

SOUTH INDIA & ANDAMAN ISLANDS TOUR

REPORT 2025

15 - 30 November 2025

Dave Farrow

A splendid tour around Tamil Nadu, Kerala and South Andaman, where with the help of expert local guide Jijo Matthews, we found 47 of the endemic birds of the region, plus an additional 23 near-endemics. This included 19 of the 20 available Andaman endemics, with selected highlights being Andaman Scops Owl, Andaman Woodpigeon, Andaman Crake, a flock of 67 Andaman Treepies, Andaman Cuckoo-Dove, Andaman Teal, Andaman Serpent Eagle, with a supporting cast of Long-tailed Parakeet, Grey-headed Lapwing, Ruddy Kingfisher and Daurian Starlings. On the mainland of Peninsula India we visited Ooty and Munnar high in the Western Ghats, the dry plateau of Mudumalai, the rich forest of Periyar and the lowland woodlands of Thattekad. We found virtually all the endemics available here (all bar one...) and enjoyed an abundance of birds alongside fine accommodation and some excellent local food. Highlights included Painted Bushquails, Nilgiri, Palani and Wayanad Laughingthrushes, Yellow-throated and Grey-headed Bulbuls, Jungle Nightjar, Mottled Wood Owl, White-bellied, Nilgiri, Rusty-tailed, Black-and-Orange, and Brown-breasted Flycatchers, Nilgiri and White-bellied Blue Robins, and Nilgiri Pipit, to name but a few.

As our group came together in the tropical warmth of Port Blair, we began our birding around the wetlands and mudflats that surround the bay. We found many Purple Swampheens, Medium Egrets, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and a White-bellied Sea Eagle with a huge nest. We found our first endemic in the form of Andaman Teal, with 17 busily feeding on a shallow muddy pond. We saw smart Eastern Yellow Wagtails, Eurasian Whimbrel and Wood Sandpiper, numerous Tibetan Sandplovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Red-necked and Long-toed Stint, Eurasian Curlews and Curlew Sandpipers. At dusk we tried an urban site for Andaman Masked Owl, but without success.

Our first morning took us to a block of forest known as Kalathang, and in just a small area we had a busy session with a large birdflock, which held a staggering number of Andaman Treepie with at least 67 counted, many White-headed Starlings, and Andaman and Greater Racket-tailed Drongos feeding around a rubbish dump. We saw an adult Andaman Crake lurking under bushes, Andaman Green and Green Imperial Pigeons, diminutive Freckle-breasted Woodpeckers, Long-tailed Parakeet, a flyby Andaman Cuckoo-Dove, Andaman Flowerpecker, Greenish Warblers, Asian Fairy Bluebirds guzzling fruit, Crested Honey Buzzard, Black Baza and Changeable Hawk Eagle. In mangroves we found a Ruddy Kingfisher sitting quietly, Arctic Warbler and a vocal Mangrove Whistler. In the afternoon we visited Chiriyatappu where we found Andaman Coucal, and a single Andaman Serpent Eagle sitting quietly watching the forest floor. We found a pre-roost gathering of at least five shy Andaman Woodpigeon, often the hardest endemic to find. An attempt at night birding was disturbed by noisy traffic, but we managed to see two Andaman Nightjars, and later a Walden's Scops Owl and two Hume's Boobooks showed well, to round off a great day.

Returning in the morning to Chiriyatappu, we walked the now peaceful road finding Andaman Shama, a confiding pair of Andaman Woodpecker, had a flight view of an Andaman Serpent Eagle, a pair of Oriental Cuckooshrikes, a roadside Forest Wagtail, a migrant Richard's Pipit together with two Red-throated Pipits on a hotel lawn, Taiga Flycatcher, plenty of Andaman Drongos and Black-naped Orioles, and a brief view of a Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher.

In a different direction in the afternoon, we headed up the main trunk road to Ferrarganj. The tall forest here was quiet, but once darkness fell the Andaman Boobooks started calling and we had great views of one at the roadside. A little more trickery was required with our next target, Andaman Scops Owl. Stepping into the forest we started to lure one in, with a response coming fairly soon. Suddenly the bird appeared, giving us some stunning views at close range.

A return visit to the forests of Kalathang was in order, via a roadside marsh where we saw Japanese Sparrowhawk, Pacific Swift, Pintail Snipe, Crested Serpent Eagle and two Grey-headed Lapwing. We enjoyed more views of Andaman Crane, White-headed Starlings, Freckle-breasted Woodpecker, a Violet Cuckoo, Small and Scarlet Minivets. In the afternoon we returned to Chiriyatappu, where an Andaman Cuckoo-Dove was found sat in a bush at the roadside. We revisited Andaman Woodpigeon, with at least five birds seen among forest giants, and after dark we searched once again for Andaman Masked Owl, but only a Hume's Boobook could be found.

