



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## SRI LANKA

26<sup>th</sup> December 2005 – 4<sup>th</sup> January 2006



*Malabar Whistling Thrush by Keith Valentine*

### Tour summary

This tropical island lying just to the south of the Indian subcontinent was the focus during our ten-day adventure in quest of great Sri Lanka endemics and other geographically localised bird species. The trip was highly successful and saw us locating every single endemic of the island including the newly discovered Serendib Scops-Owl.

Transferring from the bustling city of Colombo, we made our way to our first birding destination on the banks of the Kelani River where we explored the moist hills and valleys of the Kelani River Forest Reserve. Here we located Yellow-fronted Barbet, Layard's Parakeet, Sri Lanka Gray Hornbill and Orange-billed Babbler. Black Eagle was seen flying over the area and in the moist forested leaf litter we found the retiring Sri Lanka Spurfowl and Spot-winged Thrush. Sri Lanka Hanging Parrots were rather conspicuous on the forest edge and a single Chestnut-backed Owlet was located during our final morning in the reserve. Other great forest species included Malabar Trogon, Yellow-browed and White-browed Bulbuls, Brown-capped and Dark-fronted Babbler, and White-throated Flowerpecker.

We headed through the highlands of Nuwara Eliya, famous for its superb Ceylon tea, and that afternoon we searched through the gardens of Victoria Park finding avian gems such as Sri Lanka White-eye, the migratory Indian Pitta, Indian Blue Robin, Forest Wagtail, Yellow-eared Bulbul and the beautiful Pied Thrush. An area of thick undergrowth near to our hotel also yielded a pair of secretive Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush.

The following morning we departed early for Horton Plains National Park and by dawn we had set our sights on the difficult Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, a very shy and localised endemic. The stunted surrounding forest was highly productive as we had great views of Kashmir Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Wood-Pigeon, Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler, Indian Scimitar-Babbler, Dull-blue Flycatcher and Long-billed Sunbird.

Continuing to our net destination at the wetlands of Yala National Park, we found Spot-billed Pelicans in large numbers, stately Black-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Pheasant-tailed Jacana favoring lily-covered ponds, prolific waders including Great Thick-knee and Yellow-wattled Lapwing, and we had excellent views of a stately Gray-headed Fish-Eagle. The dense woodland within the park yielded displaying Indian Peafowl, Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon, the impressive Malabar Pied-Hornbill, Jerdon's Bushlark, Indian Robin, flocks of migratory Rosy Starling, and good numbers of Indian Nightjars calling in the evening. Mammals and reptiles were well represented in Yala and we had close encounters with Golden Jackal, Ruddy and Stripe-necked Mongoose, Asian Elephant, Spotted Deer, Sambar, Bengal Monitor and Mugger Crocodile.

The next day was spent exploring the Bundala and Uda Walawa National Parks, and both reserves produced great wildlife sightings. Explorations of the seasonal wetlands of Bundala yielded Black Bittern, an obliging Ruddy-breasted Crake, Blue-faced Malkoha, and Blyth's Pipit strutting through the more open fields. The grasslands and sparse woodland of Uda Walawa held Barred Buttonquail, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Streaked Weaver, an abundance of Asian Elephants, and a fortuitous sighting of Jungle Cat.

Our final destination was the expansive lowland rainforest of Sinharaja National Park. This area proved outstanding and during our explorations we located Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Red-faced Malkoha, the skulking Green-billed Coucal, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, and had incredible views of a shy Slaty-legged Crake. Other gems of the forest edge included Mountain Hawk-Eagle, the stunning Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Crimson-fronted Barbet, the localized Black-throated Munia, White-faced Starling and Sri Lanka Myna. Close up views were also enjoyed of the impressive Indian Rock Python and Hump-nosed Viper. By night we located a Sri Lanka Frogmouth and had amazing views of the recently discovered Serendib Scops-Owl.

This incredible island proved rewarding for scarce endemic bird species and other fantastic wildlife sightings as well. Sri Lanka is a pleasure to travel, has great food throughout, and comfortable accommodation - all this combining to create one of the finest birding destinations in Asia!



Indian Elephant



Indian Pitta

## BIRD SPECIES LIST

E = Endemic, SE = Sub-continent endemic

### Grebes *Podicipedidae*

#### **Little Grebe (Dabchick)**

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Our only sighting of this species was a single bird seen at a waterbody in Bundala NP.

### Pelicans *Pelecanidae*

#### **Spot-billed Pelican**

*Pelecanus phillipensis*

Good numbers of roughly 50 birds were found in the town of Tissa where they nest in trees around the village.

### Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

#### **Indian Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Roughly 100 seen on each day around the town of Tissa.

#### **Little Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax niger*

Seen regularly at most waterbodies countrywide, with numbers of around 100 birds seen around Tissa.

### Anhinga & Darter *Anhingidae*

#### **(Oriental) Darter**

*Anhinga melanogaster*

Around 5 birds were noted each day at the wetlands in the Tissa area.

*NOTE: The resident African form P. rufa is sometimes lumped with the Asian P. melanogaster and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms.*

### Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns *Ardeidae*

#### **Gray Heron**

*Ardea cinerea*

Seen at wetlands in the Tissa area.

#### **Purple Heron**

*Ardea purpurea*

We found this species in wetlands around the town of Tissa.

NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands *A. p. bournei* is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

**Great (White) Egret** *Ardea alba*

A common sight at all wetlands and rice paddies in the Tissa area, Yala NP and Bundala NP.

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World *A. a. egretta* which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

**Intermediate Egret** *Mesophyx intermedia*

This species was recorded in low numbers at the wetlands around the town of Tissa.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Encountered often at the many rice paddies around Tissa.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little, Western Reef (*E. gularis*) and Madagascar's Dimorphic (*E. dimorpha*) Egret into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*

A very common species that was encountered almost daily.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Commonly recorded throughout Sri Lanka where it was seen.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret (*E. coromanda*). This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

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

At least 10 birds were noted daily in the Tissa area.

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*

A single bird was seen around Tissa and a further 4 birds were found at wetlands in Bundala NP.

**Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis*

A single bird was found at a roadside wetland in Bundala NP.

### Storks Ciconidae

**Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala*

At least 15 birds were found in Yala NP and a further 30 were seen at Bundala NP.

**Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*

Good numbers were noted at all wetland localities in the Tissa area, Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*

5 birds were found just outside the town of Tissa.

**Black-necked Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*

A majestic species that we found once in Yala NP when a pair of birds were seen.

### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

**Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Common in the wetlands and rice paddies around Tissa.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

At least 20 birds were seen in Yala NP and surrounds with similar numbers noted in Bundala NP.

### Swans, Geese & Ducks Anatidae

**Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*

Good numbers of around 25 birds were observed in the wetlands around Tissa.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

Many were seen at the wetlands in Yala NP and Bundala NP

### Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures Accipitridae

**Oriental Honey-Buzzard***Pernis ptilorhyncus*

A single bird was sighted flying over the Kelani River and 2 were found at the Sinharaja forest.

**Black-shouldered (-winged) Kite***Elanus caeruleus*

Seen on our drive from the Kelani River Lodge to Nuwara Eliya and 5 birds were seen in the grasslands in Uda Walawa NP.

NOTE: Clements has split the two species Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) of the Old World and White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) of the New World. This split is not universally accepted.

**Brahminy Kite***Haliastur Indus*

A single bird was noted in Yala NP however at least 10 birds were found in Bundala NP and Uda Walawa NP.

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

A total of 4 of these impressive Eagles were found at Yala NP.

**Grey-headed Fish Eagle***Icthyophaga ichthyaeus*

A single bird was found at a roadside wetland near the town of Tissa.

**Crested Serpent-Eagle***Spilornis cheela*

Good views were had of birds in Bundala NP and at the Sinharaja forest.

**Pallid Harrier***Circus macrourus*

This graceful species was seen twice flying over the grasslands in Uda Walawa NP.

**Shikra***Accipiter badius*

The common accipiter of Sri Lanka, it was sighted at the Kelani River FR, Horton Plains and Sinharaja forest.

**Black Eagle***Ictinaetus malayensis*

Excellent views were had of soaring birds at the Kelani River Lodge and near Sinharaja forest.

**Booted Eagle***Hieratus pennatus*

A single bird was found on our drive from Horton Plains NP to Tissa.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle***Spizaetus cirrhatus*

At least 4 birds were found in Yala NP and a further 4 at Uda Walawa NP.

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle***Spizaetus nipalensis*

Birds were noted flying over the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae****Eurasian Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

A single bird was found in open woodland outside Yala NP.

**Pheasants & Partridges Phasianidae****Sri Lanka Spurfowl (E)***Galloperdix bicalcarata*

A secretive species however it does call often and can thus be located in this way. We were fortunate to have excellent views of 2 birds in the Kelani River FR and also at the Sinharaja forest.

**Sri Lanka Junglefowl (E)***Gallus lafayetii*

Fairly common and seen at the Kelani River FR, Yala NP, Bundala NP and the Sinharaja forest.

**Indian Peafowl (SE)***Pavo cristatus*

A truly magnificent species that was recorded in large numbers in both Yala and Bundala NP's.

