



*We had great views of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard in Desert National Park (Frédéric Pelsy).*

## **WESTERN INDIA**

**23 JANUARY – 8 FEBRUARY 2019**

**LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES**

Another very successful Birdquest tour to western of India traced an epic route through the states of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat, with a short visit to the state of Maharashtra to conclude. We recorded no fewer than 326 bird species and 20 mammals, and, more importantly, we found almost every bird specialty of the dry western and central regions of the subcontinent including a number of increasingly scarce species with highly restricted ranges. Foremost of these were the impressive Great Indian Bustard (with a world population of less than 100 individuals), the stunningly patterned White-naped Tit, White-browed (or Stoliczka's) Bush Chat and the Critically Endangered Indian Vulture. Many Indian subcontinent endemics were seen with Rock Bush Quail, Red Spurfowl, Red-naped (or Black) Ibis, Indian Courser, Painted Sandgrouse, the very localized Forest Owlet, Mottled Wood Owl and Indian Eagle-Owl, White-naped Woodpecker, Plum-headed and Malabar Parakeets, Bengal Bush, Rufous-tailed and Sykes's Larks, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, the lovely White-bellied Minivet, Marshall's Iora, Indian Black-lored Tit, Brahminy

Starling, Rufous-fronted Prinia, Rufous-vented Grass-Babbler, Green Avadavat, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Indian Spotted Creeper, Vigors's Sunbird, Sind Sparrow and the range restricted western form of the Jerdon's Babbler. Amongst many other highlights were the much sought-after Grey Hypocolius, the amazing Demoiselle Crane spectacle at Khichan, Red-necked and Laggar Falcons, Crab-plover, Yellow-eyed Dove, Sykes's Nightjar and Pallid (or Striated) Scops Owl, Hoopoe, Sand and Desert Larks, Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks, all three forms of Variable Wheatear, Red-tailed Wheatear, White-tailed Stonechat, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Desert Whitethroat, Mountain Chiffchaff, Sulphur-bellied Warbler and Crested, Grey-necked, White-capped and Striolated Buntings. A new feature of the tour was a brief extempore visit to a new coastal site in Gujarat, where we were fortunate to find an amazing flock of 96 Indian Skimmers, now a rare and very localized bird in India. It was also great to find a splendid male Finsch's Wheatear, apparently the second record for the Indian Subcontinent, at the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer.



*The impressive Golden Temple sits like a golden barge on the still waters of a large artificial lake (Frédéric Pelsy).*

As all participants had arrived in Amritsar, the starting point for our tour, the day before its official start, we decided to pay a visit to the famous Golden Temple instead of the scheduled visit the next day, which was to be a very busy and long birding day. After walking few kilometers along the busy streets of Amritsar, we reached the impressive Golden Temple, which sits like a glowing golden barge on the still waters of a large artificial lake, surrounded by a white marble-clad precinct complete with numerous subsidiary buildings and minarets. Sikh pilgrims come from all over the world to visit the shrine, which contains the original copy of the Sikh holy book, the Granth Sahib, and we joined them to look at the book and the priests that guard it.

Our Western Indian adventure began officially well before sun rise the next morning in the lobby of our hotel in Amritsar from where we drove to Harike, a large wetland area surrounded by vast reed beds and agricultural land. First stop was at a large stand of Elephant Grass, where couple of hours of birding provided great views of one of the avian star attractions of Harike, the Rufous-vented Grass Babbler, a species which was previously placed within Prinias and was known by the name Rufous-vented Prinia. Another major target, the "Sind" Jerdon's Babbler also proved easy to locate but getting "tickable" views for all of us, was

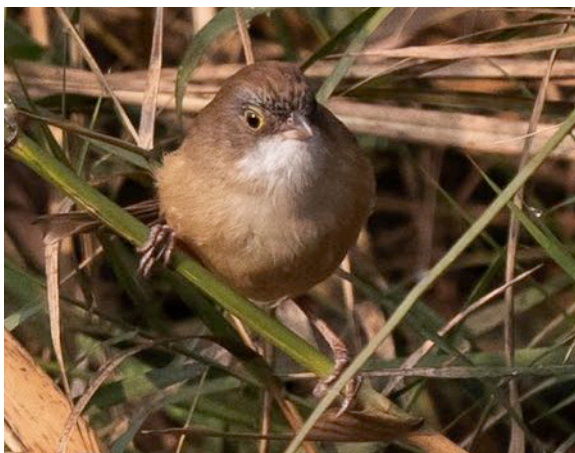


another matter. This western taxa *scindicum* of Jerdon's Babbler was earlier thought to occur only in the Indus Valley of Pakistan, but it was discovered here in Harike as recently as October 2012 by Indian birders. It was also a big relief for me personally to note that Mountains Chiffchaffs were common and vocal, meaning that we didn't need to spend any time searching them as on some previous trips. A supporting cast of commoner species in this very bird rich area included Bengal Bush Lark, Yellow-bellied, Graceful and Plain Prinias, heard only Striated Grassbird, Striated Babbler, Black-breasted Weavers, White-crowned Penduline Tits, Paddyfield Warblers, several Bluethroats, Water Pipits, many Citrine Wagtails, Black Francolins and several handsome White-tailed Lapwings. After a lunch in a local dhaba, we headed to an area, where our main target, the restricted range Sind Sparrow was easily found, and we had great views of a small flock of them eating seed heads. A walk through a marsh and birding along the lakeside gave us good views of Little, Indian and Great Cormorants and Oriental Darters, while noisy River Terns flew around.



*Striated Babbler and Rufous-vented Grass Babbler and were easy to see at Harike (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Wildfowl were present in large numbers, and amongst the many commoner species were handsome Indian Spot-billed Ducks, Ferruginous Ducks and Red-crested Pochards. As we still needed to find one more Harike specialty, we spent the late afternoon in the same area we had visited in the morning, and managed to dig out two White-tailed Stonechats, which were unfortunately rather distant, as they were on the wrong side of a river, but with the aid of telescope all the critical field marks were clearly visible.



