



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

The Himalayan Kingdom of
BHUTAN
&
Kaziranga & Nameri National Parks

21st March – 13th April 2009



TRIP REPORT

Trip report compiled by tour leader David Shackelford

Top 10 Birds of the Tour as voted by participants:

1. Ward's Trogon
2. Rufous-necked Hornbill
3. Blood Pheasant
4. Beautiful Nuthatch
5. Satyr Tragopan
6. Himalayan Monal
7. Fire-tailed Myzornis
8. Mrs. Gould's Sunbird
9. Ibisbill
10. Snow Pigeon



Tour Summary:

It was an incredible experience traveling through a land where pristine forest-clad mountain slopes resonate with bird song combined with mighty awe-inspiring snow-capped Himalayan peaks, blazes of flowering rhododendrons and magnolias, and magnificent Dzongs dominating the inspiring landscape. This is the Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan and we were all amongst a privileged few to have seen and experienced this natural wonderland.

Our adventures began in Assam traveling through the extreme north-eastern section of the Indian subcontinent with brightly-colored bee-eaters, kingfishers, barbets, rollers and magnificent Indian One-horned Rhinoceros striding the extensive plains of Kaziranga National Park. The mighty Bramaputra River forms the northern boundary of this reserve and small pockets of lowland evergreen forest and stands of broadleaf woodland can still be found harboring some tantalizing birds and mammals amongst the expansive grassland and wetlands that dominate the area.

During our initial afternoon we enjoyed a male Pied Harrier quartering over the open plains, Brown Fish-Owl on the day roost, Chestnut-capped Babbler skulking in the tall elephant grass, and several small coveys of localized Swamp Francolin. Subsequent jeep drives within the national park provided a great experience with mammal species such as Asian Elephant, Water Buffalo, the rare Swamp Deer, Hog Deer and Wild Boar. A morning elephant back ride afforded further spectacular views of Indian One-horned Rhinoceros including several mothers with calves providing an intimate encounter with one of the world's great but endangered mammals.

Birding the surrounding habitat yielded amazing encounters of Great Hornbill calling protectively over a female incubating eggs in a nest cavity, flocks of Striated Babbler, a responsive White-rumped Shama, Striated Grassbird, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Ruby-cheeked Sunbird, and Barred Buttonquail among many others. The wetlands were brimming with birds and we enjoyed such sought-after species as Greater and Lesser Adjutants, Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon, stately Black-necked Stork, Pallas's and Grey-headed Fish-Eagles, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, and migrant Rosy Pipit. Patches of lowland evergreen forest also held some exciting species including Asian Barred and Jungle Owlets, scope views of the often elusive Blue-bearded Bee-eater, magnificent Wreathed Hornbill, Pompadour and Thick-billed Green-Pigeons, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Rufous-capped Babbler, outrageous Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Crested Serpent-Eagle, and four species of noisy parakeet including the scarce Blossom-headed Parakeet. Forest mammals were no less dramatic with Capped Langur, Black Giant Squirrel, and an awesome experience with three Hoolock Gibbons swinging through the trees that stole the show.

Continuing to our comfortable tented camp at the border of Nameri National Park, we first scanned over the Jia Bhoreli River where hundreds of Small Pratincole, Great Thick-knee, River Lapwing, and noisy River Tern were enjoyed followed by scope views of Sand Lark and a male Hodgson's Redstart. Even in our camp we scoped a perched Oriental Hobby and found a very responsive Brown Hawk-Owl at night. The forested area across the river yielded some excellent sightings including the rare Pale-capped Pigeon, vibrant Sultan Tit, Green-billed Malkoha, Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Orange-bellied and Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Vernal Hanging-Parrot, both Tickell's and the attractive Black-breasted Thrushes, Maroon Oriole, Puff-throated Babbler, and with persistence we were rewarded with amazing views of the critically endangered White-winged Duck.

At last the Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan beckoned and it was time to say farewell to our friendly hosts at Assam along with all the legendary birds and mammals that make this region such a magical place. The contrast between Bhutan and India is remarkable both in appearance and geography as Bhutan rises up from the Indian plains and outlines the beginning of the mighty Himalayan mountain range. With its prowess, grandeur and tales of Yetis and Tibetan Madmonks it is the idyllic destination for any naturalist and adventurer. We crept through the sleepy Bhutanese border in the afternoon and settled into our hotel in Samdrup Jonkhar to reenergize for our upcoming birding adventures.

The road from Samdrup Jonkhar winds up the Himalayan foothills northward through patches of lowland evergreen forest. Both Great and Oriental Pied Hornbills showed well at a fruiting ficus trees as we scoped a couple of boldly patterned Black-backed Forktail, gorgeous Scarlet Minivet, Crimson and stunning Black-throated Sunbirds, Black-naped Monarch, and a gorgeous pair of Scarlet Finch. Climbing out of the lowlands we were treated to some brilliant Bhutanese mid-altitude forest birding and it was not long before we were adding many mid-montane elevation birds to the list such as Rufous-bellied and Black Eagles, gaudy Chestnut-tailed Minla, Crimson-browed and lovely Gold-naped Finches, Green-tailed Sunbird, Black-eared and Green Shrike-Babblers, stunning views of the secretive Spotted Wren-Babbler, scarce Brown Bullfinch, Himalayan Swiftlet, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, and simply astounding views of the incredible Rufous-necked Hornbill.

Reaching our most northeasterly point of the tour, we visited our first of several impressive Dzongs (temple fortresses) in the town of Trashigang and it was interesting to see how monks as young as four years old live their lives of dedicated Buddhism every day. Here in town we were also treated with the experience of a true oriental bazaar market replete with a great variety of grains, garlands of dried chilies, silk, hand-woven bamboo crafts, hocks of yak meat and fermented cheese balls, and colorful textiles. Nearby we scoped Blue-capped and Blue Rock-Thrushes, noisy White-crested Laughingthrush, Grey-winged Blackbird, and Black-throated Parrotbill while the drier scrub produced a nice encounter with Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, Striated Prinia, Himalayan Bulbul, and an unexpected vagrant Three-banded Rosefinch.

One of the many joys of Bhutan is that it offers the chance to explore remote wilderness, and in our efforts to take advantage of this opportunity we camped on numerous occasions throughout the tour. Our camp staff often picked very scenic destinations for our camps overlooking a series of steep forested mountains. Bhutanese hospitality simply has to be experienced to be believed, and we found our staff and the people of Bhutan in general to be extraordinarily friendly and hospitable with almost embarrassing politeness. During camping nights our chef regularly prepared an astounding variety of food including both traditional local cuisines plus an assortment of more Tibetan and Indian influenced meals.

Passing through extensive forest of flowering magnolias and impressive rhododendrons on our way to our next campsite we stopped along our route at a steep rocky cliff where native Rock Bees had

created massive combs clinging to the overhanging ledges. Within short time we were scoping a handsome male Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, one of only two Asian representatives of this primarily African bird family. We continued to the fabled Limnethang Road, a birding hotspot that can produce some of the most riveting birding on earth. Our time here produced some world class birds plus spectacular scenery and waterfalls. The songs of Wedge-billed and Rufous-throated Wren-Babblers invigorated us as we sought out other memorable birds included the skulking Yellow-throated and gorgeous Golden-breasted Fulvetas, seldom seen Sapphire Flycatcher, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, Common Green Magpie, brightly-colored Orange-bellied Leafbird, Long-tailed and Grey-chinned Minivets, prolonged views of a busy party of Cutia, Grey-chinned Babbler, noisy Grey Treepie, Little Forktail, and an amazing encounter with a cooperative Yellow-throated Martin.

Undoubtedly one of the most memorable moments during the tour occurred as we were birding along a steep section of the Limnethang and the king's entourage pulled up beside us. To our astonishment the fifth King of Bhutan himself stepped outside to warmly greet us and we enjoyed a magnificent experience visiting with His Majesty at length commemorated with his gift of an inaugural coin for us to treasure as a special symbol of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As our local guide Tsering put it, "it was one of the greatest moments of his life." The king's goal for the nation is to develop economic self-reliance while preserving the nation's rich natural resources and maximize "gross national happiness" for his people. As if this experience wasn't already enough excellent karma, we concluded our birding along the Limnethang Road with crippling views of Fire-tailed Sunbird and several minutes soaking in the splendor of a dazzling male Satyr Tragopan, one of the most remarkable birds on earth!

The lofty mountain pass of Thrumsing La produced a stunning male Golden Bush-Robin, noisy flocks of Black-faced Laughingthrush, Rufous-breasted Accentor, a very cooperative White-browed Bush-Robin, and our first of many fantastic looks at pairs of Blood Pheasant. Dropping down into the Ura and Bhumthing Valleys we enjoyed a small flock of Brown Parrotbill sneaking through the bamboo followed by crippling scope views of a the gorgeous Himalayan specialty, the monotypic Ibisbill.

We pushed on westwards towards Trongsa picking up a Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, an over wintering Alpine Accentor, Spotted Forktail, and cooperative (yet athletic) views of the dazzling Fire-tailed Myzornis along the way arriving in time to visit the enormous Trongsa Dzong that shone in brilliant gold illuminated by the afternoon sunlight. The tiny landlocked kingdom of Bhutan is often poetically referred to as the Land of the Dragon, and was virtually unknown to outsiders until 1974 when a small number of foreigners were admitted to formerly visit the country. The next morning as we turned off the main road across the country on a journey southwards towards Zhemgang a tinge of excitement ran through the group as we headed into even more remote regions.

We camped two nights in the southern lowlands of Tingtibi, an area that holds special interest for birders as there are many delightful species that can only be found in the vast low to mid-altitude forests of this region. We managed to locate some great birds over the next few days that included a small flock of brightly colored Golden-breasted Fulvetta, White-bellied Yuhina, a few stunning Sultan Tits, Barred Cuckoo-Dove perched throughout the day near the camp, cooperative Lesser Necklaced and Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes, localized Rufous-faced Warbler, amazing views of Red-headed Trogon, Grey-capped Pygmy and the scarce Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers, a delightful pair of Kalij Pheasant, and best of all after several dedicated hours we soaked in phenomenal views of a feeding Beautiful Nuthatch above our heads. Of course the numerous close encounters with the localized population of Golden Langurs only added to our experience!

