



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Northern India

Birds & Tigers I

8th to 25th February 2016 (18 days)

Siberian Rubythroat



Trip Report

Compiled by Tour Leader, Rich Lindie

Tiger - Ranthambore NP



Tour Summary

8th February: Our great Indian adventure began with an informal gathering and a bit of birding in the grounds of our New Delhi hotel. There, we were thrilled to spend time with several common but delightful species, including three species of parakeet, **Red-whiskered** and **Red-vented Bulbuls**, scores of **Black Kites**, **Jungle Babblers**, **Indian Peafowl** and a **Brown-headed Barbet**, many of which were also new birds for all of the group members.

9th February: The first significant sighting on our second day was that of our twelfth and final group member. Thereafter, it was probably the sight of coffee and tea that had most of us satisfied until our early departure for the Delhi train station. Standing there, amidst yet more interesting sights, smells and sounds, I could see that most of the group finally felt like their true cultural experience had also begun. Indeed, gatherings of **House Crow** and **Black Kites** kept us mildly entertained from time to time but let's just say that rail side happenings (everything from trash-burning to cow herding) did the bulk of the entertaining for the following five hours, until our arrival in the Ranthambore area, where a short trip in a Canter delivered us to our lodge.

Wasting no time at all, we walked straight from the Canter to lunch, before undertaking our first drive into the national park. Three hours later, covered from head to toe in dust, we had been initiated into the frenetic but somewhat organised chaos that is Tiger-searching in India. Empty-handed on the feline front, we did at least grab a few birds during the drive, including a smart **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** and three **Painted Spurfowl**, along with further views of the ever-popular **Indian Peafowl**, **Jungle Babbler** and **Rufous Treepie**. Sambar Deer and the ubiquitous Chital also put in appearances but our mad dashing meant that better views would have to wait for another day.

10th February: Two drives, 2 zones (4 and 5), 1 magnificent Tiger and countless great bird sightings - that's how our third day in India went. Ok, so a copious quantity of dust also came with the deal but who had time to notice in all the excitement. Furthermore, with a Tiger sighting, and such an amazing one at that, in the bag, that was to be our last session of mad dashing and dust-eating. But back to the cat sighting...



Rufous Treepie

Not long after we had turned around to return to lodge in time to avoid being locked up in the park, we bumped into two vehicles watching a handsome male tiger relaxing in a shallow pool. There for several minutes, we were able to snap away a few hundred great shots. Then, as if enjoying the limelight, he wandered up from the river to the road, proceeded to scratch himself on a tree and then to walk straight toward our vehicle for a closer encounter than many of us had expected or hoped for. An unforgettable encounter and already firmly placed as the unbeatable highlight of the tour, within the first 72 hours of the tour!

Not many will easily recall the other sightings we had during that day but we were very pleased to see our first **Woolly-necked Stork**, **Brown Crake**, **White-breasted Waterhen** and **Bronze-winged Jacana** at various water bodies in Zone 4, as well as **Painted Sandgrouse**, **Rufous-fronted Prinia**, **Common Babbler**, **Indian Robin** and **Long-tailed Shrike** around the small hill near our lodge.

11th February: Incredibly, the following day brought almost as much excitement, and just as many cats, as the previous! Traversing Zone 2, for a change, we had great views of the fort, **Indian Scops Owl** and **Mottled Wood Owl** in the morning, whilst our trip to Zone 1 will be remembered for our time with a magnificent Leopard and the anxious moments before that sighting... Not much else had been seen during the afternoon drive and, yet again, we had just begun our return journey when a routine stop at a ranger's hut gathered some news of recently heard alarm calls. Changing course to investigate, we found ourselves in a queue of cars, all trying their best to locate the cause of so much alarm. Then, spotted first by our vehicle, we began the race against time and odds to get everyone onto the very well camouflaged

beast in the undergrowth. Rotating just about the entire group through the small area around the driver's seat, we slowly but surely got people onto the cat, one-by-one. Elation for those when they finally saw it, interminable anxiety for those who had to wait their turn. Then, as if to relieve us from the anguish and to reward us for our patience, the Leopard stood up, and walked across the forest floor for all and sundry to see. Just in time, no less, as we had to dash to the gate to get out of the park in time!



12th February: A morning drive in Ranthambore proved rather fruitless, though some wonderful close-ups of a pair of **Small Minivet** were thoroughly enjoyed. Thereafter, it was one final look at the waterhole near camp, before our second train ride of the trip - this time to the town of Bharatpur, where our bus and yet another top-class driver were awaiting us.

Nothing can prepare one for the craziness that fills the streets of India - A truly unequalled density of people, color, variety, chaos, street-roaming animals, sounds, smells and seeming unpredictable driving. That's what awaited us and entertained us for the better part of our late afternoon, taking us into dark and eventually our lodge near the Chambal River.

13th February: The mode of transport for our fifth morning was, without a doubt, the smoothest of the entire trip. Cruising slowly down the Chambal River, we forgot, for a few hours, about the bumpy and busy roads to which we'd become so accustomed. There, over the course of just a couple of hours, we were also very lucky to start the day with sightings of Ganges River Dolphin, the very elegant **Indian Skimmer**, the apparently very popular **Black-bellied Tern**, Gharial, **River Lapwing** and a handful of impressive **Egyptian Vultures**. A great way to start the morning indeed. Then it was back to the crazy roads around Agra and the much anticipated Taj Mahal. Escorted through the masses of foreign and local visitors, we skilfully but leisurely made our way around and through the Taj Mahal in great time, selfies and booties included. A brief visit to a nearby marble inlay factory and we soon were back en route to Bharatpur for the third time on the tour, this time to stay.