*Jerdon's Babbler and White-crowned Penduline Tit at Harike (Frédéric Pelsy).*



The next day was mainly occupied by travelling as we had over 500 kilometers to drive, but after a quick breakfast at our favorite dhaba in Harike, we had time for a brief check of some riverside vegetation nearby, where good views of a Moustached Warbler, never an easy bird on this itinerary, were had. Later, when taking a shortcut on some country roads, we came across a massive flock of Rose-ringed Parakeets, fed inside a walled-off compound by local people. Although a common and widespread species in India, the sight and sound of thousands of parakeets flocking around the food was really impressive. We reached our destination, the plains of Tal Chappar, late in the afternoon, and spent some time birding in the nearby thorn forest, where the best bird was Eastern Orphean Warbler.



*The rare and localized Indian Spotted Creeper at Tal Chappar (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next morning we were back in the forest to look for our main target, the rare and localized Indian Spotted Creeper. This time it didn't take too long to locate two of these enigmatic birds, which we then followed for quite some time taking plenty of pictures and even some sound recordings. Another good bird spotted here was a Brook's Leaf Warbler. Later in the morning we visited Tal Chappar Wildlife Sanctuary, a beautiful area of flat grassland, which we birded by driving around along the narrow tracks that crisscross the area. The most important target bird here was the White-browed (or Stoliczka's) Bush Chat, which proved easy to find once we got to the right habitat. Another memorable experience was a stop at a small pool, where many Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse came to drink giving us great views and photo opportunities. We also saw a good number of Blackbucks, which must be one of the handsomest antelopes on the planet, and also many Nilgais. Before lunch we paid a visit to a quarry, which has previously been a breeding site for Indian Eagle Owl, but unfortunately was now unoccupied. After a simple lunch at the Forest Resthouse, where part of the group had stayed overnight, we drove to Bikaner, where we had time to pay a short visit to the famous carcass dump on the outskirts of Bikaner, which is now run by the Forest Department as a reserve for the large number of wintering raptors. During the short visit, we saw hundreds of Steppe Eagles, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures with smaller numbers of Black and Black-eared Kites and a few Himalayan and Cinereous Vultures and Eastern Imperial Eagles. Most of the Egyptian Vultures belonged to the northern nominate subspecies, which occurs in lowland India during the winter months, but we also managed to find

representatives of the resident subspecies *ginginianus*, which, according to preliminary results of an on-going research project, is a potential split from the nominate subspecies. Other birds noted included a small number of Yellow-eyed Doves. In Bikaner we stayed at rather upmarket accommodation, which was once the palace of the king of the former Bikaner state, the Maharaja Ganga Singh. The large garden of the palace hotel is a popular venue for wedding receptions, and tonight there was not one but two parties going on. One wedding ceremony was over by 10 pm, but the other one, with a wall of massive loudspeakers just 20 meters from my room door, was still going on at one am. Luckily a recently purchased a set of noise cancelling headphones kept me sane during the night!



*Yellow-eyed Doves were very numerous in the outskirts of Bikaner (Frédéric Pelsy).*

The following day we returned to the carcass dump on the outskirts of Bikaner, where we obtained great views of the Yellow-eyed Doves, a species that spends the winter on the plains of north western India. We estimated we saw around 3000 of them during the morning. From Bikaner we drove across the Thar Desert to the little village of Khichan of Demoiselle Crane fame. On this occasion the cranes behaved in accord with expectations, and we spent some quality time with the large numbers of confiding cranes coming to drink at a small pool in the outskirts of the village and offering great photo opportunities. Later, after a tasty lunch in a local resort, we headed to Jaisalmer, and reached our accommodation, one of the many tented camps that has been built in the middle of the desert near Sam, in the evening.



*Asian Desert Warbler and Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark at Desert National Park (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse is positively common on this itinerary (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Early the next morning we took jeeps and headed for the famous Desert National Park, the last stronghold of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. The best birding area here, the Sudasari Enclosure, where there are no cattle and consequently good grasslands, which stretch for 2-3 miles in each direction, was now closed to all visitors to ensure peace and quiet for the bustards, a good move in my opinion. Dalveer, our knowledgeable guide, took us to another spot nearby, where we soon spotted a group of three bustards flying past us, offering decent views although a little too distant for great photos. This grievance was soon corrected as another flock of three bustards flew past us, this time much closer and in perfect morning light! What a thrill it was to witness the flight of this majestic bird, which sadly is heading for almost certain extinction during the next 10-20 years as almost no breeding success has been reported for many years, so the surviving population of less than 100 birds is mainly of aging adults. Later we had reasonable scope views of four more bustards feeding in tall grasses some distance away. Other interesting birds sighted during the day, which was spent within 10 km radius from Sudasari, included five species of vulture, of which White-rumped and Red-headed Vultures were new for the trip, a couple of Tawny Eagles, Montagu's Harrier, an amazing total of 40 Cream-coloured Coursers (in some years this species can be tricky to find here), two Laggar Falcons, many Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks, Bimaculated Larks, Desert Whitethroat, Asian Desert Warbler, Trumpeter Finches and Isabelline, Desert and Variable Weathers. During our lunch break Frédéric showed us some document shots he had managed to take earlier in the morning of a skittish wheatear that had disappeared before any of us had time to check it properly, and it was soon concluded that it was actually a Finsch's Wheatear, apparently a NEW bird for the Indian Subcontinent! Obviously, we rushed back to the site, and found the wheatear, a first-winter male, easily, and spent quite some time with it. What a brilliant find, thank you Frédéric! Later in the evening our guide Dalveer posted some photos of the bird in Facebook and soon after that someone else posted photos and videos of another Finsch's Weather photographed in Jaisalmer area a month earlier. It is unclear whether this was the same bird as ours, but anyway it makes our observation as the second record for the subcontinent!

Next morning our local guide took us to an area close to Pakistan border, that I had never visited before, for some additional desert birding. When we reached our destination, it turned out that foreigners are actually not allowed in this sensitive border area, but we tried to keep low profile and birded the sandy and rocky



*Greater Hoopoe-Lark is relatively difficult bird to find in India (Frédéric Pelsy).*

plains for most of the morning. The best birds were two pairs of Greater Hoopoe-Larks, a difficult bird to get in India, several Red-tailed Wheatears, 30(!) Cream-coloured Coursers, Tawny Eagle and 250 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. The afternoon was dedicated to the traditional visit to Jaisalmer city, where we had a couple of hours sightseeing in the old part of the town with its narrow alleys, old houses and merchant homes. The night after our departure from Sam a storm with very high winds hit this part of the desert and apparently destroyed all the tented tourist camps in the area. I am glad that we got away in time!



