fog descended on the surrounding hills as evening approached, indicating it was time to head home.

Many great birds were awaiting us in the higher mountains, and we mounted our jeeps in the cold pre-dawn and headed out through the montane forests on a winding mountain road. As the first light filtered through the conifers, we could hear a Koklass Pheasant barking his raucous call from the slope above us. We waited for it to emerge from the gloom, but he boosted himself down slope like a rocket, just leaving us with his wing noise. Some way further up the road we searched grassy slopes that fell away steeply below us, and after a period of scanning we were able to make out a ghostly shape that resolved itself into the form of a male Cheer Pheasant, his long boldly barred tail acting as a marker. After watching it for a while, we noticed two more very cryptic birds alongside it! Whoopee! Cheers everyone, the leader gets a lifer! Also here were Eurasian Crag Martins and a restless flock of Altai Accentor, and as we moved up the forested road we

found busy bird flocks with Brown-fronted and Himalayan Woodpeckers, Spot-winged and Green-backed Tits, Yellow-browed Tits, Black-throated Bushtits, Blue-capped Redstart, White-tailed Nuthatch and Buff-barred Warblers. We also found Maroon Oriole, Rufous Sibias, Black-throated Thrushes, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and Peregrine Falcon. At the forest edge alongside sparse cultivation we saw Streaked Laughingthrushes, a Mistle Thrush, Rock Bunting, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Blue-fronted Redstart, and a surprise 'write-in' of a female Blyth's Rosefinch. Working back towards Naini Tal we found several bird flocks that kept us entertained, while to the left we had the awesome spectacle of the snowy Himalayan peaks all in a row, with Trisul and Nanda Devi some 120km to our north-west. A Brown Shrike was new, and we enjoyed busy flocks of Black-faced Warblers, and in the last hour of light we found Great Barbets in a fruiting bush, a Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, then found Chestnut Thrushes, White-collared and Grey-winged Blackbirds coming down to drink. Another splendid day's birding!



Cheer Pheasant pair



Koklass Pheasant male

Moving back to the south facing side of the mountains once more, around some fields and bushes we found Asian Barred Owlet, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Blue-fronted Redstart, Rock Bunting, Tickell's Leaf Warbler and two parties of Kalij Pheasants on the roadsides. We followed a path into a partly-wooded gully where we made little progress in two hours due to the sheer numbers of birds, many of them very confiding, all actively feeding around us in the morning sun. We teased out a Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler and glimpsed a Golden Bush Robin, found Rufous-chinned, White-throated, Striated and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Blue-winged Minla, White-throated Fantail, Ashy-throated and Orange-barred Leaf Warblers, many Lemon-rumped Warblers, Aberrant and Grey-sided Bush Warblers, Blue-throated and Great Barbets, Greater Yellownape, Brown-fronted and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Nepal House Martins and more Black-throated Thrushes, Yellow-browed Tit, Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Blue-capped Redstart and some flyover Yellow-breasted Greenfinch. Following a newly completed road further down the valley, we found Green-tailed Sunbird, Eurasian Crag Martin, Whiskered Yuhina, dozens of Black-headed Jays along with Eurasian Jays of the race *bispecularis*, and big flocks of Himalayan Black Bulbuls and Slaty-headed Parakeets. Exploring another track further down the road we found another Asian Barred Owlet, and saw two Yellow-throated Martins scampering across a hillside. Returning to the fields where we had begun our day, we had a good view of a Golden Bush Robin and saw Kalij Pheasants going up a tree to roost.

We made a second visit to the higher mountain forests, and at dawn we were parked up and listening to the hoarse call of Koklass Pheasant once again. Once again the bird shot over our heads, (this time we actually glimpsed it) and approaching the place we thought it might be in the jeeps, it briefly appeared on the roadside in front of us before disappearing upslope. We crept forward carefully, and suddenly there was a male Koklass Pheasant sitting on a branch calling in plain view, not 20m from us! We watched this bird for quite some time before we noticed a furtive female with it, and they both provided us with great views as they fed on the slope next to us, before slowly walking uphill and finally out of view. Flushed with success, we

went and ate our packed breakfast by the grassy mountainsides, getting some decent views of Altai Accentors which *finally* landed on the roadside slopes, plus several Rock Buntings, a flock of Alpine Swifts and Striated Prinia. We continued birding the forest roads, finding many familiar birds plus a Grey-winged Blackbird at the drinking place we had discovered two days previously, and a Himalayan Woodpecker. Then it was time to head back, check out, and slowly drive downhill. We found Naini Tal rubbish dump, where dozens of Steppe Eagles were cruising about, we found a pair of magnificent Mountain Hawk Eagles perched below the road, a Long-billed Thrush in a roadside gully, and in the warmer forests at lower elevations we found Bronzed and Hair-crested Drongos, Ashy Bulbul and a Rufous-bellied Niltava. In the evening we bade farewell to Yogi our guide and our team of skilled jeep drivers, boarded our night train to Delhi, and trundled away slowly into the night.



Gharial on the Chambal River

Arriving in Delhi we transferred to a bus which was our transport for the next few days, and headed off down the Yamuna expressway towards Agra. Thick fog shrouded the land and visibility was at about 20 m for the whole journey! Clearly we were going to struggle to see the Taj Mahal in this weather, so we decided to postpone it until the following day and hope for better weather! We headed for our comfortable lodge at Chambal, arriving in time for one of their excellent lunches. As the mornings here were also foggy, after having a look at the roosting Brown Hawk Owl in the hotel grounds we drove down to the Chambal River and took a boat ride on the river. The water was high, and there were no islands for the Skimmers so unfortunately we could not find any, but we had good looks at Black-bellied Tern, plus Bar-headed Geese, Ruddy Shelduck, Lesser Whistling Duck and Great Thick-knees, but the real stars here were the Gharial and Muggers, in good numbers with several of these huge dragons hauled out of the water. A Gangetic River Dolphin popped up in front of our boat, and even did a half breach out of the water.

The morning was again dominated by dense fog, but we managed some close-range roadside birding where in tall grass we found Red Avadavat, Baya and several Black-breasted Weavers. In the ravines area of the Chambal sanctuary we walked through the fog, finding Black Redstart, Common Babbler, Plain and Ashy Prinias, but after a while we gave up and headed back to do some birding around the Lodge. There we found two separate roosting Indian Scops Owl, the same Brown Hawk Owl that we saw yesterday plus Greenish Warbler, Brahminy Starling, Yellow-throated Sparrow, Indian Silverbill, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon and Brown Headed Barbet. We ate an early lunch then drove to Agra, picked up a guide for a tour of the Taj Mahal and set off in the electric bus to the entrance. We enjoyed a clear view, without fog, and enjoyed a very agreeable tour around the great monument. The Yamuna River at the back of the site was full of birds, with Eurasian Spoonbill, Woolly-necked Stork, Marsh, Wood, Green and Common Sandpiper, Spotted and

Common Redshank, many Black-winged Stilts and Great Cormorants, Pied Avocet, Ruff, Egyptian Vulture, Black Kites and some Wire-tailed Swallows. Once we had extracted ourselves, we set off through the fruit-lined streets and onwards to our spacious hotel at Bharatpur.