14th February: Without fail, a day in Keoladeo National Park is a highlight of any birding trip to India. With such sheer numbers of birds - many of which are tame and easy to see, a relaxed atmosphere and the opportunity to be peddled around peacefully in a rickshaw - there are few places like it anywhere. We enjoyed all of the above for a full day, seeing throngs of waterfowl of several species, **Sarus Crane**, **Yellow and Black Bitterns**, **Black-necked Stork**, **Greater Spotted Eagle**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Indian Stone-curlew**, **White-tailed Lapwing**, **Dusky Eagle-Owl**, **Indian Grey Hornbill**, **Streak-throated Swallow**, **Green Bee-eater**, **Brahminy Starling**, **Orange-headed and Tickell's Thrushes** and a gorgeous **Siberian Rubythroat** before calling it a night, once again in our charming marble-clad hotel.

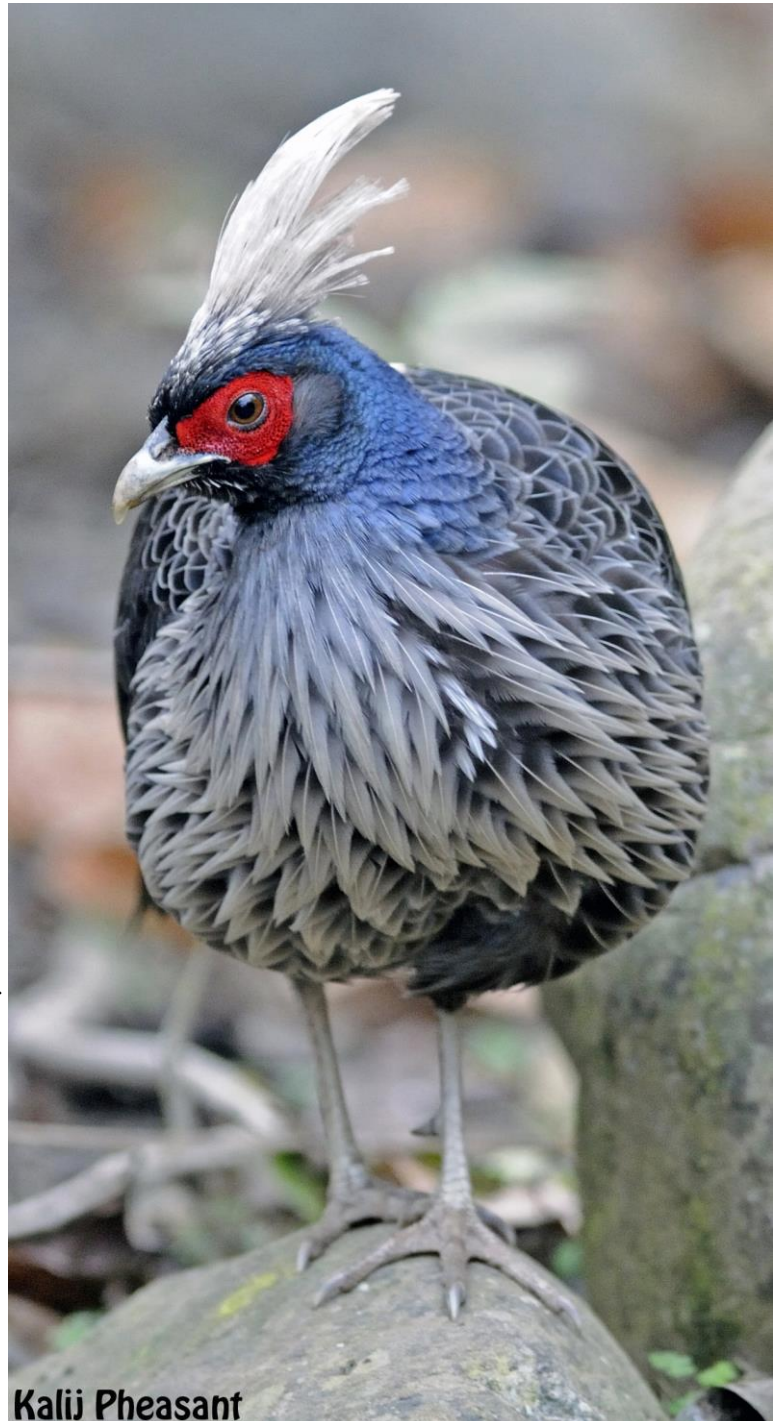
15th February: Another morning in Keoladeo National Park, given the immense success that we had with our target species the previous day, only produced a few new birds - namely **Brook's Leaf Warbler**, **Siberian Stonechat** and **Common Pochard**, though repeat views of several species were much appreciated. For the afternoon, we successfully twitched **Jack Snipe** and **Indian Courser**, picking up **Desert** and **Isabelline Wheatears** along the way, whilst better looks at **Crested Lark** were another worthwhile diversion.

16th February: Having missed **Greater Painted Snipe** on previous days, we went on yet another twitch for our final morning in the Bharatpur area, and were yet again successful, though I suspect the insight we had into local village life was an even greater highlight for some!

A short bus ride then took us to Fatehpur Sikri, where we met up with our knowledgeable local buff again, who, once again, led us expertly through stately edifices and the fascinating history of this, the region's most fascinating ancient remains. He did so once more, not long after that, in the impressive red jungle that is the Agra Fort, perfectly rounding off our experience of the Moghuls' gifts to the Agra area. Lunch at a local barbeque restaurant then satisfied the appetite we had worked up, followed by a four-hour drive to Delhi, an interesting encounter with a traffic officer near our dinner restaurant, and our first night on an Indian sleeper train!

