



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## India

### North Eastern - Eagle's Nest & Beyond

*9<sup>th</sup> April to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023 (14 days)*



Himalayan Cutia by Markus Lilje

*This exotic birding adventure takes us to many seldom-visited and remote destinations in north-east India. We will have the rare opportunity to search for a host of Asia's most tantalising and desirable species, including the stunning Temminck's Tragopan, Bengal Florican, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Ward's Trogon, exquisite Beautiful Nuthatch, Bugun Liocichla, incredible Grandala, rare and endangered White-winged Duck, and dazzling Fire-tailed Myzornis – to name just some of the many exciting possibilities! This exciting tour takes us to some of Asia's best birding sites where few birders have ever ventured and we will no doubt encounter many rarely-seen species!*

**THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...****THE ITINERARY**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Guwahati to Nameri National Park</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Nameri National Park</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Nameri to Dirang (Sangti Valley)</b>
<b>Days 4 to 6</b>	<b>Mandala Phudung and Sela Pass areas</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Dirang to Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary</b>
<b>Days 8 to 12</b>	<b>Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary</b>
<b>Day 13</b>	<b>Eagle's Nest to Tezepur</b>
<b>Day 14</b>	<b>Tezepur to Guwahati and depart</b>

**TOUR ROUTE MAP...**

## THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

### **Day 1: Guwahati to Nameri National Park.**

The tour will start with a drive from Guwahati to Nameri National Park. This wonderful reserve is contiguous with the Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, together constituting an area of over 1 000km<sup>2</sup> (390 mi<sup>2</sup>) of semi-evergreen forests, moist deciduous forest and narrow strips of grassland along the beautiful crystal-clear, boulder-strewn rivers. In the afternoon we will begin our quest for a long list of sought-after target birds, all of which we will have an entire day to find the following day.



**White-winged Duck by Markus Lilje**

### **Day 2: Nameri National Park.**

We have a full day to explore the forested areas of this park for our main target – the highly

endangered White-winged Duck. This large forest duck inhabits forested pools and slow-flowing river channels and our chances of finding it are very good. Whilst searching for this rare species we will also be on the lookout for other forest denizens, including the rare Pale-capped Pigeon, Pin-tailed, Wedge-tailed and Ashy-headed Green Pigeons, seldom-seen Pied Falconet, spectacular Sultan Tit, Common Green Magpie, Greater Necklaced and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes, Green-billed Malkoha, secretive Pale-chinned Blue Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, gigantic Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Vernal Hanging Parrot, the attractive and elusive Black-breasted Thrush, Maroon Oriole, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Wreathed and magnificent Great Hornbills, Oriental Dollarbird, and the scarce Silver-backed Needletail overhead. Depending on the rains, we may even find Hooded Pitta during our forays through this wonderful reserve.

**Day 3: Nameri to Dirang (Sangti Valley).** After breakfast today we will drive north and slightly west to the Sangti Valley. The area of interest is the poorly explored East Kameng district of Arunachal



**Fire-tailed Myzornis by Markus Lilje**

Pradesh, the northeasternmost state of India. The area forms the border between China and India and is situated just west of the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. The eastern Himalayan slopes form a varied and rich landscape and habitat with the most wonderful rainforest – rich with bird and animal life. En route we will explore some lower elevation bamboo and mixed broad-leaved forest where some very special species can be found.

Targets include Grey-headed, White-breasted and Pale-billed Parrotbills, gregarious White-hooded Babbler, Streak-throated Barwing, extremely elusive Pale-headed Woodpecker,



Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, Goldenbreasted Fulvetta and Broad-billed Warbler. Other interesting species could include Yellow-bellied, Greycheeked and Yellow-vented Warblers, Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Long-tailed Sibia, scarce White-naped Yuhina, Yellow-throated and Nepal Fulvettas, Long-tailed Minivet, handsome Greater and Lesser Yellownapes, and Hair-crested and Ashy Drongos. We can expect to arrive at Dirang in the late afternoon.

