



*This amazing Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl, encountered in Corbett NP, was voted as the bird of the trip (Mitchell Harris).*

# **BIRDS AND TIGERS OF NORTHERN INDIA**

**9 – 27 MARCH 2019**

**LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES**

This year's 'Birds and Tigers of Northern India' tour again proved a great success with a feast of avian and mammalian delights. We followed the classic itinerary that took us to a wide variety of habitats, from bird filled wetlands to semi-desert scrub, from dry savanna woodland and arable farmland to the verdant forested slopes and rushing torrents of the Himalayan foothills. This tour has many regional specialties and Indian subcontinent endemics, and among the many highlights were the magnificent Cheer Pheasants, the shy

Koklass Pheasant, many Kalij Pheasants, Jungle Bush Quails and Painted Spurrows both of which showed well, Black-necked Stork, Red-naped Ibis, majestic Sarus Cranes, the critically endangered Indian, plus White-backed, Himalayan, Griffon, Cinereous and Red-headed Vultures, the endemic Indian Spotted Eagle amongst commoner Greater Spotted and Eastern Imperial Eagles, Pallas's and Lesser Fish Eagles, the splendid Indian Courser, Indian and Great Stone-curlews, Yellow-wattled and White-tailed Lapwings, Painted Snipe, Black-bellied and River Terns, Indian Skimmer, Painted and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, a total of three Spot-bellied Eagle-Owls with brilliant views, a family of Dusky Eagle Owls, several sightings of Brown Fish-Owls, 17 species of woodpeckers, the handsome Collared Falconet, Nepal Cupwing (or Wren-babbler), bird waves of many colorful Himalayan passerines, White-crested, Chestnut-crowned, Rufous-chinned and Striated Laughingthrushes, Wallcreeper, Himalayan Rubythroat, Golden Bush Robin, Slaty-backed and Spotted Forktails, many flycatchers and redstarts, Black-headed Jay and subtle Sind Sparrows plus a wealth of more widespread Asiatic species. In addition to the birds we had four brilliant encounters with Tiger, saw several Leopards, enjoyed great views of the normally nocturnal Sloth Bear, sighted the rare Honey Badger, and enjoyed an excellent array of other mammals, great scenery, delicious food and a visit to the incomparable Taj Mahal. A new feature of this tour was the use of hides/blinds at three different sites to enjoy close-up views and excellent photographic opportunities of many birds and other wildlife.



*Another tour favourite, the magnificent Tiger, which we saw in Corbett and in Ranthambhore (Hannu Jännes).*

We began the tour with a half day visit to the Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary in the state of Haryana less than an hour's drive from our hotel. In wintertime Sultanpur is teeming with birds, including a couple of NW Indian bird specialties, and is a great place to start any birding tour. Our first target was Sind Sparrow, a NW Indian and Pakistan specialty, which in recent years has found its way to the outskirts of Delhi, which we found relatively easily and had great views of several birds. The second target bird, Brooks's Leaf Warbler, another winter visitor to NW India, played harder to get but eventually showed well to us all. Other good birds found hiding in the bushes and acacia woods included Greater Coucal, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, a total of five Spotted Owlets, Brown-headed and Coppersmith Barbets, Black-rumped Flamebacks, Common Woodshrike, White-browed Fantail, Long-tailed Shrike, Rufous Treepie, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Common Chiffchaff, Hume's Leaf Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Ashy Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Large Grey and Jungle Babblers, Lesser Whitethroat, Eastern Orphean Warbler (an unexpected find), Oriental White-eye, Common Myna, Indian and Oriental Magpie Robins, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Black Redstart, Olive-backed Pipit and Purple Sunbird. In and around the wetland we found Knob-billed Duck, Greylag Goose, Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Pintail, Eurasian Teal, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Tufted Duck, Little Grebe, Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Glossy Ibis, three species of egret, Purple and Grey Heron, Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Grey-



headed Swampphen, Common Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, a handsome pair of Sarus Cranes, Small Pratincole, Black-winged Stilt, White-tailed Lapwing and Citrine Wagtail, while overhead we saw soaring Booted Eagle, Western Marsh Harriers, Black Kites and Shikras. After the busy morning's birding we boarded our bus and started the long journey north. The reason for us choosing the bus instead of the traditional train, was that we wanted to avoid all the waiting and hassle at the train stations, plus we were also hoping to reach our destination much earlier in the evening than we could have done on the train. Unfortunately we had some hiccups on the way with a vehicle break-down, a massive traffic jam on a country road and the poor condition of the half-finished new highway near Delhi, that all combined to slow us down by a couple of hours, but we still reached our comfortable lodge in Kumeria earlier than we would have done had we done the journey by train.



*Wild Asian Elephants are common in Corbett NP (Hannu Jännes).*

The next morning began with a visit to the Kosi River and birding in the vicinity of our hotel before we boarded our open-topped Gypsy jeeps and headed for our accommodation in Dhikala camp, deep within Corbett National Park, arriving there in the evening, after spending most of the day birding along the way on the forested tracks. As this was our first day in completely new habitat, the number of new species was almost overwhelming. During the day we encountered many Red Junglefowls, Kalij Pheasants, Pallas's Fish and Lesser Fish Eagles, few hundred Small Pratincoles, Spotted and Common Emerald Doves, Brown Fish Owl at its day roost, Asian Barred Owlet, Large-tailed Nightjar, Crested Treeswifts, White-rumped Spinetails, Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, Grey-capped Pygmy and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Himalayan and Greater Flamebacks, large numbers of Plum-headed and Red-breasted Parakeets, flocks of colorful Scarlet and Long-tailed Minivets, Ashy, Lesser Racket-tailed and Hair-crested Drongos, White-throated Fantail, Cinereous and Himalayan Black-lored Tits, Himalayan and Black Bulbuls, Lemon-rumped and Whistler's Warblers, Grey-breasted Prinias, White-crested Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leiothrix, Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, a really showy Long-billed Thrush, many Grey-winged Blackbirds, a Black-throated Thrush, Verditer Flycatcher, Blue Whistling Thrush, Taiga Flycatcher, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Plumbeous Water and White-capped Redstarts, Golden-fronted and Orange-bellied Leafbirds, and Crimson Sunbird. For me personally the absolute highlight of the day was a magnificent pair of Great Hornbills, which, after some time, came to check us out and gave us brilliant views, but for participants I am sure the excellent sighting of a pair of Tigers near Dhikala camp in the afternoon, was the high point! .