Crossing over the Black Mountains into the western side of the country we traveled over Pele La where snow-capped Himalayan peaks could be seen rising out of the surrounding foothills and a feeling of content, peacefulness and awe enveloped the group. It was here at our forested lunch stop where we bid farewell to our fantastic camp staff that had provided for and taken care of our needs over the past two weeks. The surroundings of Pele La wasn't without birding highlights and among more common denizens such as Common Cuckoo and Eurasian Jay we enjoyed awesome views of Snow Pigeon including a large flock that nearly knocked some of us over. Undoubtedly however, the bird that stole the show was mind boggling views of the Ward's Trogon male perched only twenty-five feet away at eye-level! Just before we settled into Punakha for the night a troop of Grey Langurs entertained us with their babies clinging to their mother's chest.

The settlement of Punakha with its impressive riverside Dzong awaited us with River Lapwing, Brown Dipper, and Crested Kingfisher hunting up and down the crisp, clear rivers. After a day exploring the subtropical forest bordering the Mo Chu where we added the attractive Slender-billed Oriole, Rosy Pipit, uncommon migrant Greater Black-headed Gull, and a vocal Bay Woodpecker to our growing list of birds we spent the late afternoon admiring one of the country's traditional dzongs, or fortress monasteries, which today serves both as a historical artifact while functioning as monastic and governing community. Like many sites visited during our tour, Punakha allowed us the chance to view the unique cultural heritage of Bhutan since it is the only place left on earth where the Vajrayana Buddhist culture survives intact, a lifestyle emphasizing the use of meditation as a means to achieve enlightenment.

Continuing to the capital of Bhutan, Thimpu was undoubtedly the busiest part of the country we encountered. Here we took the time to visit the Golden Takin enclosure on the outskirts of town we marveled at these stocky beasts. This seldom-seen animal can only be encountered in remote areas of the Himalayas feeding in the grassland meadows often well above the tree line so we were happy to enjoy the opportunity of observing this strange species, even if it is in captivity.

Our final two nights were spent in a very comfortable resort in Paro, home to several exciting and extremely impressive buildings that display the religion and cultural heritage of Bhutan including the Paro Dzong and the world famous Tiger's Nest Monastery that is perched marvelously on the face of a sheer cliff. We had the good fortune of visiting the monastery which proved to be a very memorable and worth-while trek. The late afternoon while scouring the river near town produced amazing views of Black-tailed Crake as well as the reclusive Pin-tailed Snipe.

We concluded the tour with a meander up the lofty pass of Chele La where Kalij and Blood Pheasants offered further great views along the forested roadside. Atop the mountain pass we beheld an awesome scenic site with perfect weather looking over the high Himalayan peaks in the distance towering to over 7000 meters with a blanket of clouds settled in the valleys below. Like many of the mountain passes and prominent ridges in Bhutan, we found colorful prayer flags abundantly erected where the people believe the natural power of the wind distributes blessings of the inscribed prayers as the flags flutter and wave. During our descent we found a cooperative pair of Spotted Laughingthrush, both Collared and Spot-winged Grosbeaks, Spotted Nutcracker, the reclusive Scaly Thrush, and a lovely male White-browed Rosefinch.

A fabulous farewell dinner was enjoyed our final evening while we reflected upon all the memorable moments of this epic tour through north-east India and Bhutan. Bhutan leaves behind a vivid image of tranquility and peace amid dramatic mountain landscapes and charming Buddhist culture, and an unforgettable adventure together through what is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating places on earth.



ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS (477 Species)

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the bird species list follows that of IOC (International Ornithological congress), Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2006; *Birds of the World: Recommended English Names*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (version 2.0).

E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic.

Pheasants and Partridges *Phasianidae*

Swamp Francolin (NE)

Francolinus gularis

This localized, uncommon and extremely attractive bird was seen on several consecutive days at Kaziranga National Park.

Hill Partridge

Arborophila torqueola

Ubiquitous in the forests of Bhutan but a very shy bird, we heard the call this species on many different days of the tour resounding from the steep mountain slopes.

Rufous-throated Partridge

Arborophila rufogularis

Although not as numerous as Hill Partridge, we still heard this species on several days during the tour in highland forested areas.

Chestnut-breasted Partridge

Arborophila mandellii

This scarce species was heard on a couple occasions and while traveling at middle altitudes of the Limnethang Road we pushed one bird off the road which then flew up the mountainside in front of our vehicle.

Blood Pheasant

Ithaginis cruentus

We saw no fewer than fifty individuals of this, one of Bhutan's star avian gems first on Thrumsing La and again on the Chele La.

Satyr Tragopan

Tragopan satyra

Certainly one of Bhutan's most sought-after specialties, a visual of any of the world's five tragopans will surely make any birder's list of top birding experiences of a lifetime. We encountered two of this incredibly beautiful species, both mature males, the second of which we watched calling nearby for

nearly ten minutes!

Himalayan Monal

Lophophorus impejanus

One of the world's most vividly colored birds, we found a gaudy male and one female that we watched for more than five minutes while they fed alongside Blood Pheasants followed by excellent sunlit flight views of another colorful male gliding across the mountain slope below us.

Red Junglefowl

Gallus gallus

We had numerous intimate encounters with this pretty bird in Kaziranga NP.

Kalij Pheasant

Lophura leucomelanos

We had great views of all three possible subspecies during our tour including excellent views of males and females both in the lowlands of Tingtibi and the high pass of Chele La.

Grey Peacock-Pheasant

Polyplectron bicalcaratum

This elusive pheasant was heard calling quite close in the lowland forest near Samdrup Jonkhar but we were unable to lure the bird into view.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Lesser Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna javanica

We found two flocks of more than twenty individuals in a wetlands in Kaziranga NP.

Bar-headed Goose

Anser indicus

This species was pleasantly common at wetlands in Kaziranga.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga NP.

White-winged Duck

Asarcornis scutulata

A globally endangered species, we were first unsuccessful in our morning search through Nameri National Park but with persistence in the afternoon we soaked in sightings of two separate pairs including brilliant views of two birds swimming on the water only thirty meters away.

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Several birds were seen in Kaziranga NP followed by a subsequent sighting in Bhutan near Thimpu.

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas penelope

Small numbers were found on wetlands in Kaziranga with further scattered sightings in Bhutan.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Two sightings were had during our Assam extension; presumably wild.

Indian Spot-billed Duck

Anas poecilorhyncha

We encountered small numbers daily at wetlands in Kaziranga.

Northern Shoveler

Anas clypeata

Small rafts were seen in Kaziranga National Park.

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga NP.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Several birds were seen and scoped in wetlands of Kaziranga NP.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

One adult was first scoped in Kaziranga followed by another two individuals near Thimpu in Bhutan.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

A raft of nearly thirty birds were seen on one occasion in Kaziranga NP followed by a single bird in central Bhutan where this is a rare bird.

Common Merganser

Mergus merganser

We saw this first along the river in Nameri followed by a brief flyby of six near Thimpu in Bhutan.

Storks Ciconidae

Asian Openbill

Anastomas oscitans

Fairly large numbers were seen throughout India, especially in Kaziranga National Park.

Woolly-necked Stork

Ciconia episcopus

Several were seen on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Black-necked Stork

Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus

This tall, elegant stork was seen on several occasions within the Kaziranga National Park. It is a scarce bird and Kaziranga is one of the best places to see this species.

Lesser Adjutant

Leptoptilos javanicus

This species was pleasantly common in Kaziranga.

Greater Adjutant

Leptoptilos dubius

Dozens of this rare and localized species were seen at close range in the bustling city of Guwahati with further sightings of two individuals being seen in Kaziranga NP.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Yellow Bittern

Ixobrychus sinensis

One bird flew into the window of our hotel in Guwahati; it eventually regained consciousness and flew away.

Cinnamon Bittern

Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

A rare bird in Bhutan, we found a single bird in a roadside wetland near Paro.

Striated Heron

Butorides striata

One bird was scoped along the river adjacent to Nameri.

Indian Pond Heron

Ardeola greyii

This wetland species proved to be fairly common in Assam.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Large numbers were encountered throughout India.

Grey Heron

Ardeola cinerea

Several were encountered at wetlands in Kaziranga National Park.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Singletons were seen at the edge of a large wetland in Kaziranga National Park.

Great Egret

Casmerodius albus

Several were seen at Kaziranga and Nameri.

Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret

Mesophoyx intermedia

Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga National Park.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Several individuals were seen throughout our stay in Kaziranga and Nameri.

Ibises Threskiornithidae

Black-headed Ibis

Threskiornis melanocephalus

A winter visitor to this area of Assam, we enjoyed two sightings of five birds total in appropriate wetland habitat.

Pelicans Pelicanidae

Spot-billed Pelican

Pelecanus philippensis

Small numbers were seen daily in Kaziranga National Park.

Cormorants *Phalacrocoracidae*

Little Cormorant

Phalacrocorax niger

Small numbers were encountered daily in Kaziranga National Park and Nameri.

Indian Cormorant

Phalacrocorax fuscicollis

Several individuals were seen in Kaziranga National Park.

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Several sightings of this widespread species were first found in Nameri and later along montane rivers throughout Bhutan showing extensive white from breeding plumage.

Anhingas *Anhingidae*

Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

Several of these striking birds were seen daily in Kaziranga National Park and Nameri.

Falcons & Kestrels *Falconidae*

Common (Eurasian) Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Birds were seen throughout the more open areas of Bhutan.

Oriental Hobby

Falco severus

We enjoyed great scope views of a single bird perched literally above our tented camp in Nameri.

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

One bird was scoped in Nameri National Park.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites *Accipitridae*

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

A single bird was seen soaring over the river in central Bhutan followed by another bird soaring high over the pass above Paro.

Jerdon's Baza

Aviceda jerdoni

A rare bird in Bhutan with few records, we found a single bird flying over the mid-altitude forest north of Samdrup Jonkhar.

Crested (Oriental) Honey-Buzzard

Pernis ptilorhynchus

Two birds were seen in Kaziranga NP.

Black-winged (-shouldered) Kite

Elanus caeruleus

One individual was seen during our stay at Kaziranga.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Hundreds were seen on our first day en route to Kaziranga from Guwahati and in transit to Samdrup Jonkhar.