*Cream-coloured Courser and Red-tailed Wheatear were both sighted in the Jaisalmer area (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*Indian Eagle-Owl near Jaisalmer (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next day we left Sam and our tented camp behind and headed south to the remote village of Siana for a two night stay. On the way we stopped for some good early morning birding near Jaisalmer and had great views of an Indian Eagle-Owl, several Desert Larks, and a Syke's Warbler as well as other commoner species. It was late afternoon when we reached our lovely lodge run by an aristocratic Rajput family of hereditary landowners, and, after some refreshing coffee/tea we were ready for birding in the relatively remote and sparsely inhabited area of dry hills and plains that surround the village. Best birds of our late afternoon session included two confiding Indian Stone-curlews, several Painted Sandgrouse that came to drink at a pool after sunset, Indian Scops Owl (a pair breeding in the garden of our lodge), and a hooting Indian Eagle-Owl. We also spent some time in an area, where White-bellied Minivets were known to come to roost, but only managed very unsatisfactory views of a male that was calling in flight high above us.



*Male and female White-bellied Minivet at Siana (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*A pair of Red-necked Falcons in Siana (Frédéric Pelsy).*

The highlights of the following day in Siana with our capable local guides included a magnificent male White-bellied Minivet first thing in the morning, and later in the day a family party of five birds on the roadside, the critically endangered Indian Vultures around their breeding cliffs, a really magnificent pair of Red-necked Falcons, plus two Laggar Falcons and a splendid Shaheen a.k.a Peregrine Falcon of the local breeding form *peregrinator*, our first Indian Bush Larks, a White-browed Bush Chat and White-capped and several Striolated Buntings. The traditional night drive didn't really produce any of the hoped-for mammals, but we managed to locate one Indian Nightjar and a Pallid Scops Owl, our first ever record of the species here in Siana.



*Male and female Painted Sandgrouse in Siana (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Green Avadavat, our main reason to visit Mount Abu (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Our last morning in Siana was spent searching for Rock Bush Quail, which took quite some time but eventually brought success in the form of a showy male. During the search we also flushed three pairs of Painted Sandgrouse, saw yet another Indian Eagle-Owl and the only Grey-necked Bunting of the trip. After Siana the next stop was Mount Abu, where an afternoon's birding resulted many new birds with White-eyed and Common Buzzards, Oriental Turtle and Spotted Doves, Brown-headed Barbet, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Ashy and White-bellied Drongos, White-spotted Fantail, Indian Jungle Crow, Indian Black-lored Tit, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Grey-breasted Prinia, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Crested Bunting and, most importantly, the endearing Green Avadavat, our main reason to visit the mountain.

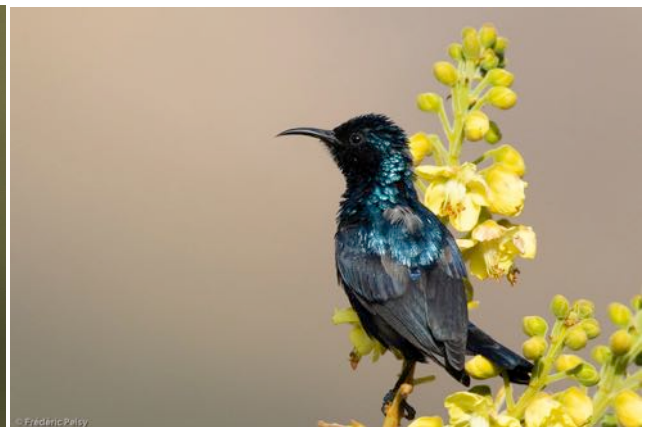


*Indian Scimitar Babbler on Mount Abu (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*Ashy Prinia and Indian Black-lored Tit on Mount Abu (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Both Oriental White-eye and Purple Sunbird were common on Mount Abu (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Yellow-eyed Babbler and Common Tailorbird from Mount Abu (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Indian Courser in the outskirts of Ahmedabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next morning a three hour birding session in the more forested mid-elevations of the mountain yielded many of the species we had seen the previous day plus Crested Honey Buzzard and Changeable Hawk-Eagle, and finally, after much searching, a pair of the endemic Indian Scimitar Babbler, which showed extremely well. We also spent quite some time following a calling Grey Junglefowl, which let us merry dance before finally sneaking away in the dense bushes. As we were leaving Mt Abu and Rajasthan behind to begin our journey to the low-lying state of Gujarat and our camp in Zainabad, we got a call from a local contact confirming that there were still two individuals left of the originally 120 strong flock of Sociable Lapwings wintering near Ahmedabad. As the intel was very fresh and the detour meant only two hours of extra driving, I decided to take the risk. When we arrived at the stake-out late in the afternoon, our contact was waiting for us with the news that the last two birds had left the area for good during the day. What a disappointment! The only consolation was that a nearby field hold a flock of 16 handsome Indian Coursers and we also got great views of majestic Sarus Cranes. As we arrived our camp in Zainabad, on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, rather late in the evening, it was decided that our scheduled night drive would be postponed until the next day.

As the sun rose next morning, we headed out into the saline wastelands of the Little Rann of Kutch. The main target bird in this habitat was Macqueen's Bustard, a winter visitor from Central Asia, which has become rare owing to both persecution and habitat change. We had info that the birds hadn't been seen for a few weeks, and our intensive search in the key area for this species seemed to confirm the fact they had left the area. The number of birds in the dry country here, and all over the drier western parts of India, seemed to be pretty low this year due to serious drought, and some of the species we are used to seeing in good numbers were very scarce. The more interesting species of the morning's birding were Sand Larks and a Syke's Nightjar that was roosting under some bushes and offered excellent close-up views. This was my first record of this species in broad daylight! We had many encounters with the beautiful Onagers (Indian Wild Ass) and the more ungainly Nilgais too. During the lunch break we admired couple of cute roosting Pallid Scops Owls, which were wintering in the camp grounds. In the afternoon we visited the Navra Talav Lake, which was thronged with birds, including Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Great White and Dalmatian





*Syke's Nightjar at Zainabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Pelicans and Small Pratincole. After Navra Talav we went to see a Striped Hyena, which showed really well. The night drive in the Khari area proved to be a bit of a fiasco as we couldn't find the hoped for Syke's Nightjars. Luckily, we had seen the species earlier during the day, so the pressure wasn't that great!



