



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Kaziranga National Park & The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan

31st March – 23rd April 2008



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Trip report compiled by Tour Leader Glen Valentine

Top 10 Birds of the Tour as voted by participants:

1. Himalayan Monal
2. Mrs. Gould's Sunbird
3. Ward's Trogon
4. Rufous-necked Hornbill
5. Blood Pheasant
6. Fire-tailed Sunbird

7. Long-tailed Broadbill
 8. Beautiful Nuthatch
 9. Cutia
 10. Satyr Tragopan
- Honorable mention: Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler



Tour Summary

One rarely gets the opportunity to spend three weeks in a land where pristine forest-clad hills resonating with bird song, mighty awe-inspiring snow-capped Himalayan peaks, crystal clear mountain streams hosting dippers, forktails, Ibisbills and redstarts, blazes of flowering Rhododendrons and Magnolias and magnificent Dzongs dominate the scenery and landscape. This is the Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan and we are all amongst a privileged few to have seen and experienced this natural wonderland.

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



Open Jeep drives within the national park is a great way to experience the wilderness that remains and guarantees great sightings of several species of mammal such as Asian Elephant, Water Buffalo, mighty Indian One-horned Rhinoceros, localized Swamp Deer, Hog Deer and Wild Boar. We were also fortunate to have terrific views of a small party of Small Indian Otter socializing at the edge of a wetland in the late afternoon. Elephant back rides afforded us our best chance at seeing one of the rarest birds in India, Bengal Florican, of

which we had excellent views of a male on the ground and in flight. Great scope views were also obtained of this mega on our second last morning in the park. We were completely awe-struck just after we left on our first ride when we were suddenly surrounded by at least a dozen Indian One-horned Rhinoceros that included several mothers with their calves. This intimate encounter with one of the world's great mammals was the perfect way to kick-start the trip and what an amazing trip it proved to be.

Birding the huge stands of Elephant Grass yielded flocks of Striated Babbler, a cooperative Blunt-winged Reed Warbler, Swamp Francolin, Striated Grassbird, the rare Finn's Weaver for some of the group and beautiful male Pied Harrier quartering the area. The wetlands teemed with birds and we enjoyed such sought-after species as Greater and Lesser Adjutant, Pallas's and Gray-headed Fish-Eagles, River and Black-bellied Terns, Black-necked Stork and Rosy Pipit. Wooded areas yielded several species of woodpecker including the tiny White-browed Piculet, Brown Hawk-Owl, Long-billed Vulture, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Thick-billed, Yellow-footed and Green Imperial Pigeons, surprisingly cooperative Abbott's Babbler, four species of noisy parakeet and the incomparable Green-billed Malkoha to mention a few.

Panbari Forest, a small patch of lowland evergreen forest holds some exciting species and we were able to find a wide range of good forest species during our limited time here. Highlights included Asian Emerald Cuckoo, dazzling Common Green Magpie, the elusive Blue-bearded Bee-eater, magnificent Wreathed Hornbill, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush and outrageous Greater Racket-tailed Drongo. Mammals were no less dramatic and Hoolock Gibbon and Black Giant Squirrel were two fantastic mammals that stole the show.

The Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan beckoned and it was time to say farewell to our friendly hosts at Kaziranga along with all the legendary birds and mammals that make the park such a magical place and head for the Himalayas. The contrast between Bhutan and India is remarkable in appearance and geography. Bhutan rises up from the Indian plains and outlines the beginning of the mighty Himalayan mountain range and 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 late in the afternoon after a long day's driving and were all keen to reach our hotel in Samdrup Jonkhar and crash for the night to reenergize for the next day's exciting birding.

The road from Samdrup Jonkhar to Deothang winds up the Himalayan foothills through patches of lowland evergreen forest where several species can be found that occur nowhere else in Bhutan. Star birds that showed well included Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, the rare and localized Dark-rumped Swift, boldly patterned Black-backed Forktail, gorgeous Scarlet Minivet, Crimson Sunbird, Oriental Pied Hornbill and the impressive Great Hornbill that flew right over our heads in an incredible display of beauty and power. 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 megas such as Gray-headed Parrotbill, Pied Falconet, and the adequately named Beautiful Nuthatch that fed at eye level for 20 minutes of uninterrupted scope views...amazing! We also added some typical Bhutanese birds to the list such as Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, the stunning Silver-eared Mesia, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Black-eared and White-browed Shrike-Babblers, gaudy Chestnut-tailed Minla, Black-throated Parrotbill, the iridescent Mrs. Gould's Sunbird and Cutia feeding nuthatch-like on large mossy limbs.

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. The drive to Trashigang was eventful bird-wise as are all driving days through Bhutan and we picked up the rare Gray-headed Bullfinch at the roadside along with Crimson-browed Finch, Tibetan Serin, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker and several species of barbets, tits, yuhinas and minlas. Anticipation mounted as we edged closer to the fabled Limnethang Road adding several

desirable specialties that included Darjeeling Woodpecker, the rare, nomadic and beautiful Gold-naped Finch, bands of noisy White-crested Laughingthrush, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, Gray-winged Blackbird and our first of many Brown Dipper, dipping in the numerous Himalayan rivers that cascade through the valleys. Upon passing the town of Mongar we were stopped in our tracks by a bird party that could only be described as intense for within minutes we were oohing and aahing at avian gems like Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Common Green Magpie, brightly-coloured Orange-bellied Leafbird, Gray-chinned Babbler, noisy parties of Gray Treepie, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Slaty-backed Forktail, unbeatable Scarlet Finch and Nepal Fulvetta. This was birding at its best and a mere taste of things to come!

Birding along the Limnethang Road can produce some of the most riveting birding that one can ever do but like all forests, it can be frustratingly quiet at times. The flurries of mayhem that are prone to occur surely make up for the dry patches and it is moments like when the unmistakable song of a Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler breaks out that reinforces why we do what we do. Our time on the lower

and middle stretches of the road produced some absolutely world class birds such as Greater and Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbills, Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo, outrageous Rufous-necked Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, a very localized and low density bird, skulking Yellow-throated Fulvetta, seldom seen Sapphire Flycatcher, Brown Bullfinch, Spot-winged Grosbeak and Little Forktail. Incredible persistence paid off in the form of two female and one male Ward's Trogon from whom we eventually walked away. One of the birding moments of the trip happened along this stretch



of road when the song of the near-mythical Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler broke the cool air and it was not long before we were all lined up, staring at one of Asia's most desirable birds hopping from branch to branch as it held its head up intermittently to call and fan its tale. A lifer all round and a real mega that sent us on a high for hours!

It was time to head higher up the Limnethang Road into pheasant country passing large tracts of bright red flowering Rhododendrons and silky white Magnolias on the way. Suddenly the bus came to a grinding halt and screams of Satyr Tragopan filled the air! A female was standing in the road but scurried up the bank as soon as it became aware of our presence. Not to worry, this was just the beginning and enough to heighten our senses and whet our appetites for things to come. We had no problem in obtaining brilliant views of a Bar-winged Wren-Babbler and we eventually ended up seeing a remarkable four male Satyr Tragopan during our time at Sengor. Thrumsing La pass produced a stunning male Golden Bush-Robin, noisy flocks of Black-faced Laughingthrush, an unseasonal Alpine Accentor, brief views of Fire-tailed Myzornis, a rather cooperative White-browed Bush-Robin, our first of many fantastic looks at Blood Pheasant and a showy male Fire-tailed Sunbird that was scoped at length.

Dropping down into the Ura and Bhumthing Valleys we were surprised to see several small flocks of Beautiful Rosefinch and huge roving flocks of Plain Mountain Finch. Other star birds that entertained us were the fabulous Ibisbill, a Himalayan specialty, Brown Parrotbill and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush.

We pushed on west towards Trongsa picking up a flock of the beautiful Snow Pigeon along the way and arriving in time to see the enormous Trongsa Dzong standing in the brilliant golden

afternoon sunlight. The scenery from our hotel was breath-taking and we all enjoyed the comforts of a hot shower and soft bed after four nights of camping. This set us up perfectly for a further two nights of camping in the southern lowlands of Tingtibi.

This area has significant interest for birders visiting Bhutan as there are several delightful species that can only be found in the vast low to mid-altitude forests of the lower Zhemgang Road. We managed to locate some absolute corkers over the next few days that included a small flock of brightly coloured Golden-breasted Fulvetta, White-bellied Yuhina, a pair of gaudy Long-tailed Broadbill, a stunning male Sultan Tit which sat only meters away at eye level for all to indulge in, a cute Collared Owlet who sat motionless until we eventually walked away from this often elusive owl, relatively cooperative Lesser Necklaced and Blue-winged Laughingthrushes, White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, localized Rufous-faced Warbler, scope views of Red-headed Trogon, several looks at the tiny Speckled Piculet, Gray-capped Pygmy and the scarce Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, a flock of four Spot-winged Starling, a scarce and highly nomadic species and a delightful pair of Kalij Pheasant at the side of the road who carried on feeding unperturbed by our presence.

