



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Sri Lanka

### Endemic Birds & Big Game II

*23<sup>rd</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2017 (11 days)*

## Trip Report



Indian Pitta by Rich Lindie

**Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: Rich Lindie**

For most of us, the tour kicked off at the Cinnamon Red Hotel in Colombo, where we left at 8am for a drive to the Heritance Hotel, and then the Wallawa, to collect the remaining members of our group, before heading straight to the Kithulgala area. Once there, we had lunch, and then crossed the river (by pontoon) for our first visit to the park, where we quickly got onto our first Red-backed Flamebacks, and a Serendib Scops Owl not long after, not to mention a few goodies like Sri Lanka Swallow, Layard's Parakeet and Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot on the way! Returning to the river, we also saw our first Brown-breasted Flycatcher and a male Sri Lanka Junglefowl. After dinner, and back in the national park, a few of us tried for Sri Lanka Bay Owl but had to settle for a Dark-fronted Babbler and Brown Fish Owl instead.

On the second day of the tour, we started the morning off with a pre-breakfast stroll around a nearby resort, where several 'trip birds' put in an appearance, including our main targets – Chestnut-backed Owlet, Brown-capped Babbler and Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill. Following that, we returned to our lodge for breakfast, before heading out to the other side of the river once again. Taking the suspension bridge, for a change, we passed first through some very productive secondary forest, and then through a small village on the edge of the park. Both areas produced some good birds, starting with a popular Black-naped Monarch, a low-flying Black Eagle, a perched Besra and a couple of Sri Lanka Hill Myna in the forest, and a couple of Crimson-fronted Barbets inside the village itself.

Back at the lodge, we took a little time off in the heat of the day before making a final trip to the park headquarters, seeing our first Indian Pitta (in a garden) along the way, and an Indian Scops Owl after dark.

A leisurely breakfast saw in the start of the following day, followed by a 3-hour drive to Nuwara Eliya, where we checked into our hotel and went for a short stroll nearby – picking up a Paddyfield Pipit and a couple of White-bellied Sea Eagles for our efforts. We then ate lunch, and immediately set out for a spot of birding on the edge of town, where a Sri Lanka Bush Warbler put in a pretty lengthy appearance – *albeit an on-and-off one*. In Victoria Park, shortly thereafter, we saw yet more Indian Pittas and a few of the more common highland endemics, but not a single Pied Thrush! Making one more stop before dinner, this time to a spot along the Hakgala road, patience and persistence paid off when we all managed to grab views of a Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush or two.

The next morning, we departed for Horton Plains National Park at 5:30. Along the way, just outside the town of Pattipola, we were thrilled to spot a group of Sri Lanka Wood Pigeons sitting in a roadside tree. Up in the park itself, we were greeted by truly miserable weather but it didn't take long before we spotted the next of our targets, when a Dull-blue Flycatcher popped up on the edge of a small forest pond at our first stop. Things got a little slower thereafter, but we persisted, and eventually everyone caught up with Indian Blackbird and Hill Swallow before a brief stop in the rain on our way out produced one more Dull-blue Flycatcher for good measure. We then had lunch back in Nuwara Eliya, popped to the local racetrack for a spot of wetland birding, and ended up at the Victoria Gardens for one last attempt at Pied Thrush. Enjoying sightings of several of the species seen the day before, including Forest Wagtail, as well as our first sighting of Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, we enjoyed our time in the park, though it wasn't until the eleventh-hour that we could finally relax, when a lovely male Pied Thrush was eventually picked up!





**Leopards by Rich Lindie**

Leaving the highlands behind the next morning, we made our way towards Tissa and the 'dry' south-east, with just one planned stop to make along the way. Unfortunately, the rain that greeted us in the morning had not let up at all during our drive to the Surrey Bird Sanctuary, and we arrived there to be greeted by a deluge and maze of wet and muddy trails. Unperturbed, however, the whole group set off to twitch a roosting Brown Wood Owl before retreating to the bus for the rest of the morning. A little drier, we ate lunch in Tissa, and went directly to the 'tanks' where, thankfully, the rain held off for long enough for us to see a great trio of owl species, and a host of waterfowl, including Cotton Pygmy Goose, Watercock and Pheasant-tailed Jacana. We then ended off the day with a long vigil for White-naped Woodpecker, a pair of which put in a stellar appearance.