Brahminy Kite

Haliastur indus

A single bird was seen above our hotel our first morning in Guwahati.

Pallas's Fish-Eagle

Haliaeetus leucoryphus

This awesome raptor was seen on several occasions with incredible views being obtained of perched and soaring adults in Kaziranga NP. This is another rare and highly sought-after species and Kaziranga is probably the best place in the world to see it.

Grey-headed Fish-Eagle

Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus

We had brilliant close-up views of several adults in Kaziranga NP and again in Nameri.

Slender-billed Vulture

Gyps tenuirostris

Several of these endangered birds were seen soaring above our resort outside Kaziranga just before

lunch.

Himalayan Vulture

Gyps himalayensis

We found numerous birds throughout our travels in Bhutan including great soaring views directly above our heads.

Griffon (European) Vulture

Gyps fulvus

Two individuals were seen perched and flying in Kaziranga NP.

Red-headed Vulture

Sarcogyps calvus

One bird was seen soaring with Slender-billed Vultures near our resort adjacent to Kaziranga.

Crested Serpent-Eagle

Spilornis cheela

Superb flight and perched views were had of several birds first in Assam and again during our tour in Bhutan near Zhemgang.

Western Marsh-Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

One female was seen soaring over the grassland areas of Kaziranga.

Northern (Hen) Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Only one bird was observed during our stay at Kaziranga.

Pied Harrier

Circus melanoleucos

This beautiful and seldom seen raptor was enjoyed by everyone in Kaziranga National Park as an immaculate male was observed quartering over grasslands.

Crested Goshawk

Accipiter trivirgatus

We had several nice sightings of this widespread Asian raptor throughout our tour in Bhutan including nice scope views of perched birds.

Shikra

Accipiter badius

Two birds were seen during our tour in Bhutan with especially nice eye-level flight views of one bird near Trashigang.

Besra

Accipiter virgatus

First one bird showed well in Assam followed by further flight views of another bird near Trongsa in Bhutan.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

We found several birds throughout our tour in Bhutan especially near high passes including a very close bird our final morning near Chele La.

Northern Goshawk

Accipiter gentiles

A single bird was scoped as it perched cooperatively along the Lingmethang Road.

Eurasian [Himalayan] Buzzard

Buteo [burmanicus] buteo

We had a singleton of the more widespread *Buteo* race in Kaziranga NP. The rather mottled local race of this widespread species split by some authorities as Himalayan Buzzard was seen on several occasions throughout Bhutan.

Black Eagle

Ictinaetus malayensis

Frequently encountered in flight throughout Bhutan with numerous greatviews including one bird with a squirrel in its talons.

Lesser Spotted Eagle

Aquila pomarina

One bird was scoped as it perched along the edge of the water in Kaziranga apparently scavenging.

Rufous-bellied Eagle

Hieraetus kienerii

This uncommon species was seen very well in flight above Deothang, a beautiful adult.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle

Spizaetus cirrhatus

Singletons were seen every day in and around Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle

Spizaetus nipalensis

This spectacular bird was the most frequently encountered raptor of the trip and we enjoyed both magnificent scope and flight views on numerous occasions throughout Bhutan.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

White-breasted Waterhen

Amaurornis phoenicurus

Good views were obtained at the edges of wetlands in Kaziranga NP and once near Nameri.

Black-tailed Crake

Amaurornis bicolor

We were rewarded with exceptional views of this often reclusive *ralid* on consecutive days in the Paro Valley.

Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

This widespread species was seen on several occasions in the Assam lowlands.

Buttonquail *Turnicidae*

Barred Buttonquail

Turnix suscitator

We flushed birds once from the jeep and again from elephant back in Kaziranga National Park.

Stone-curlews *Burhinidae*

Great Stone-curlew

Esacus recurvirostris

This attractive species was scoped in the western portion of Kaziranga National Park along the bank of the Brahmaputra River.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhynchidae*

Ibisbill

Ibidorhyncha struthersii

Some participants first saw this bird while rafting along the river near Nameri followed by amazing scope views near Bumthang after our Brown Parrotbill success. We later encountered one further bird along the Po Chu; the epitome of Himalayan riverside birding!

Stilts *Recurvirostridae*

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

A single bird was found in a wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae*

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus Vanellus

One small flock of these migrant lapwings were seen briefly in Kaziranga NP.

River Lapwing

Vanellus duvaucelii

Common and conspicuous along the border rivers in the Paro, Thimpu, and Punakha Valleys with our first sightings in Nameri during our Assam pre-tour extension.

Grey-headed Lapwing

Vanellus cinereus

We were pleased to have nice views of several of these scarce migrants near wetlands in Kaziranga.

Red-wattled Lapwing

Vanellus indicus

Small numbers were seen on consecutive days in Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Pacific Golden Plover

Pluvialis fulva

A vagrant to this area, we had great views of an active flock of twenty-five birds at a small wetland in Kaziranga National Park.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

A few migrant birds were observed both in Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Jacanas *Jacanadae*

Bronze-winged Jacana

Metopidius indicus

Small numbers of this attractive “lilly trotter” were seen in Kaziranga NP and adjacent areas.

Sandpipers *Scolopacidae*

Eurasian Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

We obtained nice views of two birds that froze just beside the road near our campsite at the higher portion of the Lingmethang Road.

Pintail Snipe

Gallinago stenura

A total of eleven were flushed from the riverside in Paro over two consecutive days.

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Several birds were scoped in Kaziranga NP.

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

A few distant birds were scoped at a small wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

At least three birds were seen in Kaziranga National Park.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Numerous individuals were found during our Assam pre-tour extension.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

We first encountered this species in India followed by two sightings in Bhutan including scope views near Paro.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Several were seen at various water bodies throughout Kaziranga.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Small numbers were encountered in Kaziranga with a further sighting in Bhutan.

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Small numbers were seen at wetlands in Kaziranga NP.

Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

Small Pratincole

Glareola lactea

Hundreds of birds were seen feeding and flying over the river near Nameri National Park.

Terns *Sternidae*

Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull

Ichthyaetus ichthyaeus

Two of these scarce passage migrants were seen along the Mo Chu River in Punakha.

River Tern

Sterna aurantia

Several birds were seen at close range along tributaries of the Brahmaputra River and other wetlands within Kaziranga NP and Nameri. A beautiful and elegant species indeed!

Pigeons & Doves *Columbidae*

Common Pigeon

Columba livia

Numerous in towns and villages throughout India and Bhutan.

Snow Pigeon

Columba leuconota

This immaculate dove was seen exceptionally on this tour including birds soaring within only twenty meters and one flock that nearly knocked one of us over!

Speckled Wood-Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*

We had great scope views of perched birds on two occasions with especially nice close views en route to Zhemgang.

Ashy Wood Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis*

We only heard this species calling from inside the forest while ascending through the eastern side of Bhutan.

Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea*

A scarce species, we were fortunate to have two birds fly in above us in Nameri and perch briefly above our heads.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Fairly numerous both during the extension and in Bhutan.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Small numbers were seen in and around Kaziranga and Nameri.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Large numbers were seen daily in India as well as most days in Bhutan.

Barred Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia unchall*

Scope views were had by some of the group first in Nameri National Park followed by scattered sightings in eastern Bhutan and finally incredible scope on numerous occasions of at least ten birds feeding near our campsite below Zhemgang.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

We first had a couple flight views of this species during the Assam extension followed by a couple birds that showed on the ground near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Pompadour Green Pigeon *Treron pompadora*

Several birds were scoped in a large mixed flock of green pigeons in the Panbari Forest.

Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra*

A flock totaling a dozen was encountered in Kaziranga NP with a further individual seen with a flock of Pin-tailed Pigeons below Deothang.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*

This attractive pigeon was relatively common in Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron apicauda*

We had brilliant scope views of birds first in Nameri NP in a fruiting tree and again on two occasions near our Tingtibi campsite including some outstanding close scope views of cooperative birds.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenura*

This species was only seen very briefly in the lowlands near Tingtibi but we never obtained a reasonable view, perhaps due to the group of Pin-tailed Green-Pigeons that were feeding in the same area.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

We had several great views of this impressive bird in the lowlands with our first views in Kaziranga NP.

Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia*

Several encounters were had at mid altitude forest sites throughout Bhutan and once in Kaziranga NP.

Parrots and Allies *Psittacidae*

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

Fairly large numbers were encountered on the Kaziranga Extension and Nameri.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Commonly encountered in and around Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Blossom-headed Parakeet *Psittacula roseate*

Several birds were seen very nicely while birding in the Kaziranga National Park.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*

One of the most commonly encountered birds on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension, this beautiful bird occurs in noisy flocks.

Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*

We found six of these tiny parrots in Nameri National Park.

Cuckoos & Coucals *Cuculidae*

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

We encountered this widespread Asian species on several occasions on the extension and one was heard below Deothang.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*

A single bird was seen in the grasslands of Nameri National Park.

Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis*

Everyone on the Kaziranga Extension was rewarded with splendid views of this outrageous bird followed by nice perched views again in a dry valley in central Bhutan.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*

This commonly heard species was seen on a few occasions in Kaziranga and Nameri and later another was heard below Deothang and Punakha.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*

This tiny forest-dwelling cuckoo was only seen once briefly in Nameri NP.

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus*

One bird was scoped along the roadside near Kaziranga.

Asian [Square-tailed] Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris*

Sometimes split as a separate species from the more widespread Asian form *dicruroides*, we all observed once bird for several minutes in the Panbari Forest.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparverioides*

One of the dominant sounds of Bhutan, this species was heard virtually daily and seen well on two occasions including great scope views.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus varius*

We only heard this widespread species calling near our camp at Tingtibi.

Hodgson's [Whistling] Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus [nisicolor] fugax*

This is a reclusive species that was surprisingly silent this year and we only heard one bird calling from a distance along the middle Lingmethang Road.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

We heard this species calling once in Nameri followed by another individual we attempted to lure into view north of Samdrup Jonkhar.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*

Heard almost daily and seen very well on two occasions in Bhutan.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

We enjoyed splendid close views of one very cooperative individual and only heard one distant bird calling later in the tour near Thimpu.