Leaving Trongsa for the western side of the country we crossed over Pele La where we were to experience our most dramatic scenery of the trip; 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 exceedingly scenic 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. Pele La wasn't without birding highlights and we added the impressive Great Parrotbill with its massive yellow bill, a wonderful flock of White-throated Needletail and a pair of Hoary-throated Barwing. A troop of Gray Langur entertained us with their babies clinging to their mother's chest.

The "city" of Punakha with its impressive riverside Dzong awaited us with River Lapwing and Crested Kingfisher hunting up and down the crisp, clear rivers. We also added Slender-billed Oriole and several more common and widespread species to the ever-growing list before moving on to the capital of Bhutan, Thimpu. This is undoubtedly the busiest part of the country and we took the time to visit the Golden Takin enclosure on the outskirts of town. This stocky beast looks like a cross between a wildebeest and a buffalo and there is a neat little story around how the Bhutanese perceive the takin to have been created. This seldom-seen animal can only be encountered in remote areas of the Himalayas feeding in the grassland meadows above the tree line at around 4000 meters above sea level so we were happy to have the opportunity of seeing this strange species, even if it is in captivity.

The city of Paro is home to several exciting and extremely impressive buildings that display the religion and cultural heritage of Bhutan and these include the Paro Dzong and the world famous Eagle's Nest Monastery which is perched precariously on the face of a cliff just outside town. We had the good fortune of visiting the monastery which proved to be a very memorable and worth-while trek, whilst those who were unable to manage the long and strenuous hike enjoyed the likes of the Paro Dzong and museum. The afternoon was spent scouring the river near town for Black-tailed and Ruddy-breasted Crakes which both showed exceptionally well and a single Ibisbill was bumped into whilst traversing a shingle bed in search of snipes.

Anticipation mounted once again as we meandered up the Chele La pass to an altitude of 3988 meters above sea level; this is monal country and intimate encounters with Kalij and Blood Pheasants lower down the pass kept us on our toes and focused on the task at hand. We were nearing the top of the pass with no monals to speak of with the leaders' nerves put to the limits when suddenly the cry of "Himalayan Monal" broke the silence. In a pine tree ahead and to the right of the bus was a stunning male perched on a horizontal limb for all to admire. The magnificent pheasant then hopped onto the forest floor where it fed for ages whilst we scoped this iconic Himalayan beauty. After obtaining saturation views we climbed up the final stretch of the pass to admire the scenery together with the adornment of prayer flags, chortens and the crisp mountain air that so typifies the Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan. Our descent was rather eventful and we scored with a cooperative pair of Spotted Laughingthrush, Collared Grosbeak, Spotted Nutcracker and extended scope views of the seldom-seen Long-tailed Thrush.

A fabulous farewell dinner was to be enjoyed to recap on all the memorable moments of this epic tour through north-east India and Bhutan.

Annotated List of Bird Species recorded

462 Species

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: a Checklist 5th Edition* (2000) Ibis Publishing Company, with updates to June 2005.

Pelicans Pelicanidae

- Spot-billed Pelican** *Pelecanus philippensis*
Small numbers were seen every day in Kaziranga National Park.
- Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*
Only 2 birds were found in the wetlands of Kaziranga NP.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae

- Little Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax niger*
Small numbers were encountered daily in Kaziranga National Park.
- Indian Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
Several individuals were seen in Kaziranga National Park.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Several sightings of this widespread species along montane rivers near the Punakha and Paro Valleys near cliff roosting sites.
- Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*
Several of these striking birds were seen daily in Kaziranga National Park.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
Several individuals were seen throughout our stay in Kaziranga.
- Gray Heron** *Ardeola cinerea*
Several were encountered at wetlands in Kaziranga National Park.
- Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
A singleton was seen at the edge of a large wetland in Kaziranga National Park.

Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Several were seen at Kaziranga.	
Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga National Park.	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Large numbers were encountered throughout India.	
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
This wetland species proved to be fairly common in and around Kaziranga.	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>

Storks Ciconidae

Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomas oscitans</i>
Fairly large numbers were seen throughout India, especially in Kaziranga National Park.	
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Several were seen on the Kaziranga Extension.	
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>
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	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
This species was pleasantly common in Kaziranga.	
Greater Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>
15 of this rare, localized and highly sought-after species was seen at close range in the bustling city of Guwahati with further sightings of 2 individuals being seen in Kaziranga NP.	

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
A total of 7 individuals were seen on 2 separate occasions in Kaziranga.	
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser Indicus</i>
This species was pleasantly common at wetlands in Kaziranga.	
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga NP.	
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
A total of four were seen in Kaziranga NP.	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Small numbers were found on wetlands in Kaziranga with another 2 being seen on the outskirts of Thimpu.	
Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
We encountered small numbers daily at wetlands in Kaziranga.	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Small rafts were seen on 2 days in Kaziranga National Park.	
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Small numbers were seen on most days in Kaziranga NP.	
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
A total of 5 were seen during our stay at Kaziranga.	
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
A small flock of 6 were seen on a wetland in Kaziranga NP.	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>

A small raft of 10 was seen on one occasion in Kaziranga NP.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*

Scope views were obtained of 2 birds at the edge of Thimpu with further views of 2 males in Paro.

Osprey Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

A single bird was seen soaring over the river north of Samdrup Jonkhar.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*

A pair was seen at quite some distance soaring over woodland in Kaziranga NP.

Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

2 were seen in Kaziranga NP with a further 8 being found below Deothang.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

A total of 2 individuals were seen during our stay at Kaziranga.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

At least 100 were seen on our first day en route to Kaziranga from Duwahati with several more being found around Samdrup Jonkhar.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*

A single bird was seen on our first full day in Kaziranga NP.

Pallas's Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*

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

Gray-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*

We had brilliant close-up views of several adult and juvenile birds in Kaziranga NP.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*

2 birds were seen by some of the group above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*

We had good views of several of this endangered species.

Himalayan Griffon (Vulture) *Gyps himalayensis*

Several individuals were seen north of Deothang as well as on Yotong La and Pele La passes.

Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela*

Superb flight views were had of several birds below and above Deothang.

Eurasian Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

2 females were seen soaring over the grassland areas of Kaziranga.

Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*

This beautiful and seldom seen raptor was enjoyed by all in Kaziranga National Park. A further immaculate male was seen quartering over some grassland at extremely close range on the drive from Guwahati to Samdrup Jonkhar.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A total of two were found during our stay at Kaziranga.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*

We had a total of 4 individuals, near Kori La, Pele La and on the middle Lingmethang Road.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

2 were seen in flight in Kaziranga NP with another 2 rufous-looking birds being seen on Chele La.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus*

We had good flight views of a single bird above Samdrup Jonkhar as well as a further individual on Pele La.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

A singleton was seen by some in Kaziranga NP with 2 further sightings in Bhutan, near Trashigang and en route to Zhemgang.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentiles*

A single bird was seen in flight near Thrumsing La.

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.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*

Frequently encountered in flight with up to 5 birds on 4 days of the trip.

Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii*

This uncommon species was seen on 3 occasions, above Deothang, and twice on the Zhemgang Road.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

Singletons were seen every day in and around Kaziranga NP.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*

This spectacular raptor is the most frequently encountered raptor of the trip and we enjoyed both magnificent scope and flight views with up to 3 seen on 7 days of the tour.

Falcons & Kestrels Falconidae

Common (Eurasian) Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

A single bird was seen in Kaziranga with several further sightings throughout the more open areas of Bhutan.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Never numerous in Bhutan, we first observed a single bird cruising over the river south of Deothang with a further encounter near Trashigang.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

We had a pair of these beautiful raptors near our campsite en route to Trashigang as well as a singleton on the Zhemgang Road.

Pied Falconet *Microhierax melanoleucus*

We were very fortunate to witness this rare and localized bird take out a Yellow-breasted Greenfinch in flight and then managed to obtain walkaway scope views of this beautiful raptor as it ripped the passerine to pieces on a dead snag in the late afternoon above Deothang.

Pheasants and Partridges Phasianidae

Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*

This localized, uncommon and extremely attractive bird was seen exceptionally well on 3 consecutive days at Kaziranga.

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola*

Ubiquitous in the forests of Bhutan but a very shy bird, we heard this species on no fewer than 15 days, but always too far from the roadside.

Chestnut-breasted Partridge *Arborophila mandellii*

This rare species was heard on only 2 days from steep ravines on the middle altitudes of the Limnethang Road.

Rufous-throated Partridge *Arborophila rufogularis*

Although not as numerous as Hill Partridge, we still heard this species on 4 days of the tour in forested areas.

