



NORTHWEST INDIA TOUR REPORT 2025

6 - 26 February 2025

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Our very successful Birdquest tour to various parts of northwestern India traced an epic route through the states of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat, with a short visit to the state of Maharashtra to conclude. Additionally, there was a four-day pre-tour extension to some of the finest birding sites on India's northern plains, including Sariska National Park, Chambal River Sanctuary and the large wetlands of Keoladeo Ghana (a.k.a Bharatpur). We recorded no fewer than 353 bird species and 26 mammals, but, 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 was the impressive Great Indian Bustard (with a world population of less than 150 individuals), the increasingly rare Asian Houbara, the rare Indian Vulture, the very localized Forest Owlet, the stunningly patterned White-naped Tit, White-browed (or Stoliczka's) Bush Chat and Green Avadavat. Many Indian subcontinent endemics or near-endemics were seen with Rock Bush and Jungle Bush Quails, Painted and Red Spurrows, Red-naped (or Black) Ibis, Indian Courser, Painted Sandgrouse, magnificent Indian Skimmer, Mottled Wood Owl, Indian and Dusky Eagle Owls, Jungle Nightjar, Plum-headed and Malabar Parakeets, Sirkeer Malkoha, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Black-bellied Tern, Brown-headed Barbet, Indian Bush, Rufous-tailed, Malabar and Sykes's Larks, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, the lovely White-bellied and Orange Minivets, White-spotted Fantail, Marshall's Iora, Indian Black-lored Tit, Indian Spotted Creeper, Brahminy Starling, Rufous-fronted and Jungle Prinia, Rufous-vented Grass Babbler, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler, 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 Hypocorax, the amazing Demoiselle Cranes in the village of Khichan, the morning flight of thousands of Common Cranes in the Great Rann of Kutch, the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing, Red-necked and Laggar Falcons, Crab-plover, the mind blowing Jorbeer Conservation Reserve with hundreds of wintering eagles and vultures and over a

thousand of Yellow-eyed Doves, Sykes's Nightjar and Pallid (or Striated) Scops Owl, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, all three forms of Variable Wheatear, Red-tailed Wheatear, Desert Whitethroat, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Brooks's Leaf Warbler, Grey-necked, Red-headed, Black-headed and White-capped Buntings. Additional features of this great tour are the opportunity to observe the fascinating rural and urban everyday life of Indian people along the route, which has to be seen to be believed, and the mostly very delicious food. Special thanks to our excellent local guides Dalveer Singh, Jugal Tiwari and Veer Vaibhav Mishra in the Bhuj area and Rohidas Dagale in Tansa WL.

Our pre-tour extension began at Sariska Tiger Reserve near Alwar, where we spent the afternoon birding the mountain road leading to Bala Fort. This is an excellent area to see the endemic Painted Spurfowl, our main reason to visit this area. Unfortunately, our efforts didn't pay off, but we had an amazing sight of a Leopard walking along the roadside, and we also encountered some commoner birds like White-bellied Drongo, Cinereous Tit, Small Minivet and Common Woodshrike. The next morning, as the road leading to Bala Fort was not yet open, we decided to visit a nearby Hindu temple in the bottom of the valley, where locals were feeding birds. This proved to be a smart move as we soon located, amongst flocks of peacocks, pigeons, parakeets, babblers, sparrows, treebies and bulbuls, a cooperative male Painted Spurfowl feeding on the puffed rice that was spilled down from a high wall by hungry birds. This bird feeder was also visited by some White-breasted Waterhens and a beautiful male Yellow-crowned Woodpecker. In the end Frank thought that he had seen 2-3 different spurfowls during our stay. Fully satisfied with the results of our morning's birding, it was time to transport ourselves to Bharatpur, where we spent the afternoon and the following morning birding the famous wetland of Keoladeo Ghana National Park with a local guide Dalveer Singh, who was also going to be our guide on the main tour. Our main quarry in the park was Dusky Eagle Owl, which we saw at their nest. Other birds seen in this world famous birding hot spot, a former hunting ground for the maharajas of Bharatpur and their guests, consisting of 28 square kilometers of managed wetlands and drier, savanna type habitats, included Black and Yellow Bitterns, Brown Crake, Little Heron, Great White and Dalmatian Pelicans, White-tailed and Grey-headed Lapwings, many Greater Spotted and two Eastern Imperial Eagles, Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Clamorous Reed and Blyth's Reed Warblers and several Bluethroats plus large numbers of ducks, cormorants, egrets, herons and storks.