17th February: Waking up a little earlier than expected, we were at least pleased to find our lodge nonetheless ready for our arrival - rooms cleaned and *masala chai* ready. A brief breakfast then took us straight into birding the grounds of the hotel. Experiencing higher elevation forest for the first time on the tour, we took no time at all to lay eyes on new birds and they came thick and fast for several hours. Flocks, containing furtive **Yellow-bellied Fantails**, **Grey-hooded Warblers** and **Himalayan Black-lored Tit**, were pleasantly common, albeit fast-moving, whilst flowering trees attracted stunning **Crimson Sunbirds** and striking **Orange-bellied Leafbirds**. Our first attempt at **Ibisbill** before lunch turned up **Wallcreeper** as a consolation only but time was on our side and we travelled back to the lodge for lunch, thrilled to find an **Asian Barred Owlet** and a **Great Hornbill** along the way - both within minutes of each other!

After lunch, we moved inland from the Kosi River, where some active flocks provided us with our first views of **Whistler's Warbler** and **Black-throated Bushtit**, whilst a nearby stream had a **Spotted Forktail** in attendance, as well as **Collared Owlet**, **White-crested Laughingthrush** and a wonderfully relaxed **Long-billed Thrush**. We then dashed back to the Kosi River, where a lengthy scan finally turned up a pair of **Ibisbills**, which happened to be between the two halves of our group the entire time! Fantastic and lengthy close-ups of these great



Kalij Pheasant



birds, we'd managed to bag two monotypic families from just about the same standing spot in one day, rounding things off very nicely - at that point, the second best birding day of the trip for many. And that was BEFORE we spotted a **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** during our drive home!

18th February: A brief morning walk near the lodge saw us finding our first **Brown Dipper** and enjoying great views of a **Pallas's Fish Eagle**, before a return to our favorite creek added **Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker** and **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** to our trip list. A brisk walk through another local village then yielded views of **Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler** for some, and **Grey Treepie** for all.

After a final lunch with a great view over the Kosi River, we departed for greener pastures in Corbett National Park. Moments after entering the park, we spotted some very obliging **Kalij Pheasants**, followed by **Large Cuckooshrike**, superlative views of **Crested Serpent Eagle** and **Tawny Fish Owl**. Thereafter, an entertaining checklist session came as no surprise.

19th February: To say that our first morning in Corbett National Park got off to a roaring start would be an understatement. Not many would have dared imagine a tiger sighting that could compare with our first but that's just what we had. Not because the encounter was close, but rather for the experience of getting to hear one of these great beasts in full voice, anxious moments before it was spotted wandering through some grassland, and over the river! Great stuff indeed. The morning thereafter wasn't too bad from a birding standpoint either, providing us with our first **Oriental Skylarks**, **Rosy Pipit** and **Puff-throated Babbler**, before a midday break was equally relished.

The afternoon saw a little less in the way of new birds but a **Changeable Hawk Eagle**, several **Cinereous Vultures** and a **Stork-billed Kingfisher** were all much-appreciated, as was our second(!) encounter with **Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl**!

20th February: Our third encounter with Tiger was an interesting one to say the least. Although we never saw one, the mating grunts and warning roars were fantastic to hear, even if the latter were brought about by the perseverance of the elephant *mahouts*! It was also an entertaining way to see in our final morning in Corbett National Park, leading us straight into the final leg of our adventure. A few rain showers and one lunch later, we found ourselves on the road to Nainital. Climbing up to 6500 feet from the foothills below, in just 30 minutes, we passed by some spectacular scenery and rapidly became aware of the cooler conditions we were going to face over the coming days. Bird-wise, we bumped into a flock of **Nepal House Martins** on the way up, but not much else. Our first of many **Streaked Laughingthrushes**, however, was quickly found within the confines of the city, before the sun set on another lovely day and some much-appreciated hotel comfort.



21st February: Our first day in the Nainital area took us to the lofty heights above the village of Vinayak and beyond. There, amid otherwise steeply forested slopes, we were to find ourselves gazing upon some grassy hillsides below. Our quarry: Cheer Pheasant. Although the pheasants didn't put in an appearance, we had no trouble in occupying ourselves with other new sights, including **Bearded Vulture**, **Himalayan Vulture**, **Mountain Hawk Eagle**, **Rufous Sibia** and **Altai Accentor**. Making our way back down the hill, we knew we had further days to settle the score with the pheasant, so we quickly set about enjoying all the other new birds on offer in the area. Mostly tied to roving flocks, birds came thick and fast at times, but we managed views of **Himalayan Woodpecker**, **Green Shrike-babbler**, **Black-headed Jay**, **Green-backed Tit**, **Black-faced Warbler**, **Lemon-rumped Warbler**, **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler**, **Whiskered Yuhina**, **White-tailed Nuthatch**, **Himalayan Bluetail**, **Slaty-blue Flycatcher**, **Fire-tailed Sunbird** and **Great Barbet**, before finally reaching town again in the late afternoon.

22nd February: For the second day in the Himalaya, we dropped a little lower in elevation, for a morning in the Sattal area. Wasting no time once there, we entered the forest for good looks at some **Slaty-headed Parakeets**, as well as a **Chestnut-headed Tesia** for some. Not long after, it was a flock of **White-throated Laughingthrushes** that grabbed our attention and then we were ready to spend some time, sitting, at a nearby stream, where a few species were seen coming to drink, including **Ashy Bulbul**, **Mountain Bulbul**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Blue-winged Minla** and even a **White-throated Fantail** that had been very actively hunting the area for over an hour. We also bagged our only views of **Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush** nearby. Shortly before lunch, we enjoyed some great views of a flock of **Red-billed Blue Magpies** but abandoned the idea of staying in Sattal for a return to Nainital.