Blood Pheasant*Ithaginis cruentus*

We saw no fewer than 21 individuals of this, one of Bhutan's star avian gems on Thrumsing La and Chele La passes.

Satyr Tragopan*Tragopan satyra*

Certainly one of Bhutan's most sought-after specialties, a visual of any of the world's 5 tragopans will surely make any birder's list of top birding experiences of a lifetime. We encountered no fewer than 5 of this incredibly beautiful species. Our first encounter with this species was of a female crossing the road below Sengor to whet our appetites. The next morning produced 2 males with a further 2 being seen the next morning up Thrumsing La.

Himalayan Monal*Lophophorus impejanus*

One of the world's most vividly colored birds, our first encounter was of a male perched in a pine on Thrumsing La pass but it soon disappeared into the dense fog that enveloped the pass. Later in trip, we scoped an outrageous male on Chele La before walking away from this stunning bird.

Red Junglefowl*Gallus gallus*

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

Kalij Pheasant*Lophura leucomelanos*

Most of the group had views of a single male crossing the road in Kaziranga NP whilst everyone caught up with the species in Bhutan, where we had 17 birds on 5 occasions!

Gray Peacock-Pheasant*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*

Unfortunately this elusive pheasant was only heard in Panbari Forest.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**White-breasted Waterhen***Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Good views were obtained at the edges of wetlands in Kaziranga NP.

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

This widespread species was seen on several occasions.

Black-tailed Crake*Amaurornis bicolor*

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

Ruddy-breasted Crake*Porzana fusca*

Single birds were seen exceptionally well on consecutive days in the Paro Valley.

Jacanas Jacanadae**Bronze-winged Jacana***Metopidius indicus*

Small numbers of this attractive "Lilly trotter" was seen in Kaziranga NP.

Painted Snipes Rostratulidae**Greater Painted-Snipe***Rostratula benghalensis*

A single female was seen briefly in flight near the entrance of Kaziranga NP.

Ibisbill Ibidorhynchidae**Ibisbill***Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

We bumped into this riverine oddity near Bhumthang after our Brown Parrotbill success and had mind-blowing views the next morning at the same place. The epitome of Himalayan riverside birding!

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

River Lapwing

Vanellus duvaucelii

Common and conspicuous along the border rivers in the Paro, Thimpu, and Punakha Valleys with up to 6 observed daily.

Red-wattled Lapwing

Vanellus indicus

Small numbers were seen on consecutive days in Kaziranga NP.

Sandpipers Scolopacidae

Eurasian Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

We obtained brief views of one scurrying through the forest undergrowth before flushing away on Chele La.

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

A single bird was seen in Kaziranga NP.

Pintail Snipe

Gallinago stenura

A total of 6 were flushed from the riverside in Paro.

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

A single bird was seen in Kaziranga National Park.

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

2 birds were scoped at a small wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

A total of 11 birds were seen in Kaziranga NP.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

5 individuals were encountered during our stay at Kaziranga with further sightings en route to Samdrup Jonkhar from Guwahati and on the river in Paro.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Several were seen at various waterbodies throughout Kaziranga.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Small numbers were encountered in Kaziranga with a further sighting near Thimpu.

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Small numbers were seen at wetlands in Kaziranga NP.

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

4 individuals were seen at wetlands within Kaziranga NP.

Terns Sternidae

River Tern

Sterna aurantia

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

Black-bellied Tern

Sterna acuticauda

This scarce species was seen hunting over a large wetland in Kaziranga NP. Only 2 were noted.

Whiskered Tern

Chlidonias hybridus

A total of 15 were seen at a large wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Rock Pigeon (Dove)

Columba livia

Numerous in towns and villages throughout India and Bhutan.

Snow Pigeon

Columba leuconota

This immaculate dove was seen exceptionally well feeding in a field en route to Trongsa.

Speckled Wood-Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*

2 birds were seen in flight on the middle Lingmethang Road.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Fairly numerous on the extension and in Bhutan.

Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Small numbers were seen in and around Kaziranga.

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 above Samdrup Jonkhar with another brief sighting later on near Zhemgang.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

A total of 3 birds were seen in Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga Extension with further views of singletons above Samdrup Jonkhar and near Tingtibi.

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.

Green Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

We had several great views of this impressive bird.

Pin-tailed Pigeon *Treron apicauda*

We had brilliant scope views of a flock in perfect afternoon light below Deothang.

Wedge-tailed Pigeon *Treron sphenura*

This species was unfortunately only heard on 2 occasions near Kori La and on the middle Lingmethang Road

Mountain Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula badia*

Several encounters were had at lower altitude forest sites throughout Bhutan.

Cuckoos & Coucals Cuculidae

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*

We had unbeatable views of 1 near Lingmethang with another brief sighting near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparverioides*

One of the dominant sounds of Bhutan, this species was heard virtually daily and seen well on several occasions.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus varius*

Heard near our camp at Tingtibi.

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

This often reclusive species of which the local race is sometimes split as Whistling Hawk-Cuckoo, was heard on a few occasions with an extremely memorable sighting on the middle Lingmethang Road.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

Heard calling almost daily in Kaziranga and seen once in flight in the late afternoon.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Heard on numerous occasions other than on the Ward's Trogon recording and good views were had on Pele La and Chele La.

- Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*
 Heard almost daily and seen very well on several occasions.
- Lesser (Small) Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus*
 A single scoped bird seen low on the Limnethang Road.
- Banded Bay Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sonneratii*
 This tiny forest-dwelling cuckoo was unfortunately only heard on the Kaziranga Extension.
- Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*
 Commonly heard with a single sighting at Kaziranga.
- Violet Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*
 A single bird was heard calling below Deothang.
- Asian Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx maculatus*
 We had scope views of a singleton of this attractive species in Panbari Forest. We also had good scope views near our campsite en route to Trashigang.
- Asian [Square-tailed] Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*
 Sometimes split as a separate species from the more widespread Asian form [*Surniculus lugubris dicruroides*], we heard this bird at several lowland sights and was first scoped at Tingtibi.
- Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*
 This commonly heard species was seen on 2 occasions in Kaziranga NP, once en route to Samdrup Jonkhar and was heard below Deothang and amazingly at Punakha.
- Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
 Everyone on the Kaziranga Extension was rewarded with splendid views of this outrageous bird.
- 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 by some in Kaziranga NP.

Parrots and Allies Psittacidae

- Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*
 Fairly large numbers were encountered on the Kaziranga Extension.
- Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*
 Commonly encountered in and around Kaziranga NP.
- Slaty-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula himalayana*
 A single bird was seen flying over the camp by David on our first morning at Kaziranga NP.
- Blossom-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula roseate*
 A few were seen by some of the group on the Kaziranga Extension.
- Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri*
 One of the most commonly encountered birds on the Kaziranga Extension, this beautiful bird occurs in noisy flocks.

Bustards Otididae

- Bengal Florican** *Houbaropsis bengalensis*
 The star bird of the Kaziranga Extension! This mega was seen very well in the scope as well as at close range on elephant back early on the last morning in the park. It is one of the 200 rarest birds in the world and we are all extremely privileged to have gazed at this prized species!

Typical 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.

Collared Scops-Owl *Otus lettia*

A single bird was heard calling on both nights from our camp in Tingtibi.

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 briefly on our first night at Sengor.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei*

Although frequently heard, this diminutive owl is rarely seen, and we were fortunate to enjoy prolonged close views of a single individual near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*

Brilliant views were had of this beautiful little owl during the day in Kaziranga NP.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*

We had fantastic views of this beautiful little owl on several occasions during our stay at Kaziranga. We also had views of a single bird below Deothang.

Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata*

We had remarkable views of a single bird responding to tape playback one afternoon in Kaziranga NP.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Gray (Jungle) Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*

This species was unfortunately only heard at our campsite en route to Trashigang and at Tingtibi.

Swifts Apodidae

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*

Small flocks were encountered in the highlands with our first encounter north of Deothang..

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

This handsome and unpredictable species was observed in reasonable numbers with a maximum of 40 birds on Pele La.

Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*

A flock numbering at least a dozen were seen over Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga Extension.

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

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

Fork-tailed (Pacific) Swift *Apus pacificus*

By far the most common apus in Bhutan with up to 20 being observed on most days of the tour..

Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda*

This rare and localized bird was found below Deothang where at least 8 birds were seen.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis*

At least 30 were seen during our drive to Kaziranga on day 1 with 2 further encounters in Bhutan, 20 en route to Trashigang and 10 near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Trogon Trogonidae

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*

A single bird was seen 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 unbeatable, prolonged scope views of a male and two females on the middle Linnethang Road. Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip and an incredibly memorable birding moment for all!