Our final day was rather different in terms of weather. We started again at Chiriyatappu, and under leaden skies had a great session watching a big bare tree that held both adult and vocal juvenile Changeable Hawk Eagles, many White-headed Starlings, Long-tailed Parakeets, Black-naped Orioles, Oriental Cuckooshrikes and Vernal Hanging Parrots. A flock of 14 Daurian Starlings flew in to join them all while another 39 Daurian Starlings flew overhead to join a mass of Green Imperial Pigeons in a fruiting tree. We also found Dusky Warbler, Pacific Swift, Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-rumped Munia and Crested Serpent Eagle, and just as the heavens opened we reached the shelter of a nearby teashop just in time. The torrential rain terminated all activity despite our efforts to continue birding, and in the afternoon we braved the intermittent showers to explore the wetlands near Port Blair, finding Gull-billed, Whiskered and White-winged Terns (a write-in), a flock of Broad-billed Sandpiper (another write-in), plus Curlew Sandpipers, several Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns, Watercock and Purple Swampheens.

A long travel day followed, beginning with an early departure from Port Blair to Chennai, then a short onward flight to Coimbatore. Here we met our bus that would be with us for the next ten days, and inched our way towards Ooty, high in the Western Ghats at 2300m. A refreshment stop produced some White-browed Wagtails and our first Green Warblers, then we slowly made our way up the winding roads to the hill station. A herd of Gaur grazing in roadside tea plantations was an unusual sight, and the cool of the hills was quite a contrast to our previous location (as was the excellent buffet spread.)

Our well positioned hotel was close to the birding sites, and before breakfast we had close views of the charming Nilgiri Laughingthrushes, plus Indian Blackbird, Hill Swallow and a perched Crested Goshawk. In darker corners we found Nilgiri Blue Robin and Black-and-Orange Flycatchers, and a quick visit up to the Doddabetta Peak produced some smart Nilgiri Woodpigeons. Moving on, we drove downhill to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, and our lodgings for the next two nights at the excellent Bamboo Banks Lodge. The gardens were full of birds with Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Babbler and Orange Minivet all appearing soon after arrival. In the afternoon we explored the dry jungle habitat in the area, were shown two Oriental Scops Owls and a roosting Jungle Nightjar, plus we found Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Plum-headed Parakeet, Common Woodshrike, Jerdon's Leafbird, Bay-backed and Long-tailed Shrikes, Yellow-eyed and Puff-throated Babbler, Indian Nuthatch, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Indian Paradise Flycatcher and Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Coppermith and White-cheeked Barbet. It was great to see such an abundance of birds!

We began the day with a Jeep ride through scrubby woodland, finding a few birds along the way. A White-bellied Minivet showed briefly for some, we also saw several Booted Warblers, Peregrine Falcons, Painted Storks, a vagrant Daurian Starling among a flock of Chestnut-tailed Starling, and Grey Junglefowl. Returning to our lodge we spent the rest of the morning walking the extensive grounds seeing Greater and Indian Spotted Eagles, Booted, Tawny and Steppe Eagles, and Asian Woolly-necked Stork all circling overhead, Black-headed and Indian Cuckooshrikes, and a vocal Jungle Owlet posing nicely. In the afternoon we explored nearby areas on foot, finding a super Malabar Lark that was mimicking many other birds; Jerdon's Bushlark, Yellow-crowned and Streak-throated Woodpeckers, White-spotted Fantail, an Indian Pitta in a tree, numerous Blyth's Reed Warblers, and finished up with a trio of Spotted Owlet. Another great day.

In the twilight of dawn, the resident Jungle Owlet kept up his strident calls across the camp, and a last cruise around in the scrubby jungle produced Shikra, Black-headed Ibis and Green and Wood Sandpipers. On our way out of the park area we saw a huge Gaur cross the road, a Stripe-necked Mongoose, and a young White-eyed Buzzard. After a slow drive back up to Ooty along roads thronged with weekend tourists, we headed down to the Ooty Botanical Gardens for some afternoon birding. This was surprisingly good, and we found a smart Kashmir Flycatcher, a showy Indian Blue Robin, a Large-billed Leaf Warbler among the Greenish Warblers, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and Square-tailed Bulbuls. Rain came and mist descended to terminate our birding, and a final stop near our hotel in the fog revealed five Indian Blackbirds going to roost.

Despite waking up to thick mist, a short foray was rewarded with a trio of smart Painted Bushquails giving some great views. The wet and the fog defeated further birding, and it was time to commence our long journey southwards to Munnar. A few birds were seen along the way, such as Indian Rollers, Spot-billed Pelicans, Large Grey Babblers and Crested Hawk Eagles. We rolled into Munnar after dark, hoping for better weather tomorrow.