We began our full day in Yala Park with the usual pile-up outside the park, though it wasn't long before we escaped the crowds by taking the first turn from the main road. And, despite wet weather throughout the day, we managed to find almost 130 species of birds and 5 leopards! We even managed to make it through our lunch break without getting drenched. Needless to say, highlights were many and included seeing several Painted Stork, a Black-necked Stork, Barred Buttonquails, Great Stone-curlews, Yellow-wattled Lapwings, countless Green Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, up-close Jerdon's Bush Larks and Jungle Prinia. On the rarity front, we were thrilled to find singles of both Daurian and Chestnut-tailed Starlings. A roadside stop on the way back to our hotel also produced our first Indian Nightjar of the trip.



**Jungle Prinia by Rich Lindie**

Another night of heavy rain led straight into a morning of the same, and it soon became clear that we would not be getting to experience the dry south-east as advertised – confirmed by media warnings of flooding in nearby parts of the country and southern India. Spirits not dampened, however, we set off for Bundala National Park in the wee hours of the morning, where, despite the weather, the birds were good to us again. Indeed, during just a few hours in the wetlands and mudflats there, we picked up more trip birds and lifers than I think any of us had expected, including Indian Stone-curlew, Lesser Adjutant, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Small Pratincole!

Returning to our hotel mid-morning, we packed our bags and headed for our second stop in the 'dry' zone – Udawalawa National Park. As expected, it wasn't long before we found our first elephants, though yet more rain, and what seems to be an unmanageably spreading quantity of invasive plants, meant our experience in Udawalawa wasn't quite the same as that in Yala and Bundala National Parks. We ALL managed to catch up on Sirkeer Malkoha, however, and that's all that mattered. Our second evening excursion for Jerdon's Nightjar was a complete wash (blow?) out.

By then, fed up with the seemingly incessant rain, none of us was to argue with the idea of some early morning coffee and tea in lieu of rushing out into the field. Then, as if to reward our patience, we were given a window of clarity (relative, of course), allowing us an hour of birding in woodland near our hotel. The catch being that we didn't see anything of particular interest, save for a couple of Pale-billed Flowerpeckers (eaters?), so it was off to breakfast we headed, before boarding the bus for the final stop in our Sri Lankan adventures – Sinharaja.



Once there, we waited out yet more rain at our hotel, before popping down to Kudawa village, where persistence paid off with great views of Black-throated Munia.

Our first day in Sinharaja was, wait for it...a washout. Well, almost – we did pick up our main target for the morning, White-faced Starling, even if nothing else. And by midday, there was enough of a break in the weather to allow us a stroll in the national park proper, where Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Spot-winged Thrush and Sri Lanka Frogmouth put in appearances. In addition, we added Crimson-backed Flameback, near Martin's Place, before calling it a day.

Our second day in Sinharaja, by contrast, saw much clearer conditions, and we not only enjoyed several hours of rain-free birding, we achieved the seemingly impossible, by not only finding all the remainder of the island's endemics and specials, we did so before lunch! Our last bird? A Sri Lanka Thrush, which FINALLY put in an appearance, preceded by our penultimate target, Red-faced Malkoha – a flock of which swung by as we were taking shelter from another midday downpour! Oh, and who can forget the Sri Lanka Spurfowl and Slaty-legged Crake that preceded that!

Somehow, despite the conditions, we pulled off a remarkably successful tour, and a thoroughly enjoyable one at that. Persistence and patience, by all in the group, payed off on so many occasions, ensuring we managed to find a record-equaling number of local specials (57 out of 60 possibles) – including all of the island's endemics, a handful of regional rarities – Daurian Starling at the top of the list, and a very respectable 236 species. This in only 11 days, 8 of which were almost rained out, and in addition to the great experiences, both cultural and natural!

## Annotated List of species recorded

**Note:** Number in brackets ( ) indicate number of days on the tour the species was recorded.

List powered through the report generator of our partner iGoTerra.

### Birds (236 in total: 236 seen)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2017. IOC World Bird List (v 7.3).

**Status codes:** **E** = Endemic, **NE** = Near-endemic, **I** = Introduced

**IUCN codes:** **CR** = Critically endangered, **EN** = Endangered, **VU** = Vulnerable, **EW** = Extinct in the Wild, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient

**Recording codes:** **(H)** = Heard only

#### Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl *Anatidae*

##### **Lesser Whistling Duck**

*Dendrocygna javanica*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

##### **Cotton Pygmy Goose**

*Nettapus coromandelianus coromandelianus*

A handful at the Tissa tank.

#### Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies *Phasianidae*

**Sri Lanka Spurfowl***Galloperdix bicalcarata*

Unbeatable views! Sinharaja.

**Sri Lanka Junglefowl***Gallus lafayettii*

Several sightings.

**Storks Ciconiidae****Painted Stork (NT)***Mycteria leucocephala*

Daily sightings during our time in the south-east.

