

# BHUTAN TOUR REPORT 2025

19 April - 7 May 2025

## Dave Farrow

Our Bhutan tour this year was a wonderful trip, with a new improved itinerary that produced great results. So good to return to the forests and mountains in this land of avian plenty. For me personally it was something of a return pilgrimage, my last visit being over six years previously, and this was my 16<sup>th</sup> Birdquest tour to Bhutan since the first one back in 1997. A lot has changed, with greater access to new areas provided by an enhanced road network. This year we had the pleasure of being accompanied by Phub Dorji as our guide, his sharp eyes, keen hearing and latest knowledge made a huge contribution to the tour. We found just so many birds, with Himalayan Monal sitting at the top as our 'Bird-of-the-trip', Satyr Tragopan close behind with twelve sightings, and Beautiful Nuthatches in all their glory. We saw a total of four adult White-bellied Heron, plus two nests seen with two chicks apiece, a significant proportion of the total population of the rarest heron in the world! We saw Brown and Tawny Fish Owls, Himalayan Wood Owl, Ward's Trogons, Chestnut-breasted Partridge, Spotted Laughingthrush, Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler, Long-billed Wren Babblers, Spotted Elachura, Himalayan Cutia, and so much more. Exploring new areas in the south we found Grey-lored Broadbills, Long-tailed and Rufous-backed Sibias, and added a new species to the national list, Large Scimitar Babbler. And let's not forget the Red Panda that we watched dozing in a tree on a high pass.

Beginning our tour in the high valley of Paro, once the inbound Druk Air flight had finished giving everyone a bonus tour of the south of the country, it landed safely and soon we were on our way. Our first stop was along the riverside near Paro town, where we had stunning views of an Ibisbill feeding on small fish right by the road, and our first Himalayan Wagtails and Grey-backed Shrikes. Nearby we saw Rufous-breasted Accentor, Russet Sparrows and Grey Bushchat. We pressed onwards through the new developments of Thimphu and up to the forests of the Dochu La at 3100m. Birding around the top we found a superb pair of confiding Spotted Laughingthrush, plus Black-faced, Chestnut-crowned and White-throated Laughingthrushes. A Great Parrotbill came in for a very close inspection as did a Hoary-throated Barwing, both requiring us to step backwards to view properly! Then an unexpected call – surely that's not a Ward's Trogon up here? It certainly was, and after some effort we had a great view of a female, at least 500m above its expected altitude range. Moving on, we also found Rufous-bellied Niltava, Eurasian Jay, and Rufous-gorgetted Flycatchers; at a lower elevation we saw Maroon Oriole, Yellow-cheeked Tit and Blue-winged Minla. Down in the drier Punakha valley, we saw Slender-billed Oriole, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and Grey Treepie, before reaching our well-appointed hotel overlooking the Puna Sang Chu. Quite a day to start our trip!

Exploring some of the mountain forests close to Punakha, driving in the half-light produced a total of 25 Kalij Pheasants along the road. The overnight rain meant our bus struggled a bit on muddy slopes, but we found our breakfast crew ready and waiting for us in good forest at 2500m. Along an undisturbed track we found Grey-sided Laughingthrush, Ultramarine Flycatchers, Himalayan Cutia, Green-tailed and Mrs Gould's Sunbirds, Blyth's, Ashy-throated, Chestnut-crowned and Buff-barred Warblers, a pair of Darjeeling Woodpecker at a nest hole, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Black-throated Parrotbills, Blue-fronted and Black Redstarts, Himalayan, Common and Asian Emerald Cuckoos, displaying Crested Goshawks and Mountain Hawk Eagle, Himalayan Buzzard, White-tailed Nuthatch, Whiskered Yuhina, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Red-tailed, Bar-throated and Blue-winged Minlas, and Streak-breasted Scimitar Babblers. A Rufous-throated Wren Babbler was lured into view, our only sighting of the tour.

In the afternoon we descended to Punakha, and enjoyed a visit to the ornate Dzong with its breathtaking interiors, while a huge flock of White-throated Needletails wheeled overhead. Along the river close to our hotel we saw River and Red-wattled Lapwings, and Crested Kingfishers.

Moving on, we began alongside the Puna Sang Chu, a major flyway for migration through the country. Scanning the sandy shallows in the river we saw Great Crested Grebe, Goosanders, Little Ringed Plover, a summer-plumaged Marsh Sandpiper, White-browed Wagtail and a

Peregrine. We turned uphill by the great Dzong at Wangdi and headed up the valley to where our breakfast table was perched atop an island in the road with a chorten atop it! Here we saw our first Scarlet Minivet, Grey-hooded Warbler and Black-throated Sunbird, and nearby we managed a couple of glimpses of a Spotted Elachura as he belted out its high-pitched song. Yellow-rumped Honeyguide was more co-operative, perching on the combs of Giant Rock Bees, and a lovely pair of Crimson-naped Woodpeckers showed well. Heading on up to the Pele La at 3400m, the birding was quite busy with Green Shrike Babbler, Rufous-fronted Bushtits, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, Whistler's Warbler, Hoary-throated Barwing, and Bar-throated Minlas. Our kitchen crew were ready and waiting for us with our lunch, something that became a daily pleasure, and a short stroll here produced fantastic views of a Scaly-breasted Cupwing. Crossing the ridge to the beautiful Phobjika valley, the habitat was quite different and we saw many Red-billed Chough, Oriental Skylarks, Hen Harrier, Himalayan Vultures that sat around with full bellies. After dark, a Himalayan Wood Owl came and showed well just beside our hotel.

We returned to the Pele La in the early morning, finding three Brown Parrotbills en route. At the pass we found White-winged Grosbeak, Southern Nutcracker, Grey-sided Bush Warbler, an errant Scarlet Finch and heard our first Satyr Tragopan. Moving on, we slowly worked our way eastwards to Tongsa. A Yellow-throated Marten went scampering along the verge, and Nepal House Martins were nest building on roadside cliff. A vocal Pale Blue Flycatcher made his introduction, and after passing Tongsa we climbed up to the Yutong La pass. Despite the birding being rather muted in the afternoon we added Lemon-rumped Warblers, a flock of Plain Mountain Finches and a Hume's Bush Warbler. We reached our lodgings in the Bumthang valley just as the rain arrived.

A pre-dawn start to catch Pheasants on the road, we headed eastwards as the dawn came up and found ourselves among coniferous forest. Soon the first red shimmer of a Satyr Tragopan appeared in front of us, disappearing only to reappear just behind our bus, and give us a great display, calling fearlessly at the roadside. We continued up the road to the Sheltang La, seeing another three male Tragopans and two females as we went! Also this morning we found a pair of smart Collared Grosbeaks, male Red-headed Bullfinch, Common Rosefinch, Rufous-breasted Accentors, and glimpsed a Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch.