Our rather nice hotel had the added attraction of wide gardens and tall trees, and at dawn the Malabar Whistling Thrush sang sweetly from the roof. We also found our first Palani Laughingthrushes here, before heading out to Eravikulam National Park. We joined a throng of other tourists to ascend the hillside in a special bus, and soon after we began walking up the track where we happened upon a Nilgiri Pipit, sat on bracken at the side of the path and offering stunning views. A fortunate sighting, as this was the only one we saw! We saw more Palani Laughingthrushes, Plain Prinia, Steppe Buzzard, and numerous Greenish Warblers. Not until the last moment did we see Nilgiri Tahr, when five appeared on the skyline offering good scope views. After descending to the bottom of the hill, we checked various roadside places finding Nilgiri Flycatcher, Blue-capped Rock Thrush and Indian Black-lored Tit. In the afternoon we found a handsome male White-bellied Blue Robin (or Sholakili) that hopped around in a quiet corner. We also saw Indian Scimitar Babbler, Black-and-Orange Flycatcher, Large-billed Leaf Warbler and a smart pair of Nilgiri Woodpigeons in a fruiting tree.

We continued southwards through the tea-covered hills towards our next destination. Along the route we found Rufous Babblers, Malabar Whistling Thrush, Plum-headed and Blue-winged Parakeets, before dropping back into Tamil Nadu down the steep escarpment of Bodi Ghat, a mountainside covered in rich thorny acacia jungle. At our first stop we found an obliging Yellow-throated Bulbul that performed well, plus White-browed Bulbul, Nilgiri Flowerpecker, and Common Iora in striking breeding plumage. Down at the base of the slope we found Blue-faced Malkoha, Jungle Prinia and Jacobin Cuckoo, and as the heat built up the sky was filled with Booted and Black Eagles and a swarm of eight Crested Honey Buzzards. We continued towards Periyar, arriving in time for an afternoon walk into the forest. With the invaluable assistance of the local guides we were led to a flock of Wayanad Laughingthrush, audible but skulking in the undergrowth. A quick chase was necessary, along a path very recently vacated by a group of Gaur, and we had good views of a flock that swelled to more than 30 birds. An excellent start to our Periyar stay. We continued along muddy paths where we found many footprints of Tiger, Leopard and Dhole, we also saw White-bellied Treepies, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Rusty-tailed Flycatcher, Jungle Owlet, Grey-fronted Green Pigeons and Loten's Sunbird.

Moving to a different part of the forest, we crossed the lake on a raft and walked on narrow trails under forest giants. We saw a confident male White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, had a flyby of a pair of Red Spurfowl, saw Grey Junglefowl, Malabar and Common Flamebacks, Flame-throated Bulbul, a male Malabar Trogon, Brown-breasted and Rusty-tailed Flycatchers, and a flyover of three Malabar Imperial Pigeon. In the midday period we saw a Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher and Yellow-browed Bulbul in the hotel garden, before returning to the forest once more. We found a delightful pair of Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Little Spiderhunter, many Malabar Starlings and Blue-winged Parakeets. As the light faded we were attracted to a great cacophony from irate Jungle Babblers, mobbing a Mottled Wood Owl sat in a coconut palm.

Onwards to our final destination of Thattekad, we drove narrow roads through forest, stopping to search for elusive Grey-headed Buleuls. We found numerous Crimson-backed Sunbirds, plus Dark-fronted Babblers and Flame-throated Bulbul, before reaching our hideaway hotel. In the afternoon we eventually located our quarry of Grey-headed Bulbul, by waiting by a forest stream where Yellow-browed Bulbul, Bronzed Drongos and Blue-throated Flycatcher were dropping in. We had good looks at two pairs of furtive birds that came sneaking into bath and drink. We also found Orange-headed Thrush, Shikra, Southern Hill Mynas, Black-hooded Oriole, Nilgiri Flowerpeckers, Green Imperial Pigeons, Lesser Whistling Ducks and Pied Kingfishers, and at dusk we positioned ourselves on a bridge over the Periyar river. A flock of Black-throated Munias came into roost right beside us, then as dusk fell we were treated to the spectacle of at least 22 Great Eared Nightjars in a swarm feeding on emerging termites. We also saw Jerdon's Nightjar perched in a tree and found an Indian Scops Owl. Another top day.

Cloudy dull weather dominated our last day, we began by watching from the vantage point of a rocky hill seeing a Brown Fish Owl, White-bellied Woodpeckers, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Rosy Starlings, a single Malabar Imperial Pigeon and Orange Minivets. Next, we were shown a roosting female Sri Lanka Frogmouth, plus we saw Crested Goshawks and Crested Serpent Eagle. In the afternoon we found White-rumped Spinetails feeding over the forest with Indian Swiftlets and Little Swifts, and a surprise pair of very smart Malabar Pied Hornbills, normally a very scarce bird on this tour. At dusk we glimpsed a sneaky Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, while a couple more Jerdon's Nightjars flew by.