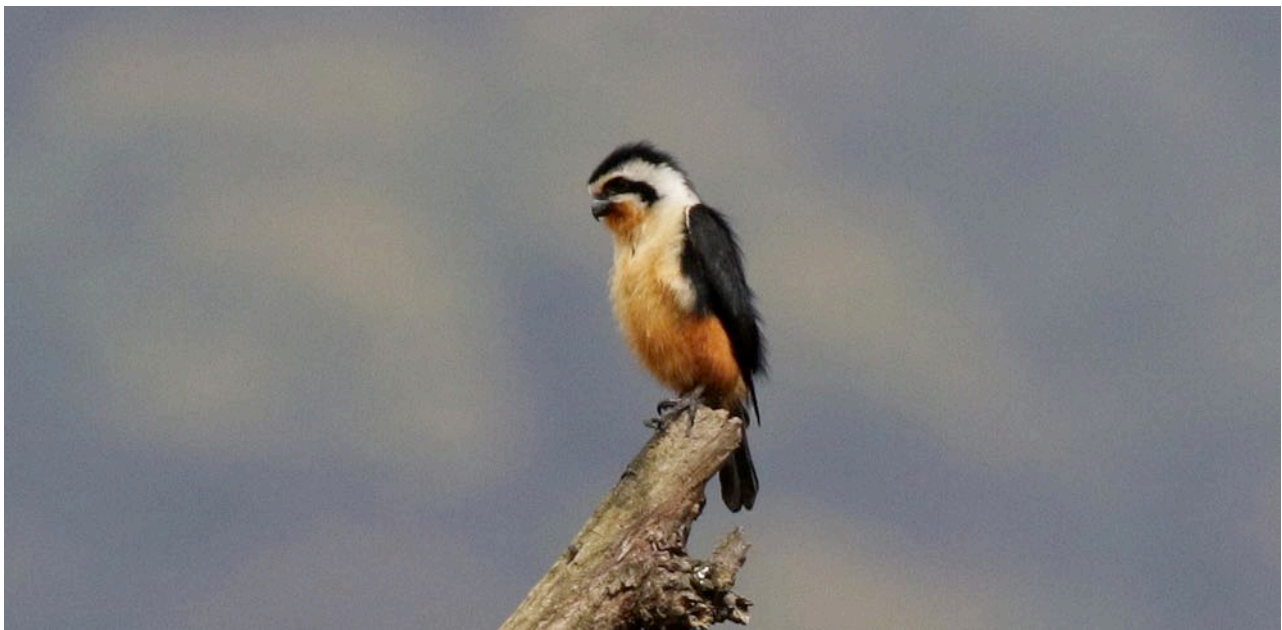


*Adult Pallas's Fish Eagle in Corbett NP (Mitchell Harris).*

The following morning started with a short owling session in the campgrounds producing a pair of Brown Hawk-Owls, followed by a breakfast and a game drive which took us first along the Sambar road and then to the other side of the river Ramganga and the wide grasslands surrounding it. Once we got to the other side of the river valley, our local guide took us to a site where he had observed the enigmatic Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl three or four days earlier. As I had never managed to see this bird in Northern India, despite many visits, my hopes were pretty low when our guide told me to play the calls of the species. The first short series of deep hoots from the loudspeaker didn't elicit any response, but on the second try, five minutes later, this massive beast glide out of the dense forest and landed straight above us giving really great views! During the mid-day break (the park is closed between 10.30-14.00), we enjoyed lunch and birded the camp area finding a strange looking hybrid sparrow, which was paired with a female House Sparrow, and was probably a hybrid between Russet Sparrow and House Sparrow. In the afternoon we were back on Sambar road and checked the grasslands and forest tracks, where we had another sighting of Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl, this time a rather skittish pair. The day had been very birdy and we had a great many new birds including Ruddy Shelduck, Common Merganser, Woolly-necked Stork, a family group of Black-necked Storks, several Cinereous Vultures, Changeable Hawk-Eagles, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Pallas's Gull, many River Terns, Jungle Owlet, the only Streak-throated Woodpeckers of the trip, two Collared Falconets, Maroon Oriole, Common Green Magpie, Ashy Bulbul, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Black-chinned and Yellow-eyed Babbler, Jungle Myna, Chestnut-tailed Starling, Small Niltava, Himalayan Rubythroat and Snowy-browed Flycatcher.

On our last morning in Corbett NP we checked a vast grassland area near Lake Ramganga, where highlights included a handsome male Black Francolin, which came to check us out, Hen Harrier, many Oriental Skylarks, a single Greater Short-toed Lark, Zitting and Golden-headed Cisticolas, and Long-billed and two Rosy Pipits. After lunch we headed back to our lodge in Kumeria, with many birding stops on the way, which yielded several new bird species with Black Stork, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, our first Greater Yellownappe, two Rufous Woodpeckers, an amazing flock of ten noisy Great Slaty Woodpeckers, never an easy bird on this itinerary, Bronzed Drongo, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Blyth's Leaf Warbler and finally a Brown Dipper by the river next to our accommodation.





*The diminutive Collared Falconet in Corbett NP (Mitchell Harris).*

The next day began at dusk with a search for Tawny Fish Owl close to our accommodation, but unfortunately the bird was not present. After breakfast and check out we headed off for pastures new. One of the main targets of the morning was the restricted range Nepal Cupwing (or Wren-babbler), which we saw very well indeed. Nearby a mixed flock had Black-crested Bulbul, Black-throated Bushtits, several Blue-winged Minlas and a Whiskered Yuhina, all new birds for us. Then we visited a regular spot for Wallcreeper, which, after a search, we saw very well. Next was the obligatory visit to the regular wintering site for the iconic Ibisbill at the Kosi River. However, the single bird that had wintered here this year, had already left the area, but we still enjoyed the birding and a picnic lunch at this pleasant riverside spot. The rest of the day was spent driving the roads up into the Himalayas to the hill station of Naini Tal at 2080m asl, our base for the next five nights. During the journey we made numerous stops at various altitudes and in different habitats and saw several new birds including Streak-throated and Red-rumped Swallows, Streaked Laughingthrush, Russet Sparrow, Large-billed Crow, a large flock of the strange Long-tailed Broadbill, always a tricky bird on this itinerary, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Nepal House Martin, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, many Russet Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Greenfinches and a flock of Ashy Woodswallows.



*Wallcreeper by the Kosi River (Mitchell Harris).*



*Long-tailed Broadbill, never an easy bird on this itinerary (Bob Wallace).*

Many great birds awaited us in the higher mountains north of Nainital, and we boarded our jeeps at 5 am the next morning to head out through the montane forests on a winding mountain road with a sense of great anticipation of things to come. Our first new bird appeared well before sunrise with a spotlighted Grey Nightjar close to the road. Then, as the light started to improve, we witnessed the awesome spectacle of snow-covered Himalayan peaks laid in row after row, with the biggest Trisul and Nanda Devi, some 120km to our north-west. We spent the first couple of hours on a forested road seeing a male Koklass Pheasant shooting down the hill side and later a pair of Cheer Pheasants, which we flushed twice from the roadside, but unfortunately failed to see them on the ground. Later we moved to an area of grassy slopes that fell steeply away below us and after a period of intense scanning, our sharp-eyed local guide spotted a male Cheer Pheasant, that stayed put for long time and offered nice scope views. The main target of the day in the bag, it was time to relax a little and enjoy the other birds around us, which included Eurasian Crag Martins, several Himalayan Vultures, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, a restless flock of Altai Accentors, Blue-capped Redstart, Green-tailed Sunbird and several singing Upland Pipits that performed well as we watched. Later we spent a lot of time birding along the forested roads, where we saw Eurasian and Black-headed Jays, Yellow-browed, Coal (or Spot-winged) and Green Backed Tits, Black-faced and Buff-barred Warblers, many White-throated Laughingthrushes and smaller number of Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, many Rufous Sibias, White-tailed Nuthatches, Bar-tailed Treecreepers, a flock of Mistle Thrushes, a single Spotted Forktail, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, several Blue-capped and two Blue-fronted Redstarts and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. We also visited some terraced fields and a water hole seeing good numbers of Rock Buntings and a few Yellow-breasted Greenfinches, Black Francolin, and a flock of five Blyth's Rosefinches, which were a nice surprise. Speeding back to Nainital and our hotel in late afternoon, we heard from our open-topped jeeps an owl hooting twice next to the road and soon found a very cute roosting Brown Wood Owl (a tour write-in), which gave us great views and photo opportunities.

Next day we drove downhill to Sat Tal area, where our first stop was a session in a popular bird hide. This was really a great fun as during the next couple of hours we counted a total of 17 species of birds visiting the feeder with really great views. These included Greater Yellownappe, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Great Barbet, Kalij Pheasants, many Red-billed Leiothrix, stunning Red-billed Blue Magpies, four of the often difficult to see Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes plus good numbers of White-crested and White-throated



Laughingthrushes. Unfortunately, the much awaited Rufous-throated Partridge, which is a regular visitor here, didn't show up, apparently because of the heavy rains during the previous night. Later we had the traditional bird walk along a forest trail nearby, and the afternoon was spent in the Chapu area. Best birds, in addition to the ones seen from the hide, included Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, a showy Grey-sided Bush Warbler, another Chestnut-headed Tesia, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Long-billed Thrush, Small Niltava, Himalayan Rubythroat, Himalayan Bluetail, Golden Bush Robin, Slaty-backed and Spotted Forktails, several Brown Dippers and Black-throated and Crimson Sunbirds.



