



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

The Himalayan Kingdom of **BHUTAN**

10th – 29th April 2007



Punakha Dzong & a Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler.

Tour leaders: David Shackelford & Jonathan Rossouw

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader David Shackelford

Top 10 Birds of the Tour as voted by participants:

Satyr Tragopan
Himalayan Monal
Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler
Rufous-necked Hornbill
Ibisbill
Blood Pheasant
Gould's Sunbird
Tawny Fish-Owl
Beautiful Nuthatch
Cutia & White-bellied Heron



Black-headed Shrike-Babbler and Blood Pheasant.

Tour Summary

‘We may expect no mercy, but we may faintly hope for neglect. Here we shall stay with our books and our music and our meditations, conserving the frail elegancies of a dying age, and seeking such wisdom as men will need when their passions are all spent. We have a heritage to cherish and bequeath.’ ~words of the high lama of Shangri-La from the novel *Lost Horizon*.

The Great Himalayan range comprises a staggering nine of the fourteen highest peaks on earth, and during our inward flights into Bhutan we were able to gaze upon overwhelming scenery ruggedly covered by snow-capped peaks as if peering inside the pages of a fairytale. Even the jagged slopes and glorious summit of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world soaring to over 29,000 feet, did not escape our view before we descended into the lofty Kingdom of Bhutan nestled between remote northeast India and the southern border of Tibet.

Our tour was timed to coincide with the advent of spring offering an exceptional visual and cultural spectacle like nothing on earth including mountain passes littered with Bhutanese prayer flags, magnificent Dzong fortress monasteries titivating ornamental splendor across the country, and mountainsides blanketed with flowering rhododendrons and magnolias. Bhutan is a remote country still remarkably isolated from much of the modern world’s depredation and we were privileged to be some of the luck few to visit this fascinating hidden treasure before it is too late.

Descending into the city of Paro aboard Druk Air, the only airline allowed to fly into the country and consisting of four planes in its total fleet, we gazed out the window looking out across seeming endless forest. In retrospect, the entire county of Bhutan offered a forested wonderland as we literally traveled for days along the single lane road that transverses the country virtually without ever leaving pristine woodland! In fact, the farsighted king has actually passed into law a decree requiring the preservation of seventy percent of the kingdom's total land area to remain under forest cover for all time.

Climbing down the steps of our plane, the cool mountain air and scent of conifers was refreshing as we found ourselves surrounded by traditionally dressed Bhutanese and decorative elaborate architecture. In short time we were soon exploring the shingle bars of the clear mountain river edge where we located a single Solitary Snipe, the retiring Black-tailed Crake, and a migrant Hodgson’s Redstart before excitedly locating the gorgeous Ibisbill, an iconic bird of the high Himalayas and placed in its own monotypic family.

The next morning was simply magical as we began ascending the mountain slope towards Chele La, the latter word meaning mountain pass in the official language of Dzongkha. We first located the

attractive Blood Pheasant of which we obtained magnificent views before the blazingly colorful Himalayan Monal stole the show in full display with prolonged scope views, a bird earnestly vying for the position as the most resplendent bird of the world. Dense twisted temperate forest of maple, magnolia and laurel gave way to a mountainside ablaze with flowing rhododendrons and blooming wild cherries while higher still the mountain passes were blanketed by stands of spruce, hemlock, and birch. Here we were treated to outrageous views of the gigantic Spotted Laughingthrush, scope views of brightly patterned Collared and White-winged Grosbeaks, and our only sighting of the scarce Brown Bullfinch. Along the highest elevations before reaching snow line the ground flourished with flowering herbs and Himalayan grasses surrounded by splashes of edelweiss, forget-me-nots, irises, and delphiniums. Interrupt

During our scenic journey through the mountains towards the capital city of Thimpu we were fortunate to catch sight of a late wintering Wallcreeper before ascending the following morning up the steep Dochu La. Atop the mountain pass we beheld an awesome scenic site looking over the high Himalayan peaks in the distance with a blanket of clouds settled in the valleys below. As along all the mountain passes and prominent ridges in Bhutan, colorful prayer flags were abundantly erected surrounding the religious chortens where the natural power of the wind is harnessed in belief to distribute the blessings of the inscribed prayers as the flags flutter and wave. We sorted through some amazing mixed species flocks collecting widespread but impressive resident species such as skulking Hoary-throated Barwing, Chestnut-tailed Minla, the vibrant Gould's Sunbird, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, vociferous Black-faced Laughingthrush, and Stripe-throated Yuhina as well as our first mammals of the trip such as Himalayan Striped Squirrel and several cooperative Assam Macaques.

Descending through endless broadleaf forest we sought out species such as the scarce Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, and pleasantly common Blue-capped Rock-Thrush before exploring the fringes of the Po River. Here we were pleasantly surprised by a family group of four impressive Tawny Fish-Owls on the day roost followed by a memorable encounter with two massive White-bellied Herons, one of the rarest herons on earth due to its dependence upon pristine Himalayan rivers and nearby forested ravines.

During the tour we spent time appreciating the unique cultural heritage of the country, in fact, Bhutan is the only place left on earth where the Vajrayana Buddhist culture survives intact, a lifestyle emphasizing the use of meditation as a means to achieve enlightenment. After a day exploring the subtropical forest bordering the Mo Chu where we encountered the secretive Spotted Wren-Babbler, Red-billed Leiothrix, Yellow-vented Warbler, the nomadic Spot-winged Starling, and several playful Gray Langurs we spent the late afternoon admiring one of the country's traditional dzongs, or fortress monasteries, which today serve as both as historical artifacts while functioning as monastic and governing communities. We were given an excellent interpretation of the humble life lived by the monks from our local cultural guide as we explored the inner chambers and temples inside the dzong, and were able to watch the young monks involved in their daily ceremonies of prayer, chanting, and meditation.

Passing through extensive forest of flowering magnolias and impressive rhododendrons on our way to Tongsa, we stopped along our route at a steep rocky cliff where native Rock Bees had created massive combs clinging to the overhanging ledges. Within short time we were scoping a handsome male Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, one of only two Asian representatives of this primarily African bird family. We also chanced upon two Gorals, a sure-footed species of mountain goat, before later obtaining crippling looks at the phenomenal Cutia, a vibrantly patterned arboreal denizen of epiphyte-laden trees in primary forest.