**Asian Openbill***Anastomus oscitans*

Near-daily sightings in the south-east, as well as a couple near Colombo.

**Woolly-necked Stork (VU)***Ciconia episcopus episcopus*

A handful in Yala NP.

**Black-necked Stork (NT)***Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus asiaticus*

One sighting in Yala NP.

**Lesser Adjutant (VU)***Leptoptilos javanicus*

Great views of a small group in Bundala NP.

**Ibises and Spoonbills Threskiornithidae****Black-headed Ibis (NT)***Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Several sightings in the south-east, as well as during our drive to Kithulgala.

**Eurasian Spoonbill***Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*

A few sightings, split between Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns Ardeidae****Yellow Bittern***Ixobrychus sinensis*

One sighting near Nuwara Eliya, a couple more in the south-east.

**Black Bittern***Dupetor flavicollis flavicollis*

A handful of sightings in the south-east.

**Black-crowned Night Heron***Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*

Tissa and Bundala NP.

**Indian Pond Heron***Ardeola grayii*

Near-daily sightings.

**Eastern Cattle Egret***Bubulcus coromandus*

As with the species above.

**Grey Heron***Ardea cinerea cinerea*

Nuwara Eliya and the south-east.

**Purple Heron***Ardea purpurea manilensis*

Tissa and Bundala NP.

**Great Egret***Ardea alba modesta*

Kithulgala, Nuwara Eliya and Bundala NP.

**Intermediate Egret***Ardea intermedia intermedia*

Nuwara Eliya and the south-east.

**Little Egret***Egretta garzetta garzetta*

Several, scattered sightings.

**Pelicans *Pelecanidae*****Spot-billed Pelican (NT)***Pelecanus philippensis*

Colombo and throughout the south-east.

**Cormorants and Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*****Little Cormorant***Microcarbo niger*

Daily sightings until we reached Sinharaja.

**Indian Cormorant***Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Two sightings in Bundala NP.

**Great Cormorant***Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

A couple of sightings in the south-east.

**Anhingas *Anhingidae*****Oriental Darter (NT)***Anhinga melanogaster*

First sighted near Colombo, then throughout the south-east.

**Hawks, Eagles, and Kites *Accipitridae*****Crested Honey Buzzard***Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis*

A handful of sightings, including a few at Kithulgala.

**Crested Serpent Eagle***Spilornis cheela spilogaster*

Several, scattered sightings.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle***Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis*

Several sightings, including a few close-ups during our time in Yala NP.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle***Lophotriorchis kienerii kienerii*

A single sighting from Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja.

**Black Eagle***Ictinaetus malaiensis perniger*

Two sightings – one at Kithulgala, another in Sinharaja.

**Shikra***Accipiter badius badius*

A handful of sightings, split between Kithulgala and the south-east.

**Besra***Accipiter virgatus besra*

One sighting just outside Tissa, another at Sinharaja.

**Brahminy Kite***Haliastur indus indus*

Sighted daily outside the two rainforest sites.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle***Haliaeetus leucogaster*

First seen well around Nuwara Eliya.

**Grey-headed Fish Eagle***Haliaeetus ichthyaetus*

A handful of sightings in the south-east.

**Rails, Gallinules, and Coots *Rallidae*****Slaty-legged Crake***Rallina eurizonoides amauroptera*

Fantastic views during our second morning in the Sinharaja area.

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

Near-daily sightings.

**Watercock***Gallicrex cinerea*

One sighting in Tissa, another in Bundala NP.

**Grey-headed Swampen***Porphyrio poliocephalus poliocephalus*

Large numbers in the south-east.

**Common Moorhen***Gallinula chloropus*

A couple in Tissa.

**Buttonquails *Turnicidae*****Barred Buttonquail***Turnix suscitator leggei*

A handful of sightings, split between Bundala and Yala national parks.

**Thick-knees *Burhinidae*****Indian Stone-curlew***Burhinus indicus*

A great sighting in Bundala NP.

**Great Stone-curlew (NT)***Esacus recurvirostris*

Several great looks during our time in the south-east.

**Stilts and Avocets *Recurvirostridae*****Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae*****Yellow-wattled Lapwing***Vanellus malabaricus*

A few great looks during our time in Yala NP, followed by more the next day.

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

Ubiquitous away from heavily forested sites.

**Pacific Golden Plover***Pluvialis fulva*

One sighting in Yala NP, followed by several in Bundala NP.

**Grey Plover***Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*

Bundala NP only.

**Little Ringed Plover***Charadrius dubius*

One sighting in Yala NP.



**Kentish Plover**

Yala and Bundala national parks.

*Charadrius alexandrinus***Lesser Sand Plover**

As with the species above.