*A roosting Brown Wood Owl (a tour write-in) gave us great views and photo opportunities (Hannu Jännes).*

On our third full day in the Nainital area we headed back to the northern slopes along the Vinayak road to look for additional higher altitude forest species that we still needed. The highlights of the day included a pair of Koklass Pheasant spotted by Mitch, Himalayan and Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers, Himalayan Buzzard, and, after much effort, two Himalayan Shrike-Babblers. Later we visited the village of Pangot, where the absolute highlight was a pair of Spot-winged Grosbeak (a tour write-in) feeding in a wild cherry and we also had great views of Chestnut-headed Laughingthrushes from a hide. Later down the valley we found two more target birds Pink-browed Rosefinch and Rufous-breasted Accentor, that had previously evaded us.



*Great Barbet at the feeder at Sattal (Mitchell Harris).*



*Coal (or Spot-winged) Tit was common in the Nainital area (Mitchell Harris).*



On our last morning at Nainital we birded the slopes in the outskirts of the town, where after an unpromising start, we had quite a productive birding session including Speckled Wood Pigeon for some, two Tickell's Leaf Warblers, Striated Laughingthrush, a couple of Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers, a flock of six Brown Bullfinches, a species only rarely encountered on this tour, a small flock of Red-fronted Serins, and two Common Hill Partridges well spotted by Fateh. In the afternoon we drove down to Kathgodam and took a very comfortable train back to Delhi, where we arrived late in the evening.



*Brown Bullfinch near Nainital (Mitchell Harris).*

Back in the lowlands our first destination was Sawai Madhopur and the famous Rathambore National Park, which we reached by the relatively comfortable Golden Temple train from Delhi. We spent the next five nights in our comfortable resort close to Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, which is dubbed as the Tiger capital of the world as it is one of the most reliable places in India to see Tiger. During our stay we did a total of eight game drives in the park, and we were very successful in achieving our main objective, which was seeing the magnificent Tiger. In total between the two jeeps (which often went different routes) we saw six individuals, of which the prolonged encounter with two nearly independent male cubs and their father was the best. Other great mammal sightings included a total of four Leopards, Striped Hyena for some, a pretty confiding Sloth Bear, which was seen on two days, Honey Badger, an animal very rarely sighted in the park, for one vehicle, and Indian Grey and Ruddy Mongoose. Naturally the park is also packed with food for the big cats, including hundreds of Chital (Spotted Deer), and smaller numbers of Wild Boar, Sambar, Nilgai and Chinkara (Indian Gazelle). We also encountered Indian Hares, House Rats, many Five-striped Palm Squirrels, hundreds of Northern Plains Grey Langurs, Rhesus Monkey, and Indian Flying Foxes. Birding is also surprisingly productive in this rather arid area, as was proved by a total of 148 bird species in a single day by doing just morning and afternoon drives in the park and some dry country birding in the vicinity of our hotel. The most interesting birds sighted during the game drives in Rathambore NP and couple of visits to dry wastelands on the outskirts of Sawai Madhpur included several Painted Spurfowls, very obliging Jungle Bush Quails, Cinnamon Bittern, White-rumped and the critically endangered Indian Vultures, a mighty Red-headed Vulture, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Bonelli's Eagles, two White-eyed Buzzards, several Brown Crakes, Indian and Great Stone-curlews, Greater Painted-snipe, Indian Courser, Painted Sandgrouse, several sightings of Indian Scops and Brown Fish Owls, Jungle and Savanna Nightjars, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Brown-capped Pygmy and a pair of White-naped Woodpeckers, Marshall's lora for half the group, Large

Cuckooshrike, a stunning white morph of Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Rufous-tailed Lark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Indian Bush Lark, Rufous-fronted Prinia, Tickell's Blue and Taiga Flycatchers, Variable Wheatear, Brown Rock Chat, and Crested, Red-headed and White-capped Buntings. Our birding forays outside the park included a very productive afternoon-early evening visit to lake Soorwal, where we encountered a number of new, interesting birds including Bar-headed Goose, Knob-billed Duck, Greater Flamingo, Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans, Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Kentish Plovers, Lesser Sand Plovers, Small Pratincoles, 20 Indian Skimmers, Pallas's Gulls, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, hundreds of Western Yellow Wagtails of the morph *beema* (a.k.a. Syke's Wagtail). Another, lot less productive visit to the Banas River, on our last morning, yielded Yellow Wagtails of the morph *feldegg* (a.k.a. Black-headed Wagtail), Crested Larks, a Rufous-tailed Lark, Great Grey Shrikes, couple of Golden Jackals and cute Bengal Foxes.



*We had four brilliant encounters with Tigers on this year's tour (Bob Wallace).*

From Sawai Madhpur we moved on by the Golden Temple Mail train to Bharatpur, and reached Bagh, our luxury heritage hotel, late in the afternoon. We soon learned that several top end bird/mammal hides had been built in the large garden of our accommodation, and rest of the day was spent checking the gardens and hides with the hotel's "hide manager"! Later, after dinner, we split up and occupied couple of the hides, which had been set up for nocturnal mammals, and had good views, with photo opportunities, of a Small Indian Civet, Jungle Cat and Golden Jackal.





*We had exceptionally good views of a Sloth Bear in Ranthambhore (Hannu Jännes).*



*Brown Fish Owl in Ranthambhore (Mitchell Harris).*





*Indian Roller in flight (Mitchell Harris).*

Next day we began our exploration of Bharatpur, officially known as Keoladeo Ghana National Park, a former hunting ground for the maharajas of Bharatpur and their guests, consisting of 28 square kilometres of managed wetlands and drier, savanna type habitats. We spent the entire day with our local guide in this world-famous birding hot spot either on foot or bicycle rickshaw checking a number of sites. Due to the rather late date of our visit, the number of wintering ducks had already decreased and some of the scarcer wintering birds had continued their journey further north. Nevertheless we enjoyed a brilliant day's birding and, in addition to many ducks, herons, egrets and waders, we had already seen earlier on the trip, we saw a number of interesting species including Cotton Pygmy Goose, Black Bittern, Griffon Vulture, many Greater Spotted Eagles, one Indian Spotted Eagle, two Eastern Imperial Eagles, Pallid Harrier, Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, a family party of three Dusky Eagle-Owls, White-eared Bulbuls, several Clamorous Reed and Blyth's Reed Warblers, a few Bluethroats, Orange-headed and couple of Tickell's Thrushes. A very birdy day during which we observed 145 species! The following morning we were back in the park trying to locate some of the species we still needed and managed to find Indian Golden Oriole and Sulphur-bellied and Moustached Warblers. In the afternoon we headed for the vast agricultural areas outside the park. The wasteland areas here, ideal for dry country birds, are quickly disappearing due to increasing agricultural activities and big building projects, but we still managed to see interesting species with Indian Courser, two Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, many Greater Short-toed Larks, smaller numbers of Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Larks and Indian Bush Larks, several Bluethroats, a nice flock of 20 Red-headed Buntings, and heard a Rain Quail giving its distinctive "bit-bit" call. In the evening some of us were back in the photo hides of the Bagh and managed to see both the Golden Jackal and Jungle Cat again.