*Isabelline Shrike at Zainabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*We had great views of Striped Hyena at Zainabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Pallid Scops Owl in our camp in Zainabad and Indian Scops Owl in the garden of our resort in Siana (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*Part of the 96 strong flock of Indian Skimmers at Jamnagar (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next day it was time to try something new again. Instead of going straight to our next destination in western Gujarat we detoured via Jamnagar on the coast of the Arabian Sea. This proved to be a good move as the tidal beaches of Jamnagar proved to be a shorebird heaven and we quickly added a number of new species to our bird list including Western Reef Heron, Great Stone-curlew, Lesser and Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Broad-billed and Curlew Sandpiper, many Terek Sandpipers, Great Knot, Brown-headed, Pallas's and Slender-billed Gulls, Caspian, Lesser Crested, Little and hundreds of Gull-billed Terns, and, most importantly, a flock of 300 of the strange looking Crab-plovers. As if this was not enough, we also encountered an amazing flock of 96 Indian Skimmers roosting at a tidal pool. This was the first time this scarce and very localized Indian specialty had been seen on this tour. Due to the detour we reached our pleasant accommodation in Moti Virani rather late in the evening.



*Bay-backed Shrike at Zainabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*Male and female Grey Hypocolius in the Bhuj region (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Early the next morning we found ourselves somewhere in the Banni area searching the berry-bearing bushes for the enigmatic Grey Hypocolius. Thanks to some miscommunication between our local driver and our guide Dalveer, we had apparently ended up in completely wrong place, where no-one had really sighted the species for some time. After running around the bushes like headless chickens for couple of hours, I decided to call the search off and we retreated defeated to our accommodation for food and rest. The afternoon was spent birding the thorn forest, where we encountered two White-naped Tits and Yellow-crowned Woodpeckers and a dry, rocky wasteland in the outskirts of a small village, which yielded three Rock Bush Quails, and, after an extensive search, a total of eight Syke's Larks.



*A pair of Rock Bush Quails, always a tricky bird to find (Frédéric Pelsy).*





*We had great views of Syke's Lark in the Bhuj region (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Rufous-tailed Lark in the Bhuj area (Frédéric Pelsy).*



The next morning we walked along the Khawda road, lined with many berry-bearing bushes, waiting for the enigmatic Grey Hypocolius to appear, which it did pretty quickly and gave really great views for everyone. We counted six Hypocolius during the morning and also saw two Red-necked Falcons. Later in the day we found a few other missing target birds with Marshall's lora, Rufous-tailed Lark and a Jungle Prinia, which played hide and seek with us, but eventually showed well. We also managed additional sightings of White-naped Tits and Syke's Larks.

For the last morning in Gujarat, I asked the guys at CEDO to help us to find some species we still wanted to see, like Sirkeer Malkoha, but even the local birding experts failed to find this scarce bird for us in the draught conditions. In the afternoon we flew to Mumbai, where after a considerable search and several phone calls, we managed to connect with our team of drivers, who were supposed to meet us at the airport. It turned out that they had been there for the whole time, but I just couldn't understand that the sign they were carrying "Best Western India group" was for us! After passing the massive traffic jams of Mumbai, we picked up our excellent local guide Rohidas and some food before reaching our rather modest accommodation in Thane late in the evening.



*Forest Owlet at Tansa WLS near Mumbai at Zainabad (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next morning we started early for Tansa WLS, our birding destination for the day, stopping on the way for Jungle Nightjar and Mottled Wood Owl. The nightjar wasn't around, but we managed to connect with a pair of the owl and achieved decent views of this beautiful bird. After reaching the forest station of Tansa WLS at dawn, we walked the short distance to a well-known Forest Owlet territory. The bird was easy to locate in the top of a teak tree, as it called from time to time, and we spent quite some time admiring this very rare bird. Rediscovered by Pamela Rasmussen and others in northwest Maharashtra as recently as 1997, there had been a gap of over 100 years since a few specimens were taken in the late 19th century from various points along the Satpura range. Later in the day we found our other main target bird, the restricted range Vigors's Sunbird, plus a supporting cast of other interesting species including Booted Eagle, four White-eyed Buzzards, Jungle Owlet, Crested Treeswift, Alpine Swift, White-naped Woodpecker, our first Common loras, Black-hooded Orioles of the vocally distinct Peninsular Indian form *maderaspatanus*, Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Black-naped Monarchs, the recently split Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Tickell's Blue and Taiga Flycatchers, and Thick-billed and Pale-billed



Flowerpeckers. It was also nice to get good views of the very distinct *sommervillei* form of Jungle Babbler, which looks like a good future split. After sunset we had rather poor views of Savanna Nightjars and we heard more Mottled Wood Owls, which really seems to be common here.



*Jungle Owlet and Mottled Wood Owl at Tansa WLS (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Vigor's Sunbird and Golden-fronted Leafbird at Tansa WLS (Frédéric Pelsy).*

Next morning we visited another part of the sanctuary, which was new territory even for me, and proved to be a very pleasant area with birds like Red Spurfowl (for some of us), Blue-winged (or Malabar) Parakeet, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Golden-fronted and Jerdon's Leafbirds and Orange Minivet. After lunch and freshen-up in our accommodation and good dinner in a swish hotel in Mumbai, 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.

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

- 1st: Great Indian Bustard
- 2nd: Grey Hypocolius
- 3rd: Indian Spotted Creeper
- 4th: Forest Owlet & Syke's Nightjar



*Blue-winged (or (Malabar) Parakeet was seen at Tansa WLS (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Green Bee-eater is a common sight in Western India (Frédéric Pelsy).*





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*Demoiselle Cranes at Khichan (Frédéric Pelsy)*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

**Total of bird species recorded: 326**

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).

**Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus* Small numbers at Harike and Tal Chappar.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Hundreds in Harike and 20 at Navra Talav near Zainabad [*rubrirostris*].

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* Just a few noted at Navra Talav near Zainabad.

**Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* One, at Harike.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope* Good numbers in Harike and at Navra Talav near Zainabad

**Indian Spot-billed Duck (Burmese S-b D)** *Anas poecilorhyncha* Small numbers at four different locations.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* Fifty or so at Harike.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Numerous at Harike and also noted near Khichan.



