

INDIA'S MONSOON SPECIALITIES TOUR

REPORT 2024

21 - 30 July 2024

Hannu Jännes

This was Birdquest's first tour to India during the summer monsoon, a time when several special birds, pretty much impossible, or at least far more difficult, to locate in the rest of the year, become visible and much easier to see. During our ten-day tour, with two days in the Pune-Mumbai area and eight days in the northern plains between Jaipur and Corbett, we saw a total of 252 species of birds. The number one target (voted bird of the trip) was the critically endangered Lesser Florican, which we saw performing its unforgettable leaping display. Other monsoon specialties included a trio of the hard-to-get grassbirds (Indian, Bristled and Broad-tailed) and Painted Francolin, which all become vocal and active in the monsoon. Other great birds seen during the tour included the localized White-naped Tit, White-bellied Minivet, Marshall's Iora, Rock Bush and Jungle Bush Quails, Painted and Red Spurfowls, Vigors's Sunbird (a Western Ghats endemic), three species of nightjar in broad daylight, three species of small bitterns, eight species of Prinias and three species of weavers in their breeding attire. The weather was very variable with proper monsoon conditions of low clouds, mist and rain of varying intensity in the Pune-Mumbai area, but in the northern plains the monsoon hadn't really begun, and it was generally very hot and humid with only a couple of short showers.

The tour began early in the morning at a hotel near Mumbai airport from where we headed 190 kms southeast for the city of Pune or more precisely the Sinhagad Fort. As I had visited the fort just before the start of the tour, I knew that it would be best to get there as soon as possible as the weather on the top of the mountain at 1200m asl could be very unpredictable and finding the birds might require some time. However, I should not have worried as our main target, the Broad-tailed Grassbird, was very obliging and showed very well even providing decent photo opportunities despite the fog and strong wind. This endemic species, occurring in the Western Ghats of India, is very difficult to see anywhere outside the monsoon period. Our main target in the bag we descended back to the parking lot seeing Malabar Whistling Thrush, Crested Bunting and a flock of Square-tailed Bulbuls on the way. Then a late lunch followed by afternoon birding at the base of the mountain, where we added several new species, including Short-toed Snake Eagle, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Pale-billed and Thick-billed Flowerpeckers, Purple-rumped and Purple Sunbirds, White-spotted Fantail, Indian Black-lored Tit and Jungle Babbler of the rather distinct form *somervillei* (a future split). Next our local guide took us to an area considered to be a good spot for Painted Francolin, another much needed target bird. Unfortunately, the site was controlled by Indian army and our access was bluntly denied. We quickly came up with plan B and spent the last hour of the day at another francolin site, where we connected with two rather vocal individuals, but just couldn't find them in the dense trees in which they were hiding.

Early the next morning we were back in the same francolin area on the outskirts of Pune, and eventually managed good scope views of a male Painted Francolin calling half-way up a large tree. What a beautiful bird and what's more a lifer for the leader too! As we still needed to see one more target bird, the Vigors's Sunbird, a species endemic to Western Ghats, we began heading back to Mumbai, where the species is thought to be commoner than in Pune. On the way the weather deteriorated markedly, and it was raining heavily when we began our sunbird search in a bird sanctuary near Mumbai. At first things didn't seem very promising, but in the end just minutes before we were about to leave the site, we managed to locate a male Vigors's Sunbird feeding on flowers at the top of a big tree. Phew, that was close! All the main targets in the bag now, we could relax a bit, and visited a wetland, where species including Lesser Flamingo, Painted Stork and Brahminy Kite entertained us. A short walk in a forest patch produced a party of three Red Spurfowls, which showed very well. Later we drove to Mumbai airport to catch an evening flight to the famous city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan, where our local guide Ghani and three drivers awaited us. It was well past midnight before we arrived at our enchanting hotel.