New day began with easy birding in the hotel's garden and wader photography in the pool hide, before boarding our bus to Agra, where our first stop was for an excellent lunch, with delicious skewers and more ice cream than you could eat! Then a visit to the famous and very impressive Taj Mahal by the Yamuna River followed by a shopping spree in the local souvenir shops. After the busy day in the hustle and bustle of Agra we headed back to the dusty, colourful Indian countryside, and the charming Chambal Safari Lodge, arriving in time for late afternoon birding around the lodge grounds. A short spot lightning session later in the evening produced a brief and well camouflaged Common Palm Civet for some.

We headed for the famous Chambal River early next morning with high hopes. A couple of short walks 'in the bandit country' close to the river produced, among other things, a single Jungle Prinia and a flock of Baya Weavers, both new species for our list. We boarded our boat and began a peaceful, thoroughly



enjoyable, cruise on a perfect sunny morning, enjoying really good, relaxed birding, seeing handsome Red-crested Pochards, a large flock of Lesser Whistling Ducks, Bar-headed Geese, Knob-billed and Indian Spot-billed Ducks, Ruddy Shelducks, a breeding pair of Bonelli's Eagles, two Long-legged Buzzards, Western Osprey, a few Pallas's Gulls, several Great Stone-curlews, Kentish Plovers and Temminck's Stints, a flock of very obliging Small Pratincoles, a handful of the scarce, and declining, Black-bellied Terns, a pair of Sand Larks, a couple of Graceful Prinias plus, of course, we also had marvelous views of four of the bizarre, but still elegant, Indian Skimmers, the main reason for visiting this site. In addition to these avian delights, we had great views of many Gharials (narrow snouted fish-eating crocodile) and Mugger Crocodiles, plus typically brief view of the Ganges River Dolphin. Back at the lodge we had good lunch before heading back to Delhi and a hotel for a freshen-up and another good meal, after which it was time to say our goodbyes, and to thank everyone for their great company, which, together with all the excellent birds and exciting places, made this such a memorable trip.



*Indian Skimmers at the Chambal River (Hannu Jännes).*

#### **BIRDS OF THE TRIP' WINNERS 2019:**

- 1st: Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl
- 2nd: Blyth's Rosefinch & Brown Fish Owl
- 3rd: Nepal Cupwing & Great Hornbill
- 4th: Speckled Woodpigeon, Wallcreeper & Leopard



*Kalij Pheasant was a common sight in the north (Hannu Jännes).*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

**Total of bird species recorded: 421**

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

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

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

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

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

**Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* Noted in Rathambore, at the Chambal River and at Keoladeo.

**Bar-headed Goose** ◊ *Anser indicus* 50 at Lake Soorval and up to 300 at Keoladeo.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Ten at Sultanpur.

**Knob-billed Duck (Comb D)** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Small numbers at suitable wetlands in the lowlands.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* Widespread, highest count 60 at Taj Mahal.

**Cotton Pygmy Goose (Cotton Teal)** *Nettapus coromandelianus* Three at Keoladeo the only record.

**Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* Noted at all major wetlands, and especially abundant in Keoladeo.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* Noted at all major wetlands, and especially abundant in Keoladeo.

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera* Only noted at Sultanpur, where abundant.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope* Noted in small numbers in Sultanpur, Lake Soorval and Keoladeo.

**Indian Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha* Small numbers at all major wetlands visited.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Noted in small numbers in Sultanpur, Lake Soorval and Keoladeo.

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Noted at all major wetlands, and especially abundant in Keoladeo.





*We had brilliant views of Black Francolin in Corbett NP (Mitchell Harris).*

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* Only small numbers seen.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Two at Sultanpur and one at Keoladeo.

**Ferruginous Duck (F Pochard)** *Aythya nyroca* Ten at Sultanpur and two at Keoladeo.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* One at Sultanpur.

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser* Small numbers noted in the north.

**Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus* Noted almost daily in the lowlands.

**Rain Quail** ♦ *Coturnix coromandelica* (H) One heard in the dry country near Bharatpur. A write-in.



*Jungle Bush Quail in Ranthambhore (Hannu Jännes).*





Mountain Hawk-Eagle (Mitchell Harris).

**Jungle Bush Quail** ♦ *Perdicula asiatica* Two encountered at Ranthambhore with good views!

**Hill Partridge (Common H P)** *Arborophila torqueola* A few birds seen and heard in the Nainital region.

**Painted Spurrow** ♦ *Galloperdix lunulata* Noted daily, with lots of great views, at Ranthambhore.

**Koklass Pheasant** ♦ *Pucrasia macrolopha* Two sightings and heard only birds in the Nainital region.

**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus* Common and tame in Corbett NP.

**Kalij Pheasant (Kaleej P)** *Lophura leucomelanos* Small numbers daily in the north. Brilliant views and photo ops.

**Cheer Pheasant** ♦ *Catreus wallichii* First a skittish pair and then a brilliant male along the Vinayak road at Nainital.

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* Widespread in good numbers. National bird of India.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Noted at all major wetlands.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Handful of birds in Ranthambhore.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* 60 at Lake Soorval and a few at Keoladeo.

**Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* Noted on all major wetlands.

**Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans* Small numbers seen.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Three in Corbett, and a total of 12 Ranthambhore.

**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus* Small numbers seen on five days.

**Black-necked Stork** ♦ *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* Small numbers, incl. a family of four, seen on five days.

**Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Widespread in the lowlands.

**Red-naped Ibis** ♦ (Indian Black I) *Pseudibis papillosa* Noted on four days in the lowlands.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Small numbers at all major wetlands.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* Up to 100 seen on all major wetlands.

**Cinnamon Bittern (Chestnut B)** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* (NL) One in Ranthambhore by only half of the group.

**Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* 3-4 birds noted on both days in Keoladeo.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers seen on eight days.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* A total of 11 in the Corbett area, Keoladeo and Ranthambhore.

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* Widespread in the lowlands.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Widespread and locally common in the lowlands.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Noted on all major wetlands.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Small numbers in Sultanpur, Keoladeo and Ranthambhore.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Widespread and locally common in the lowlands.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* Widespread and locally common in the lowlands.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Widespread.

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotus* Up to 250 at Keoladeo, and 10 at lake Soorval near Ranthambhore.





*Bar-headed Goose (Mitchelle Harris).*

**Dalmatian Pelican** ♦ *Pelecanus crispus* 60 at lake Soorval near Ranthambhore and 15 at Keoladeo.

**Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger* Widespread.

**Indian Cormorant** ♦ (I Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Up to 30 in Keoladeo and a few at Ranthambhore.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Noted along many of the bigger water bodies.

**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* Small numbers on all major wetlands.

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* One to three birds noted on seven days.

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Widespread in small numbers.

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* Common from Bharatpur to Chambal [*nominate and ginginianus*].

**Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B)** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Small numbers seen on five days.

**White-rumped Vulture** ♦ *Gyps bengalensis* One of this critically endangered species near Ranthambhore.

**Indian Vulture** ♦ *Gyps indicus* Up to six of this critically endangered species were noted daily in Ranthambhore.

**Himalayan Vulture** ♦ (H Griffon) *Gyps himalayensis* Seen daily in the Nainital area.

**Griffon Vulture (Eurasian Griffon)** *Gyps fulvus* Two in Keoladeo.

**Red-headed Vulture** ♦ *Sarcogyps calvus* One in Ranthambhore.

**Cinereous Vulture (Eurasian Black V)** *Aegypius monachus* Six in Corbett.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* Widespread in small numbers.

**Short-toed Snake Eagle (S-t Eagle)** *Circaetus gallicus* One in Ranthambhore.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus* Up to three daily in the Corbett area.

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus nipalensis* A total of four, with really good views, in the Nainital area.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii* One in Corbett NP.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* A total of six in the Nainital area.

**Indian Spotted Eagle** ♦ *Clanga hastata* Three in Keoladeo.

**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* Up to 10 a day in Keoladeo.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraetus pennatus* Only seen at Sultanpur and along the Vinayak road.