Grey Francolin is common and widespread in the arid west of India (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Ferruginous Duck (F Pochard) *Aythya nyroca*** A few at Harike.  
**Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*** A few at Harike.  
**Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus*** Noted almost daily.  
**Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*** Two were heard at Harike and one was seen in Khichan.  
**Rock Bush Quail ♦ *Perdica argoondah*** Encountered in Siana and near Nakhatrana [*interpositus*].  
**Red Spurfowl ♦ *Galloperdix spadicea*** One at Tansa WLS.  
**Grey Junglefowl ♦ *Gallus sonneratii* (H)** One at Mt Abu.  
**Indian Peafowl (Common P) *Pavo cristatus*** Common and widespread. The national bird of India.  
**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*** Widespread [*albescens*].  
**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*** Good numbers at Navra Talav and Jamnagar.  
**Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*** Good numbers at Navra Talav and a few at Jamnagar.  
**Painted Stork ♦ *Mycteria leucocephala*** A few sightings.  
**Asian Openbill ♦ *Anastomus oscitans*** A handful of sightings.  
**Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*** Two near Tansa WLS.  
**Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus***  
**Red-naped Ibis ♦ (Indian Black Ibis) *Pseudibis papillosa*** Widespread.  
**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*** Common at suitable wetlands.  
**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*** Very small numbers this year.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*** Small numbers were noted.  
**Striated Heron *Butorides striata* (H)**  
**Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*** Widespread.  
**Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*** Common and widespread.  
**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***  
**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*** One seen at Harike.  
**Great Egret *Ardea alba***  
**Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia***  
**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***  
**Western Reef Heron (W R-Egret) *Egretta gularis*** Common around Jamnagar in coastal Gujarat.  
**Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*** Small numbers in Gujarat.  
**Dalmatian Pelican ♦ *Pelecanus crispus*** Three at Navra Talav near Zainabad.





Waiting for the target birds to emerge from the Elephant Grass in Harike (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger* Widespread in small numbers.  
**Indian Cormorant** ♦ (I Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Scattered sightings.  
**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Abundant in Harike and smaller numbers in Gujarat.  
**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* Abundant in Harike.  
**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* One at Harike.  
**Black-winged Kite (B-shouldered K)** *Elanus caeruleus* Widespread [*vociferus*].  
**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* Only noted in the dry west with 200 at Bikaner.  
**Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B)** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* 11 were seen in total [*ruficollis*].  
**White-rumped Vulture (Indian White-b V)** *Gyps bengalensis* One at DNP, Jaisalmer.  
**Indian Vulture** *Gyps indicus* Seven at Siana.  
**Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* Two at Bikaner and three at DNP, Jaisalmer.  
**Griffon Vulture (Eurasian G V)** *Gyps fulvus* Fairly common in the drier parts of Rajasthan.  
**Red-headed Vulture** *Sarcogyps calvus* Two at DNP, Jaisalmer.  
**Cinereous Vulture (Eurasian Black V)** *Aegypius monachus* 19 in the drier parts of Rajasthan.  
**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* (H) Heard only at Tansa WLS.  
**Short-toed Snake Eagle (S-t Eagle)** *Circaetus gallicus* A total of six were noted.  
**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus* One on Mt Abu.  
**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* Two at Harike.  
**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* One at Tansa WLS.  
**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* Three in the Jaisalmer area, and two on the way to Siana.  
**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* 200 at Bikaner dump, smaller numbers elsewhere.  
**Eastern Imperial Eagle (Imperial E)** *Aquila heliaca* A total of 12.  
**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata* One on the way to Siana and another one in Siana.  
**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* Widespread [*dussumieri*].  
**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Widespread in small numbers.  
**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Only noted in Harike where common.  
**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* A total of three were noted.  
**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* One nice male in Jaisalmer.  
**Black Kite (Black-eared K)** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* One in Harike and two at the Bikaner dump.  
**Black Kite (Pariah K)** *Milvus [migrans] govinda* Noted on four days only.



© Frédéric Pelsy

*Griffon Vulture at the carcass dump near Bikaner (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Juvenile Himalayan Griffon at the carcass dump near Bikaner (Frédéric Pelsy).*





Common Crane (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Two in Jamnagar. A write-in.

**White-eyed Buzzard** ♦ *Butastur teesa* One on Mt Abu and six at Tansa WLS.

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* Small numbers were noted on 12 days.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* One on Mt Abu.

**Great Indian Bustard** ♦ (Indian B) *Ardeotis nigriceps* A total of ten with some stunning views at DNP in Jaisalmer.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Small numbers at suitable wetlands.

**Grey-headed Swamphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus* A few noted.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

**Eurasian Coot (Common C)** *Fulica atra*

**Sarus Crane** ♦ *Antigone antigone* A total of nine near Ahmedabad.

**Demoiselle Crane** ♦ *Grus virgo* 4000 at Khichan, and smaller numbers on two other days.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus* Small numbers seen on nine days.

**Indian Stone-curlew (I Thick-knee)** *Burhinus indicus* Two at Siana, and four on the way to Jamnagar.

**Great Stone-curlew** ♦ (G Thick-knee) *Esacus recurvirostris* Six at Jamnagar.

**Crab-plover** ♦ *Dromas ardeola* 300 in Jamnagar.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* 40 near Tal Chappar and 200 at Zainabad and Jamnagar.

**Yellow-wattled Lapwing** ♦ (Y-w Plover) *Vanellus malabaricus* Eight in Bhuj and one in Zainabad.

**Red-wattled Lapwing (R-w Plover)** *Vanellus indicus* Common and widespread.

**White-tailed Lapwing** ♦ (W-t Plover) *Vanellus leucurus* Five at Harike.

**Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* 100 in Jamnagar.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* A total of five well scattered singletons.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* One in Harike, and good numbers at Navra Talav and in Jamnagar.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* 150 on the beach in Jamnagar.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Three on the beach in Jamnagar.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* Six in Jamnagar.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* 200 in Jamnagar.