Next in the agenda was a one-night stay in the lovely Chambal Safari Lodge, where our afternoon walk around the lodge grounds and nearby village pond produced Indian Stone-curlew, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Brown Boobook, Indian Scops Owl, Brown-headed and Coppersmith Barbets and Indian Grey Hornbill. We headed for the famous Chambal River early the next morning with high hopes. A short walk 'in the bandit country' close to the river produced a pair of Jungle Prinias, some Yellow-eyed Babblers, Common Babblers, and a brief White-capped Bunting. Our cruise along the peaceful Chambal River later in the morning was thoroughly enjoyable, and we saw some excellent birds including Ruddy Shelducks, several Great Stone-curlews, River Lapwings, the scarce, and declining, Black-bellied Tern and a total of 12 Indian Skimmers, which we admired from close distance. In addition to these avian delights, we had great views of many Gharials (narrow snouted fish-eating crocodile) and Mugger Crocodiles, plus rather brief views of the Ganges River Dolphin. Back at the lodge we enjoyed a delicious packed lunch before heading back to Delhi and for our late evening flight to Amritsar, where we would meet the rest of the group.

The main part of our Northwest 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. After breakfast in a local dhaba, we spent most of the day along the Sutlej River, where a large stand of Elephant Grass 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 and we all had really good views of it. 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. A supporting cast of commoner species in this interesting area included Pallas's Gull, Black Bittern, Oriental Skylark, Yellow-bellied, Delicate (a split from Graceful) and Plain Prinias, Grey-hooded Warbler, many Striated Babblers and Black-breasted and Streaked Weavers. Wildfowl were present in good numbers, and amongst the many commoner species were handsome Bar-headed Geese and Indian Spot-billed Ducks. After a busy day's birding in Harike we paid a visit to the famous Golden Temple in Amritsar, 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.

Next morning we were back in Harike and birded the area until late afternoon. New birds included the range-restricted Sind Sparrow, which was actually singing just outside the dhaba, where we had our breakfast, and a rather distant White-tailed Stonechat. In the

afternoon we drove to the city of Bathinda for one night's stay. The next morning was mainly spent travelling as we had nearly 300 kilometers to drive, but we managed a short roadside stop at a nice and very co-operative Laggar Falcon and a longer chai break, with new dry country species like Common Babbler, Northern Raven, many Griffon Vultures, Great Grey Shrike and Variable Wheatear. We reached our destination, Tal Chappar and our comfortable lodge in time for lunch. In the afternoon we visited an open forest looking for the rare and localized Indian Spotted Creeper, which we managed to locate after 30 minutes search and got great views of a pair. Other good birds spotted here included Rufous-fronted Prinia, Small Minivet and Yellow-crowned Woodpecker. A late afternoon visit to some salt pans rewarded us with several Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. Next morning we visited Tal Chappar Wildlife Sanctuary, which we birded by driving around along the narrow tracks that cross the area. Best birds in this beautiful area of flat grassland included Cinereous Vultures, Pallid Harriers, Black-winged Kites, Long-legged Buzzards, four different Black Francolins, several Long-billed Pipits, couple of Indian Bush Larks, big flocks of Greater Short-toed Larks, and a big surprise in the form of a single Indian Spotted Creeper. We also saw a good number of Blackbucks, which must be one of the best looking antelopes on the planet, and smaller numbers of Nilgais and Chinkaras (Indian Gazelle) during the morning. Next in the agenda, was a visit to a patch of forest, where we soon located a single Brook's Leaf Warbler, a new bird for us.