We pressed onwards, towards the start of that fabled birding highway, the 'Lingmethang Road', marked by the high pass of the Thrumsing La that sits at 3780m. We saw a pair of Himalayan Monal that slipped away into the forest, yet another male Satyr Tragopan and eventually a pair of Blood Pheasants. In the flowering rhododendron on the pass we found a pair of stunning Fire-tailed Myzornis, also here were Dark-rumped Rosefinch, White-browed Bush Robin and Fire-tailed Sunbird. Lower down we found Himalayan Shortwing and Hodgson's Treecreeper, and lower still at 2900m we discovered our well-appointed camp. Nearby we found an obliging Chestnut-headed Tesia, and a splendid pair of Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers.

Birding nearly we began the day with a singing Large-billed Leaf Warbler, a group of Spot-winged Grosbeaks, watched Blyth's Swifts swooping low over our heads as they shot in and out of cracks in the roadside cliffs, and had an extended view of a stunning male Satyr Tragopan feeding just below the road, unconcerned by our loitering just uphill. Returning to the Thrumsing La, as the fog drifted in and out we saw Fire-tailed Myzornis, a pair of Fire-tailed Sunbird and a pair of Golden Bush Robin. Searching a known area for Red Panda, we could see its latrine on a mossy branch, but no animal. Then our guide Phub was waving excitedly, as the rear end of a Red Panda was seen disappearing into the bamboo. Within a couple of minutes he spotted a second animal up in the trees, sleepily lounging on a branch. We were able to watch this one at length, as it alternately dozed and studied the onlookers. You lucky people! In the afternoon we dropped lower, once fog had cleared we had a busy time watching a flock in the bamboo, with gorgeous little Black-throated Parrotbills, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, White-throated Fantail, Green-crowned Warbler and Rufous-capped Babbler. A pair of Scaly Laughingthrush were still in the same place as they had been 25 years previously, still as sneaky but we managed a short view of one. The dreamy song of a Blue-fronted Robin serenaded us, but as expected he remained invisible, buried in a bamboo thicket.

In the dawn twilight, from our mountain camp we could hear Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Wood Owls, Grey Nightjar and Long-billed Thrush. Leaving this special place we saw two more male Satyr Tragopan on the road, a showy Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker, nest-building Little Forktails, a vocal treetop Black-headed Shrike Babbler, Broad-billed Warbler, a female and an immature male Ward's Trogon, our first Rusty-fronted Barwing, a gorgeous male Sapphire Flycatcher, Black-eared Shrike Babbler and White-spectacled Warbler. Lunchtime at mid-elevations produced Hodgson's Redstart, Short-billed Minivet, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide and a vocal Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, then as we entered warmer broad-leaved forests we met Grey-cheeked Warbler, a lovely quartet of Himalayan Cutia, Sikkim Treecreeper, Yellow-cheeked Tits and Golden-throated Barbet. Our next camp was sat astride a saddle at 1600m, an excellent location to access the nearby avian abundance.

With an early quest for one of the best, we found a Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler in an overgrown gully that eventually emerged to give us a great view. I was particularly happy to reacquaint myself with this bird, nearly 25 years to the day since he jumped out in front of me for the very first time! We attempted to see another favourite, the Long-billed Wren Babbler, but all he was offering was a split-second view before hiding again. Also today we saw stunning Rufous-necked Hornbills, Black Eagle, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Asian Emerald Cuckoos, Lesser Yellownappe, Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Grey-chinned Minivet, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, White-breasted Parrotbill, a smart Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, White-naped Yuhina, Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced Warbler. Around our camp lived a vocal Long-tailed Shrike, Grey Bushchats and Himalayan Prinia, with Himalayan Swiftlets and White-throated Needletail swooping over the ridge. Evening excursions produced a wonderful Brown Wood Owl, but of several calling Hodgson's Frogmouths, none came near us.

Another morning in the mid-elevations, we saw a fine *lathamii* Kalij Pheasant, a big flock of Speckled Woodpigeon, confiding Himalayan Cutias and a Lesser Cuckoo. Gullies hid Slaty-bellied Tesias and White-gorgetted Flycatcher, and a perched Mountain Hawk Eagle showed well. Later we explored an adjoining valley and found Grey-throated Parrotbills, Streaked Spiderhunter, Yellow-vented Warbler, Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo, Bar-winged Flycatcher Shrike, Sultan Tits, and Orange-bellied Leafbird. Close to our camp was a house where in the early morning birds were coming to feed around the seepage and waste, and we had splendid views of Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Red-faced Liocichla, Bhutan Laughingthrush ('like a giant Dunnock'), Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, plus we saw Common Tailorbird, Grey-headed Woodpecker and Greater Yellownappe. Around our camp itself we saw our first Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, and a spectacular Rufous-necked Hornbill.

Then it was time to head for pastures new, so we headed downhill, to the very bottom of the Lingmethang Road and took the road southwards through the valley of the Kuri Chu river. In the dry habitat here we found Himalayan and Rufescent Prinias and Himalayan Bulbul. The scenery was spectacular as the road clung to a ledge through the dramatic gorges of the Kuri Chu, then we emerged into verdant foothill forest at 300m. Pausing here we saw Red Junglefowls, a Great Hornbill putting on a show as it fed on berries, Crested Honey Buzzard and Rufous-bellied Eagle soared overhead, Blue-throated Barbet, Pin-striped Tit Babbler, Black-naped Monarch, White-throated Bulbul, Great Myna, Chestnut-tailed Starling, and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch. Reaching the southernmost hills we could see the plains of Assam beyond, and we headed westwards along the forested ridge towards Panbang. Along the way we found a splendid Grey-lobed Broadbill (a first for this tour) plus Red-headed Trogon, Long-tailed Broadbill and more Kalij Pheasants. We arrived at our Jungle Lodge at dusk, situated on the edge of Manas National Park, eager to explore this exciting area.