A final foray produced two Crested Honey Buzzard and a Black Baza sat in the 'magic tree' just outside our hotel. In nearby woodland we found a splendid Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Jungle Owlet, Malabar Grey Hornbills and Loten's Sunbirds. Then it was time to head for the Kochi airport and bring to a close our very successful tour of South Andaman, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and all head our separate ways. A special thanks of course to Jijo for his skill and efforts at ensuring we saw as much as we could on this tour.

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 follows **AviList v2025** (AviList Core Team. 2025. *AviList: The Global Avian Checklist, v2025*).

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* Frequent on South Andaman, also good numbers at Thattekad.

Andaman Teal ◊ *Anas albogularis* Endemic. Our first of the tour, 17 seen at Sippighat.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Red Spurfowl ◊ *Galloperdix spadicea* Endemic. A noisy flyby by a pair at Periyar.

Grey Junglefowl ◊ *Gallus sonneratii* Endemic. A few seen at Mudumalai and Periyar.

Grey Francolin *Ortygornis pondicerianus*

Painted Bush Quail ◊ *Perdica erythrorhyncha* Endemic. A last look at Ooty, and we saw two males and a female close to the road. Stunning!

Andaman Coucal ◊ *Centropus andamanensis* Endemic. Fairly numerous on South Andaman.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Blue-faced Malkoha ◊ *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris* Near-endemic. A nice look at one on the Bodi Ghat road.

Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied C) *Clamator jacobinus* A couple seen at Mudumulai, another Bodi Ghat.

Asian Koel (Common K) *Eudynamys scolopaceus*

Violet Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* A female in a mixed flock at Kalathang, South Andaman.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis passerinus* One at Sippighat was unexpected. A scarce visitor here.

Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo ◊ *Surniculus dicruroides* Last addition to the tour list, good views of one at Thattekad.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* Heard-only. Calling at our Periyar hotel.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* Heard-only, on South Andaman.

Andaman Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia rufipennis* Endemic. The last day endemic we needed to find, after much searching we had a good view at Chiriyatappu.

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Nilgiri Wood Pigeon ◊ *Columba elphinstonii* Endemic. A couple seen at Doddabetta at Ooty, then another two showed very well near Munnar.

Andaman Wood Pigeon ◊ *Columba palumboides* Endemic. Often the hardest endemic to find, we had great views of six on two days at Chiriyatappu.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba [livia] var domestica*

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

Grey-fronted Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron affinis* Endemic. Plenty seen at Periyar.

Andaman Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron chloropterus* Endemic. Not uncommon on South Andaman.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicopterus* Seen in the dry woodlands of Mudumalai.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

Malabar Imperial Pigeon *Ducula cuprea* Endemic. Flyovers at Periyar and Thattekad.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra*

Purple Swamphen (Grey-headed S) *Porphyrio [porphyrio] poliocephalus*

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* A few seen in the swamps of South Andaman.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Andaman Crake ♦ *Rallina canningi* Endemic. Great views of a couple at Kalathang. A juvenile living in the garden of our Hotel sadly never showed once the tour had begun.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Yellow-wattled Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus malabaricus* A pair of these beauties at Mudumalai, plus a single.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* Three seen in a marshy area near Ferrarganj on South Andaman.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Tibetan Sand Plover *Anarhynchus atrifrons* At Sippighat

Greater Sand Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* A few seen on coastal mudflats on South Andaman.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* A couple on wetlands on South Andaman.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* A good number at Sippighat.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Seen at Sippighat

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* Many seen flying about on South Andaman wetlands.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Non-leader.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* One at Mudumalai.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A few at Sippighat.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Numerous at Sippighat.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus* A write-in, A flock of twelve at Sippighat on South Andaman.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Quite a few at Sippighat.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* A few at Sippighat.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* A small number at Sippighat.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* A single at Sippighat.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Seen at Sippighat and Thattekad.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* A write-in, two at Sippighat

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* A few noted in Tamil Nadu.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

Asian Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Seen in the air at Mudumalai.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* Some seen at Thattekad.

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Indian Cormorant ♦ *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Seen at Periyar.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Spot-billed Pelican ♦ *Pelecanus philippensis* Some seen on a lake near Coimbatore.

Cinnamon Bittern *Botaurus cinnamomeus* Several seen in marshy areas of Sippighat.

Yellow Bittern *Botaurus sinensis* Numerous in a small marshy area of Sippighat.

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra* A few along the coasts of South Andaman.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A single at Thattekad.

Little Heron *Butorides atricapilla*

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Indian/Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii/bacchus* A couple seen on South Andaman.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia*

Eastern Cattle Egret *Ardea coromanda*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Great Eared Nightjar *Lyncornis macrotis* A thrilling display at Thattekad, we watched a swarm of 22 birds feeding on rising termites.