A fine male of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* Noted near Ahmedabad, at Navra Talav and in Jamnagar.  
**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Six in Jamnagar.  
**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* 20 at Jamnagar.  
**Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* Small numbers on five days.  
**Broad-billed Sandpiper** ♦ *Calidris falcinellus* 15 in Jamnagar.  
**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* 30 in Jamnagar.  
**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Six in Harike.  
**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* 50 at Navra Talav near Zainabad and 10 in Jamnagar.  
**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* A few were encountered.  
**Terek Sandpiper** ♦ *Xenus cinereus* 300 in Jamnagar.  
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread in small numbers.  
**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* Widespread in small numbers.  
**Common Redshank** *Tringa tetanus* Noted in Harike and in Gujarat.  
**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Small numbers were noted.  
**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Small numbers seen.  
**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* (H)  
**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers were seen.  
**Cream-colored Courser** ♦ *Cursorius cursor* A total of 70 in the Jaisalmer area! A very high tally.  
**Indian Courser** ♦ *Cursorius coromandelicus* A flock of 16 near Ahmedabad.  
**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* Two at Navra Talav near Zainabad.  
**Small Pratincole** ♦ *Glareola lactea* One at Navra Talav near Zainabad.  
**Slender-billed Gull** *Chroicocephalus genei* 20 in the Jamnagar area.  
**Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* Ten at Harike, and 300 in the Jamnagar area.  
**Black-headed Gull (Common B-h G)** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Noted in Harike and Jamnagar.  
**Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G)** *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* Four at Harike and six in Jamnagar.





Caspian Tern at Jamnagar (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull (Steppe G) *Larus [fuscus] barabensis*** Noted in Harike.  
**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*** 500 in Jamnagar.  
**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*** 10 in Jamnagar.  
**Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*** 10 in Jamnagar.  
**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*** 10 in Jamnagar.  
**River Tern *Sterna aurantia*** Common in Harike, and two on the way to Zainabad.  
**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*** 15 in Harike and 10 in Jamnagar.  
**Indian Skimmer ◇ *Rynchops albicollis*** A flock of 96 in Jamnagar. A write-in.  
**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*** Fairly common in the arid areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat.  
**Painted Sandgrouse ◇ *Pterocles indicus*** Small numbers in Siana and again in the Bhuj area.  
**Rock Dove (R Pigeon) *Columba livia***  
**Yellow-eyed Pigeon ◇ (Y-e Dove) *Columba eversmanni*** We estimated 3000 at the carcass dump near Bikaner.  
**Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T-D) *Streptopelia orientalis*** Only noted on Mt Abu.  
**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***  
**Red Turtle Dove (R Collared Dove) *Streptopelia tranquebarica*** Noted on four days.  
**Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*** A few on Mt Abu and Tansa WLS.  
**Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis***  
**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon ◇ *Treron phoenicopterus*** Scattered sightings.  
**Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*** Widespread in small numbers.  
**Asian Koel (Common K) *Eudynamis scolopaceus***  
**Indian Scops Owl ◇ *Otus bakkamoena*** Great views of a pair at our resort in Siana.  
**Pallid Scops Owl ◇ (Striated S-O) *Otus brucei*** One at Siana, and two birds at our camp in Zainabad.  
**Indian Eagle-Owl ◇ (Rock E-O) *Bubo bengalensis*** A total of three, with brilliant views near Jaisalmer.  
**Mottled Wood Owl ◇ *Strix ocellata*** A pair seen quite well and several more were heard at Tansa WLS.  
**Jungle Owlet ◇ *Glaucidium radiatum*** Great views of two at Tansa WLS.  
**Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*** Widespread in small numbers.  
**Forest Owlet ◇ *Heteroglaux blewitti*** Excellent sighting of this rarity at Tansa WLS.



Indian Roller is commonly encountered on this tour (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Sykes's Nightjar** ♦ *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* Brilliant views of one in broad daylight near Zainabad.

**Indian Nightjar** ♦ (Indian Little N) *Caprimulgus asiaticus* One in Siana.

**Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis* One at Tansa WLS.

**Crested Treeswift** *Hemiprocne coronata* A few at Tansa WLS.

**Asian Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Small numbers at Tansa WLS.

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* 50 or so at Tansa WLS.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Scattered records of small numbers.

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis* Widespread and fairly common, noted almost daily.

**White-throated Kingfisher (W-breasted K)** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Widespread, noted almost daily.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* One in Jamnagar.

**Pied Kingfisher (Lesser Pied K)** *Ceryle rudis* Only a few were seen.

**Green Bee-eater (Little Green B-e)** *Merops orientalis* Widespread and locally very common.

**Eurasian Hoopoe (Common H)** *Upupa epops* Singletons on four days.

**Indian Grey Hornbill** *Ocyrocus birostris* Two in Harike and two in Tansa.

**Brown-headed Barbet** *Psilopogon zeylanicus* Three on Mt Abu, and several were heard in Tansa.

**Coppersmith Barbet** *Psilopogon haemacephalus* (H)

**Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** ♦ *Yungipicus nanus* Two on Mt Abu and two in Tansa.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** ♦ *Leiopicus mahrattensis* A total of four birds were seen in the Bhuj area.

**Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium benghalense* Noted on six days.

**White-naped Woodpecker** ♦ *Chrysocolaptes festivus* One seen and three more heard at Tansa WLS.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Widespread in small numbers.

**Red-necked Falcon** ♦ *Falco chicquera* Great views of pair at Siana and another two in the Bhuj area.

**Laggar Falcon** ♦ *Falco jugger* A total of eight were noted.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* One in Siana [*pelegrinoides*].

**Plum-headed Parakeet** ♦ *Psittacula cyanocephala* Mainly seen at Tansa WLS.





*Marshall's lora (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Common Woodshrike (Frédéric Pelsy).*



Great Grey Shrike (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Alexandrine Parakeet** ♦ *Psittacula eupatria* Noted in Punjab, and again at Tansa WLS [nominate].

**Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P)** *Psittacula krameri* Common and widespread [manillensis].

**Malabar Parakeet** ♦ *Psittacula columboides* Ten at Tansa WLS. A write-in.

**Common Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* Small numbers were noted.

**Common lora** *Aegithina tiphia* Two at Tansa WLS.

**Marshall's lora** ♦ *Aegithina nigrolutea* One in the Bhuj region.

**White-bellied Minivet** ♦ *Pericrocotus erythropygius* Three sightings in Siana including a gorgeous male.

**Orange Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus* Two at Tansa WLS. A write-in.

**Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Small numbers on eight days.

**Large Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei* (H) One was heard at Tansa WLS.

**Isabelline Shrike** ♦ *Lanius isabellinus* Four seen in total Siana [arenarius].

**Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Noted on seven days, especially common in Gujarat [nominate].

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Widespread [erythronotus].