After lunch we drove to Bikaner, where we had time to pay a visit to Jorbeer Conservation Reserve (a.k.a Bikaner carcass dump), which is now run by the Forest Department as a reserve for the large number of wintering raptors. During the short visit to this impressive site, we saw hundreds of Steppe Eagles, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures together with smaller numbers of Black Kites, Himalayan Vultures and Eastern Imperial Eagles. All the Egyptian Vultures we checked belonged to the northern nominate subspecies, which occurs in lowland India during the winter months. Other birds noted included over a thousand Yellow-eyed Doves, a species that spends the winter on the plains of northwestern India, and good numbers of Rosy Starlings. 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 following day we started early as we wanted to experience the Demoiselle Crane show in the village of Khichan. On this occasion the cranes behaved in accord with expectations, and we spent some quality time admiring thousands and thousands of noisy cranes coming to eat at a small compound in the middle of the village. Later we headed for Jaisalmer, where after a tasty lunch in a local restaurant, it was time for the traditional guided walk 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 merchants' homes. Later we paid a visit to Akal Wood Fossil Park, without seeing much new, and then it was time to drive to our accommodation, one of the many tented camps that has been built in the middle of the desert near Sam.

Early the next morning we took jeeps and headed for the Desert National Park, the last stronghold of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. There are now two rather large enclosures here, which are closed to all visitors and cattle to ensure peace and quiet for the bustards, a good move in my opinion. In order to locate our target, we drove around the perimeter of the enclosures, stopping regularly for intensive scanning. After some searching, we located two adult male Great Indian Bustards. The birds were a bit distant for decent photographs, but we enjoyed very good scope views of these magnificent birds. This majestic bird is sadly heading for almost certain extinction in the wild during the next 10-20 years as almost no breeding success has been reported for many years, so the surviving population of less than 150 birds is mainly of aging adults. Other interesting birds seen during the first half of the day, included Egyptian Vultures of the resident subspecies *ginginianus*, couple of Tawny Eagles, Montagu's Harrier, many Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks, Bimaculated and Desert Larks, Desert Whitethroat, Asian Desert Warblers, Isabelline Shrikes, White-browed Bush Chat doing its comical puff and roll display and Isabelline, Desert and all three forms of Variable Weathers. On the mammal front we were entertained by a Red Fox and African Wildcat, and it was also interesting to see some Spiny-tailed Lizards. After lunch and a bit of siesta in a local homestay, we headed for a temporary lake that had been created by excessive monsoon rains the previous summer and was teeming with birds. New bird species here included 70 Black Storks (a tour write-in), hundreds of ducks, some waders, several Water Pipits and two Black-headed Buntings for some. A nearby acacia wood hold a Sykes's Warbler and some rockier areas yielded us with confiding Trumpeter Finches, Red-tailed Wheatear, a pair of Greater Hoopoe-Larks, a scarce bird in India, and two Cream-coloured Coursers.

Next morning, we revisited the Desert National Park, where the highlight was a single male Great Indian Bustard, which was in a festive mood and showed us first a bit of its display and then came quite close to us allowing nice views and even some decent photo-ops. In the afternoon we revisited the same monsoon lake and checked couple of small forest patches, where an Eastern Orphean Warbler and a small flock of Sind Sparrows were the most interesting birds.

Next morning we left Sam and our tented camp behind and headed south-east to the remote village of Siana for one night's stay. En route we stopped at a rocky area, where we soon located a beautiful Indian Eagle Owl. We reached our lovely lodge run by an aristocratic

Rajput family of hereditary landowners in time for lunch and, after a short siesta, we were ready for birding in the remote and sparsely inhabited area of dry hills and plains that surround the village. Our knowledgeable guide took us first to an area, where Indian Stone-curlews were roosting and then to some lower slopes of a dry hill, where we soon connected with some White-bellied Minivets, our main target bird here. Our quest for the Painted Sandgrouse at sunset was less successful, but later in the evening we enjoyed good looks of an Indian Scops Owl living in our camp.

The highlights of the following morning's birding in the Siana area included two critically endangered Indian Vultures at their breeding cliffs, Rock Bush Quail, Barred Bush Quail and a very showy Sirkeer Malkoha. After Siana the next stop was Mount Abu, where an afternoon's birding resulted in many new birds including a pair of Jungle Bush Quails, Oriental Turtle Dove, White-spotted Fantail, Indian Black-lored Tit, a confiding Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Grey-breasted Prinia, White-capped Bunting and, most importantly, the endearing Green Avadavat, our main reason to visit the mountain. A day roosting Sykes's Nightjar was a great surprise and apparently the first record of this species for Mt. Abu!