Bay-backed Shrike

We set out into the Keoladeo Ghana National Park the next morning, and soon were wondering why we hadn't just stayed in bed, as the fog was as thick as ever and we struggling to see anything more than 10m away! We found our first White-eared Bulbuls, Brahminy Starlings and a couple of Common Babblers and some ghostly shapes that were resolved as Grey Francolins. Around wooded areas we found Bluethroats, White-browed Fantail, some dejected looking Indian Grey Hornbills and a quartet of Spotted Owlets, and in darker corners we found Orange-headed and Tickell's Thrushes. We took a boat ride along misty creeks that was very atmospheric, and we even added a few birds such as Booted Eagle and Bay-backed Shrike, plus many Siberian Chiffchaff which were singing away in the fog. Along the bunds and banks we found Eurasian Hoopoe, Indian Robin, Rosy Starling, White-breasted Waterhens, and as the fog lifted a little and the sky brightened we could see Greater Spotted Eagles, Indian Spot-billed Ducks, Gadwall, a couple of Black Bitterns showed briefly, and after some lunch we found Brook's Leaf Warbler, a roosting Oriental Scops Owl and witnessed the breeding colonies of Painted Storks and Asian Openbills. Under clearing skies we saw Ferruginous and Red-crested Pochard, Grey-headed Swamphen, Western Marsh Harrier, Taiga Flycatcher, Indian Reed Warbler, Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas, many Northern Pintail and a couple of Garganey. At dusk we trundled back towards the gate in our rickshaws, and came across a Dusky Eagle Owl

that perched on a dead tree briefly before it flew off, and a couple more Spotted Owlets (to make it an eight Owl day).

As the following morning was once again shrouded in thick fog once again, we decided to try something different, and headed south towards the lake at Bund Baretha. Some dreadful roads slowed our progress, but by mid-morning the skies were clearing and we stopped at some rocky hills where we saw Indian Vultures sat on the white-smeared cliffs, and also found Plum-headed Parakeets, Citrine Wagtail and Dusky Crag Martins. From here we moved to the dam of the lake where our viewing was hampered by very bright misty light but we managed to see some Cotton Pygmy Geese, Red-crested Pochards, River Tern and many Red Avadavat, while a Brown Crake lurked mostly unseen in some waterside bushes. We headed back towards Bharatpur and visited an area of fields to the north of the town where there were hundreds of Greater Short-toed Lark, a few Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, dozens of Tawny Pipit, and Yellow-wattled Lapwing. After much scanning we eventually we found our prize of Indian Courser, with a flock of ten or more that showed very well in the afternoon sun before flying off, and then another one appeared that allowed close approach. Also here we saw Xinjiang Shrike, Desert and Isabelline Wheatears, and skeins of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse that were kind enough to land in front of us and give great views.



Booted Eagle



Asian Barred Owlet

We returned to the Keoladeo Ghana National Park the next day, where fortunately it was a fog free morning. We began with Green Bee-eaters and Spotted Owlets, and then further on into the park we found a Black Bittern crouched under a bush. We were guided to where a Dusky Eagle Owl was sat on her nest, on a thick bough of a tree peering back at us with pink-lidded eyes. A real beauty. We walked around the wetland that was thronged with Northern Pintail, plus Red-crested Pochard, Eurasian Spoonbill, Common Snipe, White-tailed Lapwing, a perched Booted Eagle and Black-eared Kite, and as we returned down the main track we saw four roosting Indian Scops Owl, and the same Oriental Scops Owl we had seen previously, perched in a more open position. Then it was time to take the long road to our next destination, Ranthambore, where we arrived at our rather nice hotel in the evening.

The order of the day was jeep safaris inside the Tiger Reserve, however Park rules rather inconveniently stated that our two jeeps must separate and take different routes. One car drove around the lakes and grassy meadows where during the course of the morning we saw a covey of Jungle Bush Quail at close quarters, Crested Serpent Eagle, Crested and White-capped Buntings, Tree Pipits, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Common Woodshrike, and a Rufous-tailed Lark. A pair of Alexandrine Parakeets put on quite a show for us, and the lakes held Asian Openbills, Wood Sandpipers and Cotton Teal, and both teams were fortunate enough to see Painted Spurfowl running along the tracks. One of our jeeps had the great fortune to see two Leopards, one of which had jumped out and scared off a Sambhar that they had been watching! Well spotted! Once we had regrouped we took a stroll through dry areas outside the park and found some

gorgeous Painted Sandgrouse, Southern Grey and Bay-backed Shrike, Indian Bushlark, Variable Wheatear and Rufous-fronted Prinias. In the afternoon we had to separate once more, with one half of us seeing a Long-billed Pipit and a Sloth Bear, the other finding White-naped Woodpeckers. A melee ensued as we rejoined the main road as a Tiger had been spotted along the roadside, but had long gone when we got there, mainly due to the excessive noise produced by a truck full of loud tourists! A Brown Fish Owl was a nice final treat.

The next morning we opted for a change of scene, and headed out of town to Suriwal Lake. Water levels were good this year, and we began our birding with a field full of Indian Stone-Curlew, and counted 43 birds standing around there! At sunrise we were standing on the shores of the lake, scanning through Little and Temminck's Stints, Whiskered, River and Gull-billed Terns, Common Pochard and Ferruginous Duck. Three Great White Pelicans swam on the lake, plus we saw Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff, Bar-headed Geese, Paddyfield Pipits and some Bimaculated Larks flew over. Along the dam we found Graceful Prinia, a Booted Warbler (a write-in), a Brown Crake walking in the open, Crested Lark, Southern Grey and Long-tailed Shrikes, Common Rosefinch, Baya and Black-breasted Weavers, Bluethroat and Common Babbler. In dry areas we saw Indian Bushlark, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Tawny Pipits, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks and Yellow-wattled Lapwings. After a pause for lunch we headed back into Ranthambore in our jeeps, both vehicles in tandem this time, however it was a rather quiet ride, save for a male Red-headed Bunting and a couple of brief White-capped Buntings, Tree Pipits, another Indian Scops Owl, and White-bellied Drongo.



Leopard at Ranthambore (photos by Granger Ward)

We returned to the jeep rally around Ranthambore in the morning, again managing to keep both jeeps together. There were many Tiger tracks on the dirt roads, and even a large fresh Tiger scat, but no sign of the stripey one. Our birding was somewhat limited by the nature of the jeep safari, with drivers needing to be out of the park by 10.30 so that the last hour was just a sprint for home on bumpy tracks, but we did manage to see a pair of White-naped Woodpecker on their favourite palm tree, Bonelli's and Short-toed Eagles, Crested Serpent Eagle, Common Iora, Black and Woolly-necked Storks, Great Thick-knee, and more Indian Scops Owls at roost. Once we were outside the park we were able to walk through dry scrub where we found Common Woodshrike, Rufous-fronted Prinia, Indian Silverbill and White-browed Fantail at a water hole, and were able to make a good comparison study between Bay-backed and Long-tailed Shrikes almost alongside each other.

In the afternoon we headed outside of the park area to the Banas river, where we found a lovely Bengal Fox, Barred Buttonquail, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Green Bee-eater, Rosy Starlings, Citrine Wagtail, Sykes Wagtail, Oriental Skylark, and we had a good flight view plus brief ground views of two Jack Snipe. We searched for Indian Eagle Owl at dusk without success, and we headed back home for the last night of the tour.