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* Small numbers on five days.

**Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* Two birds in Keoladeo.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata* A total of five birds at Ranthambhore, and two at the Chambal River.



Small Pratincole at the Chambal river (Mitchell Harris).

- Shikra** *Accipiter badius* Widespread in the lowlands.
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Three birds were noted.
- Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* A total of 15 birds noted.
- Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* One fine male in the grasslands of Dhikala in Corbett NP.
- Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* One in Keoladeo.
- Black Kite (Black-eared K)** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* Good numbers in Agra, a few elsewhere.
- Black Kite (Pariah K)** *Milvus [migrans] govinda* Widespread, but not seen in Ranthambhore.
- Pallas's Fish Eagle** ♦ *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Up to five a day, including a nest, in Corbett NP.
- Lesser Fish Eagle** ♦ *Haliaeetus humilis* Fairly common and noisy in Corbett NP.
- White-eyed Buzzard** ♦ *Butastur teesa* (NL) Two sightings in Ranthambhore.
- Himalayan Buzzard** ♦ *Buteo burmannicus* One along the Vinayak road in the Nainital area.
- Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* Two at the Chambal River.
- Brown Crake** ♦ *Amauornis akool* Some good sightings in Ranthambhore.
- White-breasted Waterhen** *Amauornis phoenicurus* Small numbers noted daily in the lowlands.
- Grey-headed Swampphen (G-breasted S)** *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Noted on all major wetlands.
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Noted on all major wetlands.
- Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* Abundant in Sultanpur and Keoladeo, smaller numbers elsewhere.
- Sarus Crane** ♦ *Antigone antigone* Between two to seven birds were seen on six days.
- Indian Stone-curlew** ♦ (I Thick-knee) *Burhinus indicus* Noted in Corbett, Ranthambhore and Keoladeo.
- Great Stone-curlew** ♦ (G Thick-knee) *Esacus recurvirostris* Noted at the Chambal and in Ranthambhore.
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Common in the lowlands.
- Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Three at Lake Soorval near Ranthambhore.
- River Lapwing** *Vanellus duvaucelii* Noted in the Corbett area, in the Banas River and at Lake Soorval.
- Yellow-wattled Lapwing** ♦ *Vanellus malabaricus* One at the Chambal Lodge and three at Lake Soorval.
- Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* Noted almost daily.
- White-tailed Lapwing** ♦ *Vanellus leucurus* Seen at Sultanpur and Keoladeo.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Noted on seven days.
- Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Two at the Chambal River and 200 at Lake Soorval.
- Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* Three at Lake Soorval.
- Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* 2-3 birds at Ranthambhore.





*Black-winged Stilt photographed from one of the hides at our hotel in Bharatpur (Hannu Jännes).*

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Only seen in Keoladeo, where the maximum count was 15.

**Bronze-winged Jacana** *Metopidius indicus* Small numbers were noted.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Fairly common in Ranthambhore, and one in Keoladeo.

**Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* Noted on ten days from Ranthambhore to Chambal.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Small numbers were seen on ten days.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* 10 at Lake Soorval near Ranthambhore.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* 25 at Lake Soorval, one in Ranthambhore and ten at Keoladeo.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Noted on five days in the lowlands.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers seen on seven days.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* Small numbers noted almost daily.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Small numbers from Ranthambhore to Agra.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Small numbers from Agra to Ranthambhor.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Hundreds in Keoladeo, and smaller numbers on other lowland wetlands.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* Small numbers noted from Ranthambhore to Chambal.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Widespread in small numbers.

**Indian Courser** ♦ *Cursorius coromandelicus* Two near Ranthambhore and one in the dry areas near Bharatpur.

**Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea* Hundreds in Corbet, smaller numbers at the Chambal, Lake Soorval and Sultanpur.

**Indian Skimmer** *Rynchops albicollis* Twenty at Lake Soorval, and four much closer at the Chambal River.

**Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G)** *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* A few at Lake Soorval, Chambal and Corbett.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* Ten at Lake Soorval.

**River Tern** ♦ *Sterna aurantia* Good numbers in Corbett and in Ranthambhore, and a few at the Chambal river.

**Black-bellied Tern** ♦ *Sterna acuticauda* Four at the Chambal River.

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* A total of seven in the Ranthambhore area, and five at the Chambal river.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* One at the Chambal River and five at Lake Soorval.

**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* Two near Bharatpur and ten at Lake Soorval near Ranthambhore.

**Painted Sandgrouse** ♦ *Pterocles indicus* 12 on the outskirts of Sawai Madhpur.



*Painted Sandgrouse in the outskirts of Sawai Madhpur (Mitchell Harris).*

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

**Speckled Wood Pigeon** ♦ *Columba hodgsonii* (NL) One near Nainital for part of the group members.

**Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D) *Streptopelia orientalis*** Small numbers in the north.

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*** Widespread.

**Red Turtle Dove (R Collared D) *Streptopelia tranquebarica*** Small numbers in Corbett and again in Rajasthan.

**Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*** Widespread.

**Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*** Widespread and common.

**Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*** Only two, in Corbett.

**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon** ♦ (Y-legged G P) *Treron phoenicopterus* Rather common in the lowlands.

**Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*** Widespread in small numbers in the lowlands.

**Asian Koel (Common K) *Eudynamis scolopaceus*** Small numbers (mostly heard) in the lowlands.

**Common Hawk-Cuckoo** ♦ *Hierococcyx varius* Two seen and four more heard in the lowlands.

**Indian Scops Owl** ♦ *Otus bakkamoena* Noted at the Chambal Lodge, Bharatpur and Ranthambhore.

**Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl** ♦ (Forest E O) *Bubo nipalensis* Three, with stunning views, in Corbett NP.

**Dusky Eagle-Owl** ♦ *Bubo coromandus* A family party of three in Keoladeo.

**Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*** We had magnificent views of roosting birds in Corbett and in Ranthambhore.

**Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*** One along the Vinayak road in the north was a pleasant surprise.

**Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H)** Two birds heard in the north

**Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*** A total of six in the north.

**Jungle Owlet** ♦ *Glaucidium radiatum* Two in Corbett NP.

**Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*** Widespread in the lowlands.

**Brown Hawk-Owl (B Boobook) *Ninox scutulata*** Three birds at Dhikala camp in Corbett NP.

**Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka*** Seen and heard along the Vinayak road and one also in Ranthambhore.

**Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*** One was seen in Dhikala, and few more were heard there.

**Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis*** One seen near Sawai Madhpur, and also heard there and in Dhikala.

**Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*** Sighted on four days in the Corbett area.

**White-rumped Spinetail** ♦ (W-r Needletail) *Zoonavena sylvatica* Small numbers daily in Corbett.

**Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*** One in Ranthambhore for part of the group.

**Little Swift *Apus affinis*** Widespread.

**Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*** Widespread.

**Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*** One was seen briefly in Ranthambhore and one was heard in Corbett.

**White-throated Kingfisher (W-breasted K) *Halcyon smyrnensis*** Widespread in the lowlands.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*** Small numbers noted on eleven days.