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Encountered daily in small numbers at Kaziranga with 3 encounters in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Stork-billed Kingfisher

Halcyon capensis

4 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 NP. Small numbers of this gorgeous and demonstrative bird were also found in Bhutan.

Pied Kingfisher

Ceryle rudis

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

Crested Kingfisher

Megaceryle lugubris

This denizen of Himalayan rivers was first seen near Trashigang with great views being obtained near Punakha and Thimpu.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Blue-bearded Bee-eater

Nyctyornis athertoni

Most of the group was fortunate to have scope views of this beautiful, scarce and often elusive species in Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga Extension.

Green Bee-eater

Merops orientalis

Several were seen in the grassland areas of Kaziranga.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater

Merops leschenaulti

Small numbers of this attractive bee-eater was enjoyed throughout India, our first encounters being scope views of a single bird on a telephone wire at a fuel stop.

Rollers Coraciidae

Indian Roller

Coracias benghalensis

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

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

Some of the group managed views of two birds flying over Panbari Forest whilst everyone had great scope views of a singleton perched on top of a dead tree south of Deothang.

Great Hornbill

Buceros bicornis

A pair of these spectacular hornbills was seen flying towards us on the road above Samdrup Jonkhar and as they soared right over our heads we could hear the wing beats of these giants and were sent into a state of ecstasy and uncontrollable excitement. Thereafter we enjoyed scope views as they sat in the canopy of a fruiting tree.

Rufous-necked Hornbill

Aceros nipalensis

Another charismatic and oversized hornbill, this restricted species is best found in Bhutan with up to 7 daily along the Limnethang Road.

Wreathed Hornbill*Aceros undulatus*

Another spectacular hornbill which most of the group saw flying over us in Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga extension. 2 more were seen flying over us below Deothang.

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 Extension with 2 more being found above Samdrup Jonkhar.

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.

Blue-eared Barbet*Megalaima australis*

A pair was heard calling and then seen briefly as they flew from their concealed perch in Panbari Forest

Coppersmith Barbet*Megalaima haemacephala*

Several of these stunning barbets were seen very well in and around Kaziranga and was also seen on one occasion 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 three separate cliff side Rock Bee hives.

Wrynecks, Piculets & Woodpeckers Picidae**Eurasian Wryneck***Jynx torquilla*

A good bird for Kaziranga, we had scope views of a single bird in Kaziranga NP.

Speckled Piculet*Picumnus innominatus*

A single bird showed briefly for some of the group in Panbari Forest. Later on in Bhutan we enjoyed cracking views of this diminutive woodpecker on 7 occasions, near Trashigang, on the Zhemgang Road and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

White-browed Piculet*Sasia ochracea*

Some of the group had good views of a singleton at our lodge near Kaziranga NP.

Gray-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker*Dendrocopos canicapillus*

This tiny woodpecker was seen on several occasions in Kaziranga NP and at our campsite near Tingtibi.

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.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*

Excellent views were had by all near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Darjeeling Woodpecker*Dendrocopos darjellensis*

Good scope views of a single bird was had on Kori La pass.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos cathpharius*

One of the more regularly recorded woodpeckers in Bhutan, we had good views of several birds throughout mid-altitude forest.

Rufous Woodpecker *Celeus brachyurus*

A single bird showed briefly but well in Panbari Forest, whilst this species was only heard in Bhutan above Deothang.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*

We had views of 3 separate individuals near Tingtibi.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha*

A single bird was seen in Panbari Forest with scope views obtained near Zhemgang.

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus*

Everyone had cracking views of a pair in Kaziranga NP.

Gray-faced (Gray-headed) Woodpecker *Picus canus*

One was heard calling in Kaziranga NP, whilst a male was scoped at our campsite at Yongkhola with another one being seen near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*

We had some great encounters with this awesome bird in Kaziranga NP.

Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

We had views of 3 birds on two days in Kaziranga NP with another 3 birds calling and flying over the road above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

This skulking bird was commonly heard along the Limnethang Road with a single individual scoped above Deothang.

Pittas Pittidae

Blue-naped Pitta *Pitta nepalensis*

Despite hearing this rare and secretive species on consecutive days in Panbari Forest we were not able to coax one out.

Broadbills Eurylaimidae

Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae*

A pair of these spectacular birds was scoped at length near Zhemgang. A serious birding highlight for all!

Larks Alaudidae

Bengal (Rufous-winged) Bushlark *Mirafra assamica*

A total of 11 were encountered in the grasslands of Kaziranga NP.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

At least 7 birds were seen in Kaziranga NP with 3 more being found in a field en route to Trongsa.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Large numbers were found throughout India and the Bhutanese lowlands.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

We had great views of several birds perched on a telephone line above Samdrup Jonkhar with further

sightings being obtained thereafter.

Bank Swallow

Riparia riparia

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

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin

Riparia paludicola

Small numbers were seen feeding over the grasslands of Kaziranga and between Guwahati and Samdrup Jonkhar.

Nepal (House-) Martin

Delichon nipalensis

The commonest *Hirundine* of the trip, we encountered several colonies along the roadside with a maximum of 200 building nests at incredibly close range on Pele La.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba

Small numbers were located in and around Kaziranga. Small numbers of the white-browed race was seen in Bhutan. This race is sometimes split as Himalayan Wagtail (*Motacilla leucopsis*).

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

A single bird was seen on the edge of a wetland on the Kaziranga Extension. Some authorities split off this form as Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*).

Citrine Wagtail

Motacilla citreola

The commonest wagtail in north-east India, we enjoyed some stunning males in full nuptials. Another male was seen near Paro.

Gray Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

Singles were encountered at the roadside on 3 days of the tour.

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit

Anthus rufulus

Several were seen in dry grassland on the extension and on the drive from Guwahati to Samdrup Konkhar.

Olive-backed Pipit

Anthus hodgsoni

Encountered almost daily with a maximum of 10 birds along Kori La.

Rosy Pipit

Anthus roseatus

Small numbers were seen on the edge of a tributary of the Brahmaputra River near the Kaziranga NP with another 2 being scoped in the Paro Valley.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae

Large Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina macei

Several individuals were encountered in woodland habitat in and around Kaziranga.

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina melaschistos

Singletons were encountered on 4 days of the tour with our first memorable scope views being enjoyed north of our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Long-tailed Minivet

Pericrocotus ethologus

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

Short-billed Minivet

Pericrocotus brevirostris

Fairly numerous in middle altitude forest with a maximum of a dozen per day along the Linnethang Road.

Scarlet Minivet

Pericrocotus flammeus

The dominant minivet of lower altitudes with 10+ being found on the Kaziranga Extension. This is also the commonest minivet in Bhutan and we had up to 40 in one day below Deothang.

Gray-chinned Minivet

Pericrocotus solaris

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

Small Minivet*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

A single female bird was seen in a mixed flock of Scarlet Minivets in Kaziranga NP.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike*Hemipus picatus*

Small numbers of this character-full bird at the roadside with a maximum of 7 per day below Zhemgang.

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

Commonly recorded throughout the east of Bhutan.

Black-crested Bulbul*Pycnonotus melanicterus*

Several of these forest-dwelling bulbuls were seen in Panbari Forest with at least 20 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.

White-cheeked Bulbul*Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Small numbers in dry mountain scrub near Trashigang.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split by authorities as a separate species, Himalayan Bulbul [*Pycnonotus leucogenys* from *Pycnonotus leucotis*].

Red-vented Bulbul*Pycnonotus cafer*

Abundant in secondary habitat throughout the extension and main tour.

White-throated Bulbul*Alophoixus flaveolus*

A singleton was observed in Panbari Forest with several more being found above Samdrup Jonkhar and at Tingtibi.

Ashy Bulbul*Hemixos flavala*

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

Mountain Bulbul*Ixos mcclllandii*

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

Black Bulbul*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Small numbers were seen in Kaziranga NP with large numbers being encountered almost daily in Bhutan.

Kinglets Regulidae**Goldcrest***Regulus regulus*

A flock of 10 were seen foraging with treecreepers, tits and crossbills near Bhumthang..

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

Brilliant scope views were had of 3 separate birds in Panbari Forest with further views of 7 individuals below Deothang.

Orange-bellied Leafbird*Chloropsis hardwickii*

Small numbers were seen on 4 days of the tour in the lowlands of Bhutan with peak numbers below Zhemgang.

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

Several pairs were encountered near our lodge on the Kaziranga Extension, whilst 2 were seen above

Samdrup Jonkhar.

Dippers Cinclidae

Brown Dipper

Cinclus pallasii

Fairly common along large rivers in Bhutan with a total of 9 being seen on 6 days of the tour.

Accentors Prunellidae

Alpine Accentor

Prunella collaris

Brilliant close-up views were had of a single bird on Thrumsing La. This is a seldom-recorded species in Bhutan due to it mainly being present in Winter.