One last game drive in the Tiger Reserve, and we were divided once again onto two routes. Again no big cats, but one jeep saw Brown Fish Owl, White-naped Woodpecker for both jeeps, Painted Spurfowl, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, while the other jeep saw Painted Sandgrouse, White-capped Bunting and Indian Bushlark. Then it was time to leave this picturesque place and catch the 'Golden Temple Mail' bound for Delhi. The Owl tally was well and truly huge, now with 53 Owls seen of 9 species! That *has* to be a record. As we headed back to Delhi on the gently rocking train, we elected the Koklass Pheasant as our bird of the trip, and reflected on a very successful trip. The train arrived late by an hour, no great surprise, but the Delhi traffic was so bad that it took a further 90 minutes to reach our hotel, leaving only the shortest of time for a last quick meal and a change of clothes, before it was time for some of us to rush off to the airport, saying hurried farewells as we went (we needn't have worried, it was all fine!)

The Birdquest Northern India tour continues to be a great experience, with a superb range of birds and mammals. There is something for everyone here, and it suits both the first time travellers to Asia and also the seasoned birder. Despite having visited the country innumerable times in the last 34 years, even the leader got a lifer - Cheers everybody!



Spotted Owlets



Alexandrine Parakeets

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).

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* Seen fairly often in suitable wetlands.

Bar-headed Goose ◊ *Anser indicus* Small flocks seen at Sultanpur, Chambal, Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Seen at Chambal, Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Regular around Corbett and Ramnagar, and from Chambal to Ranthambore.

Cotton Pygmy Goose (Cotton Teal) *Nettapus coromandelianus* A few around Bharatpur, also at Ranthambore.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Good numbers at Bharatpur, also elsewhere in single figures.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A few at Chambal and Bharatpur.

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* Seen in number at Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Many at Bharatpur, also seen at Chambal and Suriwal Lake.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Flocks of hundreds at Bharatpur, also many at Suriwal Lake.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* A few singles at Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* Seen in number at Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.
Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* Some handsome examples at Bharatpur.
Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* A good number seen at Suriwal Lake, singles at Bharatpur and the Taj Mahal.
Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* A nice collection Bharatpur among the other Duck, also seen at Suriwal.
Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* Good views of two at Sat Tal, a single flushed at Bajun.
Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* Seen frequently at Ranthambore, also at Bharatpur.
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Three seen feeding along the tracks at Corbett, one at Ranthambore.
Jungle Bush Quail ♦ *Perdicula asiatica* Stunning close views of a group at Ranthambore for one of our jeeps.



Jungle Bush Quail

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola* (H) Heard distantly on two days in the Naini Tal area..
Painted Spurfowl ♦ *Galloperdix lunulata* Multiple sightings at Ranthambore along the jeep tracks.
Koklass Pheasant ♦ *Pucrasia macrolopha* Amazing views of a pair near Naini Tal. Voted 'Bird-of-the-trip'. See note.
Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* A few seen along the tracks at Corbett.
Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos* Good views of several at Corbett, many near Naini Tal in the early morning.
Cheer Pheasant ♦ *Catreus wallichii* Three seen soon after dawn on a slope near Naini Tal. See note.
Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* Common at several lowland sites visited.
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Seen at Bharatpur, Ranthambore and Suriwal Lake.
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Seen at Bund Baretha and Suriwal Lake.
Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* A dozen birds seen at Bharatpur.
Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* Seen at Bharatpur and in the Delhi area.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* Small numbers seen at Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* A couple at Dhikala, plus some flocks at Ranthambore, a 13 and a 10.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Good numbers observed at Corbett and Ranthambore.

Black-necked Stork ♦ *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* Nice views by the lodge at Dhikala, also singles at Bharatpur.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Seen in number at Sultanpur, Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.

Red-naped Ibis ♦ *Pseudibis papillosa* Five seen at Basai near Delhi, several more at Chambal.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Flocks of 180 at Basai at dusk, several more at Bharatpur.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* A handful seen, at Sultanpur, the Yamuna river at Taj Mahal, and Bharatpur.

Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* At least four seen at Bharatpur, a good showing.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A good number at Bharatpur, a single at Ranthambore.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* Several widely scattered sightings.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* Common in suitable habitats.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Regularly seen in suitable habitats.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Frequent sightings except in the mountains.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Regularly seen from Bharatpur to Ranthambore.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Common in suitable habitats.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* Seen in numbers at Bharatpur and Suriwal, also at Ranthambore.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Frequent sightings except in the mountains.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* At least three at Suriwal, other distant birds not identified.

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* In good number in suitable habitats.

Indian Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Good numbers seen at Bharatpur, also many at Suriwal.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Frequent sightings except in the mountains.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* Many at Bharatpur, single birds elsewhere.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Several sightings, at Corbett, Chambal and Suriwal Lake.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Quite common in open country and grasslands.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* A few seen at Chambal, Agra and the Bharatpur area.



Mountain Hawk Eagle



Crested Serpent Eagle

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Two at Sultanpur, also at Corbett and Ranthambore.

Indian Vulture ♦ *Gyps indicus* Nice to see birds on nesting cliffs, near Bharatpur and at Ranthambore.

Himalayan Vulture ♦ (H Griffon) *Gyps himalayensis* Some good examples seen in the Himalayas.

Griffon Vulture (Eurasian Griffon) *Gyps fulvus* A few seen at Corbett and nearby. See note.

Red-headed Vulture ♦ *Sarcogyps calvus* Three or four seen at Corbett, another at Ranthambore.

Cinereous Vulture (Eurasian Black V) *Aegypius monachus* A couple seen at Corbett.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* A couple at Corbett, a single at Naini Tal and several at Ranthambore.

Short-toed Snake Eagle (S-t Eagle) *Circaetus gallicus* A single soaring bird at Ranthambore.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus limnaeetus* Quite a number seen around Corbett. See note.

Crested Hawk Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* (NL) One seen at Ranthambore.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* Singles seen at Corbett and Sat Tal, good looks at a pair near Naini Tal.

Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii* A single seen soaring at Corbett.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* Good to see healthy numbers at Bharatpur.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* A couple of singles seen at Bharatpur.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* Regular sightings in the mountains, many seen at Naini Tal dump.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* singles seen at Corbett and Naini Tal.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* Odd birds seen at Sultanpur, Bharatpur and in the Ranthambore area.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Regular sightings along our route.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A few at Bharatpur, also at Basai and Corbett.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* At least four in the Corbett grasslands, also one at Ranthambore.

Black Kite *Milvus [migrans] govinda* Many around Delhi, Ramnagar, Agra and en route to Ranthambore.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* A small number identified at Corbett, Bharatpur and Suriwal Lake.

Pallas's Fish Eagle ♦ *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Several birds seen at Corbett.

Lesser Fish Eagle ♦ *Haliaeetus humilis* A quartet of birds seen at Corbett was rather notable.

Himalayan Buzzard ♦ *Buteo burmanicus* A single seen at Dhikala.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* A dark juvenile seen perched at Chambal.