*Charadrius mongolus atrifrons***Greater Sand Plover**

Two sightings in Yala NP.

*Charadrius leschenaultii leschenaultii***Jacanas Jacanidae****Pheasant-tailed Jacana**

Great looks at several in the south-east.

*Hydrophasianus chirurgus***Sandpipers and Allies Scolopacidae****Eurasian Curlew (NT)**

Bundala NP.

*Numenius arquata orientalis***Black-tailed Godwit (NT)**

A small group in Bundala NP.

*Limosa limosa***Ruddy Turnstone**

Bundala NP.

*Arenaria interpres interpres***Ruff**

Bundala NP.

*Calidris pugnax***Broad-billed Sandpiper**

A small group in Bundala NP.

*Calidris falcinellus falcinellus***Curlew Sandpiper**

Yala NP and Bundala.

*Calidris ferruginea***Sanderling**

Bundala NP.

*Calidris alba alba***Little Stint**

Yala and Bundala national parks.

*Calidris minuta***Pin-tailed Snipe**

First sighted in Nuwara Eliya, sighted daily in the south-east.

*Gallinago stenura***Common Snipe**

One sighting in Nuwara Eliya.

*Gallinago gallinago***Common Sandpiper**

Nuwara Eliya, Yala NP and Bundala NP.

*Actitis hypoleucos***Green Sandpiper**

A couple of sightings in Yala NP.

*Tringa ochropus***Common Redshank**

Yala NP and Bundala NP.

*Tringa totanus***Marsh Sandpiper**

Yala NP and Bundala NP.

*Tringa stagnatilis*

**Wood Sandpiper***Tringa glareola*

Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Pratincoles and Coursers *Glareolidae*****Small Pratincole***Glareola lactea*

A couple of sightings in Yala NP, another in Bundala NP.

**Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers *Laridae*****Gull-billed Tern***Gelochelidon nilotica*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Caspian Tern***Hydroprogne caspia*

Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Greater Crested Tern***Thalasseus bergii velox*

As with the species above.

**Lesser Crested Tern***Thalasseus bengalensis*

One sighting in Bundala NP.

**Little Tern***Sternula albifrons sinensis*

Yala and Bundala.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

A singleton in Tissa.

**Whiskered Tern***Chlidonias hybrida*

Tissa and Bundala NP.

**White-winged Tern***Chlidonias leucopterus*

As with the species above, only lower numbers.

**Pigeons and Doves *Columbidae*****Rock Dove***Columba livia***Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon (VU)***Columba torringtoniae*

A great sighting near Pattipola.

**Oriental Turtle Dove***Streptopelia orientalis*

One sighting in Udawalawa NP.

**Eurasian Collared Dove***Streptopelia decaocto*

One sighting near the entrance to Bundala NP.

**Spotted Dove***Spilopelia chinensis*

Ubiquitous.

**Common Emerald Dove***Chalcophaps indica robinsoni*

Several habituated birds in the Sinharaja area. First sighted, however, in Kithulgala.

**Orange-breasted Green Pigeon***Treron bicinctus leggei*

Multiple great looks during our time in both Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Sri Lanka Green Pigeon** *Treron pompadora*

First sighted in Kithulgala.

**Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea pusilla*

As with the species above.

### Cuckoos *Cuculidae*

**Green-billed Coucal (VU)** *Centropus chlororhynchos*

Eventually sighted along a trail in Sinharaja.

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis parroti*

Several sightings throughout the tour.

**Sirkeer Malkoha** *Taccocua leschenaultii*

Even I saw this one!

**Red-faced Malkoha (VU)** *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*

A fantastic sighting of a small group near the Sinharaja research station.

**Blue-faced Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

Unfortunately, just one brief sighting in Udawalawa NP, and only for some of us.

**Jacobin Cuckoo** *Clamator jacobinus jacobinus*

A few sightings in Yala NP, and a couple more in Bundala NP.

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus scolopaceus*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Banded Bay Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sonneratii waiti*

Great looks at one in Kithulgala.

**Grey-bellied Cuckoo** *Cacomantis passerinus*

Several sightings in Yala NP.

### Barn-Owls *Tytonidae*

**(H) Sri Lanka Bay Owl** *Phodilus assimilis assimilis*

Kithulgala.

### Owls *Strigidae*

**Serendib Scops Owl (EN)** *Otus thilohoffmanni*

Fantastic views of a roosting pair in Kithulgala.

**Indian Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena bakkamoena*

One during the second night walk in Kithulgala, two more on a day-roost in Tissa.

**Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis zeylonensis*

One during the first night walk in Kithulgala, another on a day-roost in Tissa.