Rufous-breasted Accentor

Prunella strophiatea

Fairly commonly recorded at most mid and high altitude sites with a total of 10 being found on 8 days of the trip.

Maroon-backed Accentor

Prunella immaculate

2 separate birds were seen by some of the group near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Thrushes Turdidae

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush

Monticola cinclorhynchus

This attractive species was fairly common along the roadside most days with a daily high of 10 birds between Tongsa and Zhemgang.

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush

Monticola rufiventris

This species was also fairly common and a high count of 12 was had on Kori La.

Blue Rock-Thrush

Monticola solitarius

Although this species is essentially a Winter visitor, will still found 3 birds near Trashigang and a single bird near Punakha.

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 50 on the drive from Trongsa to Zhemgang.

Orange-headed Thrush

Zoothera citrina

Some of the group had brief views of a single bird at Bhumthang.

Plain-backed Thrush

Zoothera mollissima

2 birds were briefly seen perched and then seen flying across the road on Chele La.

Long-tailed Thrush

Zoothera Dixoni

Unbeatable scope views were had for extended periods of this scarce and usually secretive thrush whilst it called from an exposed perch.

Dark-throated Thrush

Turdus ruficollis

2 were seen north of Deothang with another individual being spotted near Zhemgang.

White-collared Blackbird

Turdus albocinctus

Several were seen in eastern, central and western valleys with a high count of 15 seen on Chele La.

Gray-winged Blackbird

Turdus boulboul

Surprisingly, only 2 were seen throughout the trip, one en route to Trashigang and another near Mongar.

Lesser Shortwing

Brachypteryx leucophrys

This undergrowth skulker was only heard on the Zhemgang Road but was unfortunately too far away to lure into view.

White-browed Shortwing

Brachypteryx montana

This secretive species was heard on a few occasions along the Limnethang Road with a single bird

showing very briefly for some on the Zhemgang Road.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

Several of this common and widespread species was seen on the elephant back ride in Kaziranga NP.

Bright-headed Cisticola

Cisticola exilis

A few birds were seen on the elephant back ride in Kaziranga NP.

Plain Prinia

Prinia inornata

We heard this species calling from thick elephant grass in Kaziranga NP.

Striated Prinia

Prinia criniger

We found this species in dry hillside scrub on several occasions mainly in the east 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 briefly on the middle Limnethang Road.

Rufescent Prinia

Prinia rufescens

A party of 4 birds were seen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae

Chestnut-headed Tesia

Tesia castaneocoronata

This arch skulker was heard on several occasions and lured briefly into view on two occasions on the upper Limnethang Road.

Slaty-bellied Tesia

Tesia olivea

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

Gray-bellied Tesia

Tesia cyaniventer

This species was first seen near Kori La with further brief views of a single bird near Trongsa.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler

Acrocephalus stentoreus

Some of the group had views of a single bird below the restaurant of our lodge near Kaziranga NP.

Blunt-winged Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus concinens stevensi

Good views were had of a single bird in Kaziranga National Park.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler

Cettia fortipes

This common *cettia* was heard on most days of the trip and was seen very well on a few 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 several more calling nearby.

Gray-sided Bush-Warbler

Cettia brunnifrons

We were treated to incredible views of a single bird on Yotong La. This species is actually rather attractive when seen well.

Mountain Tailorbird

Orthotomus cuculatus

Only seen twice on the Limnethang Road with another calling near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Common Tailorbird

Orthotomus sutorius

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

Dusky Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus

A single skulking bird was heard and seen briefly at our lodge near Kaziranga NP.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler

Phylloscopus affinis

Several individuals were encountered in Kaziranga NP with further sightings on the lower Limnethang

Road.

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.

Pale-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Warbler

Phylloscopus chloronotus

This warbler was commonly recorded on most days in Bhutan with a high of 8 being found around our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

This passage migrant was encountered in small numbers with 11 on the Kaziranga Extension and 5 in eastern Bhutan, our first being a couple above Deothang.

Greenish Warbler

Phylloscopus trochiloides

3 of these distinctive warblers were found on the extension with several more being found at various altitudes throughout Bhutan.

Large-billed Leaf-Warbler

Phylloscopus magnirostris

The distinctive song of this bird, the only of its genus to completely vacate Bhutan in winter, was only heard and then seen near Trongsa on the Zhemgang Road.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler

Phylloscopus reguloides

This *phylloscopus* was seen on most days of the trip.

Yellow-vented Warbler

Phylloscopus cantator

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

Golden-spectacled [Whistler's] Warbler

Seicercus [whistleri] burkii

Recently split by most authorities as Whistler's Warbler, we found this form of Golden-spectacled Warbler in Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga Extension and on most days in Bhutan.

Golden-spectacled Warbler

Seicercus [burkii]

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

Gray-hooded Warbler

Seicercus xanthoschistos

This species was pleasantly common throughout Bhutan with a daily high of 6 around our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Gray-cheeked Warbler

Seicercus poliogenys

We encountered this attractive species on 4 days of the tour with our first sighting near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler

Seicercus castaniceps

Another attractive warbler that was seen on several occasions especially in the east with a high of 10 in one day near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Rufous-faced Warbler

Abroscopus albogularis

A very localized bird in Bhutan, we had good but brief encounters with a single bird near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Yellow-bellied Warbler

Abroscopus superciliaris

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

Black-faced Warbler

Abroscopus schisticeps

This beautiful warbler, resembling the common but equally showy Yellow-bellied Fantail was seen on several occasions in the east of the country.

Striated Grassbird

Chaetornis striatus

Scope views were obtained of a perched bird in the early morning in Kaziranga NP.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

- Red-throated Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*
This delicate species was first heard and then seen very well at the entrance to Kaziranga NP.
- Siberian Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*
First located above Deothang, we managed further scope views at our campsite en route to Trashigang, at Tingtibi and near Paro.
- Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*
A single sighting by David only near Kori La.
- Slaty-backed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hodgsonii*
Our only sightings were of several males and females around our campsite en route to Trashigang and of another male near Kori La.
- Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophciata*
By far the most frequently encountered of this genus, we found it most days with a maximum of up to 12 daily along the upper Limnethang Road.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*
This species is often split from Red-throated Flycatcher. We saw 2 males, one below Deothang and another seen well near Zhemgang.
- Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hyperythra*
This very attractive *ficedula* flycatcher was seen on only a single day of the tour with 2 males and 1 female near our campsite en route to Trashigang.
- White-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula monileger*
This unobtrusive bird was only heard in a thick, moist gully below Zhemgang.
- Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni*
This species was seen on 7 days of the trip, mainly in eastern Bhutan.
- Ultramarine Flycatcher** *Ficedula superciliaris*
A total of 11 individuals were found at various scattered localities with our first sighting en route to Trashigang.
- Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor*
3 individuals were seen, one near Kori La, one on the Limnethang Road and another on Yotong La pass which was reasonably cooperative.
- Sapphire Flycatcher** *Ficedula sapphira*
We were very fortunate to have scoped a pair of these rare, localized and unpredictable migrant flycatchers on the middle Limnethang Road.
- Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassina*
This beautiful and radiant bird was one of the most common species of the tour.
- Large Niltava** *Niltava grandis*
After hearing this retiring species numerous times we finally managed to get good sightings of both males and females on the middle Limnethang Road.
- Small Niltava** *Niltava macgrigoriae*
More numerous than the above species with our first sightings above Deothang with the majority of sightings later on near Zhemgang.
- Rufous-bellied Niltava** *Niltava sundara*
This gorgeous species was seen on several occasions with the highest numbers being on the Limnethang Road.
- Pale-chinned Blue-Flycatcher** *Cyornis poliogenys*
Despite hearing this species on a few occasions in Panbari Forest, it could not be lured out.
- Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides*

Our first sighting was of a male scoped near Limnethang with several more being found on the Zhemgang Road.

Pygmy Blue-Flycatcher *Muscicapella hodgsoni*

This secretive and retiring species was only heard on one occasion on the lower Limnethang Road.

Gray-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

This sprightly species was a conspicuous member of mixed foraging flocks with a high count of 15 in one day above Deothang.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

A single male was seen by some of the group whilst elephant back riding 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.

Red-flanked [Himalayan] Bluetail *Tarsiger [rufilatus] cyanurus*

Sometimes split by some authorities as a separate species, Himalayan Bluetail, we found a total of 6 with our first sightings being around our campsite en route to Trashigang. Most individuals were females but we did have brief views of a vivid male on Chele La.

Golden Bush-Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*

One of the most beautiful birds in the Himalayas, most of the group had stunning views of a male on the east slope of Thrumsing La.