The tiny landlocked kingdom of Bhutan is often poetically referred to as the Land of the

Dragon, and was virtually unknown to outsiders until 1974 when a small number of foreigners were admitted to formerly visit the country. As we turned off the main road across the country on a journey southwards towards Zhemgang a tinge of excitement ran through the group as we headed into even more remote regions. We began the morning scanning down a forested stream where Little and Spotted Forktails entertained us before we were pleasantly distracted by a beautifully cooperative pair of Scaly Laughingthrushes immediately followed by an obliging group of Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babblers. Continuing into subtropical forests we were thrilled to scope our first of many extraordinary Rufous-necked Hornbills as well as encountering small flocks of White-naped Yuhina, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, and a tiny Collared Owlet being mobbed nearby.

One of the many joys of Bhutan is that it offers the chance to explore remote wilderness, and in our efforts to take advantage of this opportunity we camped on numerous occasions throughout the tour. Our camp staff set up our tents in a field of wild marijuana, and we were ridiculously giddy about wading through stands of this well-known medicinal plant growing in abundance along the roadsides along with orchids and bromeliads. The surrounding lowland forest was alive at dawn with song and after a spectacular group of Great Hornbills flying over our camp we headed into the forest finding the range-restricted Rufous-faced Warbler, a pair of nesting Long-tailed Broadbills, both Lesser Necklaced and Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, a bright Sultan Tit, and the very reticent Blue-winged Laughingthrush that showed well for a full ten minutes. Mammal sightings were no less thrilling and we found the range-restricted Golden Langur to be locally abundant and pleasantly confiding, the oversized Giant Black Squirrel, and we were very fortunate to observe a spectacular Sloth Bear bounding down the road ahead of us one late afternoon while returning to our camp!

The next day was brilliant as we began our return trip towards Tongsa stopping in a narrow altitudinal belt of forest where after extensive searching we ecstatically beheld a pair of vocalizing Beautiful Nuthatches posing in the morning sunlight at the top of a bare snag, and later attending what seemed to be a nesting site for this endangered species. Continuing eastward past Tongsa we gradually worked our way through immaculate montane forest overlooking the scenic Black Mountains scanning through the profusion of tall firs and rhododendrons where we located both the scarce Fire-tailed Sunbird and had excellent views of two Fire-tailed Myzornis.

Small Moupin Pikas scurrying along the edge of the vegetation entertained us as did a single Sikkim Vole as we made our way over the top of Thrumsing La. Here we scoped a flock of Snow Pigeons as we gazed over an immaculately clear blue sky to the summit of Gangkar Pinsum, one of the highest of the surrounding mountains towering at more than 7,500 meters! These giant mountain peaks that form the north and western borders of the country are still shrouded in mystery as virtually none have been climbed or explored due to the fiercely cold weather conditions prevailing with relentless snow and ice. We then descending into stunted bamboo and moss-laden birch where an unbelievably close pair of Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, White-browed Bush-Robin, and Dark-breasted Rosefinch vied for our attention in competition with a male Golden Bush-Robin, Red-headed Bullfinch, and both Fulvous and Great Parrotbills, the latter of which called incessantly at close range until finally we left the bird still calling from its perch.

Our camp staff could hardly have picked a more scenic destination for our next camp on the upper reaches of the Lingmethang Road looking over a series of steep forested mountains often shrouded in mist where the calls of Chestnut-breasted Partridge resounded through the surroundings and in the nearby conifers we located a beautiful Himalayan Tawny Owl. Bhutanese hospitality simply has to be experienced to be believed, and we found our staff and the people of Bhutan in general to be extraordinarily friendly and hospitable with almost embarrassing politeness. Our camp chef would daily prepare an astounding variety of food including both traditional local cuisines plus an assortment

of more Tibetan and Indian influenced meals.

The Lingmethang Road is famous among birders and sometimes referred to be the Asian equivalent of the Manu Road in Peru, meaning that a wide altitudinal range can be covered while offering a wide diversity of spectacular birds. We were all amazed at the diversity as we sorted through rich mixed flocks including colorful birds such as the vibrant Chestnut-headed Tesia and Golden-breasted Fulvetta. After some hard work we managed phenomenally close views of a pair of the scarce Bar-winged Wren-Babbler perched calling and visible for all and soon after we were scoping our first of several Speckled Wood-Pigeons feeding almost above our heads. Of course, the pressure was on and we were very keen to find one of the star avian attractions of Bhutan, the exquisite Satyr Tragopan, a deep crimson pheasant with an almost mythical reputation. We scoured the roadsides carefully scanning through the twisted tangles of moss and lichens, and in the end we located an unheard of seven tragopans including four gorgeous males! Our best views were of a single female and two unforgettably vivid males that we watched intermittently for nearly fifteen minutes sometimes at a distance of only twenty meters; certainly one of the highlights of the tour!

We were also off to a memorable start on the lower Lingmethang Road with scope views on two consecutive days of the sought-after Ward's Trogon including two females and a vivid male perching at eye-level in the open twisted branches of a hemlock tree. We managed unbelievably close views of three finely-patterned Black-throated Parrotbills as well as finding a flock of the endemic Gray-sided Laughingthrush that showed in the open followed by brief views of the rarely seen Blue-fronted Robin responding to playback. Searching through lower stands of bamboo and dense foliage closer to our camp we first obtained scope views of a confiding pair of intensely colored Red-faced Liocichla followed by a fantastic mixed flock of Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Rusty-fronted Barwing, and pair of striking Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler. Mammals were also pleasantly visible as we watched troops of playful Capped Langur including several golden young clinging tightly to the adults as they leapt through the canopy and nearby on a small cliff ledge we watched two Seral mountain goats that moved with admirable agility up the impossibly steep slope.

After finishing off the Lingmethang Road with five meter views of the unique Long-billed Wren-Babbler skulking through the undergrowth on our final morning, we set off through Mongar towards the city of Tashigang where we were treated with the experience of a true oriental bazaar market replete with a great variety of grains, garlands of dried chilies, silk, hand-woven bamboo crafts, hocks of yak meat and fermented cheese balls, and colorful textiles. Along our route we saw several archery competitions, the national sport of the nation, as well as enjoy a friendly wave from the current fifth King of Bhutan as he passed us by with his entourage. The king's goal for the nation is to develop economic self-reliance while preserving the nation's rich natural resources and maximize "gross national happiness" for his people. So far this has been accomplished largely in part through hydroelectric power, Bhutan's most valuable natural resource, providing a sustainable, renewable, and environmentally friendly source of national income while the vast majority of the population still remain subsistence farmers and hold strongly to ancient traditions.

Finding a vocal Slender-billed Oriole along our route and obtaining superb eye-level views of more than one hundred migrant White-throated Needletails arriving on their summer grounds, we began our journey southwards towards the border of India. Ascending through stunted growth on the slopes of Yongphu La, we were excited to score terrific views of the rarely recorded Ludlow's Fulvetta, plus obtain absolutely cracking eye-level observations of a vocal Black-headed Shrike-Babbler and the impossibly bright Scarlet Finch. Our elevation steadily decreased while winding down switchbacks and navigating around hair-pin bends following the contours of shear cliffs as we made our way to our final camp in the Himalayan foothills. Here we enjoyed the unique experience of tenting beside an active

monastery where the periodic methodical reverberation of chanting and sounding conch shells accompanied monks in prayer and meditation sometimes walking right through the middle of our camp!