**Brown Wood Owl** *Strix leptogrammica*

Great views at Surrey Bird Sanctuary.

**Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum radiatum*

One on a day-roost in a garden in Tissa.

**Chestnut-backed Owlet (NT)**

*Glaucidium castanotum*

Fantastic views of a pair during a walk around the Sisira's Country Lodge grounds.

**Frogmouths Podargidae**

**Sri Lanka Frogmouth**

*Batrachostomus moniliger moniliger*

Great views of a roosting pair in Sinharaja.

**Nightjars and Allies Caprimulgidae**

**Indian Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos*

Two - near the main road between Yala NP and Tissa.

**Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae**

**Crested Treeswift**

*Hemiproctne coronata*

A few sightings in the south-east.

**Swifts Apodidae**

**Indian Swiftlet**

*Aerodramus unicolor*

Near-daily sightings.

**Brown-backed Needletail**

*Hirundapus giganteus indicus*

One sighting at Kitulgala, another in Yala NP.

**Asian Palm Swift**

*Cypsiurus balasiensis balasiensis*

A few, scattered sightings.

**Little Swift**

*Apus affinis singalensis*

Kithulgala and the south-east.

**Trogons Trogonidae**

**Malabar Trogon**

*Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus*

One sighting in Kithulgala, a few in Sinharaja, including one of a male.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

**Indian Roller**

*Coracias benghalensis indicus*

Several sightings in the south-east, and a couple on the first day.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

**Stork-billed Kingfisher**

*Pelargopsis capensis capensis*

A sighting near the Plantation Hotel for some of the group, and one for all of us in Tissa.

**White-throated Kingfisher**

*Halcyon smyrnensis fusca*

Several fabulous sightings.

**Common Kingfisher**

*Alcedo atthis taprobana*



Also seen well on several occasions.

**Pied Kingfisher***Ceryle rudis leucomelanurus*

A few sightings in both Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Bee-eaters *Meropidae*****Green Bee-eater***Merops orientalis*

Countless in the south-east.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater***Merops philippinus*

Sighted at nearly all sites visited.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater***Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti*

One sighting in Kithulgala, another in Yala NP.

**Hoopoes *Upupidae*****Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops ceylonensis*

A few sightings in Yala NP.

**Hornbills *Bucerotidae*****Malabar Pied Hornbill (NT)***Anthracoceros coronatus*

Sighted daily in the south-east.

**Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill***Ocyrceros gingalensis*

Particularly great looks during our time in Sinharaja, where some individuals are fairly habituated.

**Asian Barbets *Megalaimidae*****Brown-headed Barbet***Psilopogon zeylanicus zeylanicus*

Multiple sightings, and throughout the country.

**Yellow-fronted Barbet***Psilopogon flavifrons*

Also seen up-close on several occasions in Sinharaja, though first sighted at Kithulgala.

**Crimson-fronted Barbet***Psilopogon rubricapillus*

Great looks at a few during one of our walks in Kithulgala.

**Coppersmith Barbet***Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus*

A handful in the south-east – first in Yala NP.

**Woodpeckers *Picidae*****Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker***Yungipicus nanus gymnophthalmos*

One sighting in Kithulgala.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker***Leiopicus mahrattensis mahrattensis*

A handful of sightings in the south-east.

**Lesser Yellownape***Picus chlorolophus wellsi*

A couple of individuals in the Kithulgala area.

**Red-backed Flameback***Dinopium psarodes*

Sighted at all but two of the sites visited (Sinharaja and Horton Plains).

**Crimson-backed Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*

A couple of sightings in Sinharaja.

**White-naped Woodpecker** *Chrysocolaptes festivus tantus*

A great sighting of a pair in Tissa, and a well-deserved one at that!

### **Old World Parrots *Psittaculidae***

**Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala*

One sighting in Bundala NP.

**Layard's Parakeet** *Psittacula calthrapae*

A handful of sightings, the first of which was in Kithulgala.

**Alexandrine Parakeet (NT)** *Psittacula eupatria eupatria*

Several sightings, scattered throughout.

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

Sighted at all but the two rainforest sites.

**Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus beryllinus*

One of the first endemics sighted (at Kithulgala), and seen on several occasions thereafter.

### **Pittas *Pittidae***

**Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyura*

First sighted in a small garden in Kithulgala, before going on to be seen on four other days!

### **Woodshrikes and allies *Tephrodornithidae***

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus leggei*

Sightings in Kithulgala and in the highlands.

**Sri Lanka Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis affinis*

A handful of sightings in Yala NP.

### **Ioras *Aegithinidae***

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia multicolor*

A few in Kithulgala, and several in the south-east.