Next morning, after a well-deserved rest and one of the few sit-down breakfasts on this tour, we drove through the Jaipur's interesting old city to pay a short visit to the famous Palace of the Winds, a world-famous 'facade' from where members of the royal court could observe processions through this storied city. Just something every visitor should see! Afterwards, we drove southwestwards to the city of Ajmer for a three-night stay. The afternoon was spent on sparsely forested hills, where, in the intense heat, we manage to locate a gorgeous male White-bellied Minivet, one of our target birds here, and also added a number of other species with Grey Francolin, several Jacobin and Common Hawk Cuckoos, Shikra, White-browed Fantail, Bay-backed Shrike, Rufous Treepie, Jungle (of the nominate form) and Large Grey Babblers, Brahminy Starling and Yellow-throated Sparrow to our bird list.

New day started in the vast agricultural area of Sonkaliya, an hour's drive from our hotel, where we spent the whole day. The first area we visited gave us great daytime views of several Savanna Nightjars, a rather skittish Indian Eagle-Owl, Indian Coursers, Rufous-tailed Lark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark and Indian Bush Lark, confiding Rufous-fronted Prinias, a single Yellow-eyed Babbler, two very shy Common Babblers, several Red Collared Doves, our first Rosy Starlings (still in breeding plumage) and a cool Indian Spectacled Cobra. As our main quarry, the Lesser Florican, was not in the area, our guide Ghani made some phone calls, and we headed to another site in the plains. On the way we picked-up a local florican researcher, who took us to a spot, where we had brilliant scope views of a male florican doing its leaping display and walking around in the short grass. The main display season of this magnificent bird hadn't really begun in Rajasthan and apparently there were only two displaying males in the whole area during the time of our visit. In addition to the exquisite Lesser Florican, we saw total of three Indian Eagle-Owls (with decent scope views), Great Grey Shrike, Singing Bush Lark and a small flock of Streak-throated Swallows. After lunch in a local dhaba, we headed back to the same general area we had been during the morning and spent a couple of late afternoon hours admiring (and photographing) Marshall's Iora, Rock Bush Quail, Barred Buttonquail, Indian Stone-curlew, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, very confiding Indian Coursers and an Indian Nightjar found by Jan-Joost.

On a longish morning walk around the forested hills near Ajmer we found the much-needed local specialty White-naped Tit and we also scored several other good birds with Spotted Owlet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, another Marshall's Iora, a total of ten White-bellied Minivets including several recently fledged juveniles, Large and Black-headed Cuckooshrikes, White-bellied Drongos and a beautiful Black-headed Royal Snake. In the afternoon we paid a visit to a large wetland, where a handful of commoner Palearctic wader species, a single Osprey, one Whiskered, a few Little and around 50 excellent River Terns were found plus the usual cormorants, storks, egrets, herons and ibises. We also saw several Brown Rock Chats, a juvenile White-browed Wagtail and excellent Blue-tailed Bee-eaters during the afternoon. The final destination of the day was the Aloo Baba temple, where a juvenile White-eyed Buzzard and a small flock of Yellow-footed Green Pigeons were new birds for us.

Now it was time to move to our next destination, the city of Alwar, ca 5 hours' drive away. On the way we passed through the Sariska Tiger Reserve, where a couple of short stops along the main road gave us few Asian Openbills, Bonelli's Eagle, a handful of White-eyed Buzzards, improved views of Common Babbler, a singing Common Cuckoo and, best of all, four of the critically endangered Indian Vultures. In the afternoon, after lunch in our hotel, we were back in Sariska and visited the Bala Fort, where our main target, the often difficult to get Painted Spurfowl, showed well in the late afternoon. Other good birds in this scenic area included Jungle Bush Quails with excellent views, a few Indian Golden Orioles, a heard only Indian Pitta, an Indian Paradise Flycatcher and a single Western Crowned Warbler, an unexpected bonus species.