The surrounding foothills consisted of little more than remnant forest patches and patchy stands of bamboo tightly hugging the river and woodland streams, but we still managed to obtain sightings of some spectacular and difficult birds. Most memorably we enjoyed outstanding views of no less than nine separate Black-backed Forktails along the rocky edges of waterways, several flyby Dark-rumped Swift, a single vocal Pale-headed Woodpecker that showed briefly, and a stunning Pied Falconet that perch for prolonged scope views. Otherwise sightings included nest-building Baya Weaver, a bright Black-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, several Yellow-vented Flowerpeckers, and a tiny White-browed Piculet that moved furtively through the dense undergrowth. We were also pleased to add three new species to the country list of Bhutan including Silver-backed Needletail seen well, a soaring Asian Openbill, and scoped flight views of a single Jerdon's Baza.

Reluctantly, we were finally whisked away from the Himalayas as we crossed the border into India onto the flat floodplains of Assam crossing over the mighty Brahmaputra River to our farewell point in Gauhati. Throughout our tour we encountered an unprecedented 386 species throughout the country of Bhutan, this total excluding the more than 30 additional species recorded our final morning traveling through India, thereby concluding our tour with the highest total number of birds seen on any organized tour though this unique kingdom including numerous very difficult, rare, and spectacular avian gems. Bhutan leaves behind a vivid image of tranquility and peace amid dramatic mountain landscapes and charming Buddhist culture, and an unforgettable adventure together through what is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating places on earth.



Dochu La Scenery; Golden Langur.

Annotated List of Bird Species recorded

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

(386 species in Bhutan)

Great Cormorant

Cormorants *Phalacrocoracidae*
Phalacrocorax carbo

Several sightings of this widespread species along montane rivers near the Punakha and Paro Valleys near cliff roosting sites.

Herons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

White-bellied Heron

Ardea insignis

We were very fortunate to observe a pair of this very scarce and geographically restricted heron along the swift Po Chu.

Storks Ciconidae

Asian Openbill

Anastomas oscitans

A single bird was seen soaring over the ridge at 250 meters above sea level on the 28th of April constituting the first record of this species for Bhutan.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Several scattered sightings along rivers throughout the tour first near Thimpu and later a pair flying in the Paro Valley.

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas penelope

We found a pair at the water treatment tanks near Thimpu.

Common Teal

Anas crecca

A single female flushed from a midstream island during our search for the Ibisbill in the Paro Valley.

Red-crested Pochard

Netta rufina

A female was scoped at the water treatment tanks near Thimpu.

Gadwall

Anas strepera

A cooperative pair observed at the water treatment tanks near Thimpu.

Common Merganser

Mergus merganser

Only a single bird observed flying low over the Po Chu.

Osprey Pandionidae

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

We observed a single bird flying over us as we scanned from the bridge downstream from Punakha.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae

Oriental Honey-Buzzard

Pernis ptilorhynchus

Only a single flight view of a bird flying over broadleaf forest near Zhemgang.

Jerdon's Baza

Aviceda jerdoni

A single individual of this characteristic species was scoped slowly soaring at an altitude of 300 meters above Samdrup Jonkhar on the 28th of April. This represents the first record of this species for the nation of Bhutan.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

This widespread species is nowhere common in Bhutan. We first observed this species in Paro with singles followed by further sightings in Punakha and near Zhemgang.

Pallas' Fish-Eagle

Haliaeetus leucoryphus

An immature of this globally threatened species was seen perched near its cliff side nest near Tingtibi.

White-rumped Vulture

Gyps bengalensis

Two sightings of this now scarce species flying over the Himalayan foothills near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Himalayan Griffon (Vulture)*Gyps himalayensis*

Small numbers seen in flight on the high passes of Pele La and four birds on Thrumsing La.

Crested Serpent-Eagle*Spilornis cheela*

Small numbers of this widespread Asian raptor encountered daily in the Deothang area with up to six daily.

Crested Goshawk*Accipiter trivirgatus*

Two birds sighted below Zhemgang with a further four birds seen at close range in the Deothang area.

Shikra*Accipiter badius*

A single of these swift accipiters seen in flight over cultivated fields between Tongsa and Zhemgang.

Besra*Accipiter virgatus*

The most frequently encountered accipiter of the trip with small numbers sighted on five separate days including a male in dramatic fluttering display flight near Zhemgang.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

Generally sighted at high altitudes preferring coniferous forests with sightings on four days including perched birds in the scope.

Eurasian [Himalayan] Buzzard*Buteo [burmanicus] buteo*

The rather mottled local race of this widespread species split by some authorities as Himalayan Buzzard was seen on only two days including the Paro Valley and again on Yongphu La.

Black Eagle*Ictinaetus malayensis*

Frequently encountered in flight with up to two birds seen on seven days of the trip.

Steppe Eagle*Aquila nipalensis*

As single bird seen soaring above us on the way to Deothang.

Rufous-bellied Eagle*Hieraetus kienerii*

This uncommon species was seen on two occasions, both showing immature plumage, on Dochu La and again on Yonkho La.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle*Spizaetus nipalensis*

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

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

This widespread species was frequently recorded at the roadside in open country with up to three seen on eight days of the tour.

Eurasian Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

Never numerous in Bhutan, we first observed a pair of this swift falcon perched near the Paro Dzong with a further sighting near our scenic lunch sight near Yongphu La.

Merlin*Falco columbarius*

A single sighting of this rare winter visitor near Tongsa.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

We found a magnificent perched individual of this cosmopolitan species that we scoped downstream of Punhaka

Pied Falconet*Microhierax melanoleucus*

We were fortunate to obtain scope views of this rare and localized bird below Deothang perched on a dead snag in the late afternoon.

Pheasants and Partridges *Phasianidae*

Hill Partridge*Arborophila torqueola*

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

Chestnut-breasted Partridge*Arborophila mandellii*

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

Rufous-throated Partridge*Arborophila rufogularis*

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

Blood Pheasant*Ithaginis cruentus*

Our first morning on Chele La produced no fewer than twenty individuals in seven separate groups of this attractive species with further excellent sightings of smaller groups along Thruming La on two days.