**Marshall's Iora** *Aegithina nigrolutea*

Great views of a pair in Yala NP – at one point, side-by-side with the species above!

### **Cuckoo-shrikes *Campephagidae***

**Black-headed Cuckooshrike** *Coracina melanoptera sykesi*

First sighted in Kithulgala, best views in Yala NP.

**Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus cinnamomeus*

Several sightings in the south-east.

**Orange Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*

A few great sightings in Sinharaja.

### Shrikes *Laniidae*

#### **Brown Shrike**

*Lanius cristatus*

Near-daily sightings after we left Kithulgala.

### Old World Orioles *Oriolidae*

#### **Black-hooded Oriole**

*Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*

Kithulgala and the south-east.

### Drongos *Dicruridae*

#### **White-bellied Drongo**

*Dicrurus caerulescens*

Multiple sightings, scattered throughout the country.

#### **Sri Lanka Drongo**

*Dicrurus lophorinus*

Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

### Fantails *Rhipiduridae*

#### **White-browed Fantail**

*Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*

A few sightings in both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

### Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

#### **Black-naped Monarch**

*Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*

Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

#### **Indian Paradise Flycatcher**

*Terpsiphone paradisi*

First sighted in Kithulgala, then sighted every day during the last week of the tour.

### Crows, Jays, and Magpies *Corvidae*

#### **Sri Lanka Blue Magpie (VU)**

*Urocissa ornate*

Just two sightings in Sinharaja.

#### **House Crow**

*Corvus splendens protegatus*

A few sightings.

#### **Indian Jungle Crow**

*Corvus culminatus*

Sighted everywhere but for in Colombo and the two rainforest areas.

### Fairy Flycatchers *Stenostiridae*

#### **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**

*Culicicapa ceylonensis ceylonensis*

Several in the highlands, including a couple of confiding individuals in Victoria Gardens.

### Chickadees and Tits *Paridae*

#### **Cinereous Tit**

*Parus cinereus mahrattarum*

Also sighted on a few occasions during our time in the highlands.

### **Larks *Alaudidae***

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix griseus*  
Sighted in Yala NP by some, sighted by all in Bundala NP.

**Jerdon's Bush Lark** *Mirafra affinis*  
Great views of several in Yala NP.

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula gulgula*  
Nice close-ups of a few in Bundala NP.

### **Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae***

**Black-capped Bulbul** *Pycnonotus melanicterus*  
First sighted in Kithulgala, though our best views were of several birds seen at Martin's feeder.

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*  
Ubiquitous.

**Yellow-eared Bulbul (NT)** *Pycnonotus penicillatus*  
Great sightings during our time in the highlands, most of which were in Victoria Gardens.

**White-browed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus luteolus insulae*  
Several in the south-east.

**Yellow-browed Bulbul** *Acritillas indica*  
Great views at both rainforest sites, including some at Martin's feeder.

**Square-tailed Bulbul** *Hypsipetes ganeesa humii*  
Common at both rainforest sites visited, and also seen at Martin's feeder.

### **Swallows *Hirundinidae***

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Sighted on all but three days – the three days we spent in rainforest.

**Hill Swallow** *Hirundo domicola*  
A couple of good sightings in Horton Plains NP.

**Sri Lanka Swallow** *Cecropis hyperythra*  
Several good sightings, and pretty much the first endemic sighted on the tour (at Kithulgala).

### **Leaf-Warblers *Phylloscopidae***

**Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*  
Several sightings.

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris*  
A couple of good looks during our time in Kithulgala.

### **Reed-Warblers and Allies *Acrocephalidae***

**Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus meridionalis*



Good looks at a few in Bundala NP.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler**

*Acrocephalus dumetorum*

A handful of sightings during the first week of the tour.

**Grassbirds and Allies *Locustellidae***

**Sri Lanka Bush Warbler**

*Elaphrornis palliseri*

Great views of two – one near Nuwara Eliya, another near the research station in Horton Plains NP.

**Cisticolas and Allies *Cisticolidae***

**Zitting Cisticola**

*Cisticola juncidis*

Two sightings in Horton Plains NP, followed by a couple more in Bundala NP.

**Jungle Prinia**

*Prinia sylvatica valida*

Great views of a couple in the Yala NP picnic area.

**Ashy Prinia**

*Prinia socialis brevicauda*

A handful of good views, our first of which was near our hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

**Plain Prinia**

*Prinia inornata insularis*

Several sightings in the south-east.

**Common Tailorbird**

*Orthotomus sutorius*

Multiple sightings during the first week of the tour.