The following day we drove to the Delhi area for a one-night stay. On the way we stopped at a large wetland area along the Mumbai-Delhi highway, where Sarus Crane, a single Watercock, a fly-by Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Eurasian Spoonbills, two Delicate Prinias and our first, admittedly very distant, Black-breasted Weavers were seen. In the outskirts of Delhi, we visited another wetland area, where we soon connected with our main quarry, the Bristled Grassbird, which performed well giving great views. This bulky warbler is another species that becomes highly visible (and audible) with the onset of monsoon, but no one seems to know what they do during the rest of the year. Other new birds in this rather impressive marshland area included many Oriental Pratincoles, a single Cotton Pygmy Goose, Tricolored Munias and a single Black-tailed Godwit. After lunch we visited another wetland, where we managed to see a flock of Glossy Ibises and a Brown-headed Barbet, before the combination of oppressive heat and very high humidity got the better of us and we retreated to our hotel for a well-earned rest.

This morning, we started early as we wanted to reach the Hadeipur Sanctuary by the Ganges as early as possible to avoid the heat of the day and the masses of pilgrims that would be heading in the same direction to collect the holy water of the river to take it back to their home villages. The plan worked out well and we reached the sanctuary in good time. At the sanctuary we were taken straight to a breeding site of the Indian Grassbird, our main target bird here, but the bird kept hiding amongst the reeds and allowed only rather brief views. Later we checked another territory of this notorious skulker, but the views didn't get any better. However, there were several other good birds in the area, including good numbers of Bristled Grassbirds, Golden-headed Cisticolas and a vocal Lesser Coucal. Next we visited the Hadrapur Sanctuary, which is known as a breeding site for the critically endangered Finn's Weaver. We spend the hot and sweaty afternoon birding this vast area but had to make do with species like Indian Spotted Eagle and Streaked and Black-breasted Weavers. In the evening, we drove to our comfortable resort near the Corbett National Park for two night stay.

Today we decided to do something different and headed for the Himalayan foothills (up to around 1000m asl) for the whole day. Thanks to the higher altitude the weather was rather pleasant, and we were able to bird throughout the whole day. New habitats brought us an array of new birds (over 40 write-ins!) including seven species of woodpecker, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Jungle Owlet, Brown Boobook, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Black-chinned Babbler and a gorgeous male Crimson Sunbird.

On the last morning of our Indian monsoon adventure, we were back in the Hadrapur Bird Sanctuary, where we spent the first half of the day. Our main quarry, the Finn's Weaver, eluded us although things looked promising for a while as we found (after much searching) a group of six half-made Finn's Weaver's nests. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that the nests had been abandoned and the birds were nowhere to be seen. Despite the bad luck with the weaver, we enjoyed good birding around this extensive wetland and saw several Watercocks, many Cinnamon, Yellow and Black Bitterns, noisy Striated and handsome Chestnut-capped Babblers, Bristled Grassbirds, Bengal Bush Larks and nest-building Streaked, Black-breasted and Baya Weavers during our visit. After a lunch in a roadside dhaba, it was time to drive to our nice hotel near Delhi airport, where, after doing the bird list and enjoying drinks and a good dinner, it was time to say our goodbyes, and to thank everyone for their excellent company during this memorable trip.

BIRD OF THE TRIP

1st Lesser Florican

2nd Painted Francolin

3rd Painted Spurfowl & Broad-tailed Grassbird

4th Greater Yellownape

5th Rock Bush Quail & Sarus Crane

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 Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P.(Eds). **2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.1).**

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

BIRDS

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* One male in the outskirts of Delhi.

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* One at Hadrapur on our last morning.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Red Spurfowl ◇ *Galloperdix spadicea* A party of three in Mumbai. Excellent views!

Painted Spurfowl ◇ *Galloperdix lunulata* A pair in Sariska Tiger Reserve.

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* Heard only.

Grey Francolin *Ortygornis pondicerianus*

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* Heard only.

Painted Francolin ◇ *Francolinus pictus* Good scope views of calling male in Pune. Two others were heard in the same place.

Rock Bush Quail ◇ *Perdicula argoondah* Three encounters in the northern plains.

Jungle Bush Quail ◇ *Perdicula asiatica* Seen well in Sariska Tiger Reserve.

Jungle Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus* Great daytime views of one in the Sonkaliya area.

Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* Great daytime views of one in the Sonkaliya area.

Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* Six or so with good views in the Sonkaliya area.