Owls *Strigidae*

Mountain Scops Owl

Otus spilocephalus

Individuals were heard calling throughout the night on several occasions in mid-altitude forest, but unfortunately always too distant to be observed although we did play the recording in futile attempts.

Collared Scops Owl

Otus lettia

A single bird was heard calling on one night from our camp in Tingtibi but it did not respond to playback.

Oriental Scops Owl

Otus sunia

We played the recording for this species which was calling near our tents in Nameri, but we were unable to lure it into view.

Brown Fish Owl

Ketupa zeylonensis

We enjoyed excellent views of one bird perched on the day roost in Kaziranga National Park.

Brown Wood Owl

Strix leptogrammica

A single bird was heard calling on our first night at Yongkhola.

Tawny [Himalayan Wood] Owl

Strix [nivicola] aluco

This high-altitude owl was heard late in the night in the coniferous forest above our hotel near Thimpu.

Collared Owlet

Glaucidium brodiei

Although frequently heard, this diminutive owl is seldom seen, and we heard birds on numerous occasions calling from inaccessibly steep slopes.

Asian Barred Owlet

Glaucidium cuculoides

We had fantastic views of this beautiful little owl on several occasions during our stay at Kaziranga and Nameri followed by further views near our Tingtibi Camp and an encounter along the Mo Chu.

Jungle Owlet

Glaucidium radiatum

We found two birds first in Kaziranga NP followed by another nice scope view in Nameri NP during the extension.

Brown Hawk-Owl

Ninox scutulata

We had remarkable views of a single bird responding to tape playback one evening in Nameri.

Nightjars *Caprimulgidae*

Grey (Jungle) Nightjar

Caprimulgus indicus

This species was unfortunately only heard on a couple occasions in Bhutan and did not respond to our playback near Trongsa.

Swifts *Apodidae*

Himalayan Swiftlet

Aerodramus brevirostris

Small flocks were encountered in the highlands with our first sighting north of Deothang; also recorded in Nameri during the extension.

White-throated Needletail

Hirundapus caudacutus

This handsome and unpredictable species was observed only on the high pass above Paro where a couple birds were sighted.

Silver-backed Needletail

Hirundapus cochinchinensis

A flock numbering at least twenty individuals were seen very well flying over the Nameri forest.

Asian Palm-Swift

Cypsiurus balasiensis

Small numbers were encountered daily in the Kaziranga and Nameri areas as well as in the southern lowlands of Bhutan around Samdrup Jonkhar.

Fork-tailed (Pacific) Swift*Apus pacificus*

By far the most common *apus* in Bhutan with up to forty observed on many days of the tour.

House Swift*Apus nipalensis*

We found several flocks in the lowlands during the Assam extension followed by scattered sightings while traveling in Bhutan.

Trogon Trogonidae**Red-headed Trogon***Harpactes erythrocephalus*

A single bird was seen very well and scoped in dense tangles in the forest near Zhemgang.

Ward's Trogon*Harpactes wardi*

One of the quintessential birds of Bhutan, after numerous unsuccessful attempts and we eventually enjoyed absolutely unbeatable, prolonged scope views of a male accompanied by another male and two females en route towards Punakha. Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip and an incredibly memorable birding moment for all!

Rollers Coraciidae**Indian Roller***Coracias benghalensis*

This superbly colored bird was seen in good numbers throughout the Assam extension.

Oriental Dollarbird*Eurystomus orientalis*

A couple birds were found of this widespread species during the Assam extension.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Stork-billed Kingfisher***Halcyon capensis*

Several of these impressive kingfishers were seen in Kaziranga NP.

White-throated Kingfisher*Halcyon smyrnensis*

The commonest kingfisher, small numbers were seen daily in and around Kaziranga and Nameri. Small numbers of this gorgeous and demonstrative bird were also found in Bhutan.

Black-capped Kingfisher*Halcyon pileata*

Just one of these scarce migrants was seen in Bhutan above Samdrup Jonkhar, well out of its normal wintering range.

Common Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Encountered daily in small numbers at Kaziranga and Nameri with a few further encounters in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Crested Kingfisher*Megaceryle lugubris*

This denizen of Himalayan rivers was first seen in Nameri NP followed by several nice views on highland rivers throughout Bhutan.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

This cosmopolitan species was seen a few times in Kaziranga NP and Nameri.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Blue-bearded Bee-eater***Nyctornis athertoni*

We enjoyed several nice scope views of this beautiful but scarce bird in Kaziranga and again in Nameri NP.

Green Bee-eater*Merops orientalis*

Several of these pretty birds were seen in the grassland areas of Kaziranga.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater*Merops philippinus*

We found this passage migrant on three occasions in the open grasslands of Kaziranga NP.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*

Small numbers of this attractive bee-eater was enjoyed throughout India, our first encounters being views of a single bird on a branch only ten feet away.

Hoopoes *Upupidae*

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Everyone had great views of this common but outrageous bird on the extension and on the main tour through Bhutan.

Hornbills *Bucerotidae*

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*

Several nice birds were first seen in Kaziranga perched nicely in the sunlight followed by two more birds in a fruiting tree near Deothang.

Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*

We enjoyed unbeatable views of this outrageous hornbill on numerous occasions with no less than fifty total birds encountered throughout the Assam extension and scope views again in the lowlands of Bhutan. Most memorably we observed a female sealed in a nesting cavity with a male calling protectively from an exposed tree branch nearby.

Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*

Another charismatic and oversized hornbill, this restricted species is best found in Bhutan with numerous incredible sightings, especially along the Limnethang Road. We ever tired of this amazing bird!

Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulatus*

Yet another spectacular hornbill that we saw very well in the forest of Kaziranga NP.

Barbets *Capitonidae*

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*

One of the dominant sounds of middle-altitude Himalayan forests, we enjoyed sightings of this charismatic bird on most days of the tour.

Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata*

This delightful species was commonly heard and seen on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension and again our first day in Bhutan.

Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii*

This exquisite barbet was scoped several times throughout the mid-altitude forest that blankets Bhutan.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica*

This gaudy bird was enjoyed by everyone on numerous occasions throughout India and the lowlands of Bhutan including some remarkably close views.

Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*

A pair was heard calling and then scoped at length singing in the sunlight in Panbari Forest.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*

Several of these stunning barbets were seen very well in and around Kaziranga and Nameri; it was also seen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Honeyguides *Indicatoridae*

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide *Indicator xanthonotus*

Another scarce species best located in Bhutan, we enjoyed fantastic scope views of males and females at four separate cliff side Rock Bee hives.

Wrynecks, Piculets & Woodpeckers *Picidae*

White-browed Piculet

Sasia ochracea

Only some of us saw this species as it moved frustratingly fast through the dense vegetation along the roadside en route to the Lingmethang Road.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker

Dendrocopos hyperythrus

After a brief encounter near our campsite on the upper Lingmethang Road we had excellent views in the Royal Botanical Gardens near Dochu La.

Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker

Dendrocopos canicapillus

This tiny woodpecker was seen on several occasions in Kaziranga NP and Nameri followed by a further sighting near our Tingtibi campsite.

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos macei

A rather uncommon bird in the low and mid-altitude forest of Bhutan, we scored with a confiding pair at our campsite at Tingtibi.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos cathpharius

We only heard this species once at high altitude in Bhutan calling from an adjacent forested mountain slope.

Darjeeling Woodpecker

Dendrocopos darjellensis

Incredible scope views of a several birds were enjoyed this year with especially close birds along the Lingmethang Road.

Rufous Woodpecker

Celeus brachyurus

A single bird was heard in Bhutan above Deothang.

Lesser Yellownape

Picus chlorolophus

We had nice views of once bird in Nameri followed by a further sighting near Samdrup Jonkhar in Bhutan.

Greater Yellownape

Picus flavinucha

We first found a wonderful bird we scoped in Nameri followed by two pairs subsequently encountered at lower elevations in Bhutan.

Grey-headed (-faced) Woodpecker

Picus canus

One bird was first seen in Kaziranga NP followed by further views of another individual near our campsite en route to the Lingmethang.

Lesser Goldenback (Black-rumped Flameback) *Dinopium benghalense*

Two individuals were seen very well in Kaziranga NP.

Greater Goldenback (Flameback)

Chrysocolaptes lucidus

We had views of several birds on two days in Kaziranga NP with another individual in Nameri NP.

Bay Woodpecker

Blythipicus pyrrhotis

This skulking bird was first heard along the eastern side of Bhutan and later we had successive views of a vocal bird along the Mo Chu River.

Broadbills *Eurylaimidae*

Long-tailed Broadbill

Psarisomus dalhousiae

We only heard this bird calling down the forested slope of the Mo Chu River.

Family Uncertain *Incertae sedis*

Large Woodshrike*Tephrodornis gularis*

Two birds were seen well just above our campsite at Tingtibi.

Common Woodshrike*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

We enjoyed great views of a couple birds in the deciduous forest of Nameri NP.

Woodswallows Artamidae**Ashy Woodswallow***Artamus fuscus*

We had awesome flight and perched views of this attractive species in eastern Bhutan near Deothang as well as earlier views of a few individuals near Kaziranga NP.

Ioras Aegithinidae**Common Iora***Aegithina tiphia*

Several birds were encountered near our accommodations on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension, whilst later three more birds were found above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae**Large Cuckoo-shrike***Coracina macei*

Several individuals were encountered in woodland habitat in and around Kaziranga, Nameri, and above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike*Coracina melaschistos*

Small numbers were encountered on several scattered days of the tour with our first memorable scope views in Nameri NP.

Grey-chinned Minivet*Pericrocotus solaris*

Regularly recorded in all low and mid-altitude forest throughout Bhutan.

Long-tailed Minivet*Pericrocotus ethologus*

Several were seen in high altitude forest en route to Trashigang, on Pele La and on Chele La among other sites.

Short-billed Minivet*Pericrocotus brevirostris*

Fairly numerous in middle altitude forest with a maximum numbers along the Linnethang Road.

Scarlet Minivet*Pericrocotus flammeus*

The dominant minivet of lower altitudes numerous birds during the Assam extension and lower areas of Bhutan.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike*Hemipus picatus*

Small numbers of this character-full bird were found at the roadside with a maximum of ten birds in a single day below Zhemgang.