Jungle Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus indicus* Near-endemic. A roosting bird in a tree at Mudumalai was nice.

Andaman Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus andamanicus* Endemic. Two seen in flight at Chiriyatappu,

Jerdon's Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus atripennis* Near-endemic. A perched bird at Thattekad, plus a couple more seen flying at dusk.

Sri Lanka Frogmouth ♦ (Ceylon F) *Batrachostomus moniliger* Near-endemic. A sleepy female seen at roost at Thattekad.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*

Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* Often seen on South Andaman, a couple at Periyar.

White-rumped Spinetail ♦ *Zoonavena sylvatica* Near-endemic. A couple seen feeding over the forest at Thattekad.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Fork-tailed Swift ♦ (Blyth's S) *Apus [pacificus] leuconyx* Two seen in a mixed flock at Periyar.

Fork-tailed Swift ♦ (Pacific S) *Apus [pacificus] pacificus* A couple seen on South Andaman.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Plume-toed Swiftlet ♦ *Collocalia affinis* The commoner on South Andaman, formerly in Glossy Swiftlet.

Indian Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus unicolor*

Edible-nest Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus fuciphagus* A few seen on South Andaman.

Andaman Boobook ♦ (A Hawk-Owl) *Ninox affinis* Endemic. A good look at one at Ferrarganj.

Hume's Boobook ♦ (H's Hawk-Owl) *Ninox obscura* Endemic. Four individuals seen on South Andaman.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* At least three seen at Mudumalai.

Jungle Owlet ♦ *Glaucidium radiatum* Great views of a vocal bird in the garden of Bamboo Banks, more seen in Periyar where they are of the *malabaricum* subspecies, also heard at Thattekad.

Andaman Scops Owl ♦ *Otus balli* Endemic. Superb looks at this shy endemic on South Andaman, exhibiting some threat display to a recording of his call.

Indian Scops Owl ♦ *Otus bakkamoena* One lured into a big tree at Thattekad.

Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* Two roosting birds seen in a bamboo thicket at Mudumalai.

Oriental Scops Owl ♦ (Walden's S O) *Otus [sunia] modestus* Endemic. Good views of one at Chiriyatappu, others heard.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* One at roost at Thattekad.

Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl ♦ *Ketupa nipalensis* A sneaky bird glimpsed and heard at Thattekad.

Mottled Wood Owl ♦ *Strix ocellata* Endemic. One in a palm tree at Periyar being noisily mobbed by Jungle Babblers.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* Several seen in the South Andaman forests.

Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B) *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Frequent sightings, with a flock of seven at Bodi Ghat.

Red-headed Vulture ♦ *Sarcogyps calvus* At least three seen soaring over Mudumalai

White-rumped Vulture ♦ *Gyps bengalensis* A rare sight, a few seen soaring over Mudumalai.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* On South Andaman *davisoni*, in Kerala *melanotis*.

Andaman Serpent Eagle ♦ *Spilornis elgini* Endemic. A perched bird seen at Chiriyatappu, a second seen in flight.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus [cirrhatus] limnaeetus* Those on South Andaman belong to the *andamanensis* subspecies.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle ♦ (Crested H-E) *Nisaetus [cirrhatus] cirrhatus* Near-endemic. Seen en route to Munnar and at Periyar.

Rufous-bellied Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii* One over the forest at Periyar.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis*

Indian Spotted Eagle ♦ *Clanga hastata* Good views of a juvenile circling over Bamboo Banks.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* A few seen soaring over Mudumalai.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* A couple seen at Mudumalai.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* Good views of a juvenile circling over Bamboo Banks.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* A couple of juvenile birds seen at Mudumalai.

Crested Goshawk *Lophospiza trivirgata* A perched bird at Ooty, two at Thattekad gave good views.

Besra *Tachypiza virgata* A juvenile bird sat by the road near Ooty.

Japanese Sparrowhawk *Tachypiza gularis* A couple of fly-bys on South Andaman.

Shikra *Tachypiza badia* Several seen along our route.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Black Kite *Milvus [migrans] govinda*

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Icthyophaga leucogaster* Common on South Andaman, with a large nest seen.

White-eyed Buzzard ♦ *Butastur teesa* A juvenile bird seen (twice!) along the road to and from Mudumalai.

Common Buzzard *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* A couple seen at Eravikulam National Park at Munnar

Malabar Trogon ♦ *Harpactes fasciatus* Endemic. A male showed well at Periyar, a pair seen at Thattekad.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Great Hornbill (G Pied H) *Buceros bicornis* Heard-only, at Periyar.

Malabar Grey Hornbill ♦ *Ocyrceros griseus* Endemic. Several sightings at Periyar and Thattekad.

Malabar Pied Hornbill ♦ *Anthracoceros coronatus* Near-endemic. A striking pair seen at Thattekad was unexpected.

Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis* One at Chiriyatappu, one at Thattekad.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*

Asian Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Only seen in the dry country of Mudumalai.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca* A brief sighting at Chiriyatappu on South Andaman.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A pair at Thattekad entertained us.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* Several sightings on South Andaman.

Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda* One in the mangroves at Kalathang on South Andaman.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Notably common on South Andaman, *saturatior* subspecies.

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*

Malabar Barbet ◊ *Psilopogon malabaricus* Endemic. Several sightings at Periyar and Thattekad.

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*

White-cheeked Barbet ◊ *Psilopogon viridis* Endemic. Frequently encountered in Kerala and TN.

Heart-spotted Woodpecker ◊ *Hemicircus canente* A well-received pair of these cuties showed well at Periyar.

Common Flameback *Dinopium javanense* A few seen at Periyar in mixed flocks.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* One at Periyar.

Streak-throated Woodpecker ◊ *Picus xanthopygaeus* A male seen well at Mudumalai.

Andaman Woodpecker ◊ *Dryocopus hodgei* Endemic. Splendid views at Chiriyatappu.

White-bellied Woodpecker *Dryocopus javensis* Great views of two or three at Thattekad.

Malabar Flameback ◊ *Chrysocolaptes socialis* Endemic. Good views at Periyar, also seen at Thattekad.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker ◊ *Yungipicus nanus* Some at Mudumalai, another at Thattekad.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker ◊ *Leiopicus mahrattensis* A couple of these attractive birds at Mudumalai.

Freckle-breasted Woodpecker ◊ (Spot-b Pied W) *Dendrocopos analis* Seen well on South Andaman.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Three at Mudumalai of the *peregrinator* subspecies, aka 'Shaheen Falcon'.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* A few seen on South Andaman, *magnirostris* subspecies.

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

Plum-headed Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula cyanocephala*

Blue-winged Parakeet ◊ (Malabar P) *Psittacula columboides* Endemic. Not uncommon in Kerala.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Quite common on South Andaman.

Long-tailed Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula longicauda* Quite a few seen on South Andaman.

Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*

Indian Pitta ◊ *Pitta brachyura* One came up into a bare tree at Mudumalai to show off for a short while.

White-bellied Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus erythropygus* Endemic. Non-leader, seen by some at Mudumalai.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* In wet forest on South Andaman, dry forest on the mainland.

Scarlet Minivet ◊ (Orange M) *Pericrocotus [flammeus] flammeus* Endemic. Vocally and visually different.

Scarlet Minivet (Scarlet M) *Pericrocotus [flammeus] speciosus* Quite common on South Andaman, *andamanensis*.

Indian Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* Near-endemic. A few seen around Mudumalai.

Oriental Cuckooshrike *Coracina javensis* A couple of pairs seen on South Andaman.

Andaman Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina dobsoni* Endemic. Great views of a pair at Kalathang, one with a large green katydid, possibly *Holochlora japonica*.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike ♦ *Lalage melanoptera* Just a single female seen, at Bamboo Banks.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* Males in striking breeding plumage at Bodi Ghat probably of subspecies *multicolor*, yet elsewhere all birds seen were in non-breeding plumage, and probably of a different race.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike (Pied F-s) *Hemipus picatus*

Malabar Woodshrike *Tephrodornis sylvicola* Endemic. A flock coming to drink at Periyar.

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Indian Golden Oriole ♦ *Oriolus kundoo*

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Frequent sightings on South Andaman.

Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala cinerea* A demure but vocal fellow seen at Kalathang.

White-spotted Fantail ♦ (Spot-breasted F) *Rhipidura albogularis* Endemic. Good views at Mudumalai, also at Ooty.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*

Andaman Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus andamanensis* Endemic. Commonly found in the Andaman forests.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Plenty seen on South Andaman, a few elsewhere.

White-bellied Drongo ♦ *Dicrurus caeruleus*

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* A full-on white male at Periyar, some females seen elsewhere.

Bay-backed Shrike ♦ *Lanius vittatus* Such a smart looking bird, plenty seen in Mudumalai.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Many seen in Mudumalai.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Regular sightings throughout.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

White-bellied Treepie ♦ *Dendrocitta leucogastra* Endemic. A few seen well in Periyar.

Andaman Treepie ♦ *Dendrocitta bayleii* Endemic. A remarkable flock of at least 67 birds seen at Kalathang on South Andaman.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Large-billed Crow (Eastern Jungle C) *Corvus [macrorhynchos] levillantii* On South Andaman.

Large-billed Crow (Indian Jungle C) *Corvus [macrorhynchos] culminatus*

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

Cinereous Tit (Grey Tit) *Parus cinereus*

Indian Black-lored Tit ♦ (I Yellow T) *Machlolophus aplonotus* Endemic. A pair at Munnar.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark ♦ (A-c Finch-L) *Eremopterix griseus* A brief single en route to Munnar.