White-rumped Spinetail *Zonavena sylvatica* Two in the foothills near Corbett.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Lesser Florican ◇ *Sypheotides indicus* Great encounter in Sonkaliya with a male doing its leaping display.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* One in the grasslands of Hadeipur.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* Small numbers were noted daily in the north.

Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus*

Grey-bellied Cuckoo ◇ *Cacomantis passerines* Handful seen with some decent scope views.

Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* One in the foothills near Corbett.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo ◇ *Hierococcyx varius*

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* Heard only.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* One singing bird in Sariska.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Western Spotted Dove *Spilopelia [chinensis] suratensis*

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* A few in the foothills near Corbett.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenura* A few in the foothills near Corbett.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicopterus*

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*

Watercock *Gallinula cinerea* About ten or so in the north including some calling birds. Nice!

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Sarus Crane ♦ *Antigone antigone* Ten in total with some good views.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* A few in the Mumbai area.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* Great views!

Indian Stone-Curlew *Burhinus indicus*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Little Ringer Plover *Charadrius dubius*

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* A few in the foothills.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus malabaricus* Great to see some juvenile birds too.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* One in the outskirts of Delhi.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Indian Courser ♦ *Cursorius coromandelicus* Several close encounters in the Sonkaliya area. Great to see some juvenile birds too.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Hundred or so at a wetland in the outskirts of Delhi.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* One near Ajmer.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Five at a lake near Ajmer.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* One in Mumbai.

River Tern ♦ *Sterna aurantia* Encountered on five days with a maximum count of 50 at a lake near Ajmer.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

Asian Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*

Indian Cormorant ◊ *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Red-naped Ibis ◊ *Pseudibis papillosa*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* Hadrapur Sanctuary proved to be a great place to see all three species of bitterns.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Indian Vulture ◊ *Gyps indicus* Four of these critically endangered vultures were seen in Sariska.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* One in the foothills near Corbett.

Indian Spotted Eagle ◊ *Clanga hastata* One in Hadeipur and at least two in Hadrapur.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* One in Sariska.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* A few in Mumbai.

White-eyed Buzzard ◇ *Butastur teesa*

Unidentified Buzzard *Buteo sp* One in the foothills near Corbett.

Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* One in the garden of our hotel near Corbett.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*

Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* One near Corbett.

Indian Eagle-Owl ◇ *Bubo bengalensis* A total of four with some good scope views in the Sonkaliya area.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*

Indian Grey Hornbill ◇ *Ocyrceros birostris*

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Asian Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*

Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens*

Brown-headed Barbet ◇ *Psilopogon zeylanicus*

Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus*

Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus*

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* Fairly common in the foothills near Corbett.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker ◇ *Leiopicus mahrattensis*

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei* One in the foothills near Corbett.

Greater Yellownappe *Chrysophlegma flavinucha* One foothills near Corbett .

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* One Corbett foothills.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*

Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* A pair in the foothills near Corbett.

Slaty-headed Parakeet *Psittacula himalayensis* Small numbers in the foothills near Corbett.

Plum-headed Parakeet ◇ *Psittacula cyanocephala*

Alexandrine Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula eupatria*

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis* A few in Pune.

Indian Pitta ◊ *Pitta brachyura* Heard only in Sariska.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus*

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*

Marshall's Iora ◊ *Aegithina nigrolutea* A total of three, including a showy pair, in the Ajmer area.

White-bellied Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus erythropygus* Good numbers, including recently fledged juveniles, near Ajmer.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei*

Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Lalage melaschistos* Two in the foothills.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Lalage melanoptera*

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Indian Golden Oriole ◊ *Oriolus kundoo*

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

White-bellied Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus caerulescens*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*

White-spotted Fantail *Rhipidura albogularis*

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis*

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus*

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus*

White-naped Tit ◇ *Machlolophus nuchalis* A singleton in the forested hills near Ajmer.