Back in Nainital, we paid a visit to the village near the Polytechnic, finding **Black Eagle**, **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** and another **Himalayan Bluetail** as reward for our efforts, but not the hoped-for **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush**.

23rd February: Much a repeat of the itinerary we followed on our first day in the area, we were thrilled to find so many of the birds we had missed with such ease, on top of several bonus sightings. Starting with great views of **Koklass Pheasant** along the road up, we were then thrilled to have fantastic close-ups of a singing **Upland Pipit** the moment we stepped out of the vehicles, at the top. Incredibly, we then went on to spot several Himalayan Goral and a group of **Cheer Pheasant**, very soon thereafter! Taking turn after turn to admire the **Cheer Pheasants**, we eventually dragged ourselves away for the prospects of some more forest birding nearby. Fortunately, it didn't take long to find a flock, this time containing a small group of **Yellow-browed Tits**, as the latest additions to our list. Further down the hill, we picked up a slightly more sedentary group of **Whiskered Yuhinas**, our first **Pink-browed Rosefinches**, a few **Rock Buntings**,

Himalayan Shrike-babblers, Long-tailed Minivets, Yellow-breasted Greenfinch and an enormous flock of **Black-headed Jays**, leaving most of us pretty exhausted from a great but long morning's birding and driving.

For those who opted in, an afternoon stroll around the Polytechnic village proved rather quiet on the bird-front again.

24th February: For our final morning in Nainital, we decided to climb the stairway up to Satya Narayan Temple, where a lofty view over town was one worthwhile reward, as was the temple itself for many of us. Birding nearby wasn't too shabby either, as we picked up **Long-tailed Thrush** and had wonderful views of a male **Hill Partridge** that we managed to coax across the footpath. Having made our way up and back down in great time, however, that wasn't the last of our birding for the morning. We had just enough time to pop into the Polytechnic village nearby, where we finally obtained great views of **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush**, as well as **White-collared Blackbird** as a bonus. Not to mention scores of other laughingthrushes seen feeding right on the edge of the village.

The drive to Kathgodam after lunch was fairly uneventful, as expected, but a couple of hours in a local pub was appreciated nonetheless.

25th February: Having woken up, for the final time, on a train, we were sufficiently rested to make but a brief stop at the hotel before paying a visit to Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary. Strolling around the park in relative peace, our final birding excursion was a very pleasant one indeed. We also managed to find **Sind Sparrow** and a late-staying **Common Chiffchaff**, whilst enjoying repeat views of many waterfowl and dodging upset bulls!

And thus ended our final official outing as a group, followed only by a spot of impromptu birding around our Delhi hotel and a final meal together - altogether a very agreeable symmetry and a nice way to end a superbly successful tour!

Photo credits: All photos taken by Rich Lindie, during the tour.

BIRD SPECIES LIST

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the bird species list follows that of IOC 6.1 (International Ornithological congress), Birds of the World.

Key: **E** = Endemic to India, **SE** = Endemic to Sub-continent, **(H)** = Heard only, **(LO)** = Seen by leader(s) only, **NP** = National Park.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

- Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* First seen on the Chambal River, common in Keoladeo NP, Bharatpur.
- Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus* Chambal River and Keoladeo NP.
- Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* A few seen in Keoladeo NP.
- Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* Seen at several locations, including the Chambal River and Ramnagar Barrage.
- Gadwall** *Anas strepera* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* Ranthambore NP, Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Sighted by some of us, in Ranthambore NP.
- Indian Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha* Common in Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* Keoladeo NP, Corbett NP and Sultanpur.
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Ranthambore NP, Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Gargany** *Anas querquedula* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur only.
- Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Small numbers were commonly found throughout most of the tour.
- Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* One sizeable flock on the Chambal River.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* A handful in Keoladeo NP and at Sultanpur.
- Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
- Tufted Duck** *Aythya nyroca* Sighted by some in Ranthambore NP, seen by all at Sultanpur.
- Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser* A couple of sightings along the Kosi River.

Pheasants & allies Phasianidae

- (H) Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* Heard at Sultanpur.
- Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus* Sighted almost daily during the first week of the tour, followed by sightings at Sultanpur.
- Hill Partridge** *Arborophila torqueola* Several sightings in the Nainital area, including one of a male that we coaxed across a trail!
- Rufous-throated Partridge** *Arborophila rufogularis* One brief sighting near the Satya Narayan Temple in Nainital.
- Painted Spurfowl (E)** *Galloperdix lunulata* Two great sightings in Ranthambore NP.
- Koklass Pheasant** *Pucrasia macrolopha* Fantastic views of one near Nainital.
- Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus* Several males and females seen in Corbett NP.
- Kalij Pheasant** *Lophura leucomelanos* A common sight during our time in the Himalaya.
- Cheer Pheasant** *Catreus wallichii* A group of at least five eventually found, on our second attempt, at the well-known site above Vinayak, near Nainital.
- Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* Affectionately known as “33” to the group and seen on more than that many occasions!

Grebes Podicipedidae

- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Several sightings, including some at Ranthambore NP.

Storks Ciconiidae

- Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* Several individuals and groups seen.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* One flock in Ranthambore NP, three on the Chambal River.
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* Daily sightings in Corbett NP.
Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Ranthambore NP, Chambal River and Keoladeo NP.
Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* Great views in Keoladeo NP and at Sultanpur.

Ibises, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* This species was first seen in Ranthambore NP and later in Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* Sighted at the Chambal River only.
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Several sighted during our time in the Bharatpur area.