**Babblers *Timaliidae***

**Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler**

*Pomatorhinus melanurus*

A few nice looks during our time in Sinharaja.

**Tawny-bellied Babbler**

*Dumetia hyperythra phillipsi*

A few at Kithulgala, and a couple more in the south-east.

**Dark-fronted Babbler**

*Rhopocichla atriceps*

One sighting (on a night-walk) in Kithulgala, a few in Sinharaja.

**Fulvettas and Ground Babblers *Pellorneidae***

**Brown-capped Babbler**

*Pellorneum fuscicapillus*

One sighting in the Kithulgala area (near the Chestnut-backed Owlet site).

**Laughingthrushes *Leiothrichidae***

**Orange-billed Babbler (NT)**

*Turdoides rufescens*

A few in Kithulgala, multiple in Sinharaja.

**Yellow-billed Babbler**

*Turdoides affinis taprobanus*

Sighted on most days of the tour.

**Ashy-headed Laughingthrush (VU)**

*Garrulax cinereifrons*

A couple of great looks during our time in Sinharaja.

### Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*

#### **Yellow-eyed Babbler**

*Chrysomma sinense nasale*

One sighting in Bundala NP, a couple in Udawalawa NP.

### Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies *Zosteropidae*

#### **Oriental White-eye**

*Zosterops palpebrosus egregius*

Several sightings, scattered throughout the trip.

#### **Sri Lanka White-eye**

*Zosterops ceylonensis*

A handful of sightings in the highlands.

### Nuthatches *Sittidae*

#### **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**

*Sitta frontalis frontalis*

A lovely sighting in Victoria Gardens, and several in Sinharaja.

### Starlings *Sturnidae*

#### **Sri Lanka Hill Myna (NT)**

*Gracula ptilogenys*

On sighting in Kithulgala – near the village.

#### **Southern Hill Myna**

*Gracula indica*

A handful of sightings in Kithulgala, including a great close-up in the village.

#### **Common Myna**

*Acridotheres tristis melanosternus*

Near-daily sightings.

#### **Daurian Starling**

*Agropsar sturninus*

One sighting in Yala NP – a very unexpected one, and an appreciated bonus.

#### **Chestnut-tailed Starling**

*Sturnia malabarica*

Another surprise sighting from Yala, and in the very same area as the species above!

#### **Brahminy Starling**

*Sturnia pagodarum*

A handful in Yala NP.

#### **White-faced Starling**

*Sturnornis albofrontatus*

Two sightings in Sinharaja – the first after a long, wet stakeout.

#### **Rosy Starling**

*Pastor roseus*

A few sightings in the south-east, spread over three separate days.

### Thrushes and Allies *Turdidae*

#### **Pied Thrush**

*Geokichla wardii*

Eventually found, after a great deal of effort and patience, in Victoria Gardens.

#### **Spot-winged Thrush**

*Geokichla spiloptera*

A few great looks during our time in Sinharaja.

#### **Sri Lanka Thrush (NT)**

*Zoothera imbricata*

Who can forget this one!? – our final endemic, a cracker to boot!

#### **Indian Blackbird**

*Turdus simillimus kinnisii*

One sighting near the restaurant in Horton Plains NP, a couple more near the research station.

### **Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae***

**Indian Robin***Copsychus fulicatus leucopterus*

Great views of several in the south-east.

**Oriental Magpie-Robin***Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*

Near-daily sightings during the first week of the tour.

**(H) White-rumped Shama***Copsychus malabaricus leggei*

Yala NP.

**Asian Brown Flycatcher***Muscicapa dauurica*

Several in Kithulgala.

**Brown-breasted Flycatcher***Muscicapa muttui*

Multiple encounters during our time in the highlands and rainforest areas.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher***Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni*

Great looks at a few in Kithulgala, followed by more in Sinharaja.

**Dull-blue Flycatcher (NT)***Eumyias sordidus*

Three sightings during our time in the highlands, though it wasn't until the third that most caught up.

**Indian Blue Robin***Larvivora brunnea brunnea*

A few sightings in the highlands and in Sinharaja, including a few of some lovely males at the latter site.

**Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush (EN)***Myophonus blighi*

One relatively great sighting during our time in Nuwara Eliya.

**Kashmir Flycatcher (VU)***Ficedula subrubra*

A few brief sightings in Victoria Gardens.

**Pied Bush Chat***Saxicola caprata atratus*

A few in the highlands.

### **Leafbirds *Chloropseidae***

**Jerdon's Leafbird***Chloropsis jerdoni*

A few sightings, split between Kithulgala and the south-east, though mostly in the latter.

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

A couple of sightings in Kithulgala.