Jerdon's Bush Lark ♦ *Plocealauda affinis* Near-endemic. A single at Mudumalai.

Malabar Lark ♦ *Galerida malabarica* Endemic. A very vocal bird found at Mudumalai, including in his song mimicry of Savanna Nightjar, Red-wattled Lapwing, Grey Francolin and Common Woodshrike.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

Jungle Prinia ♦ *Prinia sylvatica* Near-endemic. A singing bird on the Bodi Ghat road.

Ashy Prinia ♦ *Prinia socialis* Non-leader.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Booted Warbler ♦ *Iduna caligata* Several of these hopping about at Mudumalai.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola* Heard-only, at Sippighat on South Andaman.

Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor*

Hill Swallow ♦ *Hirundo domicola* Near-endemic. Found around Ooty and Munnar.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo javanica* Uncommon on South Andaman.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Western House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Some obvious House Martins at Periyar were likely to be this.

Eastern Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* A couple seen at Ooty.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Seen on South Andaman.

Green Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus nitidus* Not uncommon in lowland Kerala.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Common in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, also quite a few on South Andaman where the calls are clearly different to those on the mainland, intermediate between *P. trochiloides* and *P. plumbeitarsus*.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Some good views around Munnar, heard more widely.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* A couple of sightings on South Andaman.

Grey-headed Bulbul ♦ *Microtarsus priocephalus* Endemic. Typically skulking and hard to find, we enjoyed good views of a couple of furtive pairs coming to drink at Thattekad.

Andaman Bulbul ♦ *Microtarsus fuscoflavescens* Endemic. Frequent sightings.

Flame-throated Bulbul ♦ *Rubigula gularis* Endemic. A few seen around Periyar and Thattekad.

White-browed Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus luteolus* Near-endemic.

Yellow-throated Bulbul ♦ *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* Endemic. A swift connection and close views with a couple of these on the Bodi Ghat road.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Yellow-browed Bulbul ♦ *Acritillas indica* Near-endemic. A few seen in the Kerala forests.

Square-tailed Bulbul ♦ (S-t Black B) *Hypsipetes ganeesa* Near-endemic.

Lesser Whitethroat ♦ (Hume's W) *Curruca [curruca] althaea*

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* A few at Mudumalai.

Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Tawny-bellied Babbler ♦ *Dumetia hyperythra* Near-endemic. A couple at Mudumalai of the white-throated subspecies.

Dark-fronted Babbler ♦ *Dumetia atriceps* Near-endemic. A confiding pair near Thattekad.

Indian Scimitar Babbler ♦ *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* Endemic.

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* One at Mudumalai, heard in several other forests.

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poiocephala* Heard-only.

Nilgiri Laughingthrush ♦ *Montecincla cachinnans* Endemic. A handsome bird seen well near our hotel at Ooty, and at Doddabetta Peak.

Palani Laughingthrush ♦ *Montecincla fairbanki* Endemic. Not uncommon around Munnar, with many good sightings.

Large Grey Babbler ♦ *Argya malcolmi* Near-endemic. A group of 6 en route to Munnar.

Rufous Babbler ♦ (Indian R B) *Argya subrufa* Endemic. Two seen in a tea plantation south of Munnar.

Yellow-billed Babbler ♦ *Argya affinis*

Jungle Babbler *Argya striata*

Wayanad Laughingthrush ♦ (Wynaad L) *Pterorhinus delesserti* Endemic. A furtive yet very active flock of 30 or more in the undergrowth at Periyar.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*

Indian Nuthatch ♦ *Sitta castanea* Near-endemic. Seen well at Mudumalai.

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* Present in the Andaman forests.

Southern Hill Myna ♦ *Gracula indica* Endemic.

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* Regular sightings in drier habitats.

Daurian Starling *Agropsar sturninus* A flock of 39 birds seen at Chiriyatappu, a single at Mudumalai was unusual.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum*

Chestnut-tailed Starling (Grey-headed S) *Sturnia malabarica*

Chestnut-tailed Starling ♦ (Malabar S) *Sturnia [malabarica] blythii* Endemic.

White-headed Starling ♦ *Sturnia erythropygia* Endemic. Plenty seen on South Andaman, often in mixed flocks.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* Seen on South Andaman, and also at Periyar and Thattekad.

Indian Blackbird ♦ (Nilgiri B) *Turdus simillimus* Near-endemic. Nice examples at Ooty.

Indian Robin (I Black R) *Copsychus fulicatus*

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Andaman Shama ♦ *Copsychus albiventris* Endemic. Common by voice, good views available.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

Brown-breasted Flycatcher ♦ *Muscicapa muttui* A small number seen at Periyar and Thattekad..

Nilgiri Blue Robin ♦ *Sholicola major* Endemic. Good views of a couple in the gloom of Ooty.