Brown Crake ♦ *Amauornis akool* One seen well at Suriwal, another two at Ranthambore also showed well.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amauornis phoenicurus* Common on wetlands around Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Seen in number at Bharatpur and Basai near Delhi. See note.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Very common on wetlands around Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Good numbers at Bharatpur, also at Suriwal Lake.

Sarus Crane ♦ *Grus antigone* Two seen at Basai near Delhi, another five seen in farmland near Bharatpur.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* A single seen well when flushed alongside the Banas River.

Indian Stone-curlew ♦ *Burhinus indicus* A total of 44 birds seen gathered in a field near Suriwal Lake.

Great Stone-curlew ♦ *Esacus recurvirostris* Three at Chambal, another two at Suriwal and one at Ranthambore.



Great Stone-curlew



Red-wattled Lapwing

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* Good views of a single bird on the Kosi River near Ramnagar.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Very common away from the mountains, on any foetid piece of water!

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Five on the Yamuna River at the Taj Mahal.

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* Plenty along the Kosi River and at Corbett, also at Chambal and the Banas River.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus malabaricus* A good number seen near Sultanpur, near Bharatpur and Suriwal.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* Seen regularly away from the mountains.

White-tailed Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus leucurus* Six seen on a wetland at Basai, a single at Bharatpur.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A few in the Ranthambore area, singles at Corbett and Chambal.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Small numbers seen at Chambal, Suriwal and the Banas river.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* A single bird at Basai, a couple more at Bharatpur.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* A few seen at Bharatpur, singles at Ranthambore.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* Two birds found on the Banas River, an India lifer for the leader!

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Numerous at Basai, also at Bharatpur, Suriwal and the Banas River.
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* Good numbers seen at Basai near Delhi, and at Suriwal Lake.
Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* A single at the Taj Mahal, also heard at Bharatpur.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Seen at Basai, the Taj Mahal, and in the Ranthambore area.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Seen at Basai, the Taj Mahal, and at Suriwal.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Seen frequently on rivers and other wetlands.
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Seen throughout on minor wetlands.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A good number at Bharatpur, also seen on other fresh wetlands.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A scattering of sightings of single birds.
Little Stint *Calidris minuta* One at Basai, more at Suriwal Lake.
Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* Seen in number at Chambal and Suriwal Lake, singles noted elsewhere.
Dunlin *Calidris alpina* A flock of 20+ at Suriwal Lake.
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Good numbers at Suriwal Lake, also seen at Basai and the Taj Mahal.
Indian Courser ♦ *Cursorius coromandelicus* Some 16 birds seen in fields near Bharatpur showed very nicely.



Indian Courser



Painted Sandgrouse

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* Two immatures seen on Suriwal Lake.
Pallas's Gull *Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus* Two seen at Chambal, another at Suriwal Lake.
Lesser Black-backed Gull ♦ (Steppe G) *Larus [fuscus] barabensis* Two seen flying down the Chambal River.
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* A single seen at Suriwal Lake.
River Tern ♦ *Sterna aurantia* Numerous at Corbett and Suriwal lake, a few at Ranthambore and elsewhere.
Black-bellied Tern ♦ *Sterna acuticauda* Two seen flying up and down the Chambal River. A rare bird these days.
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* A few at Suriwal Lake.
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* A large number seen in fields near Bharatpur, a few elsewhere.
Painted Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles indicus* A good number at Ranthambore with some nice close views.
Rock Dove *Columba livia* Like, whatever...
Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* (LO) One seen near Naini Tal.
Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Seen commonly in dry country.
Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* A few at Suriwal Lake were the only ones.
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* A few at Corbett, and a single at Ranthambore.
Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Very common away from the forest and the mountains.
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron phoenicopterus* Good numbers at Chambal, Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* A single at Corbett, many at Chambal, Bharatpur and Ranthambore. See note.
Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Two seen at Corbett, one almost caught by a Hen Harrier.
Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Singles seen at Chambal and Bharatpur.
Indian Scops Owl ♦ *Otus bakkamoena* Two at Chambal, four at Bharatpur, six at Ranthambore. All by day.
Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* A single seen at roost at Bharatpur.
Dusky Eagle-Owl ♦ *Bubo coromandus* Fantastic looks at a female on a nest at Bharatpur, also one seen at dusk.
Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* Great looks at two at Corbett, two at Ranthambore.

Tawny Fish Owl ♦ *Ketupa flavipes* Iconic Owl of the tour, stunning views of two at Kumeria, two in Corbett N.P.
Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) Heard distantly in the mountains near Naini Tal.
Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* One near Ramnagar, two in the Naini Tal area.
Jungle Owlet ♦ *Glaucidium radiatum* Four in one day at Corbett, two on another day.
Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* Best score of all Owls with 20 seen, many at Bharatpur and Ranthambore. See note.
Brown Hawk-Owl (B Boobook) *Ninox scutulata* A roosting bird seen well at Chambal Safari Lodge.



Brown Hawk Owl



Tawny Fish Owl

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* Two seen on our way in to Corbett.
Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* A small number seen at Kumeria and Naini Tal.
White-rumped Spinetail ♦ *Zoonavena sylvatica* A few near Kumeria, then many seen at one place in Corbett.
Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* A nice flock of 20+ entertained us at Naini Tal.
Little Swift *Apus affinis* Scattered sightings of odd birds.
Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* Regular sightings in open country.
Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* One seen at Corbett, another at Ranthambore.
White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Common throughout except in the mountains.
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Frequent sightings at Corbett, Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* Easy to see at Kumeria and around Corbett.
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Seen around Corbett, Chambal, Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* A few seen in dry country around Ranthambore. See note.
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A few seen around Corbett, then commonly at Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* A brief fly-over sighting for one of the jeeps near Dhikala.
Indian Grey Hornbill ♦ *Ocyrceros birostris* Several seen sitting around on a foggy morning at Bharatpur.
Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* Good looks at several in the forests in the Naini Tal area.
Brown-headed Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon zeylanicus* A couple seen at Chambal Safari Lodge.
Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus* Seen fairly commonly at Corbett, one at Bajun was surprisingly high.
Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus* A single at Bajun was our only sighting of this beautiful fellow.
Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* A single near Corbett was our only sighting.
Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* Two in grassland at Corbett.
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker ♦ *Yungipicus nanus* Just two seen, at Ranthambore.
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* Regular sightings in the forests of Corbett.
Brown-fronted Woodpecker ♦ *Dendrocoptes auriceps* Not uncommon in the high forests around Naini Tal.
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker ♦ *Leiopicus mahrattensis* Two seen at Bharatpur, another two at Ranthambore.
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* A female showed well near Naini Tal.
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker ♦ *Dendrocopos macei* A small number seen at Corbett in mixed flocks.
Himalayan Woodpecker ♦ *Dendrocopos himalayensis* Four examples of this fine fellow at Naini Tal.
Greater Yellownappe *Chrysophlegma flavinucha* Odd birds seen around Corbett and at Bajun.
Streak-throated Woodpecker ♦ *Picus xanthopygaeus* A nice example posed well at Corbett.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* Several good looks at these at Corbett and around. See note.

Himalayan Flameback ♦ *Dinopium shorii* Three seen well on our drive into Corbett.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* A few seen at Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

White-naped Woodpecker ♦ *Chrysocolaptes festivus* Nice looks at Ranthambore with half a dozen seen.

Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* Two birds showed well in big trees at Dhikala.

Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens* Not uncommon around Dhikala, sitting on obvious perches.

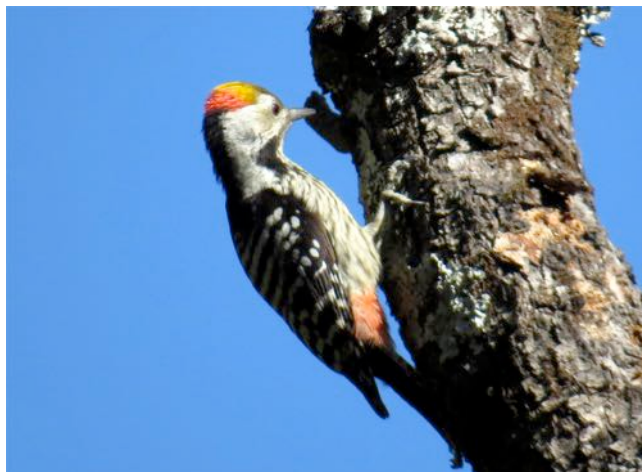
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Odd birds seen at Corbett, Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* A single bird shot overhead at Bharatpur.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Three seen in the mountains at Naini Tal, another at Bharatpur.

Slaty-headed Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula himalayana* Some large noisy flocks seen in the hills around Naini Tal.

Plum-headed Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula cyanocephala* Gorgeous birds seen at Corbett and Ranthambore.



Brown-fronted Woodpecker



Great Slaty Woodpecker

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* A couple of very large flocks flew over at Sat Tal.

Alexandrine Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula eupatria* Some great looks at these big Parrots Ranthambore.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Seen commonly away from the mountains.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* Regular sightings around Corbett.

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* A few seen in the dry woodland at Ranthambore.

Common lora *Aegithina tiphia* Three seen at Ranthambore.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* At least three seen at Corbett.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* (H) Heard only at Ranthambore.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* Just a couple of pairs seen at Corbett and at Sat Tal.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* Several seen around Kumeria and Corbett.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A single seen at Pangot.

Xinjiang Shrike (Isabelline S) *Lanius [isabellinus] arenarius* Two were seen in dry fields at Kumher. See note.

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* A couple at Bharatpur, some more around Ranthambore.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Seen almost throughout, with good numbers at Corbett and Suriwal Lake.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* A single at Corbett.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* Several seen at both Suriwal and the Banas River.

White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis zantholeuca* Two seen in a mixed flock at Corbett.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* A couple seen at Corbett.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* One at Corbett, one in the mountains, both were in mixed feeding flocks.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Plenty in open country in the Bharatpur area also at Chambal and Suriwal.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* A small number in the Naini Tal area, one at Dhikala.

White-bellied Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus caerulescens* Not uncommon in the dry woodland of Ranthambore.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* One at Bajun, seven between Naini Tal and Kathgodam.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* Odd birds in mixed flocks at Corbett.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* A couple at Dhikala, six between Naini Tal and Kathgodam.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* Not uncommon in the Himalayan foothills.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* A single at Bharatpur, a few at Ranthambore.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Quite numerous in the higher forests around Naini Tal.

Black-headed Jay ♦ *Garrulus lanceolatus* Always a favourite, small flocks of these beauties around Naini Tal.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha* Nice looks at several confiding birds around Naini Tal.

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* Several seen in the forests at Corbett.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Seen regularly, with confiding birds at Ranthambore feeding out of my hand!

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* Two at the roadside near Kumeria were the only ones of the trip.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Common around towns on the plains.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* Seen often in the mountains and foothills, though never numerous.

Indian Jungle Crow ♦ *Corvus culminatus* Seen in small numbers from Chambal to Ranthambore.

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* Several singles seen in the Corbett area and at Sat Tal.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Seen in numbers in the Corbett area, also at Ranthambore.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* Pleasingly common in the high forests around Naini Tal.

Coal Tit ♦ (Spot-winged T) *Periparus [ater] melanolophus* In good number in the high Himalayan forests. See note.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus* Seen often around Corbett, some at Sat Tal, also at Ranthambore.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* Only seen in the montane forests where not uncommon.

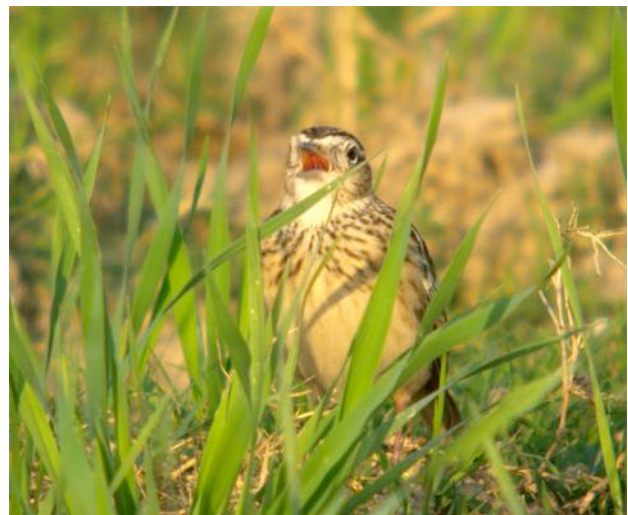
Himalayan Black-lored Tit ♦ *Machlolophus xanthogenys* Seen well in the montane forests around Naini Tal.

Rufous-tailed Lark ♦ *Ammomanes phoenicura* A single seen at Ranthambore.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark ♦ *Eremopterix griseus* Seen near Sultanpur, more in the Ranthambore area.



Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark



Oriental Skylark

Indian Bush Lark ♦ *Mirafra erythroptera* Great views of some at Suriwal Lake and near Ranthambore.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Three distant birds at Dhikala, another two at the Banas River showed well.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* Several encounters with these in dry open country.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* Hundreds at Kumher fields, also seen at Corbett and Suriwal.

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* Some eight birds flew over at Suriwal Lake.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus flaviventris* A single at Kumeria was the only sighting.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Fairly common at Corbett, not seen elsewhere.

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys* Very common in the mountains and foothills.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* Only seen at Bharatpur and in the near vicinity.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Common throughout, except for in the high mountains.

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mccllellandii* A single at Sat Tal was the only sighting.

Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flava* A few seen en route to Dhikala, also seen between Naini Tal and Kathgodam.

Black Bulbul ♦ *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Many seen in the hills around Naini Tal, also at Corbett.

Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* Common along rivers, such as at Corbett and Chambal.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Occasionally seen along our route.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Seen at the Taj Mahal, Bharatpur, and Ranthambore area, always near water.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* A couple of flocks seen at Bajun and in the higher mountain areas.

Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* Scattered sightings along our route.

Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalense* Many seen in the mountains, many between Naini Tal and Kathgodam.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Seen often along our route, commonest in the mountains.

Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer* A good close view of one at Bajun.

Nepal Wren-babbler ◇ *Pnoepyga immaculata* Two birds well seen on our first morning, near Ramnagar.

Pygmy Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla* A single bird showed well at Champi near Naini Tal.

Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps* Several delightful flocks seen in the higher forests at Naini Tal.

Aberrant Bush Warbler *Horornis flavolivaceus* A couple at Corbett and a few more in the hills around Naini Tal.