### **Flowerpeckers *Dicaeidae***

**Thick-billed Flowerpecker***Dicaeum agile zeylonicum*

One sighting in Udawalawa.

**Legge's Flowerpecker (NT)***Dicaeum vincens*

A couple of sightings in Sinharaja.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker***Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*

Several sightings, most of which were in Sinharaja.

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### **Sunbirds and Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae***

- Purple-rumped Sunbird** *Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*  
Sighted every day of the tour.
- Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticus asiaticus*  
A few sightings in the south-east.
- Loten's Sunbird** *Cinnyris lotenius lotenius*  
Several sightings, including a few at Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

### **Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***

- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus indicus*

### **Weavers and Allies *Ploceidae***

- Baya Weaver** *Ploceus philippinus philippinus*  
A few sightings in the south-east.

### **Waxbills and Allies *Estrildidae***

- Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica*  
A couple of pairs during our last hour in Yala NP.
- White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata striata*  
Close-ups of a flock in Kithulgala, and a couple of sightings in the south-east.
- Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata punctulata*  
Daily sightings in the south-east.
- Black-throated Munia** *Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti*  
Great views of a pair attending a nest in Sinharaja.
- Tricolored Munia** *Lonchura malacca*  
A handful of sightings split between Tissa and Yala NP.

### **Wagtails and Pipits *Motacillidae***

- Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus*  
Great views of a few individuals in Victoria Gardens.
- Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*  
Sightings in both Yala and Bundala national parks.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*  
Daily sightings during our time in the wet zone.
- Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus*  
Sightings in the highlands and the south-east.
- Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*  
One sighting in Yala NP



## Mammals (16 in total: 16 seen)

**Status codes:** E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced

**IUCN codes:** CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

### Elephants *Elephantidae*

#### **Asian Elephant**

*Elephas maximus maximus*

Several great encounters during our time in the south-east.

### Old World monkeys *Cercopithecidae*

#### **Toque Macaque**

*Macaca sinica*

Sighted on 6 days.

#### **Tufted Gray Langur**

*Semnopithecus priam thersites*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

#### **Purple-faced Langur**

*Trachypithecus vetulus*

A couple of sightings in Kithulgala, several in Sinharaja.

### Rabbits, Hares *Leporidae*

#### **Indian Hare**

*Lepus nigricollis*

A few sightings in the south-east.

### Squirrels *Sciuridae*

#### **Layard's Palm Squirrel**

*Funambulus layardi*

A few in Sinharaja.

#### **Common Palm Squirrel**

*Funambulus palmarum*

Daily sightings until we reached Sinharaja.

#### **Grizzled Giant Squirrel**

*Ratufa macroura*

A handful of encounters, mostly in Kithulgala.

### Cats *Felidae*

#### **Leopard**

*Panthera pardus kotiya*

Five in one day in Yala NP!

### Mongoose *Herpestidae*

#### **Ruddy Mongoose**

*Herpestes smithii*

Several sightings in the south-east.

### Wolves, Coyote, Foxes, Jackals *Canidae*

#### **Golden Jackal**

*Canis aureus*

A couple of sightings in the south-east.

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**Pigs *Suidae*****Wild Boar***Sus scrofa*

Several in the south-east.

**Deer *Cervidae*****Chital***Axis axis*

Common in the two national parks in the south-east.

**Sambar***Rusa unicolor*

Great close-ups in both Horton Plains and Yala NP.

**Cattle, Antelopes, Sheep, Goats *Bovidae*****Domestic Water Buffalo***Bubalus bubalis*

Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Old World Fruit Bats *Pteropodidae*****Indian Flying Fox***Pteropus giganteus*

Near-daily sightings.

**Reptiles (8 in total: 8 seen)****Status codes:** E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced**IUCN codes:** CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient**Agamas *Agamidae*****Eastern Garden Lizard***Calotes sp*

Kithulgala.

**Rhinoceros Agama/Horned Lizard***Ceratophora sp*

Kithulgala.

**Lyre Head Lizard/Hump-nosed Lizard***Lyriocephalus sp*

Sinharaja.

**Wiegmann's Agama/Kangaroo Lizard***Otocryptis sp*

Sinharaja.

**Monitor Lizards *Varanidae*****Bengal Monitor**

Yala NP and Sinharaja.

**Colubrid snakes *Colubridae*****Green Vine Snake***Ahaetulla nasuta*

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Sinharaja.

**Viperid snakes *Viperidae***

**Ceylon Pit Viper**  
Sinharaja.

*Trimeresurus trigonocephalus*

**Crocodiles and relatives *Crocodylidae***

**Mugger Crocodile**  
Several in the south-east.

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