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

Large numbers of around 15 birds were seen in the roads of Uda Walawa NP.

### Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

#### **Slaty-legged Crake**

*Rallina Eurizonoides*

Great views were had of a pair of birds that were found at the forest edge in a tea plantation.

#### **Ruddy-breasted Crake**

*Porzana fusca*

A single bird was seen at close range at a wetland edge in Bundala NP.

#### **White-breasted Waterhen**

*Amaurornis phoenicurus*

This species was commonly sighted at every locality on the tour.

#### **Purple (Gray-headed) Swamphen**

*Porphyrio [Porphyrio] poliocephalus*

Commonly sighted at the wetlands around Tissa and at suitable habitat in Bundala NP.

*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognised as distinct species. The form we recorded would then become Gray-headed Swamphen (P. poliocephalus) Other forms to be recognised may include African Swamphen (P. madagascariensis), Philippine Swamphen (P. pulverulentus) and Eastern Swamphen (P. melanotus).*

#### **Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

A common bird, encountered at several wetland sites throughout the tour.

### Jacanas *Jacanidae*

#### **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**

*Metopidius indicus*

A stunning bird frequenting areas covered in lilies. At least 100 birds were present at a single wetland in the Tissa area.

### Painted Snipes *Rostratulidae*

#### **Greater Painted-Snipe**

*Rostratula benghalensis*

A single bird was found in marshy habitat in Bundala NP.

### Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

#### **Black-winged Stilt**

*Himantopus himantopus*

This species was common at wetlands in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

### Thick-knees *Burhinidae*

#### **Eurasian Thick-knee**

*Burhinus oediconemus*

6 birds were located roosting under bushes in Bundala NP

#### **Great Thick-knee**

*Escacus recurvirostris*

An impressive species that was encountered in large numbers at wetlands outside Yala NP and in Bundala NP.

### Coursers & Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

#### **Small Pratincole**

*Glareola lacteal*

This dainty species was seen in Bundala NP when 8 birds were observed sitting in the road near a salt pan.

### Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae*

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Yellow-wattled Lapwing (SE)</b>  | <i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>     |
| A bird of dry, open areas that was encountered in such habitat at Yala NP and Bundala NP.                       |                                 |
| <b>Red-wattled Lapwing</b>  | <i>Vanellus indicus</i>         |
| A very common species that was encountered around Tissa, Yala NP and Bundala NP.                                |                                 |
| <b>Pacific Golden Plover</b>  | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>          |
| Roughly 5 birds were seen at the shallow pans in Yala NP while 2 more were found at similar pans in Bundala NP. |                                 |
| <b>Black-bellied Plover</b>   | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>     |
| Birds were found in Yala and Bundala NP's.  |                                 |
| <b>Little Ringed Plover</b>   | <i>Charadrius dubius</i>        |
| This species was only seen at a few pans in the Yala area.  |                                 |
| <b>Snowy Plover</b>   | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>  |
| Fairly common at pans in Yala NP and Bundala NP.  |                                 |
| <b>Mongolian Plover</b>   | <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>      |
| Only 2 birds were found at a pan inside Yala NP.  |                                 |
| <b>Greater Sand Plover</b>  | <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i> |
| Birds were noted at pans in Yala NP and Bundala NP.   |                                 |

### Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Pintail Snipe</b>  | <i>Gallinago stenura</i>   |
| Great views were had of birds near marshes in Bundala NP.   |                            |
| <b>Black-tailed Godwit</b>  | <i>Limosa limosa</i>       |
| Huge numbers of around 75 birds were found at pans just outside Yala NP and at the salt pans in Bundala NP.                                   |                            |
| <b>Eurasian Curlew</b>  | <i>Numenius arquata</i>    |
| A single bird was found in Bundala NP.  |                            |
| <b>Common Redshank</b>  | <i>Tringa tetanus</i>      |
| Seen at pans in both Yala NP and Bundala NP with additional birds seen at pans outside Yala NP.   |                            |
| <b>Marsh Sandpiper</b>  | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>  |
| This species was common at pans in Yala and Bundala NP's as well as outside Yala NP.  |                            |
| <b>Common Greenshank</b>  | <i>Tringa nebularia</i>    |
| Another common species of the pans in the Yala and Bundala areas.   |                            |
| <b>Green Sandpiper</b>  | <i>Tringa ochropus</i>     |
| 2 birds were found along the stream that flows through Victoria Park in the town of Nuwara Eliya and another 2 were seen at ponds in Yala NP. |                            |
| <b>Wood Sandpiper</b>   | <i>Tringa glareola</i>     |
| 5 birds were seen in total at Bundala NP.   |                            |
| <b>Common Sandpiper</b>   | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>  |
| Commonly sighted at many localities throughout the country.   |                            |
| <b>Ruddy Turnstone</b>  | <i>Arenaria interpres</i>  |
| At least 10 birds were found at pans in the Yala area with a further 3 seen in Bundala NP   |                            |
| <b>Sanderling</b>   | <i>Calidris alba</i>       |
| A single bird was found at a pan outside of Yala NP.  |                            |
| <b>Little Stint</b>   | <i>Calidris minuta</i>     |
| Common at pans in the Yala and Bundala areas  |                            |
| <b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>   | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> |
| Another common species at Yala NP and Bundala NP.   |                            |