Grey-bellied Tesia *Tesia cyaniventer* A vocal bird showed well at Corbett.

Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler ◇ *Cettia major* (H) A few heard in grassy patches at Corbett.

Grey-sided Bush Warbler *Cettia brunnifrons* A single curious bird showed well at Bajun.

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia castaneocoronata* One showed reasonably well at Champi near Naini Tal.

Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* Seen frequently in the Naini Tal area, some very close birds at Bajun.

Common Chiffchaff (Siberian C) *Phylloscopus [collybita] tristis* Common at Bharatpur. See note.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* A couple of sightings at Bharatpur.

Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* A single seen in bushes near Naini Tal.

Buff-barred Warbler (Orange-b Leaf W) *Phylloscopus pulcher* Not uncommon in the montane forests.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A single at Bajun was the only sighting.

Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* Fairly common in mixed flocks in the montane forests.

Brooks's Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus subviridis* A couple at Sultanpur, a single at Bharatpur.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* Not uncommon by voice, with a few views along our route.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A handful seen at Chambal, Bharatpur and Ranthambore.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos* Very common around Corbett and Naini Tal.

Whistler's Warbler ◇ *Seicercus whistleri* A handful seen around Corbett and in the montane forests.

Clamorous Reed Warbler ◇ (Indian R W) *Acrocephalus [stentoreus] brunescens* A couple at Bharatpur.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* A single at Suriwal Lake.

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata* A good look at one along the dam at Suriwal Lake.



Booted Warbler



Lemon-rumped Warbler

West Himalayan Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella kashmirensis* (H) A few heard in the grass at Corbett. See note.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen at Suriwal Lake.

Golden-headed Cisticola (Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis* A couple seen in grass at Dhikala, many more heard.

Striated Prinia *Prinia crinigera* Two birds seen in the mountains near Naini Tal.

Rufous-fronted Prinia ◇ *Prinia buchanani* Several good views in dry country around Ranthambore.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* Seen regularly along our route.

Graceful Prinia ◇ *Prinia gracilis* Two at Suriwal Lake and two at Basai near Delhi.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* Seen fairly commonly along our route.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Seen in grassy places along our route.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* Occasional sightings, often in gardens and marginal habitats.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys* Good views at Corbett, Sat Tal and Bajun.

Black-chinned Babbler ◇ *Stachyridopsis pyrrhops* Not uncommon around Corbett and in the hills around Naini Tal.

Common Babbler ♦ *Turdoides caudata* Seen a few times in dry open country.
Large Grey Babbler ♦ *Turdoides malcolmi* Seen fairly commonly around Bharatpur, Chambal and Ranthambore.
Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata* Common throughout except in the mountains.
White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus* Some good looks around Kumeria and Corbett.
Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush ♦ *Garrulax rufogularis* Four at Sat Tal and three Bajun were very pleasing.
White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis* A confiding group on a busy morning at Bajun.



White-throated Laughingthrush



Rufous-fronted Prinia

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus* A few sightings of these floppy-headed birds in the hills around Naini Tal.
Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron lineatum* Seen commonly around Naini Tal, bouncing along the ground.
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum* Six birds seen at Bajun.
Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera* Very good views of two or more at Bajun, also seen at Corbett.
Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* Small furtive flocks seen at Corbett and Sat Tal.
Rufous Sibia ♦ *Heterophasia capistrata* Seen regularly in the hills around Naini Tal.
Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* Seen regularly in dry bushy country.
Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* Family parties seen in the grass at Corbett, Bund Baretha and Suriwal.
Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis* Some furtive birds seen in mixed feeding flocks at Bajun.
Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis* At least four birds seen in the high mountains at Naini Tal.
Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta* A brief sighting of some en route from Corbett to Naini Tal.
Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* Frequent sightings around Corbett and in the hills around Naini Tal.
Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* A single in a mixed feeding flock at Naini Tal.
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta cinnamoventris* A handful seen around Corbett and in the hills around Naini Tal.
White-tailed Nuthatch ♦ *Sitta himalayensis* Great looks at some vocal birds in mixed feeding flocks at Naini Tal.
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* Regularly seen in the Corbett area.
Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* A single seen on our first morning near Ramnagar, feeding in the river bed.
Bar-tailed Treecreeper ♦ *Certhia himalayana* Regular sightings in mixed feeding flocks around Naini Tal.
Jungle Myna ♦ *Acridotheres fuscus* A small number seen at Corbett.
Bank Myna ♦ *Acridotheres ginginianus* Very numerous around towns and villages in the dry lowlands.
Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* Present throughout, except in the montane forests.
Pied Myna *Gracupica contra* Seen in number from Chambal through to Ranthambore.
Brahminy Starling ♦ *Sturnia pagodarum* Quite common in dry country around Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* Some flocks seen in dry country around Bharatpur and at the Banas River.
Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* A small flock at Bharatpur, also seen en route to Ranthambore.
Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* One seen briefly in the fog at Bharatpur.
Long-billed Thrush ♦ *Zoothera monticola* A brief view of one in a roadside culvert near Naini Tal.
Tickell's Thrush ♦ *Turdus unicolor* A single bird seen lurking at Bharatpur.
White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus* At least three in our Thrush bonanza at Naini Tal.
Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus bouboul* At least five seen coming to drink at a stream near Naini Tal.
Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus* Five birds with the above Thrushes at Naini Tal, though less confiding.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis* Good numbers this year, small flocks at Corbett and Naini Tal. See note.
Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* A single seen in the high mountains was a nice surprise.
Indian Robin ♦ *Copsychus fulicatus* Fairly common in dry country around Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Regularly seen, most numerous at Bharatpur.
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* A single seen on our last morning at Ranthambore.
Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara* A nice male at Sat Tal, a couple of females also seen.
Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* Often heard at Corbett, good views of a male there.



Small Niltava



Black-throated Bushtit

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* Rather common at Bharatpur, also seen at Suriwal Lake and at Corbett.
White-tailed Rubythroat ♦ *Calliope pectoralis* A male showed fairly well while inside a bush at Corbett.
Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus* Three birds seen at Sat Tal, all female/immatures. See note.
Golden Bush Robin ♦ *Tarsiger chrysaeus* One seen briefly at Bajun, another showed better at Charket fields.
Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus* Some great views around Sat Tal, with at least six birds seen.
Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* Frequent sightings, common in places around Corbett and Naini Tal.
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiatea* A few seen in the forests at Corbett.
Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* Several at Ranthambore, also Bharatpur, Chambal & Sultanpur. See note.
Taiga Flycatcher (Red-throated F) *Ficedula albicilla* One at Corbett, others at Bharatpur. See note
Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* Two males seen at Corbett.
Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor* Quite a few seen in the Corbett area, also at Sat Tal.
Blue-capped Redstart ♦ *Phoenicurus coeruleocephala* Some nice examples seen in the Naini Tal area.
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Odd birds seen at Chambal, Bharatpur, and in the Ranthambore area.
Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* One male and three females seen in the Naini Tal area.
Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Seen frequently along the rivers in the Corbett area.
White-capped Redstart (River Chat) *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* Like the above, also in the mountains.
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* Singles at Ramnagar, Chambal, and near Ranthambore.
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* A male showed well one morning near Naini Tal.
Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* Common in the grass at Corbett, others seen in dry country elsewhere.
Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata* Common in fields in the Bharatpur area, a scattering of sightings elsewhere.
Grey Bush Chat *Saxicola ferreus* Regular sightings in the Corbett and Naini Tal area.
Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* Three seen in dry fields at Kumher.
Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* Three seen in fields at Kumher, another two at the Banas River
Brown Rock Chat ♦ *Oenanthe fusca* A scattering of sightings in dry open country, often around villages.
Variable Wheatear ♦ *Oenanthe picata* A female near Ranthambore, a male near the Banas river.
Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* Just a couple seen, around Kumeria.
Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* Two seen at Bajun.
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus* A single showed poorly at Bajun.
Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Regular sightings around Bharatpur and Ranthambore.
Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* A female at Corbett, a couple more at Bajun.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* At least three seen around Kumeria, notably in the hotel garden.
Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda* A female showed briefly at Bajun.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Seen regularly.
Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* Quite a few of these attractive Sparrows seen in the Naini Tal area.
Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* Seen well at Chambal and Bharatpur.