We headed up into the lush forests, a humid misty morning that turned to rain, just as we reached a conveniently situated shelter in which to have our breakfast in. The birding was busy, with Greater Flamebacks, Speckled Piculet, Bay and Rufous Woodpeckers, Common Emerald Dove, Mountain Imperial Pigeon and Pin-tailed Green Pigeons, White-crested Laughingthrushes, Long-tailed Sibia, Sultan Tits, Crimson Sunbird, Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher and Yellow-vented Warbler. Spotted and Slaty-backed Forktails appeared in the rain, and we diverted into Manas National Park where we saw Black-backed Forktail on a forest stream. In the afternoon the weather had improved and we returned to the humid forests at 600m asl, seeing Blue-eared Barbet, Long-tailed Broadbills, White-browed Scimitar Babblers, Striated and Black-chinned Yuhinas, a Grey Peacock Pheasant cackled away from dense forest, while a vocal Ruddy Kingfisher also resolutely stayed hidden. In the late afternoon an Orange-headed Thrush showed nicely as it fed along the edge of the road.

Returning to the forest the next day, we opened our birding with yet another Ruddy Kingfisher that wouldn't show, unlike a fine spotted Eye-browed Wren Babbler that emerged in a rocky gully. A large flock of young Rufous-necked Hornbills put on quite a display, we saw White-hooded Babblers, White-browed Piculet, Common Green Magpie, another Grey-lobed Broadbill, and an odd song coming from the canopy turned out to be a smart Rufous-backed Sibia. A familiar call from the jungles of Thailand caught my attention, coming from the thickly vegetated slope – a Large Scimitar Babbler? Without any previous records in Bhutan, this would be a National first, a range extension from the nearest records in lowland Assam. We lured it closer, and it circled us in typical fashion, staying hidden for the most part yet crossing the road repeatedly. Eventually some short glimpses confirmed what we already knew, it was Bhutan's first Large Scimitar Babbler! Too quick for any of our photographers, but plenty of good sound recordings were acquired.

Activity dropped off as the day grew hotter, so it was time to leave this awesome forest and head for the next destination. We paused by a dramatic waterfall that also had a spectacular concentration of butterflies, and we had our lunch at a lovely viewpoint overlooking the hills and valleys. Along a windy canyon we were privileged to view the nest of White-bellied Heron far below us in the valley, with an adult and two chicks stood on the nest platform as we looked down from high up. The rarest Heron in the world, we were looking at a significant percentage of the world population! We reached our pleasant camp in a green orchard, and a short walk in the nearby

bamboo clumps produced the desired White-hooded Babblers and smart Pale-billed Parrotbills, plus a single accompanying White-breasted Parrotbill, and a Grey-bellied Cuckoo. Another wonderful day in this magical wonderland!

From our comfortable camp we didn't have to walk far to explore the nearby areas. Rain showers came and went, and from the shelter of the trees we saw Grey-throated Babblers, Black-chinned and Striated Yuhinas, and a Pale-headed Woodpecker tried to hide in the bamboo. As we paused for breakfast we could hear a Spotted Elachura singing his techno song, and catching up with him we enjoyed some lengthy views. We drove up the road towards Shemgang, finding Red-headed Trogon and Rufous-faced Warbler along the way, to a place at 1700m where we hoped to find Beautiful Nuthatch. It was all quiet, until a sharp chattering was heard, and there they were in all their glory, two beautiful Beautiful Nuthatches. Hurrah! The rain came and went, then back down the hill we saw Rusty-cheeked and White-browed Scimitar Babblers, Banded Bay Cuckoo and Asian Fairy Bluebird. Mammals also featured here, with several troops of Gee's Golden Langur seen in the area.

A final foray around our camp produced more White-hooded Babblers and Pale-billed Parrotbills, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Crimson Sunbird and Great Hornbill. Continuing our journey, we headed up to the Tama La on the road to Gelephu, where we saw another female Ward's Trogon amid a cacophony of Cuckoos. Dropping further down the mountain, we paused by a bridge where a pair of Slaty-backed Forktails fed on the stream. Nearby we found a very confiding Long-billed Wren Babbler, unafraid of the assembled onlookers and sitting in full view showing off his kiwi-like form. Also here was a Grey-bellied Tesia that finally permitted us some views, and a vigorously calling Chestnut-breasted Partridge. Despite there being no open ground to view the forest floor, we kept calling it and amazingly it popped its head up over the bank and stood in a sunlit patch! So lucky! A Grey-winged Blackbird sang close to where we had our lunch, in yet another well-appointed gazebo with a view of the clouds bubbling up from the hot plains beneath us. In the rich forests clinging to the steep slopes of the last foothills, we had amazing views of a pair of Beautiful Nuthatch, joined by Silver-eared Mesia, Rusty-fronted Barwing, a brief Eurasian Wryneck, Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Red-faced Liocichla and a Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler. We timed our journey so that the road over a large landslide had re-opened to traffic, and after crossing the last bridge at the foot of the hills we were surprised to see a Brown Fish Owl roosting in the open, a tour write-in and a rare bird in these parts. We reached the border town of Gelephu with enough time to make a pilgrimage to the town sewage ponds. At the close of day we saw Red-naped Ibis, Lesser Whistling Ducks, Great Hornbills, Indian Pond Herons, Eurasian Hobby, Rufous Treepie and Jungle Myna. We then enjoyed our first hotel in nine days, with welcome hot showers and cold beers!

As dawn came in this subtropical town, we headed out and began birding the lowlands. We saw Green Imperial Pigeon, Common Hill Myna, Indochinese Roller, Oriental Dollarbird, a trio of Indian Stone-curlew on a river bed along with several Indian Peafowl, Black-winged Kites, Hair-crested and Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Indian Cuckooshrike, Plain Flowerpecker, and a smart Eastern Red-rumped Swallow with a fascinating tunnel-entrance nest. We could hear Blue-naped and Western Hooded Pittas calling from the foothill forests, and exploring a gully we managed to lure out a Western Hooded Pitta which sat calling in view, high in the trees, unlike the Blue-naped Pittas that remained buried in their thickets. We also saw Wreathed Hornbill, Indian Pied Myna, Asian Palm Swift, three Black-backed Forktails, and a White-rumped Munia. Then we turned to climb up into the hills once more, pausing in the heat of the midday period and watching White-throated Needletails and Asian House Martins overhead, plus a Green-billed Malkoha and Crested Serpent Eagle. We continued up the forested mountain road, finding familiar species such as White-browed Piculet, Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler, Striated Yuhinas and Sultan Tits. As the rain came in we headed for our final camp of the tour, located on a 2000m pass in a curious setting among chortens and prayer flags. As the mist and rain cleared, we watched a gully behind a cafe, where we saw Bhutan Laughingthrush, Rusty-fronted Barwing, White-throated Fantail, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Red-billed Leiothrix, and a splendidly plain Tickell's Thrush.