White-browed Bush-Robin *Tarsiger indicus*

Good but brief views were had of this secretive robin on the east and west slopes of Thrumsing La pass.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Fairly common at low altitudes with our first encounters on the Kaziranga Extension. We had further views at all lowland sites in Bhutan.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*

First seen by some in the Kaziranga NP in the late afternoon, most of the group caught up with this species the next day in Panbari Forest.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Small numbers of this passage migrant were encountered in Kaziranga NP with 4 individuals seen later on in the east of Bhutan.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

This attractive bird was seen on several occasions with our first sighting at our campsite en route to Trashigang.

White-capped Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

A wonderful feature of Bhutanese rivers, this attractive species was encountered on streams throughout with a maximum of 6 on several days of the trip.

Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Almost as numerous as the preceding species and occurring in similar habitat with a maximum of 10 being found from Trongsa to Punakha.

White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*

This skulking songster was heard several times in mid-altitude forest and seen twice, once from Trashigang to Mongar and again on the middle Limnethang Road.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*

This most diminutive of forketails was seen brilliantly on 3 occasions, once on the middle Limnethang Road, once on the Zhemgang Road and later near the awesome Eagle's Nest Monestary.

Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus immaculatus*

Everyone was treated to brilliant scope views of 3 individuals of this rare lowland forktail below Deothang.

Slaty-backed Forktail*Enicurus schistaceus*

This handsome forktail was seen on 2 separate occasions, near Limnethang and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Purple Cochoa*Cochoa purpurea*

David was fortunate enough to get onto a single female near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Common [Siberian] Stonechat*Saxicola rubicola*

This widespread species was common in grassland habitat in Kaziranga NP. Some authorities split this species as Siberian Stonechat [*Saxicola torquatus indicus*]. A single bird was also seen en route from Guwahati to Samdrup Jonkhar.

Gray Bushchat*Saxicola ferrea*

A conspicuous feature at the roadside of Bhutan with more than 6 birds recorded on most travel days.

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 with one sighting above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Babblers Timaliidae**White-throated Laughingthrush***Garrulax albogularis*

Our most commonly recorded laughingthrush on account of its conspicuous nature and large flock size with 80 birds recorded around our campsite en route to Trashigang.

White-crested Laughingthrush*Garrulax leucolophus*

This handsome bird was first seen in secondary forest near Kori La with further memorable sightings on the lower Limnethang Road and the Zhemgang Road.

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush*Garrulax monileger*

We managed to obtain excellent unobstructed views of a pair of these striking birds at our campsite at Tingtibi.

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush*Garrulax pectoralis*

A flock of these endearing birds were seen by most of the group in Panbari forest.

Striated Laughingthrush*Garrulax striatus*

Numerous, vocal, and seen on most days with a maximum of 10 on two days along the Limnethang Road.

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush*Garrulax ruficollis*

This denizen of dense scrub was first encountered near Limnethang with excellent views later on the Zhemgang Road and at our campsite at Tingtibi.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush*Garrulax rufogularis*

This secretive species was heard near Limnethang and later seen very briefly near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Spotted Laughingthrush*Garrulax ocellatus*

A pair of these magnificent birds was seen at point-blank range on Chele La.

Gray-sided Laughingthrush *Garrulax caerulatus*

Another skulking Laughingthrush seen hopping around the forest undergrowth near our campsite en route to Trashigang. We later heard an unresponsive bird on the middle Limnethang Road.

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

This species was fairly common in the east of Bhutan with a total of 24 individuals encountered on 5 days of the trip. This species is sometimes considered a Bhutanese endemic [*Garrulax imbricatum*].

Scaly Laughingthrush *Garrulax subunicolor*

Considered one of the most difficult of laughingthrushes to see and rightly so, we only managed to hear this species near Trongsa.

Blue-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax squamatus*

A single bird was seen vocalizing from the tops of bushes as it moved around our camp at Tingtibi in the early morning. Another individual was heard and seen briefly near Zhemgang.

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 on 7 days of the tour.

Red-faced Liocichla *Liocichla phoenicea*

This arch skulker showed very briefly on the middle Limnethang Road and was heard calling there the following day.

Abbott's Babbler *Malacocincla abbotti*

Everyone obtained good views of an unusually confiding individual near Kaziranga NP.

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*

Heard in Panbari Forest and Kaziranga NP and seen by one participant.

White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*

1 bird showed briefly near our campsite en route to Trashigang with better views near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys*

This large, loud and striking laughingthrush was only seen on one occasion above Deothang.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

We had good views of a pair near Kori La as they circled around us several times. A single bird was later seen near Trongsa.

Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

This rare and secretive scimitar-Babbler was only heard from deep within a ravine on the Limnethang Road.

Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris*

This species proved a frustrating one and after trying in good habitat on all the passes we could only muster up one response on one occasion.

Long-billed Wren-Babbler *Rimator malacoptilus*

This rare, shy and skulking bird was heard on two occasions on the middle Limnethang Road.

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer*

A singleton was seen hopping around briefly in the drizzle on the upper Limnethang Road.

Pygmy Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla*

The high pitched whistled song of this tiny skulker was frequently heard in mid altitude forests throughout the trip with one sighting obtained on the middle Limnethang Road.

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis troglodytoides*

Stupendous views were enjoyed of this rare, localized and beautiful wren-babbler on the upper

Limnethang Road.

Spotted Wren-Babbler

Spelaeornis formosus

This shy, skulking forest mite was heard along the lower Limnethang Road and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Wedge-billed (Sikkim) Wren-Babbler

Spelaeornis (humei) formosus

This mega near mythical denizen of pristine Himalayan forest was seen exceptionally well along the middle Limnethang Road. A real surprise and a true MEGA of incomparable quality!!

Rufous-fronted Babbler

Stachyris rufifrons

This species of low altitude forest was heard on one occasion below Deothang.

Rufous-capped Babbler

Stachyris ruficeps

Fairly common in comparison to the previous species with a maximum count of 15 individuals on one day on the drive from Trashigang to Mongar.

Golden Babbler

Stachyris chrysaea

This gorgeous species of the undergrowth was seen well on 4 occasions with memorable sightings along the middle Limnethang Road and near Tingtibi.

Gray-throated Babbler

Stachyris nigriceps

A fairly secretive species that was seen near Limnethang and on the Zhemgang Road.

Striped Tit-Babbler

Macronous gularis

We had several encounters with this bird in Panbari Forest. Two birds were seen nest-building above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Chestnut-capped Babbler

Timalia pileata

This secretive species was unfortunately only heard in Kaziranga NP.

Jerdon's Babbler

Chrysomma altiloquax

2 birds were seen in dense *Elephant Grass* in Kaziranga NP by David only.

Striated Babbler

Turdoides earlei

Small flocks were seen on several occasions in Kaziranga NP.

Jungle Babbler

Turdoides striatus

2 birds were seen by some participants at our hotel in Guwahati with another 2 being seen at our campsite at Deothang. This sighting may constitute the first record of this species in Bhutan.

Silver-eared Mesia

Leiothrix argentauris

An absolute stunner that was seen fairly commonly above Deothang with another pair being found near Zhemgang.

Red-billed Leiothrix

Leiothrix lutea

This secretive ground-dwelling forest babbler was seen only once by some of the group near Zhemgang.

Cutia

Cutia nipalensis

This magnificent bird was encountered on 3 occasions with 3 birds near our campsite en route to Trashigang, a singleton near Kori La and a remarkable 9 individuals all feeding on one tree on the middle Limnethang Road allowing for great photographic opportunities.

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler

Pteruthius rufiventer

This scarce canopy dweller was heard and seen briefly on the middle Limnethang Road, whilst a female was seen by David near Zhemgang.

White-browed Shrike-Babbler

Pteruthius flaviscapis

Considerably more common than its larger cousin listed above, we had 6 sightings on 6 days of the trip with our first great views above Deothang.

Green Shrike-Babbler

Pteruthius xanthochlorus

This high altitude shrike-babbler proved to be surprisingly scarce with only one sighting of one bird

near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler

Pteruthius melanotis

One of the hottest 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 several times roaming the bamboo in small flocks. A maximum of 20 individuals was seen in one day along the middle Limnethang associating with Greater and Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbills.

Hoary-throated Barwing

Actinodura nipalensis

An attractive component of high altitude forest and much more uncommon than its cousin mentioned above, we had terrific views of 2 small flocks on Yotong La and Pele La.

Blue-winged Minla

Minla cyanouroptera

This species was often encountered in fairly large numbers in the east of Bhutan. We had our first sighting near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Chestnut-tailed Minla

Minla strigula

This gorgeous bird was seen on several occasions in middle altitude forest with a high count of 40 in one day around our camp en route to Trashigang.

Red-tailed Minla

Minla ignotincta

More numerous than the preceding species, we saw up to a dozen birds on most days in Bhutan.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta

Alcippe chrysotis

This attractive species of bamboo was seen only once near Trongsa on the Zhemgang Road with a fast moving flock of 8 individuals.