Yellow-throated Sparrow



Blue Rock Thrush

Black-breasted Weaver ♦ *Ploceus benghalensis* Small flocks with the following species at Chambal and Suriwal.
Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* Many seen in tall grass around Chambal, also at Suriwal Lake.
Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* A few at Corbett, Good looks in the Chambal area and around Bharatpur.
Indian Silverbill ♦ *Euodice malabarica* Seen in numbers at Chambal, and regularly in the Ranthambore area.
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Small groups seen at Corbett and Bajun.
Altai Accentor ♦ *Prunella himalayana* A large mobile flock in the mountains eventually provided some decent views.
Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophia* Several fine examples showed well in the high mountains.
Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Some flyovers at Bharatpur not assigned to race.
Western Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's W) *Motacilla [flava] beema* Seen at Basai, Suriwal Lake and the Banas River.
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Notable concentrations at Basai numbering in the 100s, also seen at Bharatpur.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Scattered sightings, most numerous around Kumeria along the rivers.
White Wagtail (White W) *Motacilla [alba] alba* Most numerous at Chambal and Suriwal Lake, a few elsewhere.
White Wagtail ♦ (Masked W) *Motacilla [alba] personata* Seen in the Delhi area, also at Bund Baretha.
White Wagtail (Himalayan W) *Motacilla [alba] alboides* A small number seen at Corbett.
White-browed Wagtail ♦ *Motacilla maderaspatensis* Most numerous at Kumeria, Chambal and Corbett.
Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* One seen at Corbett, another in dry fields near Ranthambore.
Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Seen at Suriwal Lake, the Banas River and near Sultanpur.
Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* Large numbers seen in the fields at Kumher, also at Suriwal Lake.
Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* A single seen at some distance at Ranthambore.
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* Quite a good number seen at Ranthambore.
Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Four seen at Charket fields were the only ones.
Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* A good number seen on the wetland at Basai, also a few at Corbett.
Brown Bullfinch ♦ *Pyrrhula nipalensis* A surprise foursome seen in the montane forest near Naini Tal.
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* A few seen in the Naini Tal area.
Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis* A nice surprise to see this in the high mountains near Naini Tal. See note.
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch ♦ *Chloris spinoides* A few sightings in the Naini Tal area, always in flight!
Crested Bunting *Emberiza lathami* A single male at Corbett, then several more seen at Ranthambore.
Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* A single at Corbett, then quite commonly around Naini Tal.
White-capped Bunting ♦ *Emberiza stewarti* A small number seen around Ranthambore.
Red-headed Bunting ♦ *Emberiza bruniceps* A male found sat in a bush at Ranthambore.



Plum-headed Parakeet

MAMMALS

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* A few scattered sightings.

Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* Common in places away from the mountains.

Asian Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* A glimpse of one up a tree at Chambal Safari Lodge.

Leopard *Panthera pardus* (NL) Two seen at Ranthambore, an exciting find – alas for one jeep only.

Tiger *Panthera tigris* A great view of a male walking through the riverside grass at Corbett.

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* A few seen at Corbett, also at Suriwal Lake.

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii* Two seen at Ranthambore.

Bengal Fox *Vulpes bengalensis* A great look at one at the Banas River.

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* Frequent sightings along our route, some nice close ones at Chambal Safari Lodge.

Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus* A brief look at one for one of our jeeps at Ranthambore.

Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula* Three in all seen in the hills around Naini Tal.

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* Some large roost gatherings at Chambal and Ranthambore.

Northern Plains Grey Langur *Semnopithecus entellus* Seen commonly in the Ranthambore area.

Tarai Grey Langur *Semnopithecus hector* A few groups seen at Corbett and Kumeria.

Nepal Grey Langur *Semnopithecus schistaceus* Not uncommon in the mountains and valleys around Naini Tal.

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* Seen almost throughout, though not at Ranthambore.

Ganges River Dolphin *Platanista gangetica* One or more gave a reasonable view at the Chambal River.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Several seen at Corbett and Ranthambore.

Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer) *Muntiacus muntjak* A few seen around Corbett.

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* Numerous at Corbett and Ranthambore, singles at Bharatpur and in the mountains.

Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis* Very numerous at Corbett, also in number at Ranthambore.

Hog Deer *Axis porcinus* A single seen at Dhikala.

Indian Gazelle (Chinkara) *Gazella bennettii* A few of these dainty animals at Ranthambore.

Nilgai (Blue Bull) *Boselaphus tragocamelus* Seen frequently at Ranthambore and in the Bharatpur area.

Common Goral (Goral) *Naemorhedus goral* At least seven seen in the high mountain areas.

Asian Elephant (Indian E) *Elephas maximus* Some great looks at a number of these at Corbett.



Golden Jackal



Nepal Grey Langur



Asian Elephants at Corbett

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 (v6.3). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Koklass Pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha*

Our 'Bird-of-the-trip'. After an encounter with only its wing noise, it was great to get so close to a calling male, and then finding a female with it and having a prolonged view of both. Best views ever! The race here is the nominate *macrolopha*.

Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii*

A great find, by no means guaranteed as our second visit to the site showed. Its easy to see why they could be overlooked, as they fed with barely any movement on the steep grassy slope. A lifer for the leader!

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus limnaeetus*

Some authors lump this species (found from the Himalayas eastwards) in Crested Hawk-Eagle *N. cirrhatus* of peninsular India and Sri Lanka, using the name Changeable Hawk-Eagle for the enlarged species.

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*

Some authors lump this and other related species in Western Swamphen *P. porphyrio* using the name Purple Swamphen (or Gallinule) for the enlarged species.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

The form found from the southern margin of the Gangetic plain south through peninsular India to Sri Lanka, *parroti*, may be a distinct species, but further study is needed. We saw both forms.

Green (or Little Green) Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

The recent Handbook of Birds of the World/BirdLife International Checklist splits this species three ways: Asian Green Bee-eater *M. orientalis* (the nominate race of which is seen on this tour); Arabian Green Bee-eater *M. cyanophrys* (Arabian Peninsular and Israel); and African Green-Bee-eater *M. viridissimus*.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

The form concerned is *sanguiniceps* which along with other forms in southern and southeastern Asia is regarded as a separate species from birds in northern Eurasia by some recent authors who use the name Black-naped Woodpecker *Picus guerinii* for the species.