Dawn at our blessed camp, and the forest all around us rang with the calls of six species of Cuckoo and Grey Nightjar heralding the start of the day. Once light we found Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Grey-winged Blackbird, Common Rosefinch and Tickell's Leaf Warbler feeding in a mustard patch. Lower down we watched Grey-sided and White-crested Laughingthrushes, Small Niltava and White-naped Yuhina, and Pale Blue Flycatcher. Fog rolled in again, so we began our journey northwards. Dropping down into the deep valley of the Puna Tsang Chu, we stopped to watch another White-bellied Heron nest with two well-grown young, clearly visible despite being hundreds of metres below us. At two separate points along the valley we also saw single White-bellied Herons, to make an incredible three adults and two chicks for the day. One of them was on the lake created by the damming of the river, almost alongside a vagrant Oriental Darter. We pressed onwards to Wangdi, and reached our charming hotel positioned by a rushing mountain stream.

Continuing along the Puna Sang Chu, we scanned the river as we went. We saw Little Grebe. Pied Avocet, Common Redshank, Gadwall and Eurasian Wigeon, before heading back uphill. Crossing the river into the dry pine and grassy cultivation, we saw a male Crested Bunting singing lustily, and a Grey-bellied Cuckoo came by. Another al-fresco breakfast beside a chorten in the forest at 2300m, we had a brief view of Indian Cuckoo, and found a Pygmy Cupwing that showed well, though a vocal White-tailed Robin was more furtive. Heading higher up the mountain, we found a handsome pair of Rufous-bellied Woodpecker. The Dochu La was quiet, so we pressed towards Paro. We stopped to check a pine-covered island along the Paro river, and surprisingly in the trees were sitting two Tawny Fish Owls! Wow! On reaching Paro, we had a nice look at a Black-tailed Crake in a roadside wetland, plus a vagrant Common Moorhen, while an Ibisbill sat preening in mid-river.

A last hurrah for our tour, with a pre-dawn departure for the Chele La, perfectly timed for a Grey Nightjar that sat on a rocky cliff by the road. As the light came up, both Kalij Pheasant and a female Satyr Tragopan scuttled off the road upon our approach. As we got higher, Blood Pheasants began to appear, and we counted a minimum of 14. But where were the Monals? Perhaps some of us were wishing *too* hard! We headed up to the pass at 3870m, and over the other side. We had a brief look at a female Himalayan Monal that flew downhill, then headed back up to the top to scan the hillsides as they drifted in and out of cloud. We met our camp crew arriving with our breakfast, of course they had seen Monals on the drive up! We quickly drove down and sure enough, there was a stunning male Himalayan Monal, strutting around and shimmering in the light. Sated with this gorgeous spectacle, we continued our explorations. We saw some smart Red-headed Bullfinches, Collared and White-winged Grosbeaks were very active, plus Blue-fronted Redstarts, Rufous-breasted Accentors, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinches, Spotted Laughingthrush, and a Long-tailed Thrush that sang strongly from a high conifer. We received a tip about a Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel, and once we had found his hole we had some nice views as he poked his head out. Dropping lower down the mountain we saw some very distant Snow Pigeons, and disturbed two Eurasian Woodcock from the roadside, one of which sat in the open. After a final field lunch with our camp crew, we said a warm goodbye to them and continued our birding. We added Goldcrest, enjoyed Grey Crested and crested Coal Tits, Mrs Gould's Sunbird and Whistler's Warbler. A couple of final additions came in the form of a vocal Indian Blue Robin, and a fine Brown Bullfinch that led us on a merry dance. One more bird to finish with, back at our hotel there was an Eastern Barn Owl roosting under the eaves. Another write-in for the tour!

What a trip! From start to finish, Bhutan did not fail to impress and enchant us with its wonderful avifauna, and actually exceeded expectations. My 21<sup>st</sup> visit over 32 years, it is great that the birding is still as good as it ever was. Long may it last! A special thanks to Phub Dorji for his hard work, and also to our camp crew for keeping us well fed throughout the trip.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

### BIRDS

**Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* A dozen at Gelephu Sewage ponds.

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera* Seven at Bajo.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope* Five at Bajo

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*

**Hill Partridge** ♦ *Arborophila torqueola* Heard-only, though not common.

**Chestnut-breasted Partridge** ♦ *Arborophila mandellii* A remarkable encounter where we saw the head and breast of a strongly calling bird near the Tama La. Also calling at Yongkola.

**Rufous-throated Partridge** ♦ *Arborophila rufogularis* Heard-only.

**Blood Pheasant** ♦ *Ithaginis cruentus* Two seen on the Thrumsing La, and at least 14 on a busy morning on the Chele La.

**Satyr Tragopan** ♦ *Tragopan satyra* A total of 12 seen along our route! What a stunning bird!

**Himalayan Monal** ♦ *Lophophorus impejanus* A pair on the road to the Thrumsing La didn't hang around, then we had stunning looks at an iridescent male on the Chele. Also a female seen there.

**Kalij Pheasant** ♦ *Lophura leucomelanos* A total of 25 seen on a drive up to the forest near Punakha, all of the white-breasted *melanota* subspecies. And in the east we saw a few dark-breasted *lathamii*.

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* A few seen in the borderlands.

**Grey Peacock-Pheasant** ♦ *Polyplectron bicalcaratum* Heard-only. Barking and cackling at Panbang, tantalisingly close!

**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus*

**Grey Nightjar** *Caprimulgus jotaka* After several heard from campsites along our route, we had a good look at a roadside bird at Paro.

**Hodgson's Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus hodgsoni* Heard-only, at Yongkola. Bah!

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris*

**White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus* A big flock low over Punakha Dzong, also seen over Yongkola camp and in a few other places.

**Asian Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

**Blyth's Swift** ◊ *Apus leuconyx* Some nice encounters with birds flying in and out of roadside nests in rock faces.

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis*

**Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis* A single vocal bird seen above Sarpang.

**Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** *Clamator coromandus* A single bird seen briefly near Shemgang.

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Heard-only.

**Asian Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx maculatus*

**Banded Bay Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sonneratii* Seen twice by our Tingtibi camp.

**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus* Heard-only.

**Grey-bellied Cuckoo** ◊ *Cacomantis passerinus* Two seen, one near Punakha, another near Tingtibi.

**Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparverioides*

**Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ (Whistling H C) *Hierococcyx nisicolor*

**Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus*

**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*

**Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

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

**Snow Pigeon** ◊ *Columba leuconota* Three distant birds at the Kila Goenpa Nunnery near the Chele La.

**Speckled Wood Pigeon** ◊ *Columba hodgsonii* A nice flock of 45 seen on the Lingmethang Road., a few also seen elsewhere.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis*

**Barred Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia unchall* Heard-only. Vocal at Darachu camp.

**Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*

**Pin-tailed Green Pigeon** ◊ *Treron apicauda* Seen on four days in the foothills.

**Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon** *Treron sphenurus* A flock at Darachu, also near the Dochu La.

**Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea* A couple seen flying over at Gelephu.

**Mountain Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula badia*

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* A vagrant and a write-in for Bhutan, seen at Paro.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*

**Black-tailed Crake** ◊ *Zapornia bicolor* One showed well on a small marsh near Paro.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* One seen on the Puna Sang Chu at Wangdi.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* One at Bajo, on the Puna Sang Chu at Wangdi.

**Indian Stone-curlew (I Thick-knee)** *Burhinus indicus* Three seen roosting on a river bed near Gelephu.

**Ibisbill** ◊ *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* A great close view on our first morning near Paro, also seen near the airport at the end of the tour.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* A single at Bajo near Wangdi was unexpected.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

**River Lapwing** *Vanellus duvaucelii*

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* Two on the Chele La, one of which stayed on the ground for stunning views, despite all the noise coming from our bus!

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* A single at Bajo, a Bhutan lifer for all including Phub!

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* A single at Bajo on our second visit.

**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* A vagrant, one on the dam lake near Wangdi.

**Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger*

**Red-naped Ibis** ♠ *Pseudibis papillosa* A flying bird at Gelephu sewage ponds.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* Seen at Gelephu sewage ponds.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Ardea coromanda* Around Gelephu.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* A single at Bajo was a write-in.

**White-bellied Heron** ♠ *Ardea insignis* A remarkable tally; first a nest near Tingtibi with adult and two chicks, then a single bird along the Puna Sang Chu, a nest in the same valley with an adult and two chicks, and finally another adult on the dam lake further upstream. The rarest Heron in the world, these represent a significant proportion of the world population..

**Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B)** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* A few seen in the foothills and lowlands.

**Himalayan Vulture** ♠ *Gyps himalayensis* Seen at Phobjika and over the Pele La, with close views of birds on the ground.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus nipalensis* Some nice encounters with perched birds, plus a few in the air.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii* Two seen over the foothill forests.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Frequent sightings over the forest.

**Crested Goshawk** *Lophospiza trivirgata* Displaying birds near Punakha were the only ones seen.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* A 'ringtail' seen hunting over the marsh at Phobjika.

**Black Kite (Black-eared K)** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* A migrating bird flew over the Dochu La.

**Himalayan Buzzard** ♠ *Buteo refectus*

**Eastern Barn Owl** *Tyto javanica* A nice treat to see this at roost under the eaves of our Paro hotel.

**Collared Owlet** *Taenioptynx brodiei* Heard-only.

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides* Heard-only, just one, near Panbang.

**Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum* Heard-only, near Gelephu airport.

**Mountain Scops Owl** *Otus spilocephalus* Heard-only, near Yomgkola.

**Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis* A surprise daytime find near Gelephu.

**Tawny Fish Owl** *Ketupa flavipes* A big surprise find of a pair in pine near Paro.

**Brown Wood Owl** *Strix leptogrammica* An excellent encounter with a vocal bird at Yongkola.

**Himalayan Owl** ♠ (H Wood O) *Strix nivicolom* Excellent views from our Phobjika hotel.

**Red-headed Trogon** *Harpactes erythrocephalus* Several seen, but none well.

**Ward's Trogon** ♠ *Harpactes wardi* Three females plus a female-plumaged young male seen along our route, but no 'raspberry fool!'

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

**Great Hornbill** *Buceros bicornis*

**Rufous-necked Hornbill** ♠ *Aceros nipalensis* Multiple encounters with these fantastic beasts, with a large group seen near Panbang.

**Wreathed Hornbill** *Rhyticeros undulatus* Just one seen, near Sarpang.

**Indochinese Roller** *Coracias affinis* A few in the borderlands.

**Oriental Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis* A single seen near Gelephu.

**Ruddy Kingfisher** *Halcyon coromanda* Heard-only. A nice surprise in the Panbang forests, but of two birds heard, they would not show themselves.

**White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

**Crested Kingfisher** *Megaceryle lugubris*

**Blue-bearded Bee-eater** *Nyctornis athertoni* A single seen briefly at Yongkola.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater** *Merops leschenaulti* Singles seen at Panbang and near Sarpang.

**Great Barbet** *Psilopogon virens*

**Lineated Barbet** *Psilopogon lineatus* Heard-only, at Gelephu.

**Golden-throated Barbet** *Psilopogon franklinii*

**Blue-throated Barbet** *Psilopogon asiaticus*

**Blue-eared Barbet** *Psilopogon cyanotis* A couple seen near Panbang.

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** *Indicator xanthonotus* Three seen on our route, staying close to the hives of Giant Rock Bees.

**Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* A single in a bird flock uphill from Gelephu.

**Speckled Piculet** *Picumnus innominatus* A single near Panbang.

**White-browed Piculet** *Sasia ochracea* Four seen in scattered locations, often close to bamboo.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Yungipicus canicapillus*

**Crimson-naped Woodpecker** *Dryobates cathpharius*

**Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* Nice views of a pair at Dochu La.

**Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos macei* A single seen in foothill forest near Gelephu.

**Darjeeling Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos darjellensis* A fine pair seen near Punakha at a hole in a big stump.

**Greater Yellownappe** *Chrysophlegma flavinucha*

**Lesser Yellownappe** *Picus chlorolophus*

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

**Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium bengalense* Heard-only.

**Greater Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* A pair seen near Panbang were a write-in.

**Pale-headed Woodpecker** *Gecinulus grantia* Some good if brief looks at one in the bamboo close to our Tingtibi camp.

**Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

**Rufous Woodpecker** *Micropternus brachyurus* Just one seen, in forest near Panbang.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* A single hunting around Gelephu sewage ponds.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

**Grey-lored Broadbill** *Serilophus* An excellent sighting of one near Nganglam, another near Panbang. This was the first time on this tour, and is a recent split from Silver-breasted Broadbill.

**Long-tailed Broadbill** *Psarisomus dalhousiae*

**Blue-naped Pitta** *Hydrornis nipalensis* Heard-only. At least six heard between Gelephu and Sarpang.

**Western Hooded Pitta** *Pitta sordida* Four heard between Gelephu and Sarpang, with one seen well as it sang from high in the trees. Easier to see than the previous species!

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus* Only seen on one day near Yongkola.

**Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis virgatus* A single male near Sarpang.

**Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia* Only seen at the Panbang Jungle Lodge.

**Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*

**Short-billed Minivet** *Pericrocotus brevirostris*

**Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus* Not uncommon in pine at higher elevations.

**Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus speciosus*

**Indian Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei* One flying about near Gelephu.

**Black-winged Cuckooshrike** *Lalage melaschistos* A common feature of mid elevation forests.

**Green Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius xanathochlorus* A curious little bird, seen well in higher elevation bird flocks.

**Black-eared Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius melanotis* A smart male seen along the Lingmethang Road.

**Black-headed Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius rufiventer* A vocal fellow singing from the treetops below Sengor.

**White-browed Shrike-babbler** *Pteruthius aeralatus*

**White-bellied Erpornis** *Erpornis zantholeuca*

**Maroon Oriole** *Oriolus traillii*

**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus* A single bird seen near Gelephu.

**Slender-billed Oriole** *Oriolus tenuirostris* A pine specialist, we saw a vocal male near Punakha.

**Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus*

**Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus remifer*

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus* Two or three seen near Panbang.

**Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus* A few seen in the border forests near Gelephu.

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis*  
**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea*  
**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* Just one seen well, on a roadside wire.  
**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Frequently seen at lower elevations, and a vocal camp companion at Yongkola.  
**Grey-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus*  
**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Frequent sightings of the distinctive *interstinctus* subspecies.  
**Yellow-billed Blue Magpie** ♦ *Urocissa flavirostris*  
**Common Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis* Smart birds seen well at Panbang and Tingtibi  
**Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* A few seen around Gelephu.  
**Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*  
**Black-rumped Magpie** *Pica bottanensis* Only seen in the cultivated areas around Bunthang and Ura.  
**Southern Nutcracker** *Nucifraga hemispila* A few of these 'spotless' Nutcrackers seen at the highest elevations.  
**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax*  
**House Crow** *Corvus splendens*  
**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*  
**Eastern Jungle Crow** *Corvus leuallantii* A couple of sightings in the borderlands.  
**Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* Unusually, just one seen  
**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*  
**Yellow-browed Tit** ♦ *Sylviparus modestus*  
**Sultan Tit** *Melanochlora sultanea* Often seen in the warmer lower elevation forests, common and showy in places.  
**Rufous-vented Tit** ♦ *Periparus rubidiventris* A small number seen on the Pele La and other high forest areas.  
**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*  
**Grey-crested Tit** ♦ *Lophophanes dichrous* A handful seen in higher elevation forests.  
**Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus*  
**Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Machlolophus spilonotus*  
**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Many seen at Phobjika.  
**White-throated Bulbul** ♦ *Alophoixus flaveolus* Not uncommon in the warm lower elevation forests.  
**Striated Bulbul** *Alcurus striatus*  
**Ashy Bulbul** *Hemixos flavala*  
**Mountain Bulbul** *Ixos maclellandii*  
**Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*  
**Black-crested Bulbul** *Rubigula flaviventris*  
**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*  
**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*  
**Himalayan Bulbul** ♦ *Pycnonotus leucogenys* A few seen only in one area, in the dry valleys south of Lingmethang.  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus* Seen best between Sarpang and Darachu camp.  
**Nepal House Martin** ♦ *Delichon nipalense* Some busy roadside colonies along our route.  
**Eastern Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* A few seen in the lowlands, with an interesting 'inverted igloo' nest seen near Gelephu.  
**Scaly-breasted Cupwing** *Pnoepyga albiventer* Stunning views of a feisty little songster on the Pele La.  
**Pygmy Cupwing** *Pnoepyga pusilla* Only one encountered, we had good views of one near the Dochu La.  
**Yellow-bellied Warbler** *Abroscopus superciliosus* Heard-only.  
**Rufous-faced Warbler** ♦ *Abroscopus albogularis* One showed well near Tingtibi.  
**Black-faced Warbler** ♦ *Abroscopus schisticeps*  
**Broad-billed Warbler** ♦ *Tickellia hodgsoni* A bamboo specialist, we had a good view of one on the Lingmethang Road.  
**Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** *Horornis fortipes*  
**Hume's Bush Warbler** ♦ *Horornis brunnescens* Also a bamboo lover, we found this on the Yutong La and Thrumsing La.  
**Grey-bellied Tesia** ♦ *Tesia cyaniventer* A sneaky fellow, we finally saw one near the Tama La.  
**Slaty-bellied Tesia** ♦ *Tesia olivea* Multiple teasing on the Lingmethang Road, with views acquired of one at least.  
**Grey-sided Bush Warbler** ♦ *Cettia brunnifrons* Several seen singing vigorously on the high passes.

**Chestnut-headed Tesia** ◊ *Cettia castaneocoronata* Seen well near Sengor, others heard.

**Black-throated Bushtit** *Aegithalos concinnus*

**Rufous-fronted Bushtit** ◊ *Aegithalos iouschistos* Four seen on the Pele La in a mixed flock, and not again until the Chele La.

**Buff-barred Warbler** *Phylloscopus pulcher* Present only in high forests

**Ashy-throated Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A few seen at high elevations around the passes

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Heard-only, at Bajo.

**Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus chloronotus* A few seen, at higher elevations.

**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis* Mirant birds noted in a couple of places.

**White-spectacled Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus intermedius* Fairly unresponsive, but we managed views on the Lingmethang Road.

**Grey-cheeked Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus poliogenys*

**Green-crowned Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus burkii* Only seen on a couple of occasions, such as on the Lingmethang Road.

**Whistler's Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus whistleri* Present and visible in the high forests.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A late arrival, several singing on the Chele La.

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* One seen near Sengor, others heard in the higher forests.

**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus castaniceps* A few smart examples seen in mid-elevation forests.

**Yellow-vented Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus cantator* Several seen well in the warmer low-elevation forests.

**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*

**Grey-hooded Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*

**Himalayan Prinia** *Prinia crinigera*

**Rufescent Prinia** *Prinia rufescens* Seen in the dry Kuri Chu valley south of Lingmethang.

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*

**Fire-tailed Myzornis** ◊ *Myzornis pyrrhaura* Some nice views of these jewels on the Thrumsing La

**Golden-breasted Fulvetta** ◊ *Lioparus chrysotis* Another favourite, gorgeous little birds seen at Yemay Goenpa and on the Lingmethang Road.

**White-browed Fulvetta** ◊ *Fulvetta vinipectus* Seen at higher elevations, often in the 'Owlet out flocks'.

**Great Parrotbill** ◊ *Paradoxornis aemodius* A shouty and very confident bird on the Dochu La.

**Brown Parrotbill** ◊ *Paradoxornis unicolor* Three seen in rhododendron forest near the Pele La.

**Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis* Seen well near our Yongkola camp.

**White-breasted Parrotbill** ◊ (Greater Rufous-headed P) *Paradoxornis ruficeps* Some seen in a mixed flock at Yongkola, and one or more seen in the bamboo near our Tingtibi camp along side Pale-billed.