Shrikes Laniidae**Brown Shrike***Lanius cristatus*

We found two migrant individuals during the Assam extension in rank grasslands.

Long-tailed Shrike*Lanius schach*

This was a conspicuous but attractive roadside bird seen daily in open habitats.

Grey-backed Shrike*Lanius tephronotus*

This species was extremely numerous throughout India and Bhutan.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae

Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris*

We had brilliant views of two individuals in Punakha.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Several great views were had of this beautiful species on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*

Another attractive species that was seen fairly regularly in mid-altitude broadleaved forest first in Nameri and later through Bhutan including excellent scope views of calling males.

Drongos *Dicruridae*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

An especially numerous and conspicuous species throughout India.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Several birds were seen in more forested areas of the Kaziranga and Nameri areas, whilst it proved to be one of the commonest species throughout Bhutan.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*

A single bird showed well in Nameri Forest, whilst it was commonly encountered in the lowlands and mid-altitude forests of Bhutan.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer*

A pair above Deothang was our first encounter of the trip followed by several scope views at scattered sites thereafter.

Hair-crested (Spangled) Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*

This species was fairly common in well-wooded areas of Kaziranga and Nameri and was later seen on several occasions in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

We had great views of several magnificent pairs during the Assam extension.

Fantails *Rhipiduridae*

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha*

This animated species was commonly encountered in mid elevation broadleaf forest where it was a regular member of mixed insectivorous flocks.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*

Numerous at lower altitudes than the above species with small numbers recorded almost daily in broadleaf forest.

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

This widespread Asian species was first encountered in Panbari Forest and Nameri with a couple further sightings in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Crows, Jays & Magpies *Corvidae*

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Two individuals were seen well during a travel day at high altitude in western Bhutan while crossing the Black Mountains.

Gold-billed Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris*

Another attractive bird that was seen on several occasions on the high passes.

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis*

A dramatically colored yet elusive bird that we managed to see on several occasions during the Bhutan tour including along the Limnethang and near our Tingtibi campsite.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

We enjoyed several close views of this attractive species on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*

Small noisy groups were found in Panbari and Nameri forests and later in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Several loose flocks were encountered around Bhumthang totaling more than one hundred birds.

Spotted (Eurasian) Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Great views were had of this charismatic species at high altitudes with a maximum number of more than ten birds seen on Chele La.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

These crows were commonly seen in the Paro, Bumthang, and Ura Valleys with up to fifty daily.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

The commonest bird of urban India, we had hundreds on our drive from Guwahati to Kaziranga.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

The numerous crows of more open areas, we had several dozen birds daily throughout India. This species also proved to be abundant throughout Bhutan.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

This is a tough bird in Bhutan because it prefers such high altitudes and we were fortunate to observe one bird soaring above Paro showing off its distinctive tail pattern among other diagnostic features.

Tits & Chickadees Paridae

Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris*

Much scarcer than some other species of tits in Bhutan with which it overlaps in habitat and altitude, we found this species on Thrumsing La pass.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Fairly numerous in coniferous forest in the western portion of the country.

Grey-crested Tit *Lophophanes dichrous*

A subtly attractive species that was seen on several occasions in pine forest on the high passes.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Several individuals were encountered during our stay at Kaziranga and Nameri.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*

By far the most common and widespread tit in Bhutan with more than ten birds recorded most days.

Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*

This brightly colored species was pleasantly common throughout Bhutan in mid-altitude forest.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus*

This species was fairly common in mid altitude broad-leaved forest throughout Bhutan.

Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea*

This incredibly beautiful, large, uncommon tit that usually forages high up in the canopy was seen on four occasions during the tour including amazing views on three consecutive days near Zhemgang.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Brown-throated (Plain) Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Large numbers were seen feeding over the grasslands of Kaziranga and Nameri.

Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*

A single individual was seen hawking insects over grassland in Kaziranga NP.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Large numbers were found throughout India and scattered sites in Bhutan.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

We found this migrant at a few rocky areas throughout Bhutan with nice eye-level views on two occasions.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

An unexpected sighting, at least one bird was mixed in with a congregation of Nepal House Martin near Tiger's Nest Monetary.

Nepal (House-) Martin *Delichon nipalensis*

The commonest *Hirundine* of the trip, we encountered several colonies along the roadside with a maximum of two hundred near Tiger's Nest Monetary.

Bushtits *Aegithalidae*

Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus*

Occurring at generally lower altitudes than its congener, this tiny bird was seen generally in small numbers on numerous days of the tour.

Rufous-fronted (Black-browed) Bushtit *Aegithalos iouschistos*

A rather scarce but attractive species of high altitude conifer forest which was seen on a few occasions with excellent sightings especially in the western side of Bhutan.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Bengal (Rufous-winged) Bush Lark *Mirafra assamica*

Two birds were encountered in the grasslands of Kaziranga NP while on elephant-back.

Sand Lark *Calandrella raytal*

We had great views of two birds on the gravel sand bank in Nameri NP.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

At least five birds seen at a distance in a field en route to Trongsa.

Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger*

We found this species in dry hillside scrub on two occasions in eastern of Bhutan.

Hill [Black-throated] Prinia *Prinia atrogularis*

The handsome Black-throated race of this bird is sometimes elevated to full species status [*Prinia atrogularis* from *Prinia superciliaris*] by some authorities was seen very well on two consecutive days in eastern Bhutan.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens*

Two vocal birds were seen very well while traveling en route to the Lingmethang road near our lunch site.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*

We enjoyed outrageous views of two singing birds at the roadside in Kaziranga NP.

Family Uncertain *Incertae sedis*

Mountain Tailorbird *Orthotomus cuculatus*

This widespread Asian species was only heard calling along the Limnethang Road.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Several were seen on the extension with further views below and above Deothang and at our campsite at Tingtibi.

Dark-necked Tailorbird*Orthotomus atrogularis*

Two very responsive birds showed well in the Panbari Forest of Kaziranga NP.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Striated Bulbul***Pycnonotus striatus*

We recorded this very attractive bulbul on several occasions throughout the east of Bhutan.

Black-crested Bulbul*Pycnonotus melanicterus*

Several of these forest-dwelling bulbuls were seen during the Assam extension with at least six more seen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Red-whiskered Bulbul*Pycnonotus jocosus*

Commonly encountered in open areas throughout India with several more being found above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Himalayan Bulbul*Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Small numbers in the dry mountain scrub of Bhutan and especially numerous near Trashigang.

Red-vented Bulbul*Pycnonotus cafer*

Abundant in secondary habitat throughout the extension and main tour.

White-throated Bulbul*Alophoixus flaveolus*

A few birds were seen in Panbari and Nameri Forests with several more being found at Tingtibi.

Mountain Bulbul*Ixos maclellandii*

Small numbers were encountered in the lowlands with peak numbers being found below Zhemgang.

Ashy Bulbul*Hemixos flavala*

Small numbers were encountered below Deothang, near Limnethang and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Black Bulbul*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Small numbers were seen in Nameri NP with large numbers being encountered almost daily especially in western Bhutan.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae**Striated Grassbird***Chaetornis striatus*

Scope views were obtained of a perched birds in the early morning in Kaziranga NP and again in Nameri.

Chestnut-headed Tesia*Tesia castaneocoronata*

This colorful arch skulker was seen on at least three occasions including scope views for some people.

Slaty-bellied Tesia*Tesia olivacea*

This shy species was only heard along the lower Limnethang Road.

Grey-bellied Tesia*Tesia cyaniventer*

This species was seen on several occasions by different people as we continued to attempt and lure out vocal birds throughout the tour.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler*Cettia fortipes*

This common *cettia* was heard on most days of the trip and was seen well on a couple occasions in the east.

Yellowish-bellied [Hume's] Bush-Warbler*Cettia [brunnescens] acanthizoides*

We had crippling views of a very confiding bird on Thrumsing La with a couple more vocal birds in the subsequent days.

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

An uncommon species in Bhutan, we had nice views of one cooperative bird near our Tingtibi camp that barely missed being killed by a boy with a slingshot!

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

A single skulking bird was seen rather well moving on top of the thick grass tussocks in Kaziranga NP.

Smoky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuligiventer*

This is a scarce passage migrant in Bhutan but one bird showed well near a scrubby riverine gully near Trashigang.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*

Several individuals were encountered in Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks with a further sighting en route to Zhemgang.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*

Commonly seen on most days in Bhutan.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis*

This distinctive species was fairly common throughout Bhutan.

Lemon-rumped (Pale -rumped) Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*

This warbler was commonly recorded on most days in Bhutan with larger numbers being seen in the highlands.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

This passage migrant was encountered twice near Deothang.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

We had two separate sightings of this uncommon species first near our campsite above Deothang and again en route to Trongsa.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Several of these distinctive warblers were found on the extension with many more being found at various altitudes throughout Bhutan especially in the west.

Large-billed Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

This distinctive *phylloscopus* was only seen once near Trongsa, the only of its genus to completely vacate Bhutan in winter.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*

This tiny but distinctive *phylloscopus* was seen on most days of the trip with highest numbers in highland areas.

Yellow-vented Warbler *Phylloscopus cantator*

This attractive species was first seen near Deothang with further regular sightings on the Limnethang and Zhemgang Road.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*

This species was pleasantly common and vocal throughout Bhutan.

White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis*

We enjoyed nice sightings of this attractive warbler moving through the undergrowth from Deothang to along the Lingmethang Road.

Green-crowned (Golden-spectacled) Warbler *Seicercus burkii*

We only found this species around our campsite at Tingtibi and on the Lingmethang Road.

Whistler's (Golden-spectacled) Warbler *Seicercus whistleri*

Recently split by most authorities as Whistler's Warbler, we found this form of Golden-spectacled Warbler at scattered sites throughout Bhutan.

Grey-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys*

We encountered this attractive species in the forest undergrowth near Zhemgang.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler*Seicercus castaniceps*

Another attractive warbler that was seen on numerous occasions throughout the tour especially with mixed flocks.

Broad-billed Warbler*Tickellia hodgsoni*

We were very fortunate to find one very close vocal bird moving in the undergrowth at eye-level with a busy mixed flock responding to an owl imitation.