Satyr Tragopan*Tragopan satyra*

Certainly one of Bhutan's most sought-after specialties, we encountered no fewer than eight of this incredibly beautiful species. Our first morning along the Linnethang Road produced a cooperative female and glimpsed male to whet our appetite followed by an unforgettable encounter with an unbelievable group of three spectacular males and a female allowing prolonged views at only twenty meters. As if this wasn't enough, we concluded our experience with this bamboo-loving pheasant with two calling males the following morning!

Himalayan Monal*Lophophorus impejanus*

One of the world's most vividly colored birds, we enjoyed an exceptional six sightings of this species, all males, including display flights and prolonged scope views of a male glittering in the morning sunlight.

Red Junglefowl*Gallus gallus*

An infrequently recorded species along this route, we found a single wary female feeding along the roadside following a rainy afternoon below Zhemgang.

Kalij Pheasant*Lophura leucomelanos*

Although somewhat out-classed by the brilliance of its cousins, this very handsome bird was a major highlight for many with pairs and singles seen well on six separate days.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae***Black-tailed Crake***Amaurornis bicolor*

With persistence we were rewarded with outstanding views of this retiring rallid at a roadside wetland in the Paro Valley.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhynchidae***Ibisbill***Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

After extensive searching, this iconic species was found on a shingle bar in the Paro Valley followed by no fewer than three further downstream the following day. 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 thirty observed daily.

Sandpipers Scolopacidae**Solitary Snipe***Gallinago solitaria*

A single individual of this uncommon species was seen in the Paro Valley.

Pintail Snipe*Gallinago stenura*

More numerous than the preceding species, we found six individuals in rank vegetation along the Paro Valley.

Green Sandpiper*Tringa ochropus*

Four individuals along the river in the Paro Valley with another individual sighted at the Thimpu water treatment tanks.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Scattered sightings along Himalayan rivers in small numbers throughout the tour.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae**Rock Dove***Columba livia*

Numerous in towns and villages throughout.

Snow Pigeon*Columba leuconota*

A single flock of seventeen birds scoped on the western slope of Thrumsing La.

Speckled Wood-Pigeon*Columba hodgsonii*

A total of fourteen of this erratic and nomadic species was seen on three consecutive days including memorable scope views of five birds feeding at close range in a fruiting tree.

Oriental Turtle-Dove*Streptopelia orientalis*

By far the most common *Columbid*, with up to fifteen individuals observed daily.

Red Collared-Dove*Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Up to ten birds were seen flying in the surroundings of Samdrup Jonkhar.

Spotted Dove*Streptopelia chinensis*

Increasingly common as we made our way into lower altitudes with up to fifteen seen daily.

Barred Cuckoo-Dove*Macropygia unchall*

First scoped at length on the east side of Dochu La when the iridescence on the neck of a courting pair was nicely seen, we subsequently recorded small numbers at most mid-altitude forest sites with a maximum of twenty birds seen below Zhemgang.

Emerald Dove*Chalcophaps indica*

Three birds on two days during our explorations near Samdrup Jonkhar seen both perched and in flight.

Thick-billed Pigeon*Treron curvirostra*

Large numbers of these attractive birds were found at a single fruiting tree below Deothang with more than a hundred birds recorded over the course of three days.

Yellow-footed Pigeon*Treron phoenicoptera*

A total of eight birds were scoped near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Pin-tailed Pigeon*Treron apicauda*

Prolonged scope views of a single close individual near Tingtibi.

Wedge-tailed Pigeon*Treron sphenura*

A single in flight over the Mo Chu followed by excellent scope views of a pair in the forest below Zhemgang.

Mountain Imperial-Pigeon*Ducula badia*

Only a single sighting of this species at Tingtibi.

Cuckoos & Coucals Cuculidae**Large Hawk-Cuckoo***Cuculus sparverioides*

One of the dominant sounds of Bhutan, this species was heard virtually daily and seen well on numerous 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 most days in mid-altitude forest and seen on one occasion.

Indian Cuckoo*Cuculus micropterus*

Heard calling from the valleys of the Limnethang Road.

Common Cuckoo*Cuculus canorus*

Beautiful scope views of a vocalizing individual and thereafter heard and seen on numerous occasions throughout the tour.

Oriental Cuckoo*Cuculus saturatus*

More common and conspicuous than the above, we found up to three per day and heard many more almost daily.

Lesser (Small) Cuckoo*Cuculus poliocephalus*

A single scoped bird seen low on the Limnethang Road.

Plaintive Cuckoo*Cacomantis merulinus*

A single bird seen at the roadside at Tingtibi with further sightings near Deothang.

Violet Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*

A single male in display flight over our campsite in Tingtibi and later fairly common below Deothang with males seen and scoped daily.

Asian Emerald Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx maculatus*

No fewer than four sightings of this spectacular species, we enjoyed scope views of cooperative feeding birds along the Limnethang Road.

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*

A single bird heard and then seen flying over us in response to imitations of its distinctive song.

Green-billed Malkoha*Phaenicophaeus tristis*

Two pairs scoped first on Pele La and the second below Yonkhola.

Greater Coucal*Centropus sinensis*

Two birds seen in secondary growth near Deothang.

Typical Owls Strigidae**Mountain Scops-Owl***Otus spilocephalus*

Heard calling on most nights at high altitudes, but unfortunately too distant to be observed.

Collared Scops-Owl*Otus lettia*

A single bird heard calling at our camp in Tingtibi and later near Deothang.

Tawny Fish-Owl*Ketupa flavipes*

This scarce species was scoped at its daytime roost in the Punakha Valley where we found two adults and two immatures.

Brown Wood-Owl*Strix leptogrammica*

A single bird in flight over our Yonkhola Camp.

Tawny [Himalayan Wood] Owl *Strix [nivicola] aluco*

A dusk individual above our camp at Sengor yielded the goods with a responsive individual seen well in response to playback. This form is often considered a separate species, Himalayan Wood-Owl, by some authorities.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei*

Although frequently heard, this diminutive owl is rarely seen, and we were fortunate to enjoy no fewer than three prolonged scope views including a single vocalizing individual below Tongsa, an irate individual being mobbed below Zhemgang, and finally a third bird that flushed from our feet at the roadside on Kori La.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*

A single individual was scoped in the foothill forest near our camp at Tingtibi with a further sighting in Samdrup Jonkhar.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Gray (Jungle) Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*

Heard on most nights in the highlands with singles flushed from the roadside on several occasions including spotlight views of birds in response to playback at Tongsa.

Swifts Apodidae

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*

Numerous in the highlands with up to one hundred seen daily.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

This handsome and unpredictable was observed in surprisingly large numbers with over a hundred birds encountered along the Mo Chu, small numbers over Pele La and the Upper Limnethang Road, and at least sixty seen buzzing the fifth King's entourage below Yonkhola.

Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*

Three individuals of this scarce bird, previously unknown from Bhutan, were seen well just below Deothang on the 26th of April. The birds were watched to within a distance of approximately thirty meters, showing the characteristic darker throat and silver backs separating them from White-throated Needletails.

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Encountered daily near palm in the Deothang area with up to fifteen birds daily.

Fork-tailed (Pacific) Swift *Apus pacificus*

The common Apus with over twenty observed on most days and over two hundred individuals above the Mo Chu.

Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda*

This rare and localized bird was found at its traditional site in the vicinity of Deothang with our first sighting of a single bird in the company of other swifts at 1300 meters and another four individuals closer to the breeding cliffs lower down.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis*

First seen in Tongsa with small numbers later seen breeding on the Tashigang Dzong.

Trogon Trogonidae

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*

Heard on several occasions in low altitude forests before being seen near Deothang.

Ward's Trogon*Harpactes wardi*

One of the quintessential birds of Bhutan, we enjoyed prolonged close scope views of a male and two females on two consecutive days on the middle Limnethang Road.

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

Small numbers encountered on rivers below Deothang with up to eight daily.

Black-backed Kingfisher*Ceyx erithacus*

A single of these tiny avian gems was pushed downriver during our first Black-backed Forktail quest below Deothang.

White-throated Kingfisher*Halcyon smyrnensis*

This widespread species was encountered in open country on several day throughout the tour with especially near Deothang.

Crested Kingfisher*Megaceryle lugubris*

This denizen of Himalayan rivers was seen well along the Mo Chu with six individuals in a single day.

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

A pair was first observed near Zhemgang was followed by point-blank views of a gorgeous individual along the lower Lingethang.

Rollers Coraciidae**Dollarbird***Eurystomus orientalis*

Small numbers of this widespread Asian species encountered near Deothang.

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

Up to four seen daily on eight separate days of the tour.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**Great Hornbill***Buceros bicornis*

Seven individuals of this spectacular bird were seen on two separate mornings flying across the river and directly over our camp at Tingtibi.

Rufous-necked Hornbill*Aceros nipalensis*

Another charismatic and oversized hornbill, this restricted species is best found in Bhutan with up to twelve daily in the Zhemgang area with smaller numbers later found along the Lingmethang Road.

Wreathed Hornbill*Aceros undulatus*

Another spectacular hornbill which we only found below Deothang.

Barbets Capitonidae**Great Barbet***Megalaima virens*

One of the dominant sounds of middle-altitude Himalayan forests, we enjoyed sightings of up to twenty individuals per day.

Lineated Barbet*Megalaima lineata*

A single bird first heard and later seen well in secondary scrub near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Golden-throated Barbet*Megalaima franklinii*

Almost as numerous and vocal as the preceding species with up to fifteen sightings per day in suitable habitat.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica*

Found at lower altitudes than the two preceding species, we found up to five birds daily in the Zhemgang and lower Limnethang areas.

Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*

We enjoyed several scope views of this attractive barbet near Deothang.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*

Two birds seen well near our hotel in Samdrup Jonkhar.

Honeyguides *Indicatoridae*

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide *Indicator xanthonotus*

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

Wrynecks, Piculets & Woodpeckers *Picidae*

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*

A pair of these diminutive woodpeckers was scoped along the Mo Chu with a third bird seen at Zhemgang.

White-browed Piculet *Sasia ochracea*

A single bird was seen associating with mixed flock along the lower Limnethang Road with a second sighting in the bamboo near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Gray-capped Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

Three seen well near Tingtibi and reasonably common near Deothang.

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei*

A single cooperative bird was scoped at the roadside just below Deothang.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos hyperythrus*

Small numbers of this attractive species were seen on Dochu La, Pele La, and Yotong La with a maximum of five observed on a single morning on Kori La.

Darjeeling Woodpecker *Dendrocopos darjellensis*

Excellent scope views of a pair of this handsome species in the coniferous forest high on the slopes of Chele La.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos cathpharius*

A single vocalizing male was scoped at length along the middle altitudes of the Limnethang Road.

Rufous Woodpecker *Celeus brachyurus*

Heard calling in the forest near Tingtibi.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*

First encountered along the Mo Chu when a par was scoped with singles later observed further east.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha*

Individuals observed on three days near Zhemgang and again near Deothang.

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

Commonly heard with individuals scoped on four separate days, most memorably our first encounter on Pele La.

Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

A cooperative pair scoped near Deothang with several more heard in the area.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

This often skulking bird was commonly heard along the Limnethang Road with a single individual seen very well perched at its nesting cavity.

Pale-headed Woodpecker *Gecinulus grantia*

A single individual was heard vocalizing from a large stand of *Dendrocolombis* bamboo below Deothang before responding to playback by flying down the slope and seen by some perching in an open patch of bamboo.

Broadbills Eurylaimidae

Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae*

A pair of these spectacular birds was scoped at length near Tingtibi while they constructed their scruffy globular pendulous nest.

Larks Alaudidae

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

At least ten individuals were seen displaying in the Ura Valley.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A single flying over the river in the Punakha Valley with numerous birds near Mongar.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Seen along the river in Punakha and later at least fifteen individuals around Tashigang with small numbers daily near Samdrup Jonkhar.

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin *Riparia paludicola*

We found ten individuals cruising low over the surface of the Mo Chu River in the late afternoon. Some authorities split this species as *Riparia chinensis* from its African counterpart.

Asian (House-) Martin *Delichon dasypus*

Small flocks of about ten birds seen over Dochu La and Yongphu La.

Nepal (House-) Martin *Delichon nipalensis*

The commonest *Hirundine* of the trip, we encountered several colonies along the roadside with a maximum of a hundred-and-fifty on Pele La.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Especially numerous in the western valleys of Paro and Thimpu with up to fifty seen daily and later smaller numbers encountered in the east. This race sometimes split as Himalayan Wagtail (*Motacilla leucopsis*).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

A male and female of this uncommon migrant found in typical marshy wintering habitat in the Paro Valley. Some authorities split off this form as Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*).

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

A single individual was scoped in the company of a large flock of white wagtail on the shingle bar downstream of Paro.

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Singles encountered at the roadside on four days of the tour.

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Two birds seen in dry rice paddies in the Paro Valley.

Richard's Pipit*Anthus richardi*

A single sighting of this scarce migrant by some participants below Zhemgang.

Olive-backed Pipit*Anthus hodgsoni*

Encountered almost daily with a maximum of forty birds along Thrumsing La.

Rosy Pipit*Anthus roseatus*

Small numbers seen in marshy areas in the Paro Valley with several birds acquiring the summer color for which they are aptly named.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike***Coracina melaschistos*

Small numbers encountered on several days throughout the tour with high numbers of five daily along the Mo Chu and again near Zhemgang.