Yellow-throated Fulvetta

Alcippe cinerea

Two small flocks were encountered moving low down in Bamboo thickets on the middle Limnethang Road.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta

Alcippe castaneiceps

Numerous at high altitudes with up to 25 daily on the high passes.

White-browed Fulvetta

Alcippe vinipectus

Ubiquitous in the western portion of the country with our highest numbers of up to 10 daily at high altitudes.

Nepal Fulvetta

Alcippe nipalensis

Recorded on 6 days of the tour with small flocks found 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 25 daily along the Limnethang Road.

Long-tailed Sibia

Heterophasia picaoides

This lowland species was only seen by Tshering in a mixed flock above Deothang.

Striated Yuhina

Yuhina castaniceps

This low altitude species was only seen on 4 days of the trip with great views obtained on the Zhemgang Road.

White-naped Yuhina

Yuhina bakeri

This attractive bird was first encountered above Deothang before seeing several more on the middle Limnethang Road.

Whiskered Yuhina

Yuhina flavicollis

The most commonly encountered yuhina in Bhutan and a conspicuous member of mixed flocks, we found over 80 birds during our time along the Limnethang Road.

Stripe-throated Yuhina

Yuhina gularis

This large yuhina with its floppy crest was seen well near our campsite en route to Trashigang, on

Thrumsing La and on Yotong La.

Rufous-vented Yuhina

Yuhina occipitalis

This species was nearly as common as Whiskered Yuhina with small numbers seen most days at higher altitudes.

Black-chinned Yuhina

Yuhina nigrimenta

This localized bird was never common during the tour with small quick-moving flocks encountered on the middle Limnethang Road and the Zhemgang Road.

White-bellied Yuhina (Erpornis)

Erpornis zantholeuca

Undoubtedly the rarest yuhina in Bhutan, we saw a total of 5 birds on 3 occasions below Zhemgang and near our campsite at Tingtibi.

Fire-tailed Myzornis

Myzornis pyrrhoura

This avian gem was only encountered once in a fast-moving mixed flock on the east side of Thrumsing La pass.

Parrotbills Paradoxornithidae

Great Parrotbill

Conostoma oemodium

We first heard this massive bamboo-dwelling parrotbill on Thrumsing La before getting close views of a single calling bird on Pele La.

Brown Parrotbill

Paradoxornis unicolor

4 individuals of this scarce parrotbill were seen very well in the Bhumthang Valley.

Gray-headed Parrotbill

Paradoxornis gularis

This is a very rare, elusive and unpredictable bird in Bhutan. We were gob smacked when we located a flock of at least 12 individuals feeding rather high up in the canopy together with a mixed species flock above Deothang.

Black-throated Parrotbill

Paradoxornis nipalensis

We had some fantastic close-up views of a flock of at least 13 birds moving through a bamboo thicket close to our camp en route to Trashigang, whilst later on the middle Limnethang Road we bumped into another 4 birds.

Black-browed (Lesser Rufous-headed) Parrotbill *Paradoxornis atrosuperciliaris*

David and several other participants were extremely fortunate to get on a single bird in a mixed flock of Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills and Rusty-fronted Barwings on the middle Limnethang Road. The race seen was the black-browed race which is inexplicably rare in Bhutan and almost unknown from the country.

[Greater] Rufous-headed Parrotbill

Paradoxornis ruficeps

Awesome views were enjoyed of this uncommon and extremely attractive species on the middle Limnethang Road.

Long-tailed Tits Aegithalidae

Black-throated Tit

Aegithalos concinnus

Occurring at generally lower altitudes than its congener, this bird was seen generally in small numbers on 8 days of the tour with a maximum of 12 one day on the Limnethang Road.

Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit

Aegithalos iouschistos

A rather scarce species of high altitude conifer forest which was only seen on Thrumsing La.

Tits & Chickadees Paridae

Great Tit

Parus major

Several individuals were encountered during our stay at Kaziranga with another 2 being found along the

drive from Guwahati to Samdrup Jonkhar.

Coal Tit*Periparus ater*

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

Rufous-vented Tit*Periparus rubidiventris*

Much scarcer than the above species with which it overlaps in habitat and altitude. We found this species on Thrumsing La and Chele La.

Gray-crested Tit*Lophophanes dichrous*

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

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 sibilotus*

This brightly coloured 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 was one of the most celebrated birds of the trip and rightly so, it is an incredibly beautiful, large, uncommon tit that usually forages high up in the canopy. We were extremely fortunate to have obtained magnificent eye level views of a stunning male as it fed alongside us near Tingtibi. Some of the group picked up another individual below Zhemgang the following day.

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

This lowland nuthatch was seen in small numbers in Kaziranga NP and on 5 days in the lowlands of Bhutan with peak numbers along the Zhemgang Road.

White-tailed Nuthatch*Sitta himalayensis*

The high altitude nuthatch in Bhutan with 7 individuals seen on 5 days of the tour.

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 were blown away to see this species above Deothang and have prolonged 20 minute scope views of a single bird.

Australasian Treecreepers Climacteridae**Eurasian Treecreeper***Certhia familiaris*

This widespread species was seen on 4 occasions in high altitude coniferous forest.

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper*Certhia nipalensis*

Only a single brief sighting of this solitary bird in rhododendron forest atop Yotong La.

Brown-throated Treecreeper*Certhia discolor*

A single bird was seen for an extended period above Deothang.

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

A single bird was seen by some of the group on the Kaziranga Extension.

Gould's Sunbird*Aethopyga gouldiae*

This resplendent bird was seen on a few occasions at fairly high altitudes with a maximum of 4 on two days near Trongsa and on the Eagle's Nest hike.

Green-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga nipalensis*

The most commonly encountered sunbird during the tour with good numbers most days including a

high of more than 30 birds around our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*

Another fairly numerous sunbird with small numbers most days at lower altitudes with a high count of 12 below Deothang.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*

Some of the group had views of a vivid male in Panbari Forest which was not a problem as everyone obtained mouth watering views of several gorgeous males below Deothang.

Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda*

A male of this nomadic but exquisite bird was encountered atop Thrumsing La.

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*

A total of 11 were seen in the south-eastern lowlands of Bhutan.

Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae

Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum melanoxanthum*

Only David managed a sighting of a male of this rare Himalayan species during a lunch break at our Sengor campsite.

Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*

A pair was seen briefly by some participants in Panbari Forest.

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum*

This species was heard on a few occasions on the Kaziranga Extension.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*

Numerous at middle altitudes especially in the east of Bhutan.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

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

Old World Orioles Oriolidae

Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris*

We had brilliant views of 3 individuals in Punakha.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*

Another attractive species that was seen fairly regularly in mid-altitude broadleaved forest.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Several great views were had of this beautiful species on the Kaziranga Extension as well as below Deothang.

Fairy-bluebirds Irenidae

Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*

This electric bird was seen once on the Kaziranga Extension and 4 individuals were seen at quite some distance above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Shrikes Laniidae

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

A conspicuous roadside bird with up to 10 seen daily in open habitat.

Gray-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

This species was extremely numerous throughout India and Bhutan.

Helmetshrikes & Allies Prionopidae

- Common Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*
 Good views of 2 birds were had on consecutive days in Panbari Forest.
- Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis gularis*
 A total of 6 birds were seen below and above Deothang.

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 area, whilst it proved to be one of the commonest species in Bhutan.
- Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus*
 A single bird showed well in Panbari Forest, whilst a total of 19 were encountered in the lowlands of Bhutan.
- Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus remifer*
 A pair above Deothang was our only encounter of the trip.
- Hair-crested (Spangled) Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*
 This species was fairly common in well-wooded areas of Kaziranga and was also seen on several occasions in the lowlands of Bhutan.
- Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus*
 We had great views of a magnificent pair in Panbari Forest with a singleton found later on below Zhemgang.

Woodswallows Artamidae

- Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*
 We had awesome flight and perched views of this unique species in and around Kaziranga NP. A further 4 individuals were seen near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae

- Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*
 2 individuals were seen, one near our campsite en route to Trashigang and another on Pele La.
- 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 well in Panbari Forest and near Limnethang.
- Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda*
 We enjoyed several close views of this attractive species on the Kaziranga Extension and on the drive from Guwahati and Samdrup Jonkhar.
- Gray Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*
 Small noisy groups were found in Panbari Forest and in the lowlands of Bhutan.
- Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica*
 Small loose flocks were encountered around Bhumthang.
- Eurasian Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Great views were had of this charismatic species at high altitudes with a maximum number of 15+ seen on Chele La.

Red-billed Chough*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

These crows were commonly seen in the Paro, Bumthang, and Ura Valleys with up to 150 daily.