The following morning started well before breakfast with some co-operative Jungle Nightjars calling and flying around near our accommodation. A three-hour birding session on Mt Abu in beautiful sunny weather produced many of the species we had seen the previous day plus a confiding pair of Indian Scimitar Babblers, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, some Red Spurfowls providing very acceptable views and a brief Grey Junglefowl. On our way to our camp in Zainabad, on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, we did a long detour via Lake Nalsarovar for a flock of the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing, which was wintering in the area. In addition to eight handsome lapwings (some of which were already in full breeding plumage) we observed Red-headed and Black-headed Buntings, several Common Quails and some Sarus Cranes here.

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 Asian Houbara (a.k.a. Macqueen's Bustard), a winter visitor from Central Asia, which has become rare owing to both persecution and habitat change. It took some driving and searching, but in the end, we found a single individual that took off in front of our vehicle and flew past us before it disappeared in the impenetrable thorn bush. Other interesting observations of the morning's safari included several encounters with the beautiful Onagers (Indian Wild Ass) and some Sand Larks. Back in the camp around noon we were shown a sleepy Pallid Scops Owl, which was roosting inside a dense tree. Later in the afternoon/early evening we visited a nearby Navra Talav Lake, which was thronged with birds, including Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Great White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Oriental and Small Pratincoles, and a brief Sykes's Lark.

Next day, on the way to our 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 added a number of new species to our bird list including Western Reef Heron, Tibetan and Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Grey Plover, Red Knot, Slender-billed and Heuglin's Gulls, Caspian, Lesser Crested, Little and Gull-billed Terns, and, most importantly, a flock of 100 of the strange looking Crab-plovers. As if this was not enough, we also encountered a small flock Indian Skimmers roosting at a tidal pool. Due to the detour, we reached our pleasant accommodation in Moti Virani rather late in the evening.

The new morning found us near the village of Fulay in the Greater Rann of Kutch, where berry-bearing bushes held a few Grey Hypocolius including both males and females. We also had brilliant views of a pair of Marshall's Iora here, a new bird for our list, and an Indian Nightjar at nest. Next in the agenda was a visit to a drinking pool at the edge of the Banni Grassland, where we were also having our picnic breakfast. On the way back to our accommodation for lunch and some siesta, our skillful guides showed us an Eastern Barn Owl, Painted Sandgrouse and the much needed Indian Courser. The afternoon was spent birding some patches of thorn forest, where we encountered several handsome White-naped Tits, a new bird for us, and also got good views of a Sykes's Lark.

The next day we drove back to Banni Grassland to see the magnificent morning flight of the Common Cranes, which winter here in huge numbers and visited a lake, where we had great views of Clamorous Reed, Moustached and Paddyfield Warblers, all of which seemed to be rather common and easy to see here. In addition, we noted a small flock Alpine Swifts (a new bird for us), both Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans, many Black-crowned Night Herons, several Citrine and Western Yellow Wagtails (subspecies beema and feldeggi). Later when driving through the grassland, we spotted two Indian Foxes and a very photogenic Red-necked Falcon.

The next day we travelled from Bhuj to Mumbai and reached our comfortable accommodation near Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary at lunchtime. In the late afternoon, Rohidas, our excellent local guide, took us to the forest station of Tansa WLS, where after a fair bit of

walking he showed us a fine Forest Owlet. We then 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. Other birds seen during our late afternoon birding session included good views of the distinct *sommervillei* form of Jungle Babbler, which looks like a good future split, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Ashy and White-bellied Drongos, Black-rumped Flameback, Alexandrine and Plum-headed Parakeets, and a Sulphur-bellied Warbler. At sunset we worked on a pair of Mottled Wood Owls and obtained good views of them.