Hérons, Bitterns Ardeidae

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* One sighting in Keoladeo NP.
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* A couple of sightings in Keoladeo NP.
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers seen in Keoladeo NP.
Striated Heron *Butorides striata* Ranthambore NP, Chambal River and Keoladeo NP.
Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* Numerous sightings throughout the lowlands.
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Commonly recorded throughout mainly the first portion of the tour.
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Sighted at most lowland wetland sites.
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Great views in Keoladeo NP, first seen in Ranthambore NP.
Great Egret *Ardea alba* A fairly common sight during the first half of the tour.
Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* First recorded in Keoladeo NP.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Found in small numbers at most wetlands visited.

Cormorants, Shags Phalacrocoracidae

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* We saw this diminutive cormorant at many sites.
Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Good views of a few in Keoladeo NP.
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Recorded at suitable wetland sites throughout the tour.

Anhingas, Darters Anhingidae

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* Ranthambore NP, Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.

Ospreys Pandionidae

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Two sightings along the Chambal River, one in Corbett NP.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Several sightings, throughout the tour.
Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* One, seen during our first search for Cheer Pheasant.
Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* Several great views during our time in the lowlands.
Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Individuals seen at most of the major lowland sites.
Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus* Several sightings in Ranthambore NP.
Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* A handful in Corbett NP, common around Nainital.
Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* One – above the Vinayak Cheer Pheasant site.
Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* One sighting (for some of us) in Corbett NP
Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* Great views of several in Corbett NP.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* Unbeatable views of several in Corbett NP.
Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* Two sightings in Corbett NP.
Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* Some great close-ups of one near Vinayak.

Rufous-bellied Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii* Two young birds together, near Nainital.
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* At least one adult seen during our time in the Nainital area.
Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* Several seen in Keoladeo NP.
Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* A handful of sightings in Keoladeo NP, two in Sultanpur.
Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* Common around Nainital and Sattal.
Shikra *Accipiter badius* Five sightings, the best of which was of an adult near Dhikala camp.
Besra *Accipiter virgatus* One presumed sighting near our lodge in the Ranthambore area.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Good views of one, near Nainital.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Keoladeo NP (including one male) and Sultanpur.
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* Corbett NP only.
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Recorded almost daily, mostly near urban areas, throughout.
Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Several seen well in the Kosi River-Corbett NP area.
Lesser Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus humilis* Four sightings in Corbett NP.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae

Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool* First sighted, for great views, Ranthambore NP.
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Seen at several water bodies, including the larger ones in Ranthambore NP.
Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.
NOTE: This species has recently been split from Purple Swamphen (Porphyrio porphyrio)
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Numerous sightings throughout the lowlands.
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.

Cranes Gruidae

Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* Great views in Keoladeo NP.

Buttonquail Turnicidae

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* Seen well, by a few of us, in Keoladeo NP.

Stone-curlews, Thick-knees Burhinidae

Indian Stone-curlew *Burhinus indicus* One small group, in Keoladeo NP.
Great Stone-curlew *Esacus recurvirostris* We encountered this fantastic wader along the Chambal River and in Ranthambore NP.

Ibisbill Ibidorhynchidae

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* Great close-ups of two, side-by-side, on the Kosi River.

Stilts, Avocets Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* We saw this species daily, whilst in the lowlands.
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* One sighting in Ranthambore NP.

Plovers Charadriidae

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* First seen on the shores of the Chambal River.
Yellow-wattled Lapwing (SE) *Vanellus malabaricus* One sighting, near Ranthambore NP.
Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* Encountered almost daily during the tour.
White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* Good views in Keoladeo NP and at Sultanpur.
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Great close-ups on the Chambal River.

Painted-snipes Rostratulidae

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* We enjoyed great views of this sought-after species, near Bharatpur.

Jacanas Jacanidae

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Several non-breeding birds in Keoladeo NP.
Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* Also seen in Keoladeo NP, as well as Ranthambore NP.

Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae

Jack Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Good views of a few, at one site in Bharatpur town.
Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* One group, in Ranthambore NP.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* A few sighted during the first week of the tour.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* One, at one of the many pools in Bharatpur town.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Commonly sighted around lowland water bodies.
Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* As with the above species.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* As with the above two species, though less common.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* First sighted near our lodge in the Ranthambore area.
Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* As with the above species.
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.

Courser, Pratincoles Glareolidae

Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* Two groups seen near Khumer, north-west of Bharatpur.
Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* At least three seen along the Chambal River.

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae

Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* Great views of a handful, on the Chambal River.
Pallas's Gull *Ichthyophaga ichthyophaga* Two sightings along the Chambal River, one in Corbett NP.
River Tern *Sterna aurantia* Ranthambore NP, the Yamuna River and Corbett NP.
Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda* Great views during our time on the Chambal River.
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Seen by part of the group only, near the Taj Mahal.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Painted Sandgrouse *Pterocles indicus* Several great sightings near our lodge in Ranthambore.

Pigeons, Doves Columbidae

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Sighted almost daily.
Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* Several great views during our time in Nainital.
Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* First sighted in the Agra-Bharatpur area.
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* Great views in Corbett NP.
Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Several great views, in the lowlands.
Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* Fly-bys for some of us, in Corbett NP.
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicopterus* A handful of sightings in the lowlands.
Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron apicauda* One flock, seen by a few of us, in Corbett NP.
Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenurus* One sighting, also for just a few of us, in the Sattal area.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* Several sightings during the first half of the tour.
Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* One pair, in the grounds of the Ashok Resort.
Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* One in Corbett NP, another at Sultanpur.

Owls Strigidae

Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* A few sightings in Ranthambore NP.
Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl *Bubo nipalensis* Two sightings, three individuals, one surprised me!
Dusky Eagle-Owl *Bubo coromandus* One, in Keoladeo NP.
Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* Several sightings in Ranthambore NP, a few in Corbett NP.
Tawny Fish Owl *Ketupa flavipes* One, during our drive to Dhikala, Corbett NP.
Mottled Wood Owl (E) *Strix ocellata* A pair, expertly spotted by Della, in Ranthambore NP.
Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* One seen, near the Kosi River, others heard.
Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* Great views, also in the Kosi River area.
Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* A single bird, in Corbett NP.
Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* Great views of pairs in Ranthambore NP and Keoladeo NP.
Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* Great views of one, in the grounds of our Chambal lodge.

Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae

Crested Treeswift *Hemiproctes coronata* A couple of sightings in the Kosi-Corbett area.

Swifts Apodidae

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* One sighting in the Kosi River area.
(LO) White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* One sighting in Corbett NP.
Little Swift *Apus affinis* Several sightings during the first half of the tour.

Rollers Coraciidae

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* This flashy species was seen on a few occasions during the first week of the tour.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* One sighting in Ranthambore NP, a couple in Corbett NP.
White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Several great sightings, starting in Ranthambore NP.
Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* Seen on several occasions in the Kosi-Corbett area.
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Several sighted during the first half of the tour.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Several of these gems were seen well in Keoladeo NP.

Hoopoes Upupidae

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Several encounters, much to at least one participant's delight.

Hornbills Bucerotidae

Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* Great views of a singing bird, near the Kosi River.
Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* One sighting, for some, in Corbett NP.
Indian Grey Hornbill (SE) *Ocyrceros birostris* Keoladeo NP, Corbett NP and Sultanpur.

Asian Barbets Megalaimidae

Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* Great, lengthy close-ups in the Nainital area area.
Brown-headed Barbet (SE) *Psilopogon zeylanicus* Several, including a few in Keoladeo NP.
Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineatus* Seen daily in/near Corbett NP.
Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus* Surprisingly, just the one in Corbett NP.
Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* A handful of great sightings, including one at Sultanpur.

Woodpeckers Picidae

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nanus* One brief sighting in Corbett NP.
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus* A few sightings in the foothills.
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei* As with the above species.
Brown-fronted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos auriceps* A couple of individuals, in the highlands.
Himalayan Woodpecker *Dendrocopos himalayensis* A few good looks, all in the Nainital area
Greater Yellownape *Chrysophlegma flavinucha* A few sightings, over two days, in Corbett NP.
Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* As with the above species.
Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* This species was only seen in Corbett NP.
Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* A couple of good views in the Kosi-Corbett area.
Himalayan Flameback *Dinopium shorii* One sighting, in Corbett NP.
Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* Several seen in the lowlands.
Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* Four sightings in Corbett NP.
White-naped Woodpecker *Chrysocolaptes festivus* One sighting in Ranthambore NP.
Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* Four, seen flying over the Kosi River.

Caracaras, Falcons Falconidae

Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens* First seen at the Quality Inn (Kosi River).
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* First seen in the Ranthambore area.
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Two sightings, probably of the same individual, near Vinayak (above Nainital).

Old World Parrots Psittaculidae

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* A handful of sightings from our Delhi hotel gardens.
Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Encountered daily in lower lying areas.
Slaty-headed Parakeet *Psittacula himalayana* Good numbers seen around Sattal.
Plum-headed Parakeet (SE) *Psittacula cyanocephala* Seen on all but a few days of the tour.
Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* Several sightings during our time in the foothills.

Woodshrikes and allies Tephrodornithidae

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* A few sightings in the Himalayan foothills.
Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis virgatus* One flock seen in Corbett NP.

Ioras Aegithinidae

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* One sighting, during a pit stop in Corbett NP.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* One sighting near the Kosi River, another in Corbett NP.
Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Coracina melaschistos* One sighting in Dhikala camp (Corbett).
Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Great views of a pair, just outside Ranthambore NP.
Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* Several sightings, best of which were near Nainital.
Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* One sighting in Dhikala camp, Corbett NP.

Shrikes Laniidae

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Frequent sightings in the lowlands.
Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* First seen around Ranthambore NP.

Vireos Vireonidae

Himalayan Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius rileyi* Great views of one flock, near Nainital.
Green Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus* One sighting in the Vinayak area.

Figbirds, Orioles Oriolidae

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Several individuals sighted in Corbett NP.

Drongos Dicruridae

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* By far the most commonly sighted drongo during our time in India.

White-bellied Drongo (SE) *Dicrurus caerulescens* Several sightings in Ranthambore NP.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* One surprise sighting at our Delhi hotel.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* First seen in the Kosi River area.

Fantails Rhipiduridae

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* Fairly common at higher elevations.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* Several seen in Ranthambore NP.

Crows, Jays Corvidae

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Some great sightings during our time in the Nainital area.

Black-headed Jay *Garrulus lanceolatus* Several great encounters in the Nainital area.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha* Great views in the Sattal area.

(H) Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* Heard in Corbett NP.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Seen, heard and even touched on several occasions

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* Great views near the Kosi River and around Sattal.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Practically ubiquitous near all lowland urban areas.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* The common corvid at higher altitudes.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus* The common corvid away from lowland urban areas.

Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* Particularly common around the Kosi River.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Several sightings, also in the foothills.

Tits, Chickadees Paridae

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* One sighting above Vinayak, the other near Satya Narayan Temple.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* Seen throughout the Nainital-Sattal area, on numerous occasions.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus* Several sighted throughout the lowlands and foothills.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* Great views of several, around Nainital and Sattal.

Himalayan Black-lored Tit *Machlolophus xanthogenys* First seen at the Quality Inn.

Larks Alaudidae

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix griseus* Two brief sightings near Ranthambore NP.

Indian Bushlark *Mirafra erythroptera* Great looks at a few, outside Ranthambore NP.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* We enjoyed good views of several in Corbett NP.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* Chambal River and Khumer (Indian Courser site).

(LO) Sand Lark *Alaudala raytal* Chambal River.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

(LO) Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus flaviventris* Corbett NP.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Ashok Country Resort and Corbett NP.