House Crow*Corvus splendens*

The commonest bird of urban India, we had hundreds on our drive from Guwahati to Kaziranga. Large numbers were also encountered in the border town of Samdrup Jonkhar.

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.

Starlings Sturnidae**Spot-winged Starling***Sturnia spiloptera*

A single sighting of four birds seen between Zhemgang and Tongsa in an arid valley constituted our only sighting of this scarce nomadic migrant. A very good bird and a great unexpected bonus!

Chestnut-tailed Starling*Sturnia malabarica*

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

Asian Pied Starling*Gracupica contra*

Fairly numerous on the Kaziranga Extension with several more being encountered above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Common Myna*Acridotheres tristis*

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

Common Hill Myna*Gracula religiosa*

Good views of a pair were had by some of the group in Kaziranga NP. We later had great scope views of at least a dozen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Jungle Myna*Acridotheres fuscus*

This species is almost as common as Common Myna on the Kaziranga Extension. Many more were encountered en route from Guwahati to Samdrup Jonkhar.

White-vented Myna*Acridotheres grandis*

Small flocks were seen most days on the Kaziranga Extension with a further 2 being seen above Samdrup Jonkhar.

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 with more than 40 seen daily in Paro.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

Another widespread Asian species that was seen in small numbers throughout the Kaziranga Extension. This species was also seen most days in Bhutan.

Weavers & Allies Ploceidae**Baya Weaver***Ploceus philippinus*

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

Finn's Weaver*Ploceus megarhynchus*

A non-breeding individual of this rare species was seen by some of the group in Kaziranga National Park.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae**Red Avadavat***Amandava amandava*

A small flock was seen by some of the group in Kaziranga NP.

White-rumped Munia*Lonchura striata*

We had an encounter with a single flock feeding on grain near the entrance to Kaziranga NP.

Nutmeg Mannikin*Lonchura punctulata*

A flock of 20+ individuals were scoped in a field near Limnethang.

True Finches Fringillidae**Plain Mountain-Finch***Leucosticte nemoricola*

We saw large flocks of this montane species both perched and flying on 8 days of the tour with a daily high of at least 400 near Bhumtang.

Crimson-browed Finch*Pinicola subhimachalus*

We had good views of this handsome species on 2 occasions, a flock of 5 en route to Trashigang and a single female at our campsite at Sengor.

Common Rosefinch*Carpodacus erythrinus*

Only a single male was seen by some participants in a mixed feeding flock of tits in the Ura Valley.

(Himalayan) Beautiful Rosefinch*Carpodacus pulcherrimus*

A total of 13 birds were seen in 3 separate flocks in the Bhumthang Valley.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch*Carpodacus edwardsii*

A pair was seen exceptionally well near our campsite at Sengor with further views of 4 females on Yotong La.

(Himalayan) White-browed Rosefinch*Carpodacus thura*

This species was unfortunately only heard near the top of Chele La.

Red Crossbill*Loxia curvirostra*

We had mind-blowing close views of at least 12 of these bizarre birds in the Ura Valley.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch*Carduelis spinoides*

3 flocks, each numbering 30+ birds were seen above Deothang, near our campsite en route to Trashigang and on the Zhemgang Road.

Tibetan Serin*Serinus thibetanus*

2 small flocks of these nomads were seen in eastern Bhutan, en route to Trashigang and on the middle Limnethang Road.

Brown Bullfinch*Pyrrhula nipalensis*

This scarce bird was first seen briefly at our campsite en route to Trashigang with excellent prolonged scope views of a flock of 14 on the middle Limnethang Road.

Gray-headed Bullfinch*Pyrrhula erythaca*

This is a very rare species in Bhutan and we were extremely fortunate to have had awesome close-up views of 2 stunning individuals en route to Trashigang

Collared Grosbeak*Mycerobas affinis*

This striking bird was pleasantly numerous on Chele La with more than twenty noisy and conspicuous individuals. Earlier in the trip we had a small flock of 4 near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Spot-winged Grosbeak*Mycerobas melanozanthos*

We enjoyed wonderful scope views of a flock numbering 22 individuals on the lower Limnethang Road.

White-winged Grosbeak*Mycerobas carnipes*

Seen twice in Bhutan, we first had a close encounter with 3 birds at our lunch stop on Pele La. Later on we bumped into a small flock of 7 on Chele La.

Gold-naped Finch*Pyrrhoptectes epaulette*

A rare, shy, unpredictable and highly sought-after species of Bhutan, we managed to obtain an unprecedented 5 separate sightings of this magnificent forest finch totaling no fewer than 10 birds.

Scarlet Finch*Haematospiza sipahi*

Our first tantalizing encounter was of an uncooperative female above Deothang. We were later rewarded with point blank views of a pair that included an immaculate male on our drive from Mongar to Yongkhola.

Buntings & Allies Emberizidae**Crested Bunting***Melophus lathami*

Seen on 4 occasions in scrubby countryside at low elevation. Our sightings included several striking males.

Little Bunting*Emberiza pusilla*

Our only sighting of this altitudinal migrant was of 7 individuals that moved through our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Annotated List of Mammal Species:**(25 Species)****Moupin Pika***Ochotona thibetana*

We had one sighting of this species on Chele La.

Black Giant Squirrel*Ratufa bicolor*

One of these huge attractive squirrels were seen in Panbari Forest with 3 more individuals showing brilliantly near Tingtibi.

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel*Dremomys lokriah*

2 of these squirrels were seen in Panbari Forest on the extension with several more being found in the forests of Bhutan.

Hoary-bellied Squirrel*Callosciurus pygerythus*

A total of 18 were seen throughout the Kaziranga Extension, all within the national park and Panbari Forest. This species was also seen on 3 days in Bhutan with a high of 6 found at Tingtibi.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel*Tamiops mcclllandii*

3 of these diminutive rodents were seen scurrying from tree to tree in Panbari Forest with sightings on most days in Bhutan.

Sikkim Vole*Microtus sikimensis*

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

Yellow-throated Martin*Martes flavigula*

One was seen very briefly as it dashed across the road in typical martin fashion.

Weasel sp.

An unidentified species of weasel was seen dashing across the road near our campsite en route to Trashigang.

Himalayan Palm Civit*Paguma larvata*

We were blown away above Deothang when this beautiful mammal climbed down the trunk of a tree right in front of us before disappearing into the forest understory.

Common (Eurasian) Otter*Lutra lutra*

Awesome views were enjoyed of this playful mammal at the edge of a large waterbody one late afternoon in Kaziranga NP.

Nepal Gray Langur*Semnopithecus schistaceus*

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

Golden (Leaf-Monkey) Langur*Trachypithecus geei*

Locally abundant near Tingtibi where we observed up to 50 individuals daily sometimes at a distance of no more than 5 meters.

Capped (Leaf-Monkey) Langur*Trachypithecus pileatus*

Small troops of these playful monkeys were seen in Panbari Forest and in Kaziranga NP. This species was the most common primate in Bhutan and was seen almost daily.

Assam Macaque*Macaca assamensis*

A small troop was seen in Panbari Forest on the Kaziranga Extension with several sightings throughout Bhutan.

Rhesus Macaque*Macaca mulatta*

Two small troops were seen in Kaziranga National Park with further sightings in the lowlands of Bhutan.

Hoolock Gibbon*Hoolock hoolock*

This great ape was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the Kaziranga Extension. After hearing there loud whooping calls, we managed to track down a single male who sat right above our heads grunting away whilst eating on the plentiful fruits that covered the tree.

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 bubalis*

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.

Sambar*Cervus unicolor*

A small group of 6 were seen lying down at the edge of a wetland in Kaziranga NP.

Swamp Deer*Cervus duvaucelii*

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 and seen very well twice, once near Limnethang and again near Tingtibi.

Common Goral*Nemorhaedus goral*

One was seen briefly as it bounded across the middle Limnethang Road.

Clouded Leopard*Neofelis nebulosa*

Whilst trying to tape in an unresponsive chestnut-headed Tesia near Yotong La, David crept into the forest to try and pinpoint the exact whereabouts of the calling Tesia. Suddenly there were screams of "leopard" echoing from within the forest. The whole group ran down the road to try and get a visual on

Dave's whereabouts, he was pointing and shouting, "Look over the ridge", I dropped everything and ran into the forest after Dave in a 0.0001 % chance of chasing the predator towards the road for the group to see but alas it was in vain and we came out empty handed after two grueling attempts. The cat turned out to be a CLOUDED LEOPARD, one of the rarest and most sought-after cats in the world. David was exceptionally lucky to have walked in the right place at the right time to flush this near-mythical beast off the forest floor no more than 5 meters away from him!!! Well done Dave!

Photo Credits: Blood Pheasant, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, Great Hornbill, Indian One-horned Rhinoceros, Bhutan Scenery and Eagle's Nest Monastery. All photographs by David Shackelford.

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