Long-tailed Minivet*Pericrocotus ethologus*

The common minivet of high country with over twenty seen daily on Yotong La and Thrumsing La.

Short-billed Minivet*Pericrocotus brevirostris*

Fairly numerous in middle altitude forest with a maximum of three pairs per day along the Limnethang Road.

Scarlet Minivet*Pericrocotus flammeus*

The dominant minivet of lower altitudes with maximum numbers of ten per day near Zhemgang.

Gray-chinned Minivet*Pericrocotus solaris*

Less numerous than the above species, we enjoyed scattered sightings throughout the tour with peak numbers of four daily near Zhemgang and the Lingmethang Road.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike*Hemipus picatus*

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

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

Fairly numerous in the Zhemgang area with small numbers seen daily and later especially conspicuous at middle altitudes along the Limnethang.

Black-crested Bulbul*Pycnonotus melanicterus*

A single bird encountered in the lower forests below Tingtibi with numerous sightings below Deothang.

Red-whiskered Bulbul*Pycnonotus jocosus*

Small numbers of this attractive species daily below Deothang.

White-cheeked Bulbul*Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Small numbers in dry mountain scrub between Zhemgang and Tongsa and very numerous in similar habitat near Tashigang. Authorities sometimes split this species as a separate species, Himalayan Bulbul [*Pycnonotus leucogenys* from *Pycnonotus leucotis*].

Red-vented Bulbul*Pycnonotus cafer*

Abundant in secondary habitat throughout the tour.

White-throated Bulbul*Alophoixus flaveolus*

Three birds observed in the forest near Tingtibi and fairly common below Deothang.

Ashy Bulbul*Hemixos flavala*

Small numbers near Zhemgang and along the Limnethang with a maximum of eight birds seen per day.

Mountain Bulbul*Ixos maclellandii*

Good numbers forest encountered along the Mo Chu with twenty seen in a day and later smaller

numbers in the Zhemgang area.

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
Common and conspicuous in middle altitude forests throughout the tour.

Kinglets Regulidae

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
Six birds seen in coniferous forests on Chele La.

Leafbirds Chloropseidae

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*
Several birds scoped below Deothang where it replaces Orange-bellied Leafbird at low altitudes.

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*
Our first encounter with this attractive species was on the western slope of Pele La with a courting pair displaying in the morning sunlight. Small numbers were also seen in the Zhemgang and Tashigang areas.

Ioras Aegithinidae

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*
Active pairs were encountered daily below Deothang.

Dippers Cinclidae

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*
Fairly common along large rivers during the first half of the tour with up to three seen in the Paro and Punakha Valleys followed by a several below Deothang.

Wrens Troglodytidae

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
An excellent but unexpected sighting of this Holarctic species at the top of Yotong La.

Accentors Prunellidae

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiatea*
First encountered on the top of Chele La with pairs and singles also encountered on Yotong La, Thruming La, and in the vicinity of Namling.

Thrushes Turdidae

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus*
This attractive species was wonderfully common along the roadside most days with a daily high of more than fifty birds between Tongsa and Zhemgang.

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*
Not as numerous as the preceding species, we first found individuals on Dochu La with smaller numbers on most passes to the east with maximum numbers of up to twenty and displaying individuals on Kori La.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
First seen on Dochu La with up to six on Pele La and a single male at 250 meters below Deothang. Although this species is reputed not to breed in Bhutan, vacating to its summering quarters further north, we found a number of highly vocal males, some of which were involved in display flights.

Blue Whistling-Thrush*Myophonus caeruleus*

Perhaps Bhutan's most conspicuous roadside bird, we recorded this bird in large numbers daily with a maximum of nearly one hundred on a single day along the Limnethang Road.

Orange-headed Thrush*Zoothera citrina*

Two of these handsome birds were encountered in the lowland forest near Tingtibi.

White-collared Blackbird*Turdus albocinctus*

Most common in the western valleys of Paro, Thimpu, and Punakha with up to twenty birds daily. Later smaller numbers encountered along the Limnethang Road.

Gray-winged Blackbird*Turdus boulboul*

Good numbers first recorded on Pele La and the "Cutia lookout," and even more plentiful on the eastern passes of Kori La and Yongphu La with up to thirty seen daily.

Lesser Shortwing*Brachypteryx leucophrys*

This undergrowth skulker was only glimpsed in response to playback along the Mo Chu.

White-browed Shortwing*Brachypteryx montana*

Commonly heard from damp highland ravines and one bird was seen on the east side of Thrumsing La.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**Striated Prinia***Prinia criniger*

First found in dry hill scrub along the Punakha Valley with small numbers seen in similar habitat to the east including below Yonku La and near Tashigang.

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 first seen at the checkpoint below Punhaka with our most memorable sighting of a dapper pair on the lower Lingmethang Road.

Rufescent Prinia*Prinia rufescens*

This species was commonly encountered below Deothang with up to five birds seen daily.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae**Chestnut-headed Tesia***Tesia castaneocoronata*

This most attractive of tesian was first heard along the Mo Chu with at least nine different individuals seen over the three days at higher elevations along the Limnethang Road.

Slaty-bellied Tesia*Tesia olivea*

Three of these forest mites were lured into view along the Mo Chu.

Gray-bellied Tesia*Tesia cyaniventer*

Very numerous along the middle altitudes along the Limnethang Road with at least five individuals seen.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler*Cettia fortipes*

Following a remarkable cooperative response from our first bird on Dochu La, this species was heard almost daily on mountain passes. Another two birds were later seen well along the middle Limnethang Road.

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

First seen well in Dwarf Bamboo at the top of Yontung La with three birds lured into view. Others encountered below Yonku La.

Gray-sided Bush-Warbler*Cettia brunnifrons*

Another numerous bush-warbler with our first sightings of two birds hopping unconcernedly along the roadside below Zhemgang and later another two birds vocalizing at the Fire-tailed Myzornis site on

Yontung La.

Mountain Tailorbird *Orthotomus cuculatus*

Only seen once and later heard calling along the Limnethang Road.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Our first sighting was near Tingtibi and later we again encountered this widespread species near Tashigang and below Deothang.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*

Good numbers encountered in the secondary growth near our camp on the lower Limnethang Road with further sightings of up to twenty on Kori La.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*

Small numbers at the top of most passes often associating with mixed flocks.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis*

The most distinctive of the genus, this species was fairly common in mixed insectivorous flocks at middle altitudes with up to fifteen seen in a single day.