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius [excubitor] lahtora* Fairly common in the drier parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus* Several birds at Tansa [maderaspatanus].

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Noted almost daily.

**White-bellied Drongo** *Dicrurus caeruleus* Several on Mt Abu and again in Tansa WLS.

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Several on Mt Abu and again in Tansa WLS.

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus* Rather common at Tansa WLS.

**White-spotted Fantail** ♦ (Spot-breasted F) *Rhipidura albogularis* Noted on Mt Abu and in Tansa WLS.

**White-browed Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola* Quite widespread in small numbers.

**Black-naped Monarch (B-n Blue Monarch)** *Hypothymis azurea* Fairly common at Tansa WLS.

**Indian Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi* Quite common at Tansa WLS.

**Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Widespread in small numbers in suitable wooded habitats.

**House Crow** *Corvus splendens* Noted almost daily in good numbers.

**Indian Jungle Crow** *Corvus culminatus* Fairly common on Mt Abu, and again in Tansa WLS.

**Northern Raven (Common Raven)** *Corvus corax* Only two were noted [subcorax].

**Grey Hypocolius** ♦ *Hypocolius ampelinus* Six, with brilliant views, near Nakhatrana.

**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher (G-h Flycatcher)** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Several at Tansa WLS.

**Cinereous Tit** *Parus cinereus* Two in Siana and several at Tansa WLS.





Desert Lark near Jaisalmer (Frédéric Pelsy).

**White-naped Tit** ♦ *Machlolophus nuchalis* A total of seven near Nakhatrana. Amazing bird!  
**Indian Black-lored Tit** ♦ (I Yellow Tit) *Machlolophus aplonotus* Great sightings on Mt Abu.  
**White-crowned Penduline Tit** ♦ *Remiz coronatus* 20 or so in Harike.  
**Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* Two pairs, with some great views, in the Jaisalmer area.  
**Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti* A total of four in the Jaisalmer area.  
**Rufous-tailed Lark** ♦ *Ammomanes phoenicura* Noted in Gujarat and at Tansa WLS.  
**Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** ♦ (B-c Finch-L) *Eremopterix nigriceps* Fairly common around Jaisalmer.  
**Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** ♦ (A-c Finch-L) *Eremopterix griseus* Seen daily in Gujarat.  
**Bengal Bush Lark** ♦ *Mirafra assamica* Two at Harike.  
**Indian Bush Lark** *Mirafra erythroptera* Several sightings in the Siana area [*nominata*].  
**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Five in Harike.  
**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Five in Harike. A write-in.  
**Sykes's Lark** ♦ *Galerida deva* Small numbers near Nakhatrana.  
**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Small numbers on six days.  
**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* Seen almost daily, sometimes in big flocks.  
**Bimaculated Lark** ♦ *Melanocorypha bimaculata* Noted around Jaisalmer and near Ahmedabad.  
**Sand Lark** ♦ *Alaudala raytal* Three near Zainabad [*krishnakumarsinhji*].  
**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus* Only seen on Mt Abu and in Tansa WLS.  
**White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucotis* Common and widespread in Rajasthan and Gujarat [*humayuni*].  
**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* Everywhere.  
**Grey-throated Martin** *Riparia chinensis* Quite a few seen at wetlands especially at the beginning of the tour  
**Sand Martin (Common S M)** *Riparia riparia* Two at Navra Talav near Zainabad.  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii*  
**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Fairly common at Tansa WLS.  
**Dusky Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne concolor* Scattered records.



Yellow-bellied Prinia at Harike (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Common House Martin (Northern H-M) *Delichon urbicum*** Two in Zainabad.

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*** Small numbers on three days.

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* (H)** One bird was heard at Harike.

**Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*** Widespread usually in small numbers.

**Brook's Leaf Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus subviridis*** One at Tal Chappar.

**Sulphur-bellied Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus griseolus*** One on Mt Abu, and one at Tansa WLS.

**Mountain Chiffchaff ♦ *Phylloscopus sindianus*** 15 or so in Harike.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*** Common in Harike, with a scattered few elsewhere [*tristis*].

**Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*** Only a few encountered.

**Clamorous Reed Warbler ♦ *Acrocephalus stentoreus*** Two in Jamnagar.

**Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*** One was seen well in Harike.

**Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*** Five in Harike.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*** One in Harike and another one in Tansa.

**Sykes's Warbler ♦ *Iduna rama*** Five seen in total.

**Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris* (H)** One was heard at Harike.

**Rufous-fronted Prinia ♦ *Prinia buchanani*** Widespread and fairly common in all arid areas.

**Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*** Fairly common from Mt Abu to Tansa WLS.

**Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis*** Reasonably common in Harike [*lepida*].

**Jungle Prinia ♦ *Prinia sylvatica*** Two in the Bhuj area.

**Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*** Fairly common in Harike [*sindiana*].

**Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*** Scattered records of small numbers.

**Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*** Scarce this year.

**Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*** Widespread.

**Indian Scimitar Babbler ♦ *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*** Brilliant views of a pair on Mt Abu and also noted at Tansa.

**Rufous-vented Grass Babbler ♦ *Laticilla burnesii*** Handful of birds with brilliant views in Harike.

**Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poiocephala*** Four in Tansa WLS.





Rosy Starling (Frédéric Pelsy).