Next morning we tried another part of the Tansa forest finding species like Common Woodshrike, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Black-hooded Oriole of the vocally distinct Peninsular Indian form *maderaspatanus*, Indian Golden Oriole, Jerdon's Leafbird, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Green Warbler, Crested Treeswift, Cinerous Tit, Spotted Dove and the range restricted Vigors's Sunbird. After breakfast at the forest rest house, where we admired a nice Jungle Owlet, we walked through a woodland seeing White-bellied Drongo, Pale-billed Flowerpecker and White-eyed Buzzard and checked a large reservoir, where good numbers of Tufted Ducks and Cotton Pygmy Geese were swimming. Late in the afternoon we visited some dry paddyfields and grassy hills, where the best birds included Malabar Lark, an Indian endemic and a new bird for this itinerary, Jungle Prinia, Rufous-tailed Lark and Yellow-wattled Lapwing.

A new day saw us at Mahuli Fort area, where we spent the morning seeing Greater Racket-tailed Dongo, another Jungle Owlet, Indian Cuckooshrike (a split from Large Cuckooshrike), Blue-winged (Malabar) Parakeet, Black-naped Monarch, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Rufous Woodpecker, a fine Western Crowned Warbler spotted by Ken, Golden-fronted Leafbird and Orange Minivet. After check-out and lunch at a roadside dhaba it was time to transport us back to Mumbai, where, after a good dinner in a swish hotel, 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 2025:

1st: Great Indian Bustard

2nd: Forest Owlet & Demoiselle Crane

3rd: Green Avadavat & Crab-plover

4th: Grey Hypocolius

5th: Sociable Lapwing

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follow Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). **2025. IOC World Bird List (v15.1)**.

BIRDS

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Red Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix spadicea* Endemic. Decent views on Mt Abu.

Painted Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix lunulata* Endemic. Great views of a male near Alwar on the extension.

Grey Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus sonneratii* Endemic. Seen by Ken and Dalveer only, heard by others on Mt Abu.

Grey Francolin *Ortygornis pondicerianus* Widespread, noted almost daily.

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* Excellent views in Tal Chappar.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Heard at Lake Nalsarovar and seen at Banni grassland in GRK.

Jungle Bush Quail ◊ *Perdica asiatica* A pair was seen well on Mt. Abu.

Rock Bush Quail ◊ *Perdica argoondah* Endemic. Scope views of a male singing in a wheat field in Siana.

Jungle Nightjar ◊ (I Jungle N) *Caprimulgus indicus* A few birds with good views on Mt. Abu.

Sykes's Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* Great day time views of one on Mt Abu at 1250m asl.

Indian Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus asiaticus* One at nest in GRK.

Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* Seen briefly at GRK by some, heard only by others.

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

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Small numbers in Maharastra.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* A small flock in GRK.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Great Indian Bustard ◊ (Indian B) *Ardeotis nigriceps* A total of three males with excellent views in DNP:

Asian Houbara ♦ *Chlamydotis macqueenii* Rather brief but close views of one at LRK.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Sirkeer Malkoha ♦ *Taccocua leschenaultii* Great views of one in Siana.

Asian Koel (Common K) *Eudynamys scolopaceus*

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* Common and widespread.

Painted Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles indicus* Great close-up encounters with this beautiful bird in GRK. Also noted in Siana.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Yellow-eyed Pigeon ♦ (Y-e Stock Dove) *Columba evermanni* Well over 1000 birds near Bikaner.

Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D) *Streptopelia orientalis*

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Red Collared Dove (R Turtle D) *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron phoenicopterus*

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra*

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*

Brown Crake *Zapornia akool* One in Bharatpur during the extension and another one, seen by some, in Harike.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Sarus Crane ♦ *Antigone antigone* Three near Lake Nalsarovar on main tour and another three on the extension.

Demoiselle Crane ♦ *Grus virgo* We had an amazing Demoiselle show with thousands of birds in Khichan.

Common Crane *Grus grus* Common in Gujarat.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*

Great Stone-curlew ♦ (G Thick-knee) *Esacus recurvirostris*

Indian Stone-curlew (I Thick-knee) *Burhinus indicus*

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola*

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii*

Yellow-wattled Lapwing ◊ (Y-w Plover) *Vanellus malabaricus*

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* Three in Bharatpur on the extension. A new bird for this itinerary.