**Days 4 to 6: Mandala Phudung and Sela Pass areas.** The higher elevations of Mandala Phudung hold a number of wonderful species and we will spend a full day scouring the area in search of the many specialities here. Notable birds that we will be on the hunt for include the dazzling Fire-tailed Myzornis, Scaly-breasted and Bar-winged Wren-Babblers, Spotted Laughingthrush, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, nomadic Golden-naped, Crimson-browed and Scarlet Finches, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Ferruginous and Slaty-blue Flycatchers, Chestnut-headed Tesia and the localised Brown-throated Fulvetta. We may also encounter a host of other lovely species, including soaring Himalayan Vulture, regal Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Red Junglefowl, Russet Sparrow, striking Crested Bunting, Rosy Pipit and the entertaining Brown Dipper, among many others.



Grandala by Glen Valentine

On one of the days, we will drive further up to explore the higher reaches of the Sela Pass (weather and conditions permitting) at an altitude of 4 170m (13 800ft). The scenery here is unsurpassed and we will no doubt enjoy an amazing, bird-filled day. Some of the very special high-altitude species we will be on the lookout for include the spectacular Himalayan Monal, Kalij and Blood Pheasants, Snow and Hill Partridges, unique and rather bizarre Wallcreeper, Snow Pigeon, bold and demonstrative Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, curious Spotted Nutcracker, Red-billed Chough, high-flying Brandt's and Plain Mountain Finches, Collared Grosbeak, Hodgson's Treecreeper, the stunning Grandala, Alpine and Rufous-breasted



Himalayan Monal by Markus Lilje

Accentors, rarely-seen Solitary Snipe, Himalayan Buzzard, Bearded Vulture, Plain-backed Thrush, White-collared and Tibetan Blackbirds, gorgeous Golden Bush Robin, eye-catching Spotted and Black-faced Laughingthrushes, dazzling Fire-tailed Sunbird, Rosy Pipit, White-throated Dipper in the icy mountain streams, Eurasian Wren, Indian Blue Robin and Dark-rumped, Dark-breasted and Himalayan White-browed Rosefinches.

**Day 7: Dirang to Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary.** Today we make our way into the state of Arunachal Pradesh, heading for the famous Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary.



Eagle's Nest is a wonderfully diverse reserve, with altitudes ranging from 500 to 3 200m (1 640 to 10 500 ft) above sea level, and the park protects an impressive 218km<sup>2</sup> (over 100mi<sup>2</sup>) of fabulous forest habitat. Before departing for Eagle's Nest we will spend some time in the Dirang area searching for some very special and often elusive birds, including Black-tailed Crake, the rare Longbilled Plover and the shy and seldom-seen Blyth's Kingfisher. The birding en route to Eagle's Nest can be very productive and may yield a number of great birds such as Short-billed Minivet, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Black-chinned and Striated Yuhinas, Spot-winged Grosbeak, Rusty-fronted Barwing, difficult and shy Blue-winged and Scaly Laughingthrushes, immaculate Rufous-throated Wren-babbler, White-breasted Parrotbill and White-tailed Nuthatch. Upon arrival, we will check into our tented camp and spend the afternoon birding for specialities in the surrounding forest.



**White-breasted Parrotbill**  
by Markus Lilje

**Days 8 to 12: Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary.** We have five full days to explore the splendours of Eagle's Nest, and we will visit a range of altitudes to enable us to find the host of excellent species that occur here. Eagle's Nest has recently attracted a lot of attention in birding circles due to the discovery of a new species of laughingthrush, the Bugun Liochicla (described in 2006), which is named after the local tribe in the area. This is the only site on earth where this beautiful bird has been found and our chances of finding this enigmatic species are very good, though by no means guaranteed. The entire area offers excellent birding and the list of tantalising specialities is almost endless! Of major significance, however, are Ward's Trogon, Purple and Green Cochoas, Coral-billed and Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers, stunning Himalayan Cutia, Black-headed Shrike-Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch, exquisite and littleknown Gould's Shortwing, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Longbilled and Bar-winged Wren-Babblers, and the seldom-seen Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler, and we will try our best to locate as many of these highly desirable gems as possible!