Rufous-faced Warbler*Abroscopus albogularis*

A very localized bird in Bhutan, we had very good views of two birds at the edge of Manus National Park near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Black-faced Warbler*Abroscopus schisticeps*

This beautiful warbler, resembling the common but equally showy Yellow-bellied Fantail was seen on numerous occasions throughout the country.

Yellow-bellied Warbler*Abroscopus superciliaris*

This species was heard calling from deep inside a bamboo-clad ravine above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Babblers & Parrotbills *Timaliidae***Puff-throated Babbler***Pellorneum ruficeps*

Three birds were seen very well along a forest trail in Nameri NP.

Abbott's Babbler*Malacocincla abbotti*

We only heard this species singing in the morning while walking through Nameri NP.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler*Pomatorhinus erythrogenys*

This large, loud and striking babbler was seen very well on one occasion near Trashigang.

White-browed Scimitar-Babbler*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*

One bird was heard calling from the slopes near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

We had great views of a pair in the forest near Trashigang followed by a further sighting in a mixed flock en route to the Lingmethang Road.

Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler*Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

This rare and secretive babbler was seen by some below Zhemgang where it was associating with Rusty-fronted Barwings.

Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler*Xiphirhynchus superciliaris*

After extensive searching we found once responsive bird that hopped along the edge of the bamboo on Yotong La and eventually flew across the road nearly taking out the playback system!

Long-billed Wren-Babbler*Rimator malacoptilus*

This rare, shy and skulking bird was heard calling in response to our recording across the valley on the middle Limnethang Road.

Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler*Napothera epilepidota*

It was most unexpected to encounter a vocal individual at the edge of Manus National Park near our Tingtibi camp, perhaps just previously overlooked due to its secretive habits.

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler*Pnoepyga albiventer*

A vocal bird was heard calling below us in a thick vine tangle on the upper Limnethang Road.

Pygmy Wren-Babbler*Pnoepyga pusilla*

Finally we were rewarded with amazing scope views of a singing bird for nearly twenty minutes! The high pitched whistled song of this tiny skulker was frequently heard in mid altitude forests throughout the trip.

Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler*Spelaeornis caudatus*

We had two very close sightings of this quick babbler both times responding to our playback along the Lingmethang Road.

Spotted Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis formosus*

This shy, skulking forest mite was seen amazingly well at close distance near our campsite on the eastern side of Bhutan and heard on several occasions thereafter during the tour.

Wedge-billed (Sikkim) Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis (humei) formosus*

This mega denizen of pristine Himalayan forest responded very aggressively to our recording along the middle Limnethang Road and moved through the secondary growth below us for several minute before finally quieting down.

Rufous-fronted Babbler *Stachyris rufifrons*

This species of low altitude forest was seen only once above Deothang.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*

We first found this species on the Assam extension followed by numerous views of bids normally skulking through the undergrowth throughout the tour.

Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea*

This elegant species of the undergrowth was seen well several occasions with memorable sightings along the middle Limnethang Road and near Tingtibi.

Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris nigriceps*

A fairly secretive species was seen in eastern Bhutan near a vegetated waterfall and again on the Zhemgang Road.

Striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis*

We had several encounters with this bird first in Panbari and Nameri Forests followed by two more birds seen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata*

Five birds in a mixed flock of this often secretive species were seen well in the grasslands of Kaziranga NP.

Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei*

A small noisy flock was seen from elephant back in Kaziranga NP.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus*

Two birds were seen by some participants at our hotel in Guwahati the first morning.

White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*

Our most commonly recorded laughingthrush on account of its conspicuous nature and large flock size throughout Bhutan.

White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*

This handsome bird was seen well on a few occasions with memorable views especially in the forest near Trashigang.

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax monileger*

We managed to obtain excellent views of four of these striking birds at our campsite at Tingtibi that responded aggressively to playback.

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*

A flock of these endearing birds were seen moving through a fruiting tree in Panbari Forest.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*

Numerous, vocal, and seen on most days with a maximum of a dozen on day birding along the Limnethang Road.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis*

This secretive species was seen very well after breakfast one morning near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Spotted Laughingthrush*Garrulax ocellatus*

A pair of these magnificent birds were scoped Chele La as they moved along the undergrowth edge responding to our playback.

Streaked [Bhutan] Laughingthrush*Garrulax [imbricatum] lineatus*

This species was fairly common especially in the east of Bhutan numerous sightings even in our campsites. This species is sometimes considered a Bhutanese endemic [*Garrulax imbricatum*].

Blue-winged Laughingthrush*Garrulax squamatus*

This was an amazingly cooperative species this year with no less than four sightings including scope views near Zhemgang.

Scaly Laughingthrush*Garrulax subunicolor*

Considered one of the most difficult of laughingthrushes to see in Bhutan and rightly so, we only managed to hear this species along the Lingmethang Road while we tried to coax out a calling Ward's Trogon.

Black-faced Laughingthrush*Garrulax affinis*

This species was fairly common on Thrumsing La, Yotong La, Pele La and Chele La.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush*Garrulax erythrocephalus*

Another common Laughingthrush recorded several days of the tour with especially nice views on the hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery.

Red-faced Liocichla*Liocichla phoenicea*

This arch skulker showed incredibly well this year on two consecutive days including scope views for many people along the road near our Mongar camp.

Silver-eared Leiothrix (Mesia)*Leiothrix argentauris*

This widespread undergrowth species was only heard this year calling below us in a vegetated valley near Deothang.

Red-billed Leiothrix*Leiothrix lutea*

This secretive ground-dwelling forest babbler was seen once near Zhemgang.

Cutia*Cutia nipalensis*

This magnificent bird was encountered feeding on a large moss and epiphyte-covered tree where fifteen birds showed very well along the middle Limnethang Road.

White-browed Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius flaviscapis*

An attractive and noisy species, we enjoyed several scattered sightings of males and females throughout the Bhutan tour.

Green Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius xanthochlorus*

This high altitude shrike-babbler showed well this year with three separate prolonged sightings with one especially confident bird responding to an owl imitation near our Mongar campsite.

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius melanotis*

One of the prettiest birds of the trip, we enjoyed numerous looks at this gaudy little gem.

Rusty-fronted Barwing*Actinodura egerton*

This large and striking species of the lower strata was seen numerous times roaming the bamboo and undergrowth in small flocks.

Blue-winged Minla*Minla cyanouroptera*

This species was often encountered in good large numbers in the east of Bhutan with our first sightings of several birds in a mixed flock near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Chestnut-tailed Minla*Minla strigula*

This gorgeous bird was seen on several occasions in middle altitude forest with some especially close sunlit views near our campsite en route to Trashigang and again along the Lingmethang Road.

Red-tailed Minla*Minla ignotincta*

Less numerous than the preceding species, we still saw up to a dozen birds on several days in Bhutan behaving much like a nuthatch.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta*Alcippe chrysotis*

This gorgeous species of bamboo was seen exceptionally well first along the lower Lingmethang Road and again in a large flock near Trongsa on the Zhemgang Road.

Yellow-throated Fulvetta*Alcippe cinerea*

Several small flocks were encountered moving low down in bamboo thickets in eastern Bhutan including some great sightings along the middle Limnethang Road.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta*Alcippe castaneiceps*

Numerous at higher altitudes with a few daily sightings especially on the high passes.

White-browed Fulvetta*Alcippe vinipectus*

Fairly common especially in the western portion of the country with our highest numbers at high altitudes.

Nepal Fulvetta*Alcippe nipalensis*

Recorded on six days of the tour with small flocks moving through the undergrowth found mostly on the Limnethang and Zhemgang Roads.

Rufous Sibia*Heterophasia capistrata*

One of the most common species of Bhutanese forests and recorded most days with up to twenty daily in some areas.

Long-tailed Sibia*Heterophasia picaoides*

This lowland species was only seen very well on one day of the tour above Deothang with eight cooperative individuals.

Striated Yuhina*Yuhina castaniceps*

Another species that prefers lower altitudes, we had unusually close sightings this year on several occasions including especially nice views along the Zhemgang Road.

White-naped Yuhina*Yuhina bakeri*

This attractive bird was first encountered above Deothang before seeing several more on the middle Limnethang and Zhemgang Roads including some close birds responding to owl imitations.

Whiskered Yuhina*Yuhina flavicollis*

The most commonly encountered yuhina in Bhutan and a conspicuous member of mixed flocks.

Stripe-throated Yuhina*Yuhina gularis*

This large yuhina with its floppy crest was first seen very well near our campsite en route to Trashigang, followed by further views on the highest mountain passes.

Rufous-vented Yuhina*Yuhina occipitalis*

This species was fairly common during our tour with small numbers seen most days at higher altitudes.

Black-chinned Yuhina*Yuhina nigrimenta*

This localized bird was pleasantly common this year with particularly cooperative small flocks encountered on the middle Limnethang Road and the Zhemgang Road.

White-bellied Yuhina (Erpornis)*Erpornis zantholeuca*

Undoubtedly the least common yuhina in Bhutan, we saw a few nice birds below Zhemgang and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Great Parrotbill*Conostoma oemodium*

We heard this massive bamboo-dwelling parrotbill on Dochu La responding aggressively to our playback but it never showed.

Brown Parrotbill*Paradoxornis unicolor*

Two individuals of this scarce parrotbill were eventually seen very well in the Bumthang Valley in a large stand of bamboo.

Black-throated Parrotbill*Paradoxornis nipalensis*

We first encountered this species in a bamboo clump near our Mongar camp followed by another encounter with a few fast-moving birds near Trongsa.

Family uncertain *Incertae sedis***Fire-tailed Myzornis***Myzornis pyrrhoura*

This avian gem was one of the highlights of the trip and we encountered one gorgeous male on at least fifteen occasions in a flurry of feeding activity in a stand of blooming rhododendrons on the east side of Thrumsing La pass; what a fun chase!

White-eyes *Zosteropidae***Oriental White-eye***Zosterops palpebrosus*

This species was commonly seen on the extension as well as on several days in Bhutan usually in large flocks.

Fairy-bluebirds *Irenidae***Asian Fairy-bluebird***Irena puella*

This electric bird was seen first on the Assam extension followed by some outstanding scope views of brilliant males above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Kinglets *Regulidae***Goldcrest***Regulus regulus*

A few birds were seen well foraging with treecreepers, tits and crossbills near Bumthang and the nearby mountain pass.