### Gulls Laridae

**Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*  
2 birds were located at a wetland near the coast in Bundala NP.

### Terns *Sternidae*

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*  
A few were located at pans outside of Yala NP while at least 50 were found in Bundala NP.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*  
Large numbers were seen at Bundala NP with smaller numbers in the Yala area.

**Great Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii*  
3 birds were seen at the salt pans in Bundala NP.

**Common Tern** *Sterna Hirundo*  
Many were sighted flying over wetlands in the Tissa area.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*  
2 birds were found at a pan outside Yala NP and another 3 were seen in Bundala NP.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*  
Many seen at wetlands in the Tissa area, Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
Also seen in large number at the Yala and Bundala pans.

### Doves & Pigeons *Columbidae*

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*  
Common at every locality throughout the entire tour.

**Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon (E)** *Columba elphinstonii*  
This special pigeon is very localised and found only in the higher areas of the country. We found 3 birds at the Horton Plains NP that allowed for great views.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*  
3 birds were seen in Yala NP.

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*  
Very common throughout Sri Lanka.

**Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*  
This species was seen at the lowland forest sites of Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Orange-breasted Green Pigeon** *Treron bicincta*  
Good numbers of 15 and then 10 birds were seen on consecutive days in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Pompadour Green Pigeon** *Treron pompadora*  
At least 10 birds were seen in the Kelani River FR and 8 in the Sinharaja forest.

**Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea*  
This large pigeon is common on the island and was sighted every day on the tour.

### Parrots & Allies *Psittacidae*

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*  
Commonly recorded at Yala NP, Uda Walawa NP and Bundala NP.

**Plum-headed Parakeet (SE)** *Psittacula cyanocephala*  
3 birds were found in open woodland in Uda Walawa NP in the afternoon..

**Layard's Parakeet (E)** *Psittacula calthropae*  
Birds were found at the lowland forest sites of Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot (E)** *Loriculus beryllinus*

Common and conspicuous at Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

### Cuckoos *Cuculidae*

**Pied Cuckoo**

*Clamator jacobinus*

This species was most common in woodland outside Yala NP where 7 birds were found.

**Lesser Cuckoo**

*Cuculus poliocephalus*

A single bird was found perched inconspicuously in forest at Sinharaja .

**Banded Bay Cuckoo**

*Cacomantis sonneratii*

A single bird was found in woodland along the banks of the Kelani River, the bird was first heard calling and then when located awesome views were had.

**Gray-bellied Cuckoo (SE)**

*Cacomantis passerinus*

We saw around 5 in our time at Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Asian Koel**

*Eudynamis scolopacea*

Often heard however we had sightings of this species in the Kelani River FR, at Yala NP and at Sinharaja forest.

**Blue-faced Malkoha (SE)**

*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

Two sightings of single birds were had in the thick woodlands found in Bundala NP.

**Red-faced Malkoha (E)**

*Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*

A total of 5 birds were found in the Sinharaja forest, they were often associated with mixed feeding flocks.

### Coucals *Centropodidae*

**Green-billed Coucal (E)**

*Centropus chlororhynchos*

A single bird was very well seen in Sinharaja forest.

**Greater Coucal**

*Centropus sinensis*

Encountered many times throughout the region at most sites.

### Typical Owls *Strigidae*

**Serendib Scops Owl (E)**

*Otus thilohoffmannii*

This species was only discovered in 2001 and was one of the stars of the tour. After much searching we finally managed to track down a calling bird, which gave great views.

**Chestnut-backed Owlet (E)**

*Glaucidium castanonotum*

Another endemic owl species, which was seen only once along the Kelani River.

### Frogmouths *Podargidae*

**Ceylon Frogmouth (SE)**

*Batrachostomus moniliger*

Incredible views were had of this species in the evening in Sinharaja forest.

### Nightjars *Caprimulgidae*

**Indian Nightjar (SE)**

*Caprimulgus asiaticus*

This species was found to be common in the woodland around Yala NP and many were seen and heard in this area after dark.