*Rufous-bellied Woodpecker (Bob Wallace) and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (Mitchell Harris).*

- Crested Kingfisher (Himalayan Pied K) *Megaceryle lugubris*** A handful of birds in the north.
- Pied Kingfisher (Lesser P K) *Ceryle rudis*** Widespread in small numbers.
- Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis athertoni*** Two in Corbett NP.
- Green Bee-eater (Little G B-e, Oriental G B-e) *Merops orientalis*** Noted almost daily, except in the Nainital area.
- Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*** Fairly common in Corbett NP.
- Eurasian Hoopoe (Common H) *Upupa epops*** Widespread in small numbers.
- Great Hornbill (G Pied H) *Buceros bicornis*** 13 including a flock of ten and some amazing views in Corbett NP.
- Indian Grey Hornbill ♦ *Ocyrceros birostris*** Widespread in small numbers.
- Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens*** Fairly common in the hills in the north and visiting the feeder at Sat Tal.
- Brown-headed Barbet ♦ *Psilopogon zeylanicus*** Rather common in Sultanpur and again in Bharatpur-Chambal.
- Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus*** Common in the Corbett-Kumeria area.
- Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus*** A total of seven with great views in Corbett NP.
- Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*** Widespread in the lowlands.
- Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*** Four were noted.
- Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker ♦ (Indian P W) *Yungipicus nanus*** One in Ranthambhore.
- Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (G-c W) *Yungipicus canicapillus*** A total of nine in the north.
- Brown-fronted Woodpecker ♦ (B-f Pied W) *Dendrocopos auriceps*** A total of twelve in the northern hills.
- Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos hyperythrus*** Two, a pair, along the Vinayak road in the north.
- Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker ♦ (F-b Pied W) *Dendrocopos macei*** A total of eight in the Corbett area.
- Himalayan Woodpecker ♦ *Dendrocopos himalayensis*** One seen and another heard along the Vinayak road.
- Greater Yellownape *Chrysophlegma flavinucha*** A few in the north.
- Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*** One bird in Kumeria.
- Streak-throated Woodpecker ♦ *Picus xanthopygaeus*** This year only three, all of them in Corbett NP.
- Scaly-bellied Woodpecker *Picus squamatus*** One seen well and few more heard in the Nainital area.
- Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*** Noted almost daily in the north.
- Himalayan Flameback ♦ *Dinopium shorii*** One in Kumeria in the north.
- Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*** Small numbers noted almost daily in the lowlands.
- Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*** A total of nine in the Corbett area.
- White-naped Woodpecker ♦ *Chrysocolaptes festivus*** Handful of birds seen in Ranthambhore.
- Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*** Three birds in the Kumeria area.
- Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*** A flock of ten in Kumeria, and four the next day there.
- Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens*** A total of four birds with some great views in Corbett NP.



Red-billed Blue Magpie at Sattal (Bob Wallace).

Common Kestrel (Eurasian Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus* Noted on eight days.  
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (LO) One at Taj Mahal for the leader only.  
Slaty-headed Parakeet ♦ (Himalayan P) *Psittacula himalayana* Locally common in the north.  
Plum-headed Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula cyanocephala* Widespread in good numbers.  
Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Common in the Kumeria-Corbett NP area.  
Alexandrine Parakeet ♦ *Psittacula eupatria* Small numbers noted in Sultanpur, Kumeria and Ranthambhore.  
Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P) *Psittacula* Common in the lowlands.  
Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae* A flock of 20 birds on route to Nainital. Great views.  
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike (Pied F-S) *Hemipus picatus* Small numbers in the Kumeria-Corbett NP area.  
Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* Noted almost daily in Corbett and in the lowlands.  
Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* Seen almost daily in Corbett and in the lowlands.  
Marshall's Iora ♦ *Aegithina nigrolutea* (NL) One in Ranthambhore for half of the group.  
Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Small numbers were noted on seven days, mostly in Ranthambhore.  
Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* Common in the north.  
Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* Fairly common in the north.  
Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* Handful of birds in Ranthambhore.  
Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* Small numbers in Keoladeo and Ranthambhore.  
Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* A total of three along the Vinayak road.  
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Widespread in small numbers.  
Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* A total of three in and around the Banas river near Ranthambhore.  
Himalayan Shrike-Babbler ♦ *Pteruthius ripleyi* Difficult to find this year, only two along the Vinayak road.  
Indian Golden Oriole ♦ *Oriolus kundoo* One in Keoladeo.  
Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Fairly common in Corbett NP.  
Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* Only one seen and another heard in the north.  
Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Widespread and common.  
Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Small numbers were noted on five days.  
White-bellied Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus caerulescens* Common in Ranthambhore.  
Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* Noted on three days in the north.  
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* Two seen in the north.  
Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* Rather common around flowering trees in the north.  
White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* Common in the north.  
White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* Common in Ranthambhore, a few elsewhere.  
Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* One in Ranthambhore and one in Keoladeo.  
Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* A flock of 11 on the way to Nainital was a great surprise and a write-in.





*Himalayan Bulbul at Sattal (Hannu Jännes).*

- Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Noted on three days in the Nainital area.
- Black-headed Jay** ♦ (Lanceolated J) *Garrulus lanceolatus* Noted daily, with great views, in the northern hills.
- Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythroryncha* Fairly common in the north.
- Common Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis* Three birds with some excellent views in the north.
- Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Widespread in the lowlands, and especially common in Ranthambhore.
- Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae* Noted on four days in the north, with excellent views at the Sat Tal hide.
- House Crow** *Corvus splendens* Common in the lowlands.
- Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* Common in the hills around Nainital.
- Indian Jungle Crow** ♦ *Corvus culminatus* Common in the lowlands.
- Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* Rather common in the north.
- Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Fairly common in the north, few elsewhere.
- Yellow-browed Tit** *Sylviparus modestus* Fairly common along the Vinayak road in the north.
- Coal Tit** ♦ (Spot-winged T) *Periparus [ater] melanolophus* Quite common along the Vinayak road in the north.
- Cinereous Tit** (Grey T) *Parus cinereus* Noted in the Corbett-Kumeria area and again in Ranthambhor.
- Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* Small numbers in the northern hills.
- Himalayan Black-lored Tit** ♦ (B-I Tit) *Machlolophus xanthogenys* Small numbers in the northern hills.
- Rufous-tailed Lark** ♦ *Ammomanes phoenicura* (NL) Two sightings in the Ranthambhore area.
- Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** ♦ (A-c Finch-L) *Eremopterix griseus* Good numbers noted in the dry country.
- Indian Bush Lark** ♦ *Mirafra erythroptera* Small numbers noted in the dry country in Bharatpur and Ranthambhore.
- Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Common in Corbett NP and few heard in Rantambore.
- Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Small numbers noted in the dry country from Chambal to Ranthambhore.
- Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* One in Corbett NP and 50 near Bharatpur.
- Sand Lark** *Alaudala raytal* Two at the Chambal river.
- Black-crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus flaviventris* One along the Kumeria-Mohan road.
- Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus* Fairly common in the Corbett-Kumeria area.
- Himalayan Bulbul** (White-cheeked B) *Pycnonotus leucogenys* Common in the north.
- White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucotis* Only seen in Keoladeo.
- Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* Everywhere.
- Ashy Bulbul** *Hemixos flava* Small numbers on four days in the north.



Nepal Cupwing in Kumeria (Mitchell Harris).