Nuthatches *Sittidae***Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch***Sitta castanea*

This lowland nuthatch was seen in small numbers in Nameri NP and on several days in the lowlands of Bhutan with peak numbers one day on the Zhemgang Road.

White-tailed Nuthatch*Sitta himalayensis*

The high altitude nuthatch in Bhutan with several nice sightings on numerous days of the tour in appropriate habitat.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch*Sitta frontalis*

We enjoyed great views of this lowland nuthatch first in Kaziranga followed by some outstanding scope views later in Nameri.

Beautiful Nuthatch*Sitta formosa*

This boldly patterned nuthatch is one of the most sought-after species in Bhutan as it is rare, localized and indeed beautiful. We worked hard for it and had two vocal birds only give us a glimpse before locating a stunning bird that blew us away when it flew in towards us and fed for several minutes directly above our heads along the Zhemgang Road!

Treecreepers *Certhiidae***Eurasian Treecreeper***Certhia familiaris*

This widespread species was seen on six occasions in high altitude coniferous forest during the tour.

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *Certhia nipalensis*

A single distinctive bird showed very well along the rhododendron forest of the Lingmethang Road before the King of Bhutan pulled up beside us for a nice chat!

Brown-throated Treecreeper *Certhia discolor*

We only heard this species calling from within the forest along the lower Lingmethang Road.

Starlings *Sturnidae*

Spot-winged Starling *Sturnia spiloptera*

A single sighting of three birds in Nameri NP constituted our only sighting of this scarce nomadic migrant. A very good bird and an unexpected bonus!

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*

Nice scope views of a pair were had in Kaziranga and again in Nameri NPs with another thirty birds showing well above Samdrup Jonkhar.

White-vented Myna *Acridotheres javanicus*

A few birds were seen on the Kaziranga and Nameri extensions including scope views.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*

This species is almost as common as Common Myna on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*

Two individuals showed feeding alongside an elephant in Kaziranga NP.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

This ubiquitous species was present in large numbers throughout India and in all “urban” areas of Bhutan.

Pied Myna (Asian Pied Starling) *Gracupica contra*

Fairly numerous on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*

This attractive species was fairly numerous in and around Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks and we had good looks at several more above Samdrup Jonkhar and at Punakha.

Thrushes *Turdidae*

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*

Perhaps Bhutan’s most conspicuous roadside bird, we recorded this bird in large numbers daily with a maximum of over thirty on the drive from Trongsa to Zhemgang.

Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima*

One individual showed rather poorly on the road because it flushed rather quickly as we approached with the vehicle near the Lingmethang Road.

Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*

A pair showed cooperatively high up in the conifer forest of Chele La including scope views.

Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor*

Several of these migrants, both male and female, were found moving through the undergrowth in Nameri NP.

White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus*

Several were seen in eastern, central and western valleys with a high count of ten birds seen on Chele La.

Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul*

We first found several adult males singing from the treetops en route to Trashigang followed by a few

more scattered sightings later on.

Black-breasted Thrush

Turdus dissimilis

After brief views of three birds in the morning birding at Nameri NP we later returned in the afternoon and obtained brilliant scope views of one adult male.

Lesser Shortwing

Brachypteryx leucophrys

This undergrowth skulker was only heard above Samdrup Jonkhar and the Zhemgang Road but was unwilling to show itself despite our patience.

White-browed Shortwing

Brachypteryx montana

This secretive species was heard on a few occasions along the Limnethang Road.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

Siberian Rubythroat

Luscinia calliope

A single female was found showing rather conspicuously during a jeep drive through the dense forest undergrowth in Kaziranga NP.

Indian Blue Robin

Luscinia brunnea

We heard this species on Thrumsing La in the late afternoon but it could not be lured out into view.

White-browed Bush-Robin

Tarsiger indicus

Absolutely amazing views were had of this secretive robin on the east and west slopes of Thrumsing La pass.

Red-flanked [Himalayan] Bluetail

Tarsiger [rufilatus] cyanurus

Sometimes split by some authorities as a separate species, Himalayan Bluetail, we found a several cooperative birds during the tour at high elevations but non more cooperative that the stunning male we first found on Thrumsing La.

Golden Bush Robin

Tarsiger chrysaeus

One of the most beautiful birds in the Himalayas, we worked hard but eventually managed views of two males on the east slope of Thrumsing La.

Oriental Magpie-Robin

Copsychus saularis

Fairly common at low altitudes with our first encounters in Kaziranga NP followed by scattered sightings throughout all lowland sites in Bhutan.

White-rumped Shama

Copsychus malabaricus

We lured one responsive individual into view in Kaziranga NP followed by further views in Nameri and again near Samdrup Jonkhar in Bhutan.

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Small numbers of this passage migrant were encountered in Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks with a few more scattered sightings throughout Bhutan.

Hodgson's Redstart

Phoenicurus hodgsoni

We enjoyed amazing scope views of a pair near the river in Nameri NP during the extension and then found at least another ten individuals throughout Bhutan.

White-throated Redstart

Phoenicurus schisticeps

A winter visitor that has normally departed by this time, we were thrilled to find an attractive pair that showed well in the scope for everyone on Thrumsing La.

Daurian Redstart

Phoenicurus aureoreus

A couple migrant birds were seen well on consecutive days west of Trashigang.

Blue-fronted Redstart

Phoenicurus frontalis

This attractive bird was seen on several occasions throughout Bhutan with our best sightings of a very confiding male along the idle Lingmethang Road.

Plumbeous Redstart*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Numerous, vocal, and active along the edges of Himalayan rivers, we enjoyed numerous sightings of this species throughout the tour.

White-capped Redstart*Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

A wonderful feature of Bhutanese rivers, this attractive species was encountered on streams and rivers throughout the tour.

White-tailed Robin*Cinclidium leucurum*

This turned out to be a funny bird name from an inside joke during our tour, we had three separate sightings of this often skulky species with particularly nice views for some people on the road to Zhemgang.

Little Forktail*Enicurus scouleri*

This most diminutive of forketails was seen brilliantly on three occasions with especially memorable views of a pair on the middle Linnethang Road feeding near a scenic waterfall.

Black-backed Forktail*Enicurus immaculatus*

Everyone was treated to brilliant scope views of four individuals total of this rare lowland forktail below Deothang.

Slaty-backed Forktail*Enicurus schistaceus*

This handsome forktail was seen very well on two separate occasions, along the Mo Chu River tributary and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Spotted Forktail*Enicurus maculatus*

We all enjoyed brilliant views of this extremely attractive species on several occasions with great views especially above Deothang and again south of Trongsa.

Eurasian [Siberian] Stonechat*Saxicola torquatus*

This widespread species was common in grassland habitat in Kaziranga NP and again at scattered sites in Bhutan in appropriate habitat. Some authorities split this species as Siberian Stonechat [*Saxicola torquatus indicus*].

Grey Bush Chat*Saxicola ferrea*

A conspicuous feature at the roadside of Bhutan with abundant cooperative individuals even singing conspicuously at the edge of our campsites.

Blue Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

Although this species is essentially a winter visitor, will still found a few birds on the extension near Nameri and another few sightings during the Bhutan tour near rocky outcrops.

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush*Monticola rufiventris*

This species was also fairly common and we had numerous brilliant scope views of males and females throughout the tour.

Blue-capped Rock Thrush*Monticola cinclorhynchus*

This attractive species was also fairly common along the roadside many days during the tour with our highest numbers encountered between Tongsa and Zhemgang.

Dark-sided (Siberian) Flycatcher*Muscicapa sibirica*

Only one conspicuous bird was scoped near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher*Ficedula hodgsonii*

Only one female of this migrant was seen in the dense vines near the Mo Chu River .

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher*Ficedula strophiatea*

By far the most frequently encountered of this genus, we found it many days with brilliant views on several occasions including a very cooperative bird near Punakha.

Taiga (Red-throated) Flycatcher*Ficedula albicilla*

This delicate species was first heard and then seen very well at the entrance to Kaziranga NP and again near Tingtibi in Bhutan.

White-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula monileger*

This unobtrusive bird was only heard in a thick, moist gully below Zhemgang.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra*

This very attractive *ficedula* flycatcher was seen on only a single day of the tour en route to Trashigang perched inconspicuously in a vegetated gully.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni*

This striking little species was seen on several days of the trip, mainly in eastern Bhutan and in pairs.

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliaris*

We enjoyed several cracking views of this delicately patterned species with great views of several males throughout the tour.

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*

We found only one male that was very cooperative en route to Trashigang in a depression below the road.

Sapphire Flycatcher *Ficedula sapphira*

We were very fortunate to have a brilliant view of one of these localized and unpredictable migrants responding to an owl imitation near our campsite below Trashigang.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*

This beautiful and radiant bird was one of the most common species of the tour.

Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*

We were lucky to obtain great views of this species singing along the lower Lingmethang Road.

Pale-chinned Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis poliogenys*

We first heard this species in Panbari Forest and later had great views of several birds in Nameri NP.

Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

We had six total sightings of this attractive species along the Zhemgang Road in dense vine tangles of both male and female birds.

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*

This gorgeous species was seen on two occasions with our best views of two males chasing each other on Dochu La.

Large Niltava *Niltava grandis*

After hearing this retiring species numerous times we obtained great views on at least four occasions with our best views at our campsite below Trashigang.

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae*

More numerous than the above species, we enjoyed no less than fifteen total sightings including point-blank views of perched males singing in the sunlight.

Pygmy [Blue-] Flycatcher *Muscicapella hodgsoni*

This secretive and retiring species was seen incredibly well responding to an owl imitation on the lower slope of Dochu La.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

This sprightly species was a conspicuous member of mixed foraging flocks throughout the tour.

Dippers *Cinclidae*

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*

Fairly common along large rivers in Bhutan with especially nice views below our lunch site along the Mo Chu River.

Leafbirds *Chloropseidae***Golden-fronted Leafbird***Chloropsis aurifrons*

Brilliant scope views were had of several birds in Panbari and Nameri Forests with further views of one individual below Deothang.

Orange-bellied Leafbird*Chloropsis hardwickii*

Good numbers were encountered throughout the tour with our first sighting in Nameri National Park and numerous scope views throughout Bhutan.