Red-wattled Lapwing (R-w Plover) *Vanellus indicus*

Sociable Lapwing ◊ (S Plover) *Vanellus gregarius* Eight of this critically endangered bird in the Lake Nalsarovar area.

White-tailed Lapwing ◊ (W-t Plover) *Vanellus leucurus*

Tibetan Sand Plover *Anarhynchus atrifrons*

Greater Sand Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii*

Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrinus*

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Only noted in Bharatpur on the extension.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* Only noted in Bharatpur on the extension.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Terek Sandpiper ◊ *Xenus cinereus*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Crab-plover ♦ *Dromas ardeola* A flock of 100 in the Jamnagar area.

Indian Courser ♦ *Cursorius coromandelicus*

Cream-colored Courser ♦ *Cursorius cursor*

Small Pratincole ♦ *Glareola lactea*

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Indian Skimmer ♦ *Rynchops albicollis* Excellent encounter with 12 birds at the Chambal River on the extension and 10 more distant birds at Jamnagar on the main tour.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

River Tern *Sterna aurantia*

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

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

Black-headed Gull (Common B-h G) *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*

Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G) *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus*

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Heuglin's G) *Larus [fuscus] heuglini*

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Steppe G) *Larus [fuscus] barabensis*

Asian Openbill ♦ *Anastomus oscitans*

Painted Stork ♦ *Mycteria leucocephala*

Asian Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* 70 at the desert lake in Jaisalmer! A new bird for this itinerary.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*

Indian Cormorant ♦ (I Shag) *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Red-naped Ibis ♦ *Pseudibis papillosa*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Black Bittern *Botaurus flavicollis*

Yellow Bittern *Botaurus cinnamomeus* Noted in Bharatpur on the extension.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Western Reef Heron (W R Egret) *Egretta gularis*

Little Heron *Butorides atricapilla*

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia*

Eastern Cattle Egret *Ardea coromanda*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Dalmatian Pelican ♦ *Pelecanus crispus*

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* Resident *ginginianus* in Desert National Park, migratory nominate elsewhere.

Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B) *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*

Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*

Griffon Vulture (Eurasian G V) *Gyps fulvus*

Cinereous Vulture (Eurasian Black V) *Aegypius monachus*

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*

Short-toed Snake Eagle (S-t Eagle) *Circaetus gallicus*

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

Eastern Imperial Eagle (Imperial E) *Aquila heliaca*

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

Shikra *Tachypiza badia*

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Black Kite (Black-eared K) *Milvus [migrans] lineatus*

Black Kite (Indian B K) *Milvus [migrans] govinda*

White-eyed Buzzard ◊ *Butastur teesa*

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica*

Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* Seen at the Chambal Safari Lodge on the extension and heard in Tansa WLS.

Forest Owlet ◊ *Athene blewitti* Endemic. One bird, with excellent views, in Tansa WLS.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*

Jungle Owlet ◊ *Glaucidium radiatum*

Pallid Scops Owl ◊ (Striated S O) *Otus brucei*

Indian Scops Owl ◊ *Otus bakkamoena*

Indian Eagle-Owl ◊ (Rock E-O) *Bubo bengalensis*

Dusky Eagle-Owl ◊ *Ketupa coromanda* Three birds at nest in Bharatpur on the extension.

Mottled Wood Owl ◊ *Strix ocellata*

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyeros birostris*

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Asian Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Brown-headed Barbet *Psilopogon zeylanicus*

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker ◊ *Yungipicus nanus*

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker ◊ *Leiopicus mahrattensis*

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*

Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Red-necked Falcon ◊ *Falco chicquera*

Laggar Falcon ◊ *Falco jugger*

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Plum-headed Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula cyanocephala*

Blue-winged Parakeet ◊ (Malabar P) *Psittacula columboides* Endemic.