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

This distinctive warbler was first seen on Dochu La with larger numbers of up to twenty daily later encountered along the Limnethang Road and smaller numbers on passes to the east.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

This passage migrant was encountered in small numbers with four found in the Bumthang Valley, another on the lower Limnethang Road, and two on Yongphu La.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

Singles were encountered with mixed foraging flocks on Pele La, Dochu Lathe Punakha Valley, and near Zhemgang.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Small numbers of this rather non-descript species were first found on Dochu La.

Large-billed Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

The distinctive song of this bird, the only of its genus to completely vacate Bhutan in winter, was first heard near Zhemgang where four birds were seen with scattered sightings to the east.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*

Our most commonly recorded of the genus with large numbers recorded on most days with a maximum of thirty birds seen on a single day along the Limnethang Road.

Yellow-vented Warbler *Phylloscopus cantator*

This attractive species was first found along the Mo Chu with eight sightings and was later found to be more common near Zhemgang with up to fifteen daily.

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 at high altitudes first atop Dochu La where up to ten birds were encountered with even larger numbers along the higher altitudes of the Limnethang Road.

Golden-spectacled [Green-crowned] Warbler *Seicercus [burkii]*

Generally replacing the above species below 2500 meters, this bird was first found low on Duchu La with numerous sightings around Tongsa, below Zhemgang, and was especially common on the lower Limnethang Road.

Gray-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*

Fairly common at lower altitudes and especially numerous in the Zhemgang and Tashigang surroundings with up to ten seen daily.

White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis*

This secretive species was seen only twice with one sighting along the Mo Chu and later another bird near Zhemgnag.

Gray-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys*

More commonly encountered than the above species and especially conspicuous along the Limnethang Road where up to ten birds were seen daily.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps*

This attractive bird was seen in small numbers on most days with over ten birds recorded daily along the Limnethang Road and Yongphu La.

Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*

This localized bird was only seen near Tingtibi where four individuals were found and seen very well at close quarters.

Yellow-bellied Warbler *Abroscopus superciliaris*

After hearing this species in a dry valley below Deothang we walked into a patch of bamboo and managed to coax out a responsive pair.

Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps*

A pair was first seen at Tingtibi and later we found this species to be especially numerous along the lower Limnethang Road with up to ten encountered daily.

Broad-billed Warbler *Tickellia hodgsoni*

This scarce species was seen only along the lower Limnethang Road on a daily basis with a maximum of three individuals.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*

First located along the Mo Chu, we later had further sightings on Pele La, near Zhemgang, and on Yongphu La.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

A single sighting just above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*

A single bird scoped along the Mo Chu and another on the western slope of Pele La.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*

First glimpsed in riverine forest along the Mo Chu with far more satisfying views of a displaying pair on a rhododendron in alpine shrubbery at Yongphu La and finally a surprisingly vocal male singing at 350 meters along a stream near Deothang. By the end of April normally this bird would be expected to be on its high altitude breeding grounds.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiiata*

By far the most frequently encountered of this genus, we found it most days with a maximum of up to twenty daily on Dochu La and along the Limnethang Road.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra*

A single bird seen vocalizing below our camp along the lower Limnethang Road.

White-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula monileger*

This unobtrusive birds was found skulking in a bamboo thicket below Zhemgang with others heard along the Limnethang Road.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni*

A maximum of six below Zhemgang with smaller numbers daily along the Limnethang Road.

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliaris*

Another numerous member of this genus, especially on the first half of the tour where up to six were

seen daily on Pele La and near Zhemgang.

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*

First seen on the eastern slope of Thrumsing La at the Golden Bush-Robin site with another two sightings along the Limnethang Road.

Sapphire Flycatcher *Ficedula sapphira*

We had an intimate prolonged encounter with one spectacular male just below Zhemgang.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*

Common and conspicuous with up to ten recorded most days in proper habitat.

Large Niltava *Niltava grandis*

This somewhat retiring species was especially common along the Limnethang Road with four males seen total.

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae*

More numerous than the above species with our first sightings along the Mo Chu, later near Zhemgang, and finally below Yongku La.

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*

We enjoyed no fewer than sixteen sightings of the spectacular male of this species throughout our tour. I was first encountered on Dochu la with further sightings on Pele La, near Zhemgang, the Limnethang Road, and on Kori La.

Pale-chinned Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis poliogenys*

Initially heard below Deothang from a bamboo-choked valley where we eventually lured out a pair that showed well.

Pale Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*

Small numbers daily around Zhemgang with another two birds seen well on the lower Limnethang Road.

Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

One seen briefly along the Mo Chu, excellent scope views of three individuals near Tingtibi, and finally a final sighting along the Limnethang Road.

Pygmy Blue-Flycatcher *Muscicapella hodgsoni*

Fairly commonly heard along the Limnethang Road with only brief sightings.

Gray-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

This sprightly species was a conspicuous member of mixed foraging flocks with up top ten daily along the Mo Chu, near Zhemgang, on the lower Limnethang Road, Yongphu La, and above Narphung.

Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*

Only one sighting of this secretive undergrowth bird on the west slope of Thrumsing La.

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

Sometimes split by some authorities as a separate species, Himalayan Bluetail, we found this species to be numerous on the high passes with five breeding pairs on Chele La and at least ten seen on Thumsing La.

Golden Bush-Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*

Wonderful views of a breeding pair plus a single gaudy male on the east side of Thrumsing La with a further four seen the following morning in the same area.

White-browed Bush-Robin *Tarsiger indicus*

Just a single sighting of a female of this species on the east sided of Thrumsing La in the bamboo.

Rufous-breasted Bush-Robin *Tarsiger hyperythrus*

This a single female was seen near Namling by one participant.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Numerous at low altitudes.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*

A pair seen on the edge of foothill forest below Deothang with others heard in the area.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Small numbers of this passage migrant were encountered particularly in the west with singles in the Paro and Thimpu Valley, three in the Punakha Valley, and singles on two days below Zhemgang.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

This winter visitor was encountered only in the riverine scrub in the Paro Valley with two males seen well.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

This attractive bird was pleasantly common at high altitudes at Chele La with a maximum of six birds followed by smaller numbers of Dochu La, Yotung La, and Thrumsing La.

White-capped Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

A wonderful feature of Bhutanese rivers, this attractive species was encountered on streams throughout with a maximum of more than twenty birds on Thrumsing La.

Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Almost as numerous as the preceding species and occurring in similar habitat with maximums of twenty per day.

White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*

This skulking songster was fairly commonly heard at middle altitude, especially near bamboo, with first views near Zhemgang followed by single sightings on two days on the Limnethang Road.

Blue-fronted Robin *Cinclidium frontale*

This arch skulker which occupies a similar altitudinal range as the preceding species was heard every day on the Limnethang Road and seen twice responding to playback.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*

This most diminutive of forketails was only encountered in the Tongsa area with three different birds seen over two days.

Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus immaculatus*

Our 'rockjumping' in search of Blyth's Kingfisher below Deothang revealed no fewer than nine individuals of this primarily lowland dwelling species which was scoped and seen very well by all.

Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*

Our most commonly encountered forketail with our first pair on Pele La with singles and pairs later encountered on other passes further east with a maximum of four daily below Deothang.

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*

Only a single individual of this handsome species encountered near Tongsa.

Common [Siberian] Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

One late wintering individual was found between Zhemgang and Tongsa with others heard at the roadside. Some authorities split this species as Siberian Stonechat [*Saxicola torquatus indicus*].

Gray Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*

A conspicuous feature at the roadside of Bhutan with more than twenty birds recorded most travel days and a high of thirty birds on Yongphu La.

Fantails *Rhipiduridae*

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha*

This animated species was commonly encountered in high elevation broadleaf forest where it was a regular member of mixed insectivorous flocks. A maximum of twenty per day were recorded on

Thrumsing La.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*

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

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

This widespread Asian species was fairly commonly encountered in the forest below Deothang with a maximum of eight per day.

Babblers *Timaliidae*

White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*

Our most commonly recorded laughingthrush on account of its conspicuous nature and large flock size with more than one hundred birds recorded on several days.

White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*

This striking bird was first seen in scrubby habitat below Zhemgang with more memorable encounters of flocks below Yonkhola and Kori La.

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax monileger*

Only a single flock of these wary birds seen well near our camp at Tingtibi.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*

Numerous, vocal, and seen on most days with a maximum of more than twenty birds per day on the Limnethang Road.

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *Garrulax ruficollis*

This denizen of dense scrub was first encountered on the edge of our camp at Tingtibi with a further sighting of a flock scoped on a hillside below Yonkhola.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis*

This secretive species was seen only once on the east side of Dochu La and again heard below Zhemgang and Yonkhola.

Spotted Laughingthrush *Garrulax ocellatus*

This magnificent bird was seen at point-blank range on Chele La with a total of two pairs seen for several minutes.

Gray-sided Laughingthrush *Garrulax caerulatus*

Another skulking Laughingthrush seen remarkably well with a total of four birds hoping unconcernedly on the lower Limnethang Road while three more vocalized from the nearby scrub.

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

Seen most days and increasing common as we headed eastwards with over twenty per day on Yongphu La. This species is sometimes considered a Bhutanese endemic [*Garrulax imbricatum*].

Scaly Laughingthrush *Garrulax subunicolor*

Considered one of the most difficult of laughingthrushes to see, we enjoyed spectacular views of this handsome bird near Tongsa with three seen and later others hear and seen briefly on the Limnethang Road.

Blue-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax squamatus*

A pair of these magnificent birds vocalized from atop a roadside bush below Zhemgang allowing for excellent viewing with others hear along the Limnethang Road.

Black-faced Laughingthrush *Garrulax affinis*

First seen on Chele La with six in the morning and further sightings of lesser numbers on five days

thereafter.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax erythrocephalus*

Another common Laughingthrush with maximum numbers of ten birds per day in the western and central valleys and scattered sightings along the Limnethang Road.

Red-faced Liocichla *Liocichla phoenicea*

First heard below Zhemgang with unbelievable scope views of a pair on the lower Limnethang Road, a very shy and secretive species!

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*

Heard in lowland forest below Zhemngang.

White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*

First heard below Zhemgang before being lured into view for cooperative sightings at the Beautiful Nuthatch site.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys*

This vocal open country species was first seen at the checkpoint below Punakha with many heard later and scattered sightings in similar habitat to the east.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

First heard on Pele La and Dochu La before a fine flock of five birds were seen remarkably well near Tongsa.

Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*

Only two of these handsome birds were seen accompanying a mixed flock of Rusty-headed Barwings and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills along the lower Limnethang Road.

Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris*

One of the star sightings of Thrumsing La with an incredible pair calling at a distance of less than two meters! Incredible! Another pair was later seen below Sengor and fairly commonly heard along the Limnethang Road.

Long-billed Wren-Babbler *Rimator malacoptilus*

An unresponsive bird was heard along the lower Limnethang Road before we later managed to coax into view a second more cooperative bird, a real mega!

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer*

Heard regularly along the upper Limnethang Road with one cooperative individual perching up singing and hopping about at the roadside.

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 singles seen along the Mo Chu, below Zhemgang, and along the middle Limnethang Road.

Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis caudatus*

Yet another skulking wren-babbler that was well seen along the middle Limnethang Road at the edge of forest with others heard.

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis troglodytoides*

This scarce species was seen exceptionally well along the upper Limnethang Road with two birds vigorously responding to playback and perching for long periods within three meters of our position.

Spotted Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis formosus*

First heard along the Mo Chu with one obliging individual seen at the roadside along Pele La and others heard below Zhemgang and above Deothang.

Rufous-fronted Babbler *Stachyris rufifrons*

Common below Deothang with up to six seen daily.

Rufous-capped Babbler*Stachyris ruficeps*

A frequent denizen of mixed flocks in middle altitude forest and seen most days with up to ten per day.

Golden Babbler*Stachyris chrysaea*

Almost as numerous as the above with a maximum of fifteen seen daily on the middle Limnethang Road.

Gray-throated Babbler*Stachyris nigriceps*

Somewhat more secretive than its counterparts, this species was seen in low altitude forest near Tingtibi and below Deothang with a maximum of eight per day.

Striped Tit-Babbler*Macronous gularis*

Seen daily in small numbers above Samdrup Jonkhar with a maximum of ten per day.

Silver-eared Mesia*Leiothrix argentauris*

This attractive babbler was first encountered in the Zhemgang area with up to four daily and was later especially numerous above Deothang with up to twenty sighted in a single morning.

Red-billed Leiothrix*Leiothrix lutea*

A sighting of five below Zhemgang with a further three on the lower Limnethang Road and three on Kori La.

Cutia*Cutia nipalensis*

This magnificent bird was encountered on four occasions with a pair on the west side of Pele La where we first heard Ward's Trogon, a wonderful group of four scoped foraging on a moss festooned tree at eye-level on the east side of Pele La, a pair near Namling, and finally a small flock of seven individuals on the lower Limnethang Road.

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius rufiventer*

This scarce canopy dweller was first seen below Namling where we pulled one into scope view with playback followed by a second even more cooperative bird on Yongphu La seen at eye-level at only three meters away!

White-browed Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius flaviscapis*

Considerably more common than its larger cousin listed above, we had no fewer than thirteen sightings of this handsome bird first on Dochu La with a maximum of five per day