Flowerpeckers *Dicaeidae***Yellow-vented Flowerpecker***Dicaeum chrysorrheum*

This uncommon species in Bhutan was seen only once below Deothang.

Plain Flowerpecker*Dicaeum concolor*

One bird showed very well in a fruiting tree in Nameri National Park.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker*Dicaeum ignipectus*

Numerous at middle altitudes especially in the east of Bhutan and we had particularly nice views of one male perched for ten minutes at eye-level responding to an owl imitation.

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker*Dicaeum cruentatum*

This species was seen very well near our accommodation on the edge of Kaziranga NP.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae***Ruby-cheeked Sunbird***Anthreptes singalensis*

Several birds were seen well on the Kaziranga and Nameri extension.

Purple Sunbird*Cinnyris asiaticus*

We had nice views of several birds in our hotel gardens in Guwahati.

Mrs. Gould's Sunbird*Aethopyga gouldiae*

This resplendent bird was seen on a several occasions at fairly high altitudes with several memorable views including the responsive bird during the hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery.

Green-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga nipalensis*

The most commonly encountered sunbird during the tour with good numbers most days including cooperative birds near our upper Lingmethang campsite.

Black-throated Sunbird*Aethopyga saturata*

Another fairly numerous sunbird with small numbers most days at lower altitudes including excellent scope views of feeding males.

Crimson Sunbird*Aethopyga siparaja*

We first found this pretty sunbird on the Assam extension followed by brilliant close views of a couple feeding males below Deothang.

Fire-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga ignicauda*

Numerous males and females of this nomadic but exquisite bird were first encountered on the upper Lingmethang Road as well as two other times at high passes later during the tour. Incredible numbers this year with no less than eleven individuals.

Streaked Spiderhunter*Arachnothera magna*

We enjoyed several sightings of this attractive species in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

This widespread species was commonly encountered throughout India and in the “built up” areas of Bhutan.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*

Numerous in agricultural country and around settlements.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Another widespread Asian species that was seen in small numbers throughout the Assam extension and many days in Bhutan.

Weavers & Allies *Ploceidae*

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*

We enjoyed excellent views of this species in breeding plumage while driving through Kaziranga NP.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Non-breeding birds were seen roaming around the grasslands and riverine vegetation in Kaziranga National Park.

Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae*

Scaly-breasted (Nutmeg) Mannikin *Lonchura punctulata*

A flock was first seen near our Tingtibi camp followed by better views near the Mo Chu River.

Accentors *Prunellidae*

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

Brilliant close-up views were had of a single bird on Thrumsing La and again near the Tiger’s Nest Monastery.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiatea*

We regularly recorded this species in small numbers at mid and high altitude sites during our tour.

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae*

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

A single bird was seen on the edge of a wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

A fairly common wagtail in north-east India, we enjoyed some stunning males in full breeding plumage. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Singles were first encountered in Assam followed by a few scattered sighting in Bhutan.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Good numbers were located in and around Kaziranga and Nameri followed by numerous views along river in Bhutan of the white-browed race sometimes split as Himalayan Wagtail (*Motacilla leucopsis*).

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Two birds were seen well in a dump near Guwahati.

Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Several were seen in dry grassland on the extension in Kaziranga NP and again near Punakha in Bhutan.

Blyth’s Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

A single representative of this scarce passage migrant was observed through the scope on the pass above Paro.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Encountered almost daily throughout our tour in good numbers sometimes with up to twenty birds in a

single day.

Rosy Pipit

Anthus roseatus

Small numbers were seen on the edge of a tributary of the Brahmaputra River near the Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks with another fifteen birds, some in breeding plumage, being scoped in the Punakha Valley.

True Finches *Fringillidae*

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch

Carduelis spinoides

One flock of twenty birds was scoped as we descended from Mongar.

Plain Mountain-Finch

Leucosticte nemoricola

We saw large flocks of this montane first near Bumthang and later prolonged scope views on the pass above Paro.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch

Carpodacus nipalensis

After hearing the call of this species on Dochu La we scanned down into a flowering rhododendron where two females showed briefly.

Common Rosefinch

Carpodacus erythrinus

A few males were seen near Trashigang followed by another female in the dry scrub near our Tingtibi camp.

Three-banded Rosefinch

Carpodacus trifasciatus

One of the unexpected vagrants of the trip, we found a single individual mixing with Common Rosefinch on a mountain slope near Trashigang.

(Himalayan) White-browed Rosefinch

Carpodacus thura

A beautiful male of this species was seen exceptionally well at the top of Chele La.

Crimson-browed Finch

Pinicola subhimachalus

We had good views of this handsome species on three separate occasions near Mongar and Trashigang; this can be a nomadic and unpredictable species.

Scarlet Finch

Haematospiza sipahi

We first scoped a cooperative pair of this erratic finch including a dazzlingly brilliant male followed by a second encounter of nearly thirty birds in a single tree along the Lingmethang Road.

Red Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

We had mind-blowing close views of at least six of these bizarre birds near the Ura Valley.

Brown Bullfinch

Pyrrhula nipalensis

This scarce bird was first seen briefly at our campsite en route to Trashigang with excellent views of a flock of eleven birds later near the Mo Chu River.

Red-headed Bullfinch

Pyrrhula erythrocephala

Several birds were seen well near our campsite along the upper Lingmethang Road.

Collared Grosbeak

Mycerobas affinis

Two birds were first scoped on the upper Lingmethang Road followed by cracking views of another three birds including a gaudy male on Chele La.

Spot-winged Grosbeak

Mycerobas melanozanthos

Only a couple birds were found this year on Chele La.

White-winged Grosbeak

Mycerobas carnipes

Seen twice in Bhutan, we first had a close encounter with two birds on Pele La and later we enjoyed amazing views of no less than twenty total birds cooperating very nicely on Chele La.

Gold-naped Finch

Pyrrhoptes epaulette

A rare and unpredictable species, we obtained an unprecedented six separate sightings of this

magnificent forest finch totaling no fewer than ten birds including prolonged scope views of the gorgeous male.

Buntings & Allies *Emberizidae*

Crested Bunting

Melophus lathami

We found this attractive bunting in scrubby countryside at low elevations on two occasions in Bhutan including on the drive to Zhemgang.

Little Bunting

Emberiza pusilla

We had a few sightings of this migrant bunting with our best encounter near Bumthang where we watched at least twenty birds at close range.

ANNOTATED LIST OF MAMMALS (24 Species)

Moupin Pika

Ochotona thibetana

We had a few scattered sightings of this cute little animal with especially nice views on Chele La.

Black Giant Squirrel

Ratufa bicolor

Several of these huge attractive squirrels were during our Assam extension and again at different sites in Bhutan with especially nice views near Tingtibi.

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel

Dremomys lokriah

We found this species throughout the tour in good numbers including some very cooperative animals near Trashigang.

Hoary-bellied Squirrel

Callosciurus pygerythus

First numerous on the extension through Assam, we continue to find smaller numbers in lowland sites during the Bhutan tour.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel

Tamiops mcclllandii

Especially in high elevation areas we found this tiny animal to be quite common in Bhutan.

Sikkim Vole

Microtus sikimensis

Some of the group was fortunate to get onto a single animal on the middle Limnethang Road.

Yellow-throated Martin

Martes flavigula

Normally these shy animals are only seen dashing across the road, but this year we found two separate animals, one of which actually ran towards our vehicle and stopped only ten meters away for incredible views.

Smooth Indian Otter

Lutra perspicillata

Awesome views were enjoyed of this playful mammal in the river bordering Nameri National Park.

Small Indian Mongoose

Herpestes auropunctatus

One of these little critters ran across the road in front of our jeep in Kaziranga National Park.

Nepal Grey Langur

Semnopithecus schistaceus

A small troop that included several babies were seen exceptionally well on the slope of Pele La.

Golden (Leaf-Monkey) Langur

Trachypithecus geei

Locally abundant near Tingtibi where we observed healthy numbers of this charismatic primate sometimes at a distance of no more than five meters!

Capped (Leaf-Monkey) Langur

Trachypithecus pileatus

Small troops of these playful monkeys were seen in Panbari Forest and Nameri NP followed by numerous sightings throughout eastern Bhutan.

Assam Macaque

Macaca assamensis

A small troop was seen in Panbari Forest and at Nameri followed by several nice sightings throughout

Bhutan.

Rhesus Macaque*Macaca mulatta*

A few healthy troops were seen in Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks with further sightings in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Hoolock Gibbon*Hylobates hoolock*

This great ape was undoubtedly one of the mammal highlights of the Assam Extension as we enjoyed unbeatable views of one female, one immature male, and single mature male that hung beside us for several minutes watching us just as intently as we were staring back!

Gangetic Dolphin*Platanista gangetica*

At least two of these endangered river denizens were seen by some people our first morning while scanning over the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati.

Indian Elephant*Elephas maximus*

Small herds of these monstrous mammals were enjoyed throughout Kaziranga National Park.

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros*Rhinoceros unicornis*

Good numbers of this magnificent creature were seen daily, sometimes at extremely close range, in the Kaziranga National Park.

Water Buffalo*Bubalus bubalus*

This huge beast proved to be just as numerous as the preceding species and we were treated to great looks at several herds within Kaziranga NP.

Wild Boar*Sus scrofa*

Small numbers were seen daily in Kaziranga National Park and many of the sightings included tiny piglets which were most easily seen from elephant back.

Hog Deer*Axis porcinus*

Fairly large numbers were seen daily in Kaziranga NP.

Swamp Deer*Cervus duvauceli*

This extremely localized deer was seen in good numbers most days in Kaziranga NP.

Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)*Muntiacus muntjak*

This attractive and secretive deer was heard on several occasions, first in Nameri NP and again at scattered sites across Bhutan.

Common Goral*Nemorhaedus goral*

Two animals including a strong male were observed for about twenty minutes at close range as they fed calmly on the steep cliff above us; a remarkable sighting of this often shy mountain goat.

Photo credits: Group success at summit of Thrumsing La Pass; Ward's Trogon (male); Tiger's Nest Monastery; Ibisbill; Golden Takin; Crimson-browed Finch and Hoolock Gibbon. All photographs by David Shackelford.

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