### Swifts *Apodidae*

**Indian Swiftlet (SE)***Aerodramus unicolor*

A very common species on the island, which was seen cruising the skies at every locality.

**Asian Palm Swift***Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Another regular sight on the island, this species was seen almost every day in small numbers.

**Brown-backed Needletail***Hirundapus giganteus*

This large species was noted along the Kelani River and a pair was also sighted near the Sinharaja forest.

**Little Swift***Apus affinis*

Small numbers were sighted in the areas around Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Crested Treeswifts *Hemiprocnidae*****Crested Treeswift***Hemiprogne coronata*

This species was regularly encountered at every site on the tour.

**Trogons *Trogonidae*****Malabar Trogon (SE)***Harpactes fasciatus*

This is a stunning bird of dense forests on the island. A pair was sighted in the Kelani River FR and we had at least 4 birds in total while exploring the forests at Sinharaja .

**Kingfishers *Alcedinidae*****Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis*

A common species that was seen in small numbers at most water-bodies throughout the country.

**Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher***Ceyx erichacus*

A flash of color is all that is normally seen of this shy, forest dweller. We were fortunate to have good views of a single bird in the Sinharaja forest.

**Stork-billed Kingfisher***Pelargopsis capensis*

This majestic species of kingfisher was only seen once on the tour and that was on the edge of a wetland in the Tissa area.

**White-throated Kingfisher***Halcyon smyrnensis*

The regions most common Kingfisher, we recorded this species on every single day.

**Pied Kingfisher***Ceryle rudis*

Birds were noted in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

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

A delightful species that was found in the woodlands of Yala NP, Bundala NP and Uda Walawa NP.

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

We found them on most days of the tour near wetlands throughout the country.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater***Merops leschinaulti*

This gorgeous species was noted at Yala NP and Bundala NP in small numbers.

**Rollers *Coraciidae***

**Indian Roller***Coracias benghalensis*

A few birds were found in the more open woodlands in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Hoopoes *Upupidae*****Eurasian (African) Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

A striking species that was encountered at both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

*NOTE: The Hoopoe complex has had a confusing taxonomic history, with one to four species being recognised by various authorities. Clements splits the group into two forms, Madagascar (*U. marginalis*) and Eurasian (*U. epops*). The white-winged African form is often split by other authorities as West African Hoopoe (*U. senegalensis*) with the fourth species being African Hoopoe (*U. africana*). However, the most generally accepted treatment is that of three species, Madagascar, Eurasian and African.*

**Hornbills *Bucerotidae*****Sri Lanka Gray Hornbill (E)***Tockus gringalensis*

This endemic was found at the edge of lowland rainforest at the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Malabar Pied Hornbill (SE)***Anthracoceros coronatus*

An impressive species that was very well seen in the Uda Walawa NP, however our first sightings of this species was in Yala NP.

**Barbets *Capitonidae*****Brown-headed Barbet (SE)***Megalaima zeylanica*

A common bird on the island that calls frequently, we found them at all localities.

**Yellow-fronted Barbet (E)***Megalaima flavifrons*

This endemic species was frequently encountered at the edge of lowland rainforest in the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja forest.

**Crimson-fronted Barbet (SE)***Megalaima rubricapilla*

The form in Sri Lanka looks very different to the bird found in the Western Ghats of Southern India. A single bird in the process of excavating a hole was sighted near our accommodation at Sinharaja .

**Coppersmith Barbet***Megalaima haemacephala*

4 birds were seen perched up in the late afternoon at the tops of trees in Uda Walawa NP.

**Woodpeckers & Allies *Picidae*****Brown-capped Woodpecker (SE)***Dendrocopos nanus*

This species was only seen when a pair were located in the Uda Walawa NP.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker***Picoides mahrattensis*

Close up views were obtained of a pair in open woodland just outside the entrance gate to Yala NP.

**Lesser Yellownape***Picus chlorolophus*

Singles were noted at the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja forest.

**Black-rumped Flameback***Dinopium benghalense*

This species was recorded at Kelani River FR, Uda Walawa NP and Sinharaja forest.

**Greater Flameback***Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

Unfortunately this species was only heard in Sinharaja forest.

**Pittas Pittidae****Indian Pitta***Pitta brachyura*

This stunning bird of dense undergrowth winters in this area and was sighted in Victoria Park, outside Yala NP and in the Sinharaja area.

**Larks Alaudidae****Jerdon's Bushlark (SE)***Mirafra [assimica] affinis*

This species was first encountered in Yala NP, thereafter we had at least 10 birds in open, dry areas in Bundala NP and Uda Walawa NP.