- Common Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides caudata* Common in all arid areas.
- Striated Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides earlei* Common in reed beds around Harike.
- Large Grey Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides malcolmi* Reasonably common in the arid west.
- Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striata* Rather common.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* Seen almost daily.
- Desert Whitethroat** ♦ (D Lesser W) *Sylvia minula* Small numbers in the Jaisalmer area.
- Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris* One at Talchappar and another one at Siana.
- Asian Desert Warbler** ♦ *Sylvia nana* A total of four in the Jaisalmer area with some brilliant views.
- Yellow-eyed Babbler** *Chrysomma sinense* A flock of five on Mt Abu.
- Jerdon's Babbler** ♦ *Chrysomma altirostre* Five in Harike [*scindicum*].
- Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus* Quite common on Mt Abu and again at Tansa WLS.
- Indian Spotted Creeper** ♦ *Salpornis spilonota* Brilliant views of two at Tal Chappar.
- Bank Myna** *Acridotheres ginginianus* Common and widespread.
- Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* Very common and widespread.
- Brahminy Starling** ♦ *Sturnia pagodarum* Widespread in small numbers.
- Rosy Starling** ♦ (Rose-coloured S) *Pastor roseus* Noted on seven days, sometimes in big numbers.
- Common Starling** (European S) *Sturnus vulgaris* Noted in Harike and at Bikaner dump.
- Indian Robin** ♦ (Indian Black R) *Copsychus fulicatus* Widespread and common.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis* Handful of birds seen.
- Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Several noted in Harike.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* Seen on nine days.
- Taiga Flycatcher** (Taiga F) *Ficedula albicilla* Three in Tansa WLS.
- Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* Small numbers on most days.
- Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* One in Siana and another near Nakhatrana.
- White-browed Bush Chat** ♦ (Stoliczka's B C) *Saxicola macrorhynchus* A total of three seen.
- Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* Widespread in small numbers.
- White-tailed Stonechat** ♦ *Saxicola leucurus* Two in Harike.
- Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* Only small numbers were noted.
- Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabelline* Small numbers on three days.



Adult male Desert Wheatear (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* Reasonably common in the arid areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

**Brown Rock Chat** ♦ *Oenanthe fusca* Fairly common from Harike to Bhuj.

**Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* One at DNP in Jaisalmer. **Second for India!**

**Variable Wheatear** ♦ (Eastern Pied W) *Oenanthe picata* Fairly common in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

**Red-tailed Wheatear** ♦ *Oenanthe chrysopygia* Five in total this year.



Finsch's Wheatear at Desert National Park and White-browed Bush Chat at Talchappar (Frédéric Pelsy).





Male Sind Sparrow at Harike (Frédéric Pelsy).

- Golden-fronted Leafbird (Gold-f L) *Chloropsis aurifrons*** Two in Tansa WLS.
- Jerdon's Leafbird** ♦ *Chloropsis jerdoni* A total of three in Tansa WLS.
- Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*** Rather common in Tansa WLS, and one on Mt Abu.
- Pale-billed Flowerpecker** ♦ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* Fairly common in Tansa WLS.
- Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*** Widespread and common.
- Vigors's Sunbird** ♦ *Aethopyga vigorsii* A total of ten at Tansa WLS.
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*** [*bactrianus/parkini*] and [*indicus*]
- Sind Sparrow** ♦ *Passer pyrrhonotus* In Harike a flock of eight eating seed heads.
- Yellow-throated Sparrow** ♦ (Chestnut-shouldered Petronia) *Gymnoris xanthocollis*
- Black-breasted Weaver** ♦ *Ploceus benghalensis* 25 in the reed beds in Harike.
- Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*** Only noted in Harike and near Nakhatrana.
- Red Avadavat (R Munia) *Amandava amandava*** Small numbers in Harike.
- Green Avadavat** ♦ (G Munia) *Amandava formosa* A total of 35 giving brilliant views on Mt Abu.
- Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*** Widespread.
- Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*** Unidentified Yellow Wagtails were noted in Harike and in Zainabad.
- Western Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] feldegg*** Small numbers in Gujarat.
- Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*** Noted on six days.
- Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*** Only a handful recorded.
- White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*** Seen on most days.
- White Wagtail** ♦ (Masked W) *Motacilla [alba] personata* Only a few were noted.
- Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*** One in Harike.
- Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*** Widespread in small numbers in the arid west.
- Long-billed Pipit** ♦ *Anthus similis* Three at Tal Chappar WLS.
- Tree Pipit (Brown Tree P) *Anthus trivialis*** Small numbers in Harike, in the Bhuj area and Tansa WLS.
- Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*** Common in Harike.
- Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*** Good occurrence in the Jaisalmer area.



Male Trumpeter Finch at Desert National Park (Frédéric Pelsy).

**Crested Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza lathami* A handful of birds on Mt Abu.

**White-capped Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza stewarti* Two in Siana and two on Mt Abu.

**Grey-necked Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza buchanani* Only one, in Siana. Normally a lot commoner.

**Striolated Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza striolata* Small numbers in Siana and one in Nakhatrana.



Common Babbler (Frédéric Pelsy).





*Asiatic Wild Ass (Onager) in the Little ran of Kutch (Frédéric Pelsy).*

## MAMMALS

**Northern Plains Gray Langur (Hanuman L)** *Semnopithecus entellus* Locally common.

**Indian Hare** *Lepus nigricollis* Widespread in small numbers.

**Indian Hedgehog** *Paraechinus micropus* (NL) One near Zainabad.

**Indian Desert Gerbil** *Meriones hurrianae* Noted on three days.

**House Rat (Black Rat)** *Rattus rattus* Two on Mt Abu.

**Five-striped Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus pennantii* Common from Punjab to Gujarat.

**Jungle Cat** *Felis chaus* One in DNP, Jaisalmer.

**Small Indian Mongoose** *Herpestes auropunctatus* One in Harike.

**Indian Grey Mongoose (Common M)** *Herpestes edwardsii* Scattered sightings.

**Striped Hyena** *Hyaena hyaena* One near Zainabad.

**Golden Jackal** *Canis aureus* Several were seen and also heard in the Bhuj region.

**Bengal Fox (Indian F)** *Vulpes bengalensis* This cute little fox was noted on three occasions including eight at DNP.

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* Remarkably common (20) at DNP, a few were noted elsewhere.

**Asiatic Wild Ass (Onager)** *Equus hemionus* We counted 109 in the Khuri area near Zainabad.

**Wild Boar (Indian W B)** *Sus scrofa* Noted on four days.

**Chital (Spotted Deer)** *Axis axis* Two at Tansa WLS.

**Blackbuck** *Antelope cervicapra* Two hundred at Tal Chappar.

**Nilgai (Blue Bull)** *Boselaphus tragocamelus* Widespread in decent numbers.

**Chinkara (Chinkara)** *Gazella bennettii* Rather common in the arid west.

**Indian Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus* Small numbers in the Bhuj area.



*Blackbuck at Talchappar (Frédéric Pelsy).*



*Indian Gazelle (or Chinkara) (Frédéric Pelsy).*