**Beautiful Nuthatch** by Markus Lilje

Other exciting and noteworthy species that we will be on the lookout for include the incredibly elusive Chestnut-breasted, Rufousthroated and Hill Partridges, Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle, Northern Goshawk, colourful Golden-throated Barbet, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Little Forktail, unobtrusive Ashy Wood Pigeon, Black-throated Prinia, the scarce and erratic Brown Bullfinch, White-throated Needletail overhead, a range of laughingthrushes that include Blue-winged, Bhutan, White-crested, Black-faced, White-throated, Striated and Scaly, Red-faced Liocichla and, in areas of dense bamboo, Brown, White-breasted and Black-throated Parrotbills, as well as the superb



but elusive Temminck's Tragopan. Mixed species flocks attract the incredible black-and-yellow Sultan Tit, Long-tailed, Beautiful and Rufous-backed Sibilias, range-restricted Brownthroated Fulvetta, White-tailed Nuthatch, Mrs Gould's, Greentailed and Black-throated Sunbirds, Green Shrike-Babbler, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Slaty-backed and Sapphire Flycatchers, and the scarce and attractive Fire-capped Tit. The forest undergrowth supports a range of specialities too and we will search hard for the secretive White-browed Shortwing, Pygmy, Scaly-breasted, Spotted and Rufous-throated WrenBabblers, White-tailed Robin, minuscule Chestnut-headed, Grey-bellied and Slaty-bellied Tesias, as well as the rare and ultra-skulking Blue-fronted Robin.



Ward's Trogon by Markus Lilje

**Day 13: Eagle's nest to Tezepur.** After breakfast and some final birding, we will say our farewells to this wonderful area and depart for the town of Tezepur, birding en route. In the lower elevations in the Sangti Valley, we will have another opportunity to look for the rare Long-billed Plover, Black-tailed Crake and Blyth's Kingfisher if missed previously. We should arrive in Tezepur in the late afternoon.

**Day 14: Tezepur to Guwahati and depart.** After breakfast, we begin the journey to Guwahati. Upon arrival in Guwahati, we will make a stop at the local refuse dump that attracts hundreds of regal Greater Adjutant, a rare and extremely localised bird throughout most of its limited range. Guwahati remains the best place on earth to see this stately yet also very ugly stork, with smaller numbers of the more widespread Lesser Adjutant, Asian Openbill and Black-headed Ibis also being attracted to this site. Citrine and White Wagtails are usually around in good numbers, while Striated Grassbird and Plain and Yellow-bellied Prinias will be looked for in areas of rank grass. After soaking in the adjutant storks and other interesting species, we will continue to Guwahati Airport where the tour will conclude.

#### **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.**

This includes:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 14;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary;
- Ground and water transportation;
- Park entrance fees and camera fees;
- Tips for lodge staff, porters, drivers, local communities and local guides; and
- Guiding services provided by the tour leaders and local guides.

The tour fee does not include:

- **ANY** flights (see above);



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- Visa fees;
  - Any drinks;
  - Special gratuities; and
  - Phone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**
- b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**
- c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

**Tiping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, porters, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Be aware that the Sela Pass above the Sangti Valley is at an altitude of around 4 170m (13 800ft). This can cause altitude problems for some people and means that the temperature will be quite low on this day. We can also expect rain and possibly even snow on Sela Pass. If you have problems with altitude and very cold conditions, please do let the Rockjumper office know.
- At Eagle's Nest (5 nights) we will stay a long way from any solid accommodations or civilisation, and will be using camping facilities set up by our agents. There will be fairly spacious walk-in, comfortable-for-two tents with a proper mattress to sleep on. Blankets or similar, sheets and pillows will also be provided. However, you are welcome to bring your own sleeping bag if you prefer.
- If participants would prefer a tent to themselves, please advise the office. Single tent space is limited and will be assigned in order of tour registration.
- While the food is generally good and tasty, it can become quite monotonous as not many different dishes are prepared. The food can also be spicy at times. Please be sure to let us know of your dietary requirements in advance of the tour.
- It is important for the comfort of you and your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.



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- In certain areas that contain potentially dangerous animals, you will be confined to the vehicle and are, quite understandably, not allowed to exit.
  - Fitness: This tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot, and may require walking for several hours at a time. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.

**Arrival and departure details:**

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The main tour will depart from Guwahati late on the morning of day 1 heading to Nameri National Park. The main tour will end after breakfast on day 14 with a transfer to Guwahati International Airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**Flights:**

Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi (IATA: DEL) is the main port of entry for international flights into India. There are also regular domestic flights between Delhi and Guwahati International Airport (IATA: GAU). **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