Himalayan Black-lored Tit *Machlolophus xanthogenys*

Indian Black-lored Tit ◇ *Machlolophus aplonotus*

Rufous-tailed Lark ◇ *Ammomanes phoenicura*

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark ◇ *Eremopterix griseus*

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra javanica*

Bengal Bush Lark ◇ *Mirafra assamica*

Indian Bush Lark ◇ *Mirafra erythroptera*

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala*

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Square-tailed Bulbul *Hypsipetes ganeesa*

White-browed Bulbul ◇ *Pycnonotus luteolus*

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis*

Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalense*

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropsis daurica*

Streak-throated Swallow ◇ *Petrochelidon fluvicola*

Western Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus occipitalis* A singleton in Sariska was a pleasant surprise.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*

Broad-tailed Grassbird ◇ *Schoenicola platyurus* Great views of one territorial male in Pune. A monsoon specialist.

Bristled Grassbird ◇ *Schoenicola striatus* Very vocal and easy to see. We observed this species at three different wetlands in the north.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* Great views at Hadeipur wetland.

Himalayan Prinia *Prinia crinigera*

Rufous-fronted Prinia ◇ *Prinia buchanani* Great views in the Sonkaliya area.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

Delicate Prinia ◇ *Prinia lepida*

Jungle Prinia ◇ *Prinia sylvatica* Quite vocal and easy to find at this time of the year.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Great views at Hadeipur and Hadrapur.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*

Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata*

Black-chinned Babbler ◇ *Cyanoderma pyrrhops* A few in the foothills.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *Erythrogonys erythrogonys* Heard only

Indian Grassbird ◇ *Graminicola bengalensis* Rather brief encounters with two different birds at Hadeipur.

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*

White-throated Laughingthrush *Pterorhinus albogularis* Good views of couple of different flocks in the foothills.

Large Grey Babbler ◇ *Argya malcolmi*

Jungle Babbler *Argya striata striata*

Jungle Babbler ◇ *Argya [striata] somervillei* Couple of encounters of this southern (and quite different looking) form of Jungle Babbler in Pune-Mumbai.

Common Babbler ◇ *Argya caudata*

Striated Babbler ◇ *Argya earlei* Great views at Hadrapur. Also noted in Hadeipur.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta cinnamoventris*

Jungle Myna ◇ *Acridotheres fuscus*

Bank Myna ◇ *Acridotheres ginginianus*

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Indian Pied Myna *Gracupica contra*

Brahminy Starling ◇ *Sturnia pagodarum*

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* We had a number of great encounters with this beauty. One of the earliest arriving autumn migrants in India.

Indian Blackbird ◇ *Turdus simillimus* One in Pune.

Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis*

Indian Robin ◇ *Copsychus fulicatus*

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*

Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*

Malabar Whistling Thrush ◊ *Myophonus horsfieldii* This Peninsular Indian endemic was seen in Pune.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

Brown Rock Chat ◊ *Oenanthe fusca*

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*

Pale-billed Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*

Purple-rumped Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma zeylonica*

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* A few birds, including a stunning male, in the foothills.

Vigors's Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga vigorsii* One male in Mumbai.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis*

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Black-breasted Weaver ◊ *Ploceus benghalensis*

Streaked Weaver ◊ *Ploceus manyar*

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Tricoloured Munia ◊ *Lonchura malacca*

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*

White-browed Wagtail ◊ *Motacilla maderaspatensis*

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Crested Bunting *Emberiza lathami*

MAMMALS

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*

Sambar *Rusa unicolor*

Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus*

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsi*

Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*

Greater Mouse-tailed Bat *Rhinopoma microphyllum*

Naked-rumped Tomb Bat *Taphozous nudiventris*

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta*

Bengal Sacred Langur *Semnopithecus entellus*

Southern Grey Langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri*

Terai Grey Langur *Semnopithecus hector*

Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennanti*

Indian Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum*

REPTILES

Yellow-green House Gekko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis*

Bronzed Skink *Eutropis macularia*

Indian Bark Gekko *Hemidactylus leschenaultii*

Oriental Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*

Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*

Indian Spectacled Cobra *Nasa nasa*

Black-headed Royal Snake *Spalerosophis atriceps*