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys* Very common in the highlands.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Seen on nearly every day of the tour.

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mcclellandii* Seen drinking at a small stream in the Sattal area.

Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* Seen together with the above species.

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Kosi River area, Sattal and Kathgodam.

Swallows, Martins Hirundinidae

Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* First seen in Ranthambore NP.

Pale Martin *Riparia diluta* One unexpected sighting in Corbett NP.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A few spotted along the Chambal River.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* First seen in Keoladeo NP, most regular in the highlands.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithi* Sighted at several wetlands, including in Keoladeo NP.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Sighted on both trips to the Vinayak area.

Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* A handful of sightings in the Ranthambore area.

Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalense* One flock, just before we arrived in Nainital.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.

Streak-throated Swallow *Petrochelidon fluvicola* A few seen perched and in flight in Keoladeo NP, others seen in flight at Sultanpur.

Wren-babblers Pnoepygidae

Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer* Single birds seen near the Kosi River and at Sattal.

Nepal Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga immaculata* One sighting, at a stream in the Nainital area.

Cetia Bush Warblers and allies Cettiidae

Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps* Two sightings in the Nainital area.

Aberrant Bush Warbler *Horornis flavolivaceus* Seen by part of the group, in Corbett NP.

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia castaneocoronata* One brief sighting in the Kosi River area, another, better sighting in Sattal.

Bushtits Aegithalidae

Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* Delightfully common in the highlands.

Leaf Warblers and allies Phylloscopidae

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* A single sighting at Sultanpur.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* Several seen in the highlands.

(LO) Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* Nainital.

Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* Encountered almost daily in the highlands.

Brooks's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus subviridis* One – on our final visit to Keoladeo NP.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* A couple of sightings near the Kosi River.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Heard widely, first seen in Keoladeo NP.

Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* Two sightings in the Kosi River area.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos* Ubiquitous in the highlands.

Whistler's Warbler *Seicercus whistleri* A couple of sightings in the Kosi River area.

Reed Warblers & allies Acrocephalidae

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* One sighting, beside the road, in Keoladeo.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Also only sighted in Keoladeo NP.

Cisticolas & allies Cisticolidae

Striated Prinia *Prinia crinigera* Two sightings in the Nainital area.

Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani* A few small groups seen near our Ranthambore lodge.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* A couple of good sightings in the Kosi River area.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* One sighting, near the Kosi River.

Ashy Prinia (SE) *Prinia socialis* Several encounters, the first of which was in Ranthambore NP.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Also sighted on several days and occasions.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* First seen well in Keoladeo NP.

Babblers Timaliidae

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys* Great views of one, out in the open, on the ground, near Nainital.

Black-chinned Babbler (SE) *Stachyridopsis pyrrhops* First seen at Dhikala camp, Corbett NP.

Fulvettas, Ground Babblers Pellorneidae

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* One sighting, in Corbett NP.

Laughingthrushes Leiothrichidae

Common Babbler *Turdoides caudata* A few sightings in Ranthambore area.

Large Grey Babbler (SE) *Turdoides malcolmi* Several close encounters.

Jungle Babbler (SE) *Turdoides striata* One of the top birds of the tour.

White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus* Three great sightings in the foothills.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis* Good views of a pair, at Sattal.

White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis* A few large flocks in the highlands.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus* Two great encounters in the Nainital area.

Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron lineatum* Common throughout our time in the highlands.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum* Great views on our final morning in the Nainital area.

Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera* One sighting near Nainital, another at Sattal (at the stream).

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* A handful of sightings during our time in the highlands.

Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata* We enjoyed great views of several, in the highlands.

Sylviid Babblers Sylviidae

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* A few sightings in Keoladeo NP.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* As with the above species.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis* Great views of a few in the Nainital area.

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis* Brief views of one, near Vinayak.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* Common at several sites visited.

Kinglets Regulidae

(LO) Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* One, near Nainital.

Nuthatches Sittidae

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta cinnamoventris* Several great sightings in the foothills.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* Also seen very well, though only in the highlands.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* A handful of sightings in the Kosi River area.

Wallcreeper Tichodromidae

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* At least two individuals, seen very well, at the Kosi River.

Treecreepers Certhiidae

Bar-tailed Treecreeper *Certhia himalayana* Several found throughout the Nainital area.

Starlings Sturnidae

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* One small group, in Dhikala camp, Corbett NP.

Bank Myna (SE) *Acridotheres ginginianus* Flocks seen throughout the lowlands.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* Almost ubiquitous.

Pied Myna *Gracupica contra* Several seen in the Chambal-Agra-Bharatpur triangle.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* Some great close-ups in NP.

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* Sightings for a few of us only, on the train ride to Sawai Madophur.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* A few seen at the Delhi train station, on day 2.

Thrushes Turdidae

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* One in Keoladeo NP, another at the Bagh.

Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii* Great views of one, near the Satya Narayan Temple.

Long-billed Thrush *Zoothera monticola* Also seen exceptionally well, in the Kosi River area.

Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor* One in Keoladeo NP, two in Corbett NP, two near Nainital.

White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus* One, near the Polytechnic, Nainital.

Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul* Several good sightings in the Nainital area.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Indian Robin (SE) *Copsychus fulicatus* This five species was commonly seen in the lowlands.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Another species that was common in the lowlands.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis sundava* Two good looks, both in Ranthambore NP.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* One sighting, in Corbett NP.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* A few very good views in Keoladeo NP.

Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* Magnificent close-ups of a male in Keoladeo NP.

Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus* A handful of males and a few females, around Nainital.

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus* Great views in the Kosi River area and near Nainital.

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* Common during our time in the Himalaya.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophilata* One brief sighting in the Kosi River area.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* Keoladeo NP and Sultanpur.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* As with the above species.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra* Prolonged looks at one in the Kosi River area.