**Ashy-crowned Sparrowlark (SE)***Eremopterix grisea*

This species of dry country was found in small groups at both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Swallows Hirundinidae****Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

This species was encountered at most sites throughout the tour.

*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is found throughout the world and generally regarded as a single species. Some authorities agree that the Old World H.rustica should be split from the New World H.r.erythrogaster. Also, there is an isolated population in the Egyptian delta (H.r.savignii) that some authorities regard as a separate species, the Egyptian Swallow.*

**Hill Swallow (SE)***Hirundo domicola*

2 birds were seen on the drive from Kelani River to Nuwara Eliya and roughly 5 birds were found at Horton Plains NP.

**Red-rumped Swallow***Hirundo daurica*

This species was noted in small numbers at Kelani River FR and in Yala and Bundala NP.

**Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae****Forest wagtail***Dendronanthus indicus*

This species of forest undergrowth was found in small numbers at Victoria Park in the town of Nuwara Eliya and at the Horton Plains NP.

**Gray Wagtail***Motacilla cinerea*

A common species that was seen in small numbers at most localities on tour.

**Oriental Pipit***Anthus rufulus*

Numbers of around 10 –15 birds were sighted in suitable grassy areas in Yala NP, Bundala NP and surrounds.

**Blyth's Pipit***Anthus godlewskii*

This species is subtly different from the previous species and most easily identified by call, we had 3 birds in Bundala NP.

**Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae****Black-headed Cuckooshrike***Coracina melanoptera*

Singles were sighted in both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Small Minivet***Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

This boldly colored species was found in woodland around Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Scarlet Minivet***Pericrocotus flammeus*

This species was seen at the lowland rainforest sites, the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest..

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

Seen twice on the tour, 2 birds were found at the Kealni River FR and a single bird was seen at Sinharaja .

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae****Black-crested Bulbul***Pycnonotus melaniterus*

A bird frequenting the forest edge at the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja .

**Red-vented Bulbul***Pycnonotus cafer*

An extremely common bird that was seen in all habitats and on every day of the tour.

**Yellow-eared Bulbul (E)***Pycnonotus penicillatus*

This stunning endemic species of the highland forests was sighted at Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya and at the Horton Plains NP.

**White-browed Bulbul (SE)***Hypsipetes luteolus*

Birds were found along the Kelani River and at Yala NP.

**Yellow-browed Bulbul (SE)***Iole indica*

Common at the edge of lowland forest at Kelani River FR and Sinharaja .

**Black Bulbul***Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

This species was common at Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest but favours the forest interior more than the previous species.

**Leafbirds Chloropseidae****Blue-winged Leafbird***Chloropsis cochinchinensis*

Birds were found at the edge of forest at Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja .

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

Common and widespread, many views were obtained of this species that often gives its presence away by call.

**Thrushes & Allies Turdidae****Sri Lanka Whistling-Thrush (E)***Myophonus blighi*

On a cold morning at the edge of a highland pond we were awarded astonishing views of this shy and endangered species.

**Pied Thrush***Zoothera wardii*

Much work was put in for this species at Victoria Park and we eventually had sightings of 2 birds.

**Spot-winged Thrush (E)***Zoothera spiloptera*

A species of forest undergrowth that was observed on numerous occasions in the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja forest.

**Scaly Thrush***Zoothera imbricata*

This species looks considerably different to the nominate bird. We found this shy skulker in thick bush near the Galway Forest Lodge in the town of Nuwara Eliya and again in Sinharaja forest.

**Eurasian Blackbird***Turdus merula*

This species was seen in the highlands only and at least 10 birds were found near the Galway Forest Lodge in Nuwara Eliya, a further 3 birds were seen in the Horton Plains NP.

### Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

- Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*  
This species was exceptionally common in the grasslands of the Uda Walawa NP.
- Gray-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii*  
A single bird sighted in Yala NP was the only one of the tour.
- Ashy Prinia (SE)** *Prinia socialis*  
A good-looking species that was recorded in Yala NP, Bundala NP and the surrounding areas.
- Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata*  
This species was sighted in Yala NP, Bundala NP and in the surrounding areas.

### Old World Warblers Sylviidae

- Ceylon Bush-Warbler (E)** *Bradypterus palliseri*  
This is a highly localised endemic that favours areas of highland stunted bamboo. We found a total of 3 birds in the Horton Plains NP where they were fairly easily located by call.
- Pallas's Warbler** *Locustella certhiola*  
We were fortunate to find this species at a swampy area in Bundala NP.
- Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
Fairly common in the woodlands around Tissa and in Yala NP and Bundala NP.
- Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentorius*  
A total of 2 birds were located in swampy vegetation in Bundala NP.
- Sykes' Warbler** *Hippolais rama*  
A single bird was observed in woodland just outside Yala NP.
- Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*  
An extremely common species that was sighted on almost every day of the tour.
- Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*  
Fairly common and observed at most sites and on most days of the tour.
- Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*  
This species was also fairly common and was seen at most localities.
- Large-billed Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris*  
This forest species was found at Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja forest.

### Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

- Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*  
Commonly sighted at all lowland and highland forest sites on the island.
- Brown-breasted Flycatcher (SE)** *Muscicapa muttui*  
Singles were noted at the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.
- Dull-blue Flycatcher (E)** *Eumyias sordida*  
This endemic is confined to the stunted high altitude forest in Horton Plains NP where we found a pair.
- Kashmir Flycatcher (SE)** *Ficedula subrubra*  
This endangered bird has its wintering grounds almost confined to the island and we were fortunate to find 2 birds in Horton Plains NP.
- Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae*  
A few were seen at the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja .
- Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*  
Singles and the odd pair were located at Victoria Park in the town of Nuwara Eliya and at the Horton Plains NP.

**Indian Blue Robin (SE)***Luscinia brunnea*

Good sightings of this skulker were had at Victoria Park in the town of Nuwara Eliya.

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

A common species that was seen at all highland and lowland forest sites on tour.

**Indian Robin (SE)***Saxicoloides fulicata*

Good numbers were seen in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Pied Bushchat***Saxicola caprata*

At least 5 birds were found at the Horton Plains NP.

**Fantails Rhipiduridae****White-browed Fantail***Rhipidura aureola*

A woodland species that was observed in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae****Black-naped Monarch***Hypothymis azurea*

A good looker that is normally associated with mixed feeding flocks, we found it at the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Asian Paradise-Flycatcher***Terpsiphone paradisi*

Small numbers of this flashy species were located at the Kelani River FR and Sinharaja forest.

**Babblers Timaliidae****Ashy-headed Laughingthrush (E)***Garrulax cinereifrons*

Two small groups were found in mixed feeding flocks while exploring the Sinharaja forest area.

**Brown-capped Babbler (E)***Pellorneum fuscicapillum*

A pair of birds was found in the forest interior of the Kelani River FR.

**Indian Scimitar-Babbler (SE)***Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*

Birds were located at Horton Plains NP and Sinharaja .

**Tawny-bellied Babbler (SE)***Dumetia hyperythra*

Our first sighting was in woodland just outside Yala NP and we had further looks at birds in Bundala NP.

**Dark-fronted Babbler (SE)***Rhopocichla atriceps*

This species was fairly common at lowland and highland forest sites throughout the island.

**Yellow-eyed Babbler***Crysomma sinense*

Birds were located in scrubby habitat outside Yala NP and at Uda Walawa NP.

**Orange-billed Babbler (E)***Turdoides rufescens*

This species was easily found at the forests around the Kelani River and Sinharaja .

**Yellow-billed Babbler (SE)***Turdoides affinis*

Very common and easily seen at every locality and on every day of the tour.

**Tits Paridae****Great Tit***Parus major*

A species of the highland forests where it was noted at Victoria Park and Horton Plains NP.

**Nuthatches Sittidae**

**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch***Sitta frontalis*

A single bird was found in forest near the Galway Forest Lodge in the town of Nuwara Eliya.

**Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae****Purple Sunbird***Nectarina asiatica*

This species was located at Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Long-billed Sunbird (SE)***Cinnyris lotenius*

Fairly common on the island and found at all localities in small numbers.

**Purple-rumped Sunbird (SE)***Nectarinia zeylonica*

Another fairly common sunbird species that was located at every locality on the island.

**Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae****White-throated Flowerpecker (E)***Dicaeum vincens*

This endemic of the lowland forests was first sighted at the Kelani River FR, however numbers of up to 10 a day were noted in the Sinharaja forest.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker (SE)***Dicaeum erythrorhynchus*

This species was common at all forest sites in the highlands and lowlands.

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

Birds were noted at Kelani River FR and at Victoria Park.

**Sri Lanka White-eye (E)***Zosterops ceylonensis*

A highland endemic that was well seen at Victoria Park and Horton Plains NP.

**Old World Orioles Oriolidae****Black-hooded Oriole***Oriolus xanthornus*

Birds were noted at Kelani River FR, Yala NP, Bundala NP and at Sinharaja forest.

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

Commonly seen at all localities throughout the country.

**Helmetshrikes and Allies Prionopidae****Common Woodshrike***Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

A pair were found in fairly thick woodland within the Bundala NP.