Alexandrine Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula eupatria*

Rose-ringed Parakeet (Ring-necked P) *Psittacula krameri*

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*

Marshall's Iora ◊ *Aegithina nigrolutea*

White-bellied Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus erythropygius*

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

Orange Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus flammeus*

Indian Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei*

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Indian Golden Oriole ◊ *Oriolus kundoo*

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

White-spotted Fantail ◊ (Spot-breasted F) *Rhipidura albogularis* Endemic.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Great Grey Shrike (Indian G S) *Lanius [excubitor] lahtora*

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*

Isabelline Shrike ◊ (Daurian S) *Lanius isabellinus*

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus*

Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax*

Grey Hypocolius ◊ *Hypocolius ampelinus* Three birds, two males and a female near the village of Fulay in GRK

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher (G-h Flycatcher) *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Heard only.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus*

White-naped Tit ◊ ***Machlolophus nuchalis*** Endemic. Several encounters with great views in the Nakhatrana area.

Indian Black-lored Tit ◊ ***Machlolophus aplonotus*** Endemic. Several birds on Mt Abu.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*

Rufous-tailed Lark ◊ ***Ammomanes phoenicura***

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark ◊ (B-c Finch-L) ***Eremopterix nigriceps***

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark ◊ (A-c Finch-L) ***Eremopterix griseus***

Indian Bush Lark *Plocealauda erythroptera*

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Sykes's Lark ◊ ***Galerida deva*** Endemic.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Malabar Lark ◊ ***Galerida malabarica*** Endemic. A new bird for this itinerary.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Bimaculated Lark ◊ ***Melanocorypha bimaculata***

Sand Lark ◊ ***Alaudala raytal***

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis*

Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis*

Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*

Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Eastern Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Streak-throated Swallow ◊ (Indian Cliff S) ***Petrochelidon fluvicola***

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* Heard only

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

Brooks's Leaf Warbler ◊ ***Phylloscopus subviridis***

Sulphur-bellied Warbler ◊ ***Phylloscopus griseolus***

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus [collybita] tristis*

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Western Crowned Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus occipitalis*

Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*

Clamorous Reed Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

Blyth's Reed Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Sykes's Warbler ◊ *Iduna rama*

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Rufous-fronted Prinia ◊ *Prinia buchanani*

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

Delicate Prinia *Prinia lepida*

Jungle Prinia ◊ *Prinia sylvatica*

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca*

Lesser Whitethroat ◊ (Desert L W) *Curruca [curruca] minula*

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Curruca crassirostris*

Asian Desert Warbler ◊ *Curruca nana*

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*

Jerdon's Babbler ◊ *Chrysomma altirostre*

Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Tawny-bellied Babbler ◊ *Dumetia hyperythra*

Indian Scimitar Babbler ◊ *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* Endemic.

Rufous-vented Grass Babbler ◊ *Laticilla burnesii*

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poiocephala*

Large Grey Babbler ◊ *Argya malcolmi*

Jungle Babbler *Argya striata* Subspecies *sindiana* in the NW, *sommervillei* in Tansa WLS.

Common Babbler ◊ *Argya caudata*

Striated Babbler ◊ *Argya earlei*

Indian Spotted Creeper ◊ *Salpornis spilonota* Endemic. A total of three with great views in Tal Chappar.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Indian Pied Myna *Gracupica contra*

Brahminy Starling ◊ *Sturnia pagodarum*

Rosy Starling ◊ *Pastor roseus*

Common Starling (European S) *Sturnus vulgaris*

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Indian Robin ◊ *Copsychus fulicatus*

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Taiga Flycatcher (Red-throated F) *Ficedula albicilla*

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

White-browed Bush Chat ◊ (Stoliczka's B C) *Saxicola macrorhynchus* Two birds, with some great views, at DNP.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

White-tailed Stonechat ◊ *Saxicola leucurus*

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Brown Rock Chat ◊ *Oenanthe fusca*

Variable Wheatear ◊ *Oenanthe picata*

Red-tailed Wheatear ◊ *Oenanthe chrysopygia*

Jerdon's Leafbird ◊ *Chloropsis jerdoni*

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*

Pale-billed Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

Vigors's Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga vigorsii* Endemic. Great encounters in Tansa WLS.

Yellow-throated Sparrow ◊ *Gymnoris xanthocollis*

Sind Sparrow ◊ *Passer pyrrhonotus*

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Two forms, resident *indicus* and wintering *parkini*, were encountered.