**Black-throated Parrotbill** ◊ *Suthora [nipalensis] humii* Gorgeous little sprites seen at Yemay Goenpa and on the Lingmethang Road.

**Pale-billed Parrotbill** ◊ (Lesser Rufous-headed P) *Suthora atrosuperciliaris* Several seen in the bamboo near our Tingtibi camp

**Striated Yuhina** *Staphida castaniceps* This and the following species were quite numerous in the lower elevation forests.

**Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta*

**Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis*

**White-naped Yuhina** ◊ *Yuhina bakeri* Very smart, seen near Yongkola, above Gelephu and at Darachu.

**Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* A higher elevation feature of the bird flocks.

**Rufous-vented Yuhina** *Yuhina occipitalis* Similar to the above, appearing in scrub on the high passes.

**Indian White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*

**Pin-striped Tit-Babbler** *Mixornis gularis*

**Golden Babbler** *Cyanoderma chrysaeum* A few seen lurking in bamboo.

**Rufous-capped Babbler** *Cyanoderma ruficeps*

**Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Spelaornis caudatus* Just one seen, at Yemay Goenpa. Also heard near Yongkola.

**Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus* A very smart fellow, this is split from Coral-billed.

**Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Pomatorhinus superciliaris* Great views of a pair near Sengor.

**Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* Actually only seen on one day, at Yemay Goenpa.

**White-browed Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* Quite common at lower elevations, often in bamboo.

**Large Scimitar Babbler** *Erythrogonys hypoleucos* A call familiar to me from SE Asia, at Panbang one was calling and was lured into making sweeping circles around us while staying mostly hidden. A few short views confirmed its identity, plus plenty of sound recordings, the first record for Bhutan!

**Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** ◊ *Erythrogonys erythrogonys*

**Grey-throated Babbler** *Stachyris nigriceps*

**Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler** ◊ *Stachyris humei* As I said, we've 'got history', so I was particularly pleased to see this chap emerge from a dense thicket at Yongkola, 25 years almost to the day since I first laid eyes on him.

**White-hooded Babbler** ◊ *Gampsorhynchus rufulus* Many seen, at Panbang and at Tingtibi.

**Yellow-throated Fulvetta** ◊ *Schoeniparus cinereus* Only seen the once near Yongkola, a smart little fellow.

**Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Schoeniparus castaneiceps*

**Puff-throated Babbler** *Pellorneum ruficeps* Heard-only.

**Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler** *Napothera epilepidota* A fine spotty example in a gully at Panbang.

**Long-billed Wren-Babbler** ◊ *Napothera malacoptila* After much squinting into the thickets near Yongkola where we had just a couple of glimpses, near the Tama La we were treated to the full show by a shouty little chap, looking like a tiny Kiwi!

**Nepal Fulvetta** ◊ *Alcippe nipalensis*

**Striated Laughingthrush** *Grammatoptila striata*

**Himalayan Cutia** ◊ *Cutia nipalensis* Always a crowd pleaser, we had several excellent encounters.

**Scaly Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron subunicolor* A pair seen on the Lingmethang Road.

**Blue-winged Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron squamatum* Heard-only.

**Bhutan Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron imbricatum*

**Black-faced Laughingthrush** ◊ *Trochalopteron affine*

**Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*

**Long-tailed Sibia** ◊ *Heterophasia picaoides* A handful seen in the Panbang forests.

**Rufous Sibia** ◊ *Heterophasia capistrata*

**Hoary-throated Barwing** ◊ *Actinodura nipalensis* Some very good views on the high passes.

**Blue-winged Minla** *Actinodura cyanouroptera*

**Bar-throated Minla (Chestnut-tailed M)** *Actinodura strigula*

**Rusty-fronted Barwing** ◊ *Actinodura egertoni* Not uncommon in the warmer low and mid-elevation forests.

**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea*

**Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argentauris* Good views between Tama La and Gelephu.

**Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta* A real crowd-pleaser, widespread and regularly seen.

**Rufous-backed Sibia** *Leioptila annectens* A good look at one singing strongly from high in the trees at Panbang.

**Red-faced Liocichla** ◊ *Liocichla phoenicea* Great looks at these skulkers close to our Yongkola camp.

**Jungle Babbler** *Argya striata*

**Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax monileger*

**White-crested Laughingthrush** *Garrulax leucolophus* Noisy gangs in lower elevation forest, though surprisingly hard to see.

**Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush** ◊ *Ianthocincla rufogularis* Great looks at these skulkers close to our Yongkola camp.

**Spotted Laughingthrush** ◊ *Ianthocincla ocellata* Seemingly more common than they used to be, we had great views on the Dochu La, also on Pele La and Chele La.

**Rufous-necked Laughingthrush** ◊ *Pterorhinus ruficollis* Regular sightings at lower elevations, actually I have decided this is my favourite Laughingthrush.

**Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Pterorhinus pectoralis* Non-leader. One at Panbang.

**White-throated Laughingthrush** *Pterorhinus albogularis* The most frequently seen Laughingthrush.

**Grey-sided Laughingthrush** ◊ *Pterorhinus caerulatus* Seen well at Yemay Goenpa and Darachu, a beautiful songster.

**Asian Fairy-bluebird** *Irena puella*

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

**Spotted Elachura** ◊ (S Wren-Babbler) *Elachura formosa* A songster near Wangdi wouldn't show properly, but one near our Tingtibi camp showed well, with a few others heard along the way.

**Beautiful Nuthatch** ◊ *Sitta formosa* A gorgeous pair in the hills near Shemgang, and another pair that appeared next to us in the hills above Gelephu. Our number 3 'bird-of-the-trip'.

**White-tailed Nuthatch** ◊ *Sitta himalayensis*

**Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** *Sitta cinnamoventris*

**Hodgson's Treecreeper** ◊ *Certhia hodgsoni* Two seen in the high forests of Thrumsing La.

Sikkim Treecreeper ◊ *Certhia discolor*

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* Seen in the tall forest near Gelephu.

Great Myna (White-vented M) *Acridotheres grandis* A few seen at low elevations.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* A few seen around Gelephu.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Indian Pied Myna *Gracupica contra* A single seen near Gelephu.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*

Long-tailed Thrush ◊ *Zoothera dixonii* A rare sight, we saw a singing bird on the Chele La.

Long-billed Thrush ◊ *Zoothera monticola* Singing birds at Sengor and Dochu La, with a brief flight view at the latter site.