**Black Bulbul** ♦ (Himalayan B B) *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Common in the north.  
**Grey-throated Martin** (G-t Sand M) *Riparia chinensis* Widespread in the lowlands.  
**Pale Martin** ♦ (P Sand M) *Riparia diluta* One bird by the Kosi river.  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Widespread.  
**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* Rather common from Ranthambhore to Chambal.  
**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* 15 along the Vinayak road.  
**Dusky Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne concolor* Noted daily in the Ranthambhore area.  
**Nepal House Martin** *Delichon nipalense* 50 en route to Nainital.  
**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Small numbers noted on eight days.  
**Streak-throated Swallow** ♦ (Indian Cliff S) *Petrochelidon fluvicola* Good numbers at breeding sites on two days.  
**Scaly-breasted Cupwing** *Pnoepyga albiventer* One was seen and another one was heard in the Sat Tal area.  
**Nepal Cupwing** ♦ *Pnoepyga immaculata* Great views of one in the Kumeria area. Also one heard in the Corbett NP.  
**Pygmy Cupwing** *Pnoepyga pusilla* (H) Heard in Corbett NP.  
**Black-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus schisticeps* Small numbers noted along the Vinayak road.  
**Aberrant Bush Warbler** *Horornis flavolivaceus* One to two birds on four days in Corbett and Sat Tal.  
**Grey-bellied Tesia** (Yellow-browed T) *Tesia cyaniventer* Three were heard in Corbett NP.  
**Grey-sided Bush Warbler** *Cettia brunnifrons* Good views of three at Sattal, and two were heard in Corbett.  
**Chestnut-headed Tesia** *Cettia castaneocoronata* Two birds were seen in the north.  
**Black-throated Bushtit** (Red-headed Tit, B-t Tit) *Aegithalos concinnus* Noted on four days in the north.  
**Buff-barred Warbler** (Orange-b Leaf W) *Phylloscopus pulcher* Small numbers on four days in the north.  
**Hume's Leaf Warbler** (H's W) *Phylloscopus humei* Widespread.  
**Brooks's Leaf Warbler** ♦ *Phylloscopus subviridis* Two in Sultanpur.  
**Lemon-rumped Warbler** (L-r Leaf W) *Phylloscopus chloronotus* Noted on five days in the north.  
**Sulphur-bellied Warbler** ♦ *Phylloscopus griseolus* One in Bharatpur.  
**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis* Good views of two in the outskirts of Nainital  
**Common Chiffchaff** (Siberian C) *Phylloscopus [collybita] tristis* Widespread, mainly in the lowlands.  
**Whistler's Warbler** ♦ *Seicercus whistleri* Relatively common in the Corbett-Kumeria area and in Sattal.  
**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Small numbers noted mainly in the lowlands.  
**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps* One near Sattal.  
**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* Two in Corbett NP and one at Sattal with some good views.  
**Grey-hooded Warbler** *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos* Good numbers in the north.  
**Clamorous Reed Warbler** ♦ (Indian R W) *Acrocephalus [stentoreus] brunescens* Common in Keoladeo.  
**Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* One in Keoladeo.  
**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* One in Dhikala in Corbett, and a few in Keoladeo.  
**Sykes's Warbler** ♦ *Iduna rama* (H) One heard in Sultanpur.





*Streaked Laughingthrush is a common bird in the Nainital region (Hannu Jännes).*

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* Five in the grasslands near Dhikala in Corbett.  
**Golden-headed Cisticola (Bright-capped C)** *Cisticola exilis* Five in the grasslands in Corbett NP.  
**Striated Prinia** *Prinia crinigera* Noted on two days in the north.  
**Rufous-fronted Prinia** ♦ *Prinia buchanani* Fair numbers in the Ranthambhore area.  
**Grey-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii* Widespread.  
**Graceful Prinia** ♦ *Prinia gracilis* One in Rathambore and two at the Chambal River.  
**Jungle Prinia** ♦ *Prinia sylvatica* Two near the Chambal River.  
**Ashy Prinia** *Prinia socialis* Widespread.  
**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornate* Widespread.  
**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius* Widespread.  
**Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys* Small numbers with excellent views in the north.  
**Black-chinned Babbler** ♦ *Stachyridopsis pyrrhops* Small numbers with excellent views on six days in the north.  
**Common Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides caudata* Common from Ranthambhore to Chambal.  
**Large Grey Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides malcolmi* Common in the lowlands.  
**Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striata* Widespread in good numbers.  
**White-crested Laughingthrush** *Garrulax leucolophus* This amazing bird was seen on five days.  
**Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush** ♦ *Garrulax rufogularis* Great views of four at the feeder at Sattal.  
**White-throated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax albogularis* Big flocks were encountered on four days in the hills.  
**Striated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax striatus* Only few of this great looking bird were seen in the hills.  
**Streaked Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron lineatum* Rather common in the hills in the north.  
**Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush (Red-headed L)** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum* Good views at Nainital.  
**Blue-winged Minla** *Minla cyanouroptera* Small numbers of this handsome bird noted on three days.  
**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea* We had great views of this beauty in the north.  
**Rufous Sibia** ♦ *Heterophasia capistrata* Common in the hills.  
**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* Widespread in small numbers.  
**Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris* One in Sultanpur.  
**Yellow-eyed Babbler** *Chrysomma sinense* Small numbers noted.



*Red-billed Leiothrix at the feeder in Sattal (Bob Wallace).*

**Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis* One in the Kumeria area.

**Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus* Widespread, noted almost daily.

**Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** *Sitta cinnamoventris* Small numbers at the lower elevations in the north.

**White-tailed Nuthatch** ♦ *Sitta himalayensis* Common in higher areas in the north.

**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis* Noted daily in the Corbett-Kumeria area.

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* Two along the Kosi River.

**Bar-tailed Treecreeper** ♦ *Certhia himalayana* Noted on four days in the higher hills in the north.

**Jungle Myna** ♦ *Acridotheres fuscus* Small numbers in Corbett NP.

**Bank Myna** ♦ *Acridotheres ginginianus* Good numbers in the lowlands.

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* Everywhere.

**Pied Myna (Asian P Starling)** *Gracupica contra* Widespread in the lowlands.

**Chestnut-tailed Staring** *Sturnus malabarica* Five in Corbett NP.

**Brahminy Starling** ♦ *Sturnia pagodarum* Rather common from Ranthambhore to Chambal.

**Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* Common at Keoladeo, also noted at Sultanpur and in Ranthambhore.

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* One at Lake Soorval near Ranthambhore.

**Orange-headed Thrush** *Geokichla citrina* Two sightings at Keoladeo, and one at our hotel in Bharatpur.

**Long-billed Thrush** ♦ (L-b Ground-T) *Zoothera monticola* This monster was seen well in Kumeria and at Sat Tal.

**Tickell's Thrush** ♦ *Turdus unicolor* One seen in Corbett by some, and two birds at Keoladeo.

**Grey-winged Blackbird** *Turdus boulboul* Rather common, seen on four days in the north.

**Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis* A total of five in the north.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* A flock of seven along the Vinayak road.

**Indian Robin** ♦ (I Black R) *Copsychus fulicatus* Common in the lowlands.

**Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis* Common in the lowlands.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae* Small numbers in Ranthambhore.

**Small Niltava** *Niltava macgrigoriae* A few, with excellent views, in the north.

**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus* Small numbers noted daily in the north. Stunning bird!

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Small numbers in Ranthambhore, and in and around Bharatpur.

**Himalayan Rubythroat** ♦ (Himalayan R) *Calliope pectoralis* Five seen in the north.

**Himalayan Bluetail (H Red-flanked Bush Robin)** *Tarsiger rufilatus* Two seen in the north.

**Golden Bush Robin** ♦ *Tarsiger chrysaeus* One at Sattal.

**Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* Great views of one near Sattal.

**Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* Two, with good views, in the north.

**Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus* Common in the north.

**Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher (Orange-g F)** *Ficedula strophiatea* Only one was seen.





Golden Bush Robin (Hannu Jännes).

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* Small numbers noted almost daily in the lowlands.

**Taiga Flycatcher (Red-throated F)** *Ficedula albicilla* Widespread in small numbers.

**Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra* One attractive male in Corbett NP.

**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* One along the Vinayak road in the north.

**Ultramarine Flycatcher** ♦ *Ficedula superciliaris* Small numbers noted almost daily in the north.

**Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor* Small numbers almost daily, with good views, in the north.

**Blue-capped Redstart** ♦ *Phoenicurus coeruleocephala* A total of four in the Nainital area.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Widespread in small numbers in the lowlands.

**Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis* Three sighted in the north.

**Plumbeous Water Redstart (Plumbeous R)** *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Rather common in the north.

**White-capped Redstart (River Chat, W-c Water R)** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* Common in the north.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* One along the Kosi River in the north and another one at the Chambal river.

**Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* Ten or so in the hills in the north.

**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* Widespread in small numbers.

**Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* Widespread in small numbers in Corbett and in the lowlands.

**Grey Bush Chat** *Saxicola ferreus* Common in the north, and two in Ranthambhore.

**Brown Rock Chat** ♦ *Oenanthe fusca* Scattered records in the lowlands.

**Variable Wheatear** ♦ (Eastern Pied W) *Oenanthe picata* Two in the Ranthambhore region.

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons* One in Kumeria.

**Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii* A few in the garden of our hotel in Kumeria.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* One in the north.

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (Buff-bellied F)** *Dicaeum ignipectus* Two seen and two more heard in the north.

**Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticus* Common and widespread.

**Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis* A total of three along the Vinayak road.

**Black-throated Sunbird (B-breasted S)** *Aethopyga saturata* One in the Sattal area.

**Crimson Sunbird** *Aethopyga siparaja* A total of 12 in the north.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Common and widespread, noted almost daily.

**Sind Sparrow** ♦ *Passer pyrrhonota* A total of eight in Sultanpur.



*Spotted Forktail (Mitchell Harris).*

**Russet Sparrow (Cinnamon S) *Passer rutilans*** Common in the hills in the north.

**House Sparrow X Russet Sparrow** A hybrid male, apparently between these two species, in Dhikala.

**Yellow-throated Sparrow (Chestnut-shouldered Petronia) *Gymnoris xanthocollis***

**Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*** 20 near the Chambal river.

**Indian Silverbill ♦ *Euodice malabarica*** Small numbers from Ranthambhore to Chambal.

**Altai Accentor ♦ *Prunella himalayana*** 100 or so at the Cheer Pheasant site along the Vinayak road.

**Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiata*** A few were seen.

**Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*** Unidentified Yellow Wagtails were seen in flight near Bharatpur.

**Western Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's W) *Motacilla [flava] beema*** 400 at Lake Soorval and 10 at the Banas River.

**Western Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] feldegg*** 25 at the Banas River.

**Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*** Widespread in small numbers.

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*** Widespread in ones and twos.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*** A few unidentified White Wagtails were seen.

**White Wagtail (White W) *Motacilla [alba] alba*** Noted almost daily in the lowlands.

**White Wagtail ♦ (Masked W) *Motacilla [alba] personata*** Noted on four days.

**White Wagtail (Amur W) *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis*** Only two were identified, in Ranthambhore.

**White-browed Wagtail ♦ *Motacilla maderaspatensis*** Widespread in small numbers.

**Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*** Widespread in small numbers.

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*** Small numbers in the Ranthambhore area and two in the Chambal.

**Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*** One in Corbett NP.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*** Quite a few in Ranthambhore, Bharatpur and Chambal.

**Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*** 10 or so in the north.

**Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*** Two in Corbett NP.

**Upland Pipit ♦ *Anthus Sylvanus*** Good sightings along the Vinayak road in the north.

**Brown Bullfinch ♦ *Pyrrhula nipalensis*** A flock of six near Nainital.

**Spot-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas melanozanthos*** A pair eating wild cherries at Pangot. A write-in.

**Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R) *Carpodacus erythrurus*** A scatter of records including a flock of 15 in Bharatpur.

**Blyth's Rosefinch ♦ *Carpodacus grandis*** A flock of five along the Vinayak road in the north.

**Pink-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus rodochroa*** A total of five in the north.

**Yellow-breasted Greenfinch ♦ (Himalayan G) *Chloris spinoides*** Ten on route to Nainital.

**Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*** Five near Nainital.

**Crested Bunting *Emberiza lathami*** About twenty in Ranthambhore.

**Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*** Sighted on three days in the Nainital area.





*Female Pink-browed Rosefinch at Nainital (Mitchell Harris).*

**White-capped Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza stewarti* Two at the Kosi river, and 25 or so in Ranthambhore.

**Red-headed Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza bruniceps* One in Ranthambhore and a flock of 20 near Bharatpur.



*Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush was easy to see and photograph at a feeder in Sattal (Hannu Jännes).*



*Jungle Cat photographed from one of the hides at our hotel in Bharatpur (Mitchell Harris).*

## MAMMALS

- Asian Elephant (Indian E)** *Elephas maximus* 40 or so in Corbett NP.
- Rhesus Monkey** *Macaca mulatta* Widespread and common.
- Northern Plains Gray Langur** *Semnopithecus entellus* Common in Ranthambhore.
- Tarai Gray Langur (Terai G L)** *Semnopithecus hector* Common in the Kumeria-Corbett region.
- Nepal Gray Langur** *Semnopithecus schistaceus* Rather common in the Nainital region.
- Indian Hare** *Lepus nigricollis* A total of five in the lowlands.
- Indian Desert Gerbil** *Meriones hurrinae* One in the dry areas outside Bharatpur.
- House Rat (Black R)** *Rattus rattus* A few in Ranthambhore.
- Five-striped Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus pennantii* Common in the lowlands.
- Jungle Cat** *Felis chaus* Two in Corbett NP, and couple of sightings at our hotel in Bharatpur.
- Leopard** *Panthera pardus* A total of four in Ranthambhore.
- Tiger** *Panthera tigris* A pair (plus a roaring couple) in Corbett and six in Ranthambhore. Brilliant encounters!
- Small Indian Mongoose** *Herpestes auropunctatus* Two in Bharatpur.
- Indian Grey Mongoose (Common M)** *Herpestes edwardsii* One in Ranthambhore.
- Ruddy Mongoose** *Herpestes smithii* Regularly encountered in Ranthambhore.
- Striped Hyena** *Hyaena hyaena* (NL) One in the outskirts of Sawai Madhopur.
- Common Palm Civet (Common P C)** *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* One at the Chambal Safari Lodge.
- Small Indian Civet** *Viverricula indica* One at the Bagh hotel in Bharatpur.
- Honey Badger** *Mellivora capensis* One in Ranthambhore for half of the group. A very rare animal there.
- Golden Jackal (Common J)** *Canis aureus* Noted on five days in the lowlands.
- Bengal Fox** *Vulpes bengalensis* Two in the outskirts of Sawai Madhopur.
- Sloth Bear** *Melursus ursinus* Great views of one on two days in Ranthambhore.
- Wild Boar (Wild B)** *Sus scrofa* Widespread in the lowlands.
- Ganges River Dolphin (Ganges D)** *Platanista gangetica* One at the Chambal River.
- Chital (Axis Deer, Spotted Deer)** *Axis axis* Common in Sultanpur, Corbett, Bharatpur and Ranthambhore.
- Hog Deer** *Axis porcinus* Small numbers in Corbett NP.
- Northern Red Muntjac (Indian M)** *Muntiacus vaginalis* Small numbers in the north.
- Sambar** *Rusa unicolor* Common in Corbett and Ranthambhore, also one in Bharatpur.





Document shot of the rare Honey Badger in Ranthambhore (Mitchell Harris).

**Nilgai (Blue Bull) *Boselaphus tragocamelus*** Widespread in the lowlands.

**Chinkara (Indian Gazelle) *Gazella bennettii*** Ten in Ranthambhore.

**Himalayan Goral (Goral) *Naemorhedus goral*** Four in the north.

**Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*** 50 at the Chambal Safari Lodge, 20 in Keoladeo and 20 in Ranthambhore.

**Short-nosed Fruit Bat *Cynopterus brachyotis*** Ten or so in the garden of the Chambal Safari Lodge.

#### REPTILES

**Indian Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina gangetica*** One at Keoladeo.

**Marsh Mugger *Crocodylus palustris*** Noted at the Chambal River and in Ranthambhore.

**Gharial *Gavialis gangetica*** Noted at the Chambal River.

**Bengal Monitor (Common Indian Monitor) *Varanus bengalensis*** One at Keoladeo.

**Indian Rock Python *Python molurus*** One was seen at Keoladeo on two consecutive days.



Monkey business. Northern Plains Grey Langurs in Ranthambhore (Hannu Jännes)