Black-breasted Weaver ◊ *Ploceus benghalensis*

Streaked Weaver ◊ *Ploceus manyar*

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

Green Avadavat ◊ *Amandava formosa* Endemic. 25 or so, including attractive adult birds, on our first afternoon on Mt Abu.

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] feldegg*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's W) *Motacilla [flava] beema*

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

White Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] alba*

White Wagtail ◊ (Masked W) *Motacilla [alba] personata*

White Wagtail (Amur W) *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis*

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis*

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Long-billed Pipit ◊ *Anthus similis*

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*

White-capped Bunting ◊ *Emberiza stewarti*

Grey-necked Bunting ◊ *Emberiza buchanani*

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*

Red-headed Bunting ◊ *Emberiza bruniceps*

MAMMALS

African Wildcat (Asian W) *Felis [lybica] ornata* One in the Desert National Park.

Leopard *Panthera pardus* One in the Bala Fort area on the extension.

Small Indian Mongoose *Urva auropunctata*

Indian Grey Mongoose *Urva edwardsii*

Golden Jackal (Common J) *Canis aureus*

Indian Fox (Indian F) *Vulpes bengalensis*

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Onager (Indian W Ass) *Equus hemionus*

Eurasian Wild Pig *Sus scrofa*

Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis*

Sambar *Rusa unicolor*

Blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra*

Nilgai (Blue Bull) *Boselaphus tragocamelus*

Chinkara (Indian Gazelle) *Gazella bennettii*

Ganges River Dolphin (E) *Platanista gangetica* One in the Chambal River on the extension.

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta*

Bengal Sacred Langur (Hanuman L) *Semnopithecus entellus*

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis*

Indian Crested Porcupine *Hystrix indica* One at the Desert Coursers in LRK. A new mammal for this itinerary.

Indian Palm Squirrel (Southern P S) *Funambulus palmarum* Small numbers in Tansa WLS.

Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* Very common in the north.

Indian Desert Jird (Mid-day Jird) *Meriones hurrianae*

REPTILES

Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* Several at the Chambal River on the extension.

Marsh Mugger *Crocodylus palustris* Several at the Chambal River on the extension.

Indian Soft-shell Turtle *Pangshura tentoria*

Hardwicke's Spiny-tailed Lizard *Saara hardwickii*

Indian Pond Terrapin *Melanochelys trijuga*

Oriental Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*

Common House Gekko *Hemidactylus frenatus*



Great Indian Bustard (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Spotted Creeper (image by Hannu Jannes)



White-naped Tit (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Skimmer (image by Hannu Jannes)



Painted Spurfiowl (image by Hannu Jannes)



Leopard (image by Hannu Jannes)



Yellow-eyed Pigeon (image by Hannu Jannes)



Painted Sandgrouse (image by Hannu Jannes)



White-browed Bushchat (image by Hannu Jannes)



Grey Hypocolius (image by Hannu Jannes)



Sirkeer Malkoha (image by Hannu Jannes)



Sykes's Lark (image by Hannu Jannes)



Green Avadavat (image by Hannu Jannes)



Yellow-eyed Babbler (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Scimitar-babbler (image by Hannu Jannes)



Steppe Eagle (image by Hannu Jannes)



Sociable Lapwing (image by Hannu Jannes)



Sykes's Nightjar (image by Hannu Jannes)



Sind Sparrow (image by Hannu Jannes)



River Lapwing (image by Hannu Jannes)



Red-necked Falcon (image by Hannu Jannes)



Nilgai (image by Hannu Jannes)



Trumpeter Finch (image by Hannu Jannes)



Marshall's Iora (image by Hannu Jannes)



Laggar Falcon (image by Hannu Jannes)



Yellow-crowned Woodpecker (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Nightjar (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Eagle Owl (image by Hannu Jannes)



Indian Crested Porcupine (image by Hannu Jannes)



Group (image by Hannu Jannes)



Greater Hoopoe Lark (image by Hannu Jannes)



Eastern Imperial Eagle (image by Hannu Jannes)



Demoiselle Crane (image by Hannu Jannes)



Common Greenshank (image by Hannu Jannes)



Brown Rock Chat (image by Hannu Jannes)



Bronze-winged Jacana (image by Hannu Jannes)



Blackbuck (image by Hannu Jannes)