Xinjiang (or Chinese) Shrike *Lanius [isabellinus] arenarius*

The IOC World List separates Isabelline Shrike *L. isabellinus* from Red-tailed Shrike *L. phoenicuroides*, and it has sometimes also been proposed that Xinjiang (or Chinese) Shrike *L. arenarius* should in turn be split from Isabelline Shrike *L. isabellinus*. Whilst we have not totally adopted this treatment, we have treated the proposed split as an 'allospecies'. Further, just to make matters even more difficult to comprehend, there has been a nomenclatural change in the *isabellinus* group. The form breeding in NW China was up until recently called nominate *isabellinus*, but this form has now had to be renamed *arenarius* as it was discovered that the original description of '*isabellinus*' (from a specimen taken in the Middle East) in fact relates to the form *speculigerus* (breeding in Mongolia and surroundings). The latter has consequently been renamed *isabellinus*!

Coal (or Spot-winged) Tit *Periparus [ater] melanolophus*

Although split by some authors, the IOC includes this distinctive form in Coal Tit *P. ater*

Common (or Siberian) Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus [collybita] tristis*

The IOC Checklist includes this vocally distinct form with in Common Chiffchaff *P. collybita*.

West Himalayan Bush Warbler *Locustella kashmirensis*

This species was formerly lumped in Spotted Bush Warbler *L. thoracicus*.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*

It was a good year for these, with many seen. Some authors lump this species in Red-throated Thrush *T. ruficollis*, often using the name Dark-throated Thrush for the enlarged species.

Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus*

This species was formerly lumped in Red-flanked Bluetail *T. cyanurus* of boreal Europe and Asia, with the name Orange-flanked Bush-Robin or Red-flanked Bluetail being used for the enlarged species.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva***Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla***

Taiga Flycatcher was formerly lumped in Red-breasted Flycatcher, with either the name Red-breasted or Red-throated Flycatcher being used for the enlarged species.

Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis*

This was previously lumped with Red-mantled Rosefinch *C. rhodochlamys*, with that name being used for the enlarged species.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

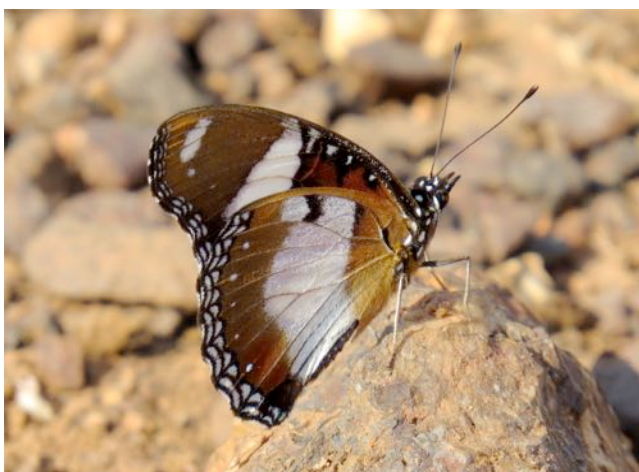
Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus*

Mugger (Marsh Crocodile) *Crocodylus palustris*

Indian Tent Turtle *Pangshura (Kachuga) tentoria*



Indian Scops Owls



Danaid Eggfly



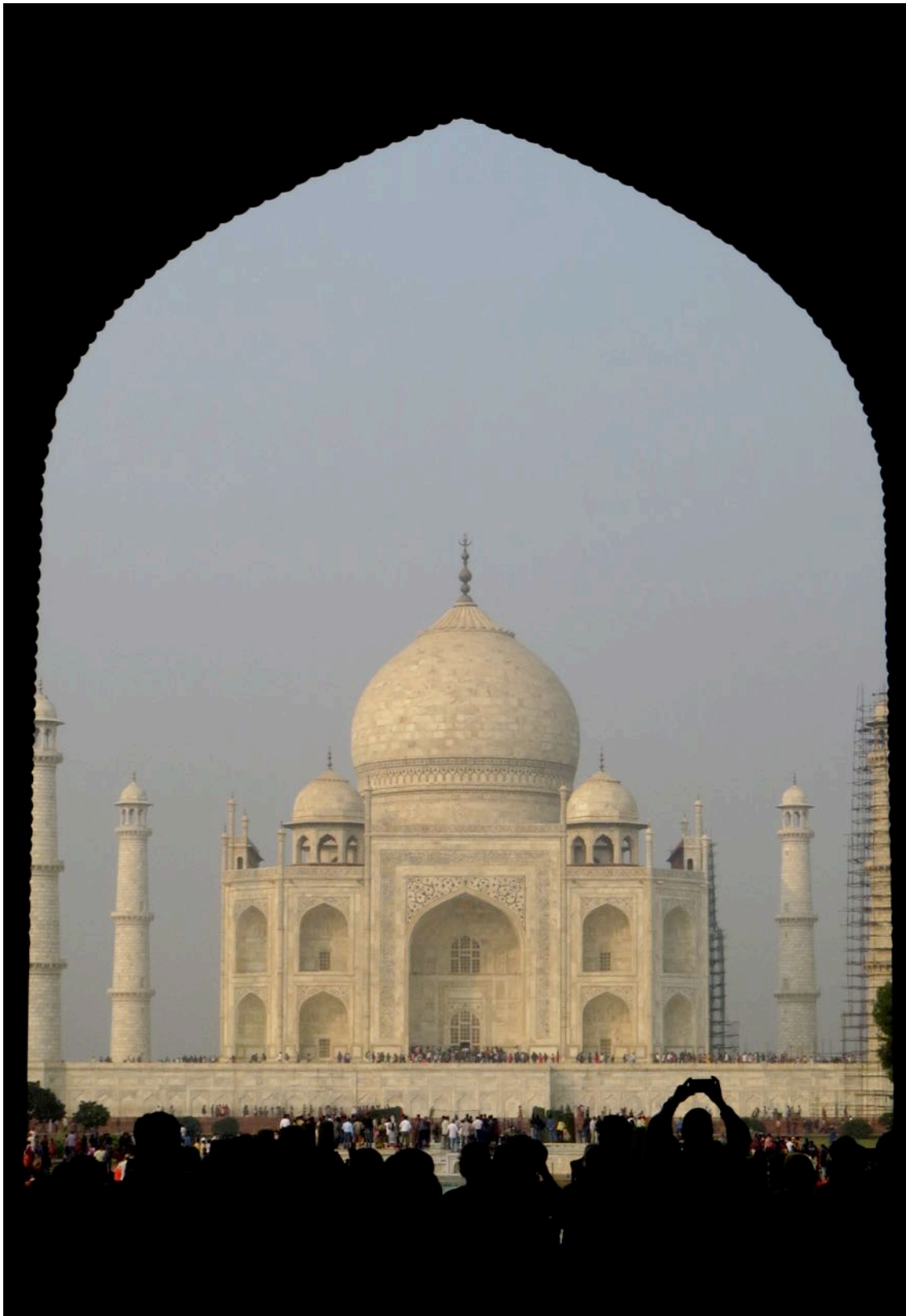
Common Wanderer



Bengal Fox



Trisul and the High Himalayas seen from Naini Tal



The Taj Mahal, Agra