White-bellied Blue Robin ♦ *Sholicola albiventris* Endemic. It took a while, but we had a great look at one near Munnar.

Nilgiri Flycatcher ♦ *Eumyias albicaudatus* Endemic. Three only, around Munnar.

White-bellied Blue Flycatcher ♦ *Cyornis pallidipes* Endemic. A smart male in the forest at Periyar showed well.

Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* A smart male at our Periyar hotel.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Malabar Whistling Thrush ♦ *Myophonus horsfieldii* Endemic. Vocal pre-dawn at Munnar, with many seen along our route.

Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea*

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula ruficauda* A few noted around Periyar, a winter visitor from the Western Himalayas.

Kashmir Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula subrubra* Near-endemic. A nice surprise to find this striking fellow at Ooty.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*

Black-and-orange Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula nigrorufa* Endemic. Nice examples at Ooty and Munnar.

Blue-capped Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhyncha* A smart and confiding male at Munnar.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

Siberian Stonechat (Amur S) *Saxicola [maurus] stejnegeri* A single at Sippighat.

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Pachyglossa agilis* Seen at Mudumalai and Thattekad.

Pale-billed Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* Seen at Mudumalai.

Nilgiri Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum concolor* Endemic. Frequent sightings from Munnar onwards.

Andaman Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum virescens* Endemic. Several seen.

Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra* A couple seen well at Periyar.

Purple-rumped Sunbird ♦ *Leptocoma zeylonica* Fairly common on the mainland.

Crimson-backed Sunbird ♦ (Small S) *Leptocoma minima* Endemic. Many in lowland forest around Thattekad.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

Ornate Sunbird *Cinnyris ornatus* Only on South Andaman.

Loten's Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris lotenius* Near-endemic. Great looks at Periyar and Thattekad.

Jerdon's Leafbird ◊ *Chloropsis jerdoni* Near-endemic. A few around at Bamboo banks.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* Seen at Thattekad only.

Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*

Indian Silverbill ◊ *Euodice malabarica* A couple at Mudumalai.

Black-throated Munia ◊ *Lonchura kelaarti* Near-endemic. A small flock came to roost at Thattekad.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Tricolored Munia ◊ (Black-headed M) *Lonchura malacca* Three at Mudumalai only in flight.

Yellow-throated Sparrow (Chestnut-shouldered Petronia) *Gymnoris xanthocollis* Pleasingly common at Mudumalai.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* A single jay-walking bird at Chiriyatappu together with the following species.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Alaskan W) *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* Quite common on South Andaman.

White-browed Wagtail ◊ *Motacilla maderaspatensis*

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* A single migrant on a hotel lawn at Chiriyatappu.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Nilgiri Pipit ◊ *Anthus nilghiriensis* Endemic. Stunning close views at Eravikulam, the benefit of being on the first bus!

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* Two of these migrants on a hotel lawn at Chiriyatappu.

MAMMALS

Asian Elephant (Indian E) *Elephas maximus* Only footprints, at Periyar.

Leopard *Panthera pardus* Clear footprint seen at Periyar.

Tiger *Panthera tigris* Many clear footprints of a male Tiger seen at Periyar.

Small Indian Mongoose *Urva auropunctata* Two at Bamboo Banks.

Indian Grey Mongoose *Urva edwardsii* A couple seen from our Ooty hotel.

Stripe-necked Mongoose *Urva vitticollis* One at the roadside at Mudumalai.

Eurasian Wild Pig *Sus scrofa*

Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis*

Northern Red Muntjac (Indian M) *Muntiacus vaginalis* Seen at Periyar, one at Mudumalai.

Sambar *Rusa unicorn*

Gaur (Indian Bison) *Bos gaurus* Rather bizarre to find these in a tea plantation. Also seen in Periyar, seemingly unconcerned by our hurried passing en route to some Laughingthrushes!

Nilgiri Tahr *Nilgiritragus hylocrius* Five beasts appeared on the mountain at Eravikulam.

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* Hundreds roosting at Periyar.

Bonnet Macaque *Macaca radiata*

Nilgiri Langur *Semnopithecus johnii*

Tufted Gray Langur *Semnopithecus priam*

Indian Hare (Black-naped H) *Lepus nigricollis* Non-leader. At Bamboo Banks.

Indian Crested Porcupine *Hystrix indica* Non-leader. One at Bamboo Banks.

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

Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* Seen on South Andaman.

Nilgiri Palm Squirrel *Funambulus sublineatus* Seen at Eravikulam.

Jungle Palm Squirrel *Funambulus tristriatus* Seen at Thattekad.

Indian Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica*

Brown Rat (introduced) *Rattus norvegicus*

REPTILES

Large-scaled Pit Viper *Craspedocephalus macrolepis* Seen at Eravikulam.

Anamalai Pit Viper *Craspedocephalus anamallensis* Seen at Thattekad.