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* A splendid example on the roadside near Sarpang.

Grey-winged Blackbird ◊ *Turdus boulboul*

Tickell's Thrush ◊ *Turdus unicolor* One seen close to our Darachu camp.

Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* Quite scarce in Bhutan, we saw some at the Pele La and at Ura, the remnants of a winter influx.

White-collared Blackbird ◊ *Turdus albocinctus*

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* One seen in the lowlands.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea* Non-leader. One at Yemay Goenpa.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* One near Gelephu.

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* Three seen in the forest near Darachu camp.

Large Niltava *Niltava grandis* A nice male seen on the Lingmethang Road.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*

White-gorgeted Flycatcher ◊ *Anthipes monileger* A vocal bird near Yongkola stayed largely hidden from view.

Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor* A couple of nice examples seen in warm mid-level forests, often heard.

Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

White-tailed Robin *Myiomela leucura*

Little Forktail ◊ *Enicurus scouleri* A pair near Sengor gathering moss for their nest, and then washing it in the stream!

Black-backed Forktail ◊ *Enicurus immaculatus* Seen in Manas N.P., then three in the 'Pitta gully' near Sarpang.

Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus* A few seen around Panbang and below the Tama La.

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus* A glimpse of one near Yongkola, good flight views at Panbang.

Blue-fronted Robin ◊ *Cinclidium frontale* Heard-only, but what a lovely song. On the Lingmethang Road.

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*

Himalayan Shortwing ◊ *Brachypteryx cruralis* A very sneaky bird at Thrumsing La, many others heard.

Lesser Shortwing *Brachypteryx leucophris* Heard-only.

Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea* Almost the last bird, we found a songster between Paro and the Chele La.

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*

Pygmy Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsoni* A pair seen at Yemay Goempa, others heard.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophitata*

Sapphire Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula sapphira* A gorgeous male showed well on the Lingmethang Road.

Ultramarine Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula superciliaris* Regularly encountered.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* Just a couple of poor views near Yongkola.

White-browed Bush Robin ◊ *Tarsiger indicus* A female plumaged sonster at the Thrumsing La.

Golden Bush Robin ◊ *Tarsiger chrysaeus* A smart male seen at the Thrumsing La, also a couple of females seen.

Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus* A female seen on the Sheltang La, more of both sexes seen on the Chele La.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* Some lovely examples seen on the Chele La, scattered sightings elsewhere.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*

White-capped Redstart (River Chat) *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Two males seen at Yemay Goenpa.

Hodgson's Redstart ◊ *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

**Blue-capped Rock Thrush** ◊ *Monticola cinclorhyncha* A common feature wherever there were roadside cuttings.

**Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* Typically at higher elevation than the previous species.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* One by the river at Bajo.

**Grey Bush Chat** *Saxicola ferreus*

**Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii*

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*

**Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*

**Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker** ◊ *Dicaeum melanozanthum* A fine example seen near Sengor.

**Plain Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum minullum* A couple seen near Gelephu.

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*

**Mrs. Gould's Sunbird** *Aethopyga gouldiae* A good few of these gorgeous birds seen in the higher forests.

**Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis* Ever present at high elevations.

**Black-throated Sunbird** *Aethopyga saturata* The sunbird of the warm lower elevation forests.

**Crimson Sunbird** *Aethopyga siparaja* Smart males seen at Tingtibi.

**Fire-tailed Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga ignicauda* A pair on the Thrumsing La.

**Streaked Spiderhunter** *Arachnothera magna* A couple showed well at Yongkola, several others seen along our route.

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer cinnamomeus* Pleasingly common, mainly at higher elevations.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

**White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata*

**Rufous-breasted Accentor** ◊ *Prunella strophiata* Several seen on the Chele La, also at Ura.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

**White Wagtail (Himalayan W)** *Motacilla [alba] alboides*

**White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla maderaspatensis* A pair seen on the river at Bajo.

**Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus* A single flew over at Bajo.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus* A flock of 15 on the Pele La.

**Collared Grosbeak** ◊ *Mycerobas affinis* Seen in the highest forests, particularly active and vocal on the Chele La.

**Spot-winged Grosbeak** ◊ *Mycerobas melanozanthos* At least four seen at Sengor.

**White-winged Grosbeak** *Mycerobas carnipes*

**Brown Bullfinch** ◊ *Pyrrhula nipalensis* Seen well eventually between Paro and the Chele La.

**Red-headed Bullfinch** ◊ *Pyrrhula erythrocephala* Regular sightings on the high passes. Most of all on the Chele La where they showed very nicely.

**Golden-naped Finch** ◊ *Pyrrhoptectes epauletta* Heard-only.

**Plain Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola* A flock seen en route to Bumthang, and hordes of them seen distantly at the Chele La.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

**Scarlet Finch** ◊ *Carpodacus sipahi* Several smart males seen in a range of locations.

**Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* A brief look at one at Ura.

**Dark-rumped Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus edwardsii* A nice look at both sexes near the Thrumsing La.

**Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus thura* Females seen on the Chele La.

**Yellow-breasted Greenfinch** *Chloris spinoides* Just encountered once, with a big flock near Punakha.

**Red Crossbill (Common C)** *Loxia curvirostra*

**Crested Bunting** ◊ *Emberiza lathami* A couple of singing males in cultivation near Punakha.

## MAMMALS

**Western Red Panda** *Ailurus fulgens* Very happy that Phub found two of these beautiful animals in the forests on the Thrumsing La, one stayed around for some good long looks.

**Yellow-throated Marten (Himalayan Y-t M)** *Martes flavigula* A single seen along the road near the Pele La.

**Northern Red Muntjac** *Muntiacus vaginalis*

**Brown Goral (Common G)** *Naemorhedus goral* One near Yongkola.

**Assamese Macaque** *Macaca assamensis*

**Nepal Sacred Langur** *Semnopithecus schistaceus* A couple seen near the Pele La.

**Golden Langur** *Trachypithecus geei* Not uncommon in the southern valleys, with some possibly hybrids with Capped Langur.

**Capped Langur** *Trachypithecus pileatus*

**Moupin Pika** *Ochotona thibetana*

**Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel** *Belomys pearsonii* One on the Chele La, poking its head out of its hole, was a nice surprise.

**Irrawaddy Squirrel (Hoary-bellied Himalayan S)** *Callosciurus pygerythrus*

**Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel** *Dremomys lokriah*

**Black Giant Squirrel (Malayan G S)** *Ratufa bicolor* Non-leader. At Panbang.

**Himalayan Striped Squirrel** *Tamiops macclellandii*