**Drongos Dicruridae****Black Drongo***Dicrurus macrocercus*

A total of 5 birds were found on the drive between Uda Walawa NP and the Sinharaja forest.

**White-bellied Drongo (SE)***Dicrurus caerulescens*

Common at the lowland rainforest sites of Kelani River FR and Sinharaja .

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo***Dicrurus paradiseus*

The subspecies occurring on the island is very different as it lacks the large rackets. We found this species in the Sinharaja forest.

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

A single bird was found near the Kelani River.

**Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae****Sri Lanka Magpie (E)***Urocissa ornata*

This bird has an incredible combination of colors and is a treat to the senses in every possible way, we had glorious views of this species in the Sinharaja forest.

**House Crow***Corvus splendens*

A very common species throughout the country.

**Large-billed Crow***Corvus macrorhynchus*

An abundant species that was seen on every day of the tour.

**Starlings Sturnidae****Southern Hill Myna (SE)***Gracula indica*

Birds were sighted at Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja

**Sri Lanka Myna (E)***Gracula ptilogenys*

A total of 4 birds were found in our time at Sinharaja .

**Common (Indian) Myna***Acridotheres tristis*

Common in and around urban centres throughout the country.

**White-faced Starling (E)***Sturnia senex*

A lowland forest species with a very restricted range, we found at least 7 birds during our stay in the Sinharaja area.

**Rosy Starling***Sturnus roseus*

Huge numbers were encountered at both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

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

Widespread and common in urban areas throughout India.

**Weavers and Allies Ploceidae****Streaked Weaver***Ploceus Manyar*

Excellent views were had of this uncommon species in Uda Walawa NP.

**Baya Weaver***Ploceus phillipinus*

2 birds were found in woodland just outside Yala NP.

**Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae****White-rumped Munia***Lonchura striata*

Large groups were regularly encountered at the edge of lowland forest in the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja .

**Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*

Commonly encountered throughout the country.

**Black-throated Munia (SE)** *Lonchura kelaarti*

Uncommon in its small range we found fair numbers at forest edge in the Sinharaja area.

**Black-headed Munia** *Lonchura Malacca*

Unprecedented numbers were located in the grasslands of Uda Walawa NP.

## MAMMAL SPECIES LIST

### Fruit Bats *Pteropodidae*

**Common Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus*

Large numbers of 300 odd were seen roosting on the drive between Uda Walawa and Sinharaja forest.

### Cheek-Pouch Monkeys *Cercopithecidae*

**Toque Macaque (E)** *Macaca sinica*

Roughly 10 were seen on the drive between Bundala NP and Uda Walawa NP.

**Ceylon Gray Langur (E)** *Semnopithecus priam*

Many were found in Bundala NP and on the drive to Uda Walawa NP from Bundala NP.

**Purple-faced Leaf Monkey (E)** *Trachypithecus vetulus*

This species was first seen at Horton Plains NP and again at Sinharaja forest.

### Hares & Rabbits *Leporidae*

**Indian Hare** *Lepus nigricollis*

At least 5 were seen on our drive in Uda Walawa NP.

### Squirrels *Sciuridae*

**Ceylon Palm Squirrel (E)** *Funambulus palmarum*

Common and regularly encountered at most localities.

**Dusky Striped Squirrel** *Funambulus sublineatus*

3 of these dark squirrels were found in the highlands around the town of Nuwara Eliya.

**Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel (E)** *Ratufa macroura*

This beautiful species was regularly found in the Sinharaja forest.

### Dogs & Allies *Canidae*

**Golden Jackal** *Canis aureus*

3 were found in Yala NP and a further 2 were sighted in Uda Walawa NP.

### Mongoose *Herpestidae*

**Ruddy Mongoose**

*Herpestes smithii*

Good views were had of this species in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Ceylon Brown Mongoose (E)**

*Herpestes fuscus*

A single was sighted in Yala NP.

**Stripe-necked Mongoose**

*Herpestes vitticollis*

This distinctive species was seen well in Yala NP with a total of 3 found in one day.

**Cats Felidae**

**Jungle Cat**

*Felis chaus*

Great views were had of a single cat as it came to sit in the road in the late afternoon.

**Elephants Elephantidae**

**Indian Elephant**

*Elephus maximus*

These impressive beasts were first seen in Yala NP however later we found many in the Uda Walawa NP.

**Pigs Suidae**

**Wild Boar**

*Sus scrofa*

A couple were found in Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Deer Cervidae**

**Spotted Deer**

*Cervus axis*

At least 5 were found in Yala NP during our morning game drive.

**Sambar**

*Cervus unicolor*

We saw this large species at close range in Horton Plains NP and in Yala NP.

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