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor* One, near the 'car wash stream', Nainital.

Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus coeruleocephala* Several males and females in the highlands.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Numerous sightings in the lowlands.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* Two sightings above Nainital, once during lunch.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Common along rivers in the highlands.

White-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* As with the above species.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* One, along the Chambal River.

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* Great views of two, in the Nainital area.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* Keoladeo NP, Corbett NP and Sattal.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata* Bharatpur town and Corbett NP.

Grey Bush Chat *Saxicola ferreus* Several seen well, throughout the highlands.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* At least one, near Khumer (north of Bharatpur).

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* A few, including a breeding-plumaged male, near Khumer.

Brown Rock Chat (SE) *Oenanthe fusca* Best views: a pair at Fatehpur Sikri.

Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* One sighting near Ranthambore NP, another near Khumer.

Dippers Cinclidae

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* A couple of sightings along the Kosi River.

Leafbirds Chloropseidae

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* Great views of a pair at the Quality Inn.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Seen on most days during our time in the lowlands.

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* Two sightings, for some of us, in the Nainital area.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* Great views in the grounds of the Quality Inn.

Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda* A handful seen together, including some splendid males, near Nainital.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* Several close-ups during our time in the Nainital area.

Sind Sparrow *Passer pyrrhonotus* One pair, attending a nest, at Sultanpur.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* A common sight during the first week.

Waxbills, Munias & allies Estrildidae

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica* Sgreat views of a few, in the Ranthambore area.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Sightings in Delhi and the Kosi River area only.

Accentors Prunellidae

Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana* Several flocks in the Nainital and area.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophia* Sighted by some of the group, near Nainital.

Wagtails, Pipits Motacillidae

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* A handful of scattered sightings, including one in Bhratpur.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* First seen in Ranthambore NP.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Several sightings during the first week, and at Sultanpur.

White-browed Wagtail (SE) *Motacilla maderaspatensis* Seen well on many occasions.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* First seen near our Ranthambore lodge.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* At least one individual seen in Corbett NP.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Great views of a small group, near the Quality Inn.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* Also seen well, in Corbett NP.

Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus* Fantanstic views of a singing bird in the Vinayak area.

Finches Fringillidae

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Two sightings in the Nainital area.

Pink-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus rodochroa* Two females seen near Nainial.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Chloris spinoides* A small flock seen in the same area as the above species.

Buntings Emberizidae

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* Good views of a couple, in the Nainital area.

White-capped Bunting *Emberiza stewarti* Two sightings during our time in the Nainital area.

MAMMAL SPECIES LIST

Dogs & Allies Canidae

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* Great views of a three, in Corbett NP.

Cats Felidae

Leopard *Panthera pardus* One unforgettable sighting in Ranthambore NP!

Bengal Tiger *Panthera tigris* Unbeatable views of one during our second drive in Ranthambore NP came as a huge relief, not to mention early enough to allow us to focus on other things during the remainder of our stay. With one participant having stayed behind during that drive, however, some of us were anxious to see what would turn up in Corbett NP. Amazingly, we had more great views of this amazing cat in Corbett, as well as a sound show that truly put the cherry on the cake!

Mongoose Herpestidae

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* One small group seen in Keoladeo NP.

Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes javanicus* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.

Weasels, Skunks, Otters Mustelidae

Smooth-coated Otter *Lutogale perspicillata* One sighting, of a group, in Corbett NP.

Yellow-throated Martin *Martes flavigula* A pair seen near the Polytechnic in Nainital.

Genets & Civets Viverridae

Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* Great views at our Chambal River lodge.

Bovids Bovidae

Nilgai *Bosephalus tragocamelus* Several sites, including Ranthambore NP and Keoladeo NP.

Himalayan Goral *Naemorhedus goral* A pretty sizeable group near Vinayak.

Deer Cervidae

Chital *Cervus axis* Very common in all national parks visited.

Hog Deer *Axis porcinus* A handful of sightings in the grasslands in Corbett NP.

Northern Red Muntjac (Barking Deer) *Muntiacus muntjak* Also seen in Corbett NP.

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* Fair numbers of this massive deer seen mainly in Ranthambore and Corbett NPs.

River Dolphins Platanistidae

Ganges River Dolphin *Platanista gangetica* One great encounter on the Chambal River.

Pigs Suidae

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Seen on several occasions and in all three national parks visited.

Fruit Bats Pteropodidae

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* A few sighted around the Chambal River Lodge.

Rabbits, Hares Leporidae

Indian (Black-naped) Hare *Lepus nigricollis* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* Sighted almost daily, throughout the tour.

Plains Grey Langur *Semnopithecus dussumieri/entellus* Ranthambore NP and Sultanpur.

Tarai Gray Langur *Semnopithecus hector* Commonly encountered in the foothills.

Nepal Grey Langur *Semnopithecus schistaceus* Seen very well in and around Nainital.

Elephants Proboscidae

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* A handful seen in Corbett NP, one touched at the Quality Inn.

House Rats Muridae

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus* First seen at the Delhi train station.

Squirrels Sciuridae

Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* Regular encounters in the lowlands.

REPTILE SPECIES LIST

Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* Chambal River and Corbett NP.

Marsh (Mugger) Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* First sighted in Ranthambore NP.

Flap-shelled Turtle *Lissemys punctata* Great views in Keoladeo NP.

Indian Softshell Turtle *Nilssonia gangetica* This huge species was seen well in Keoladeo NP by some of the group

Land Monitor *Varanus bengalensis* Keoladeo NP.

Asian House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

Kashmir Rock Agama *Laudakia tuberculata* Seen by some of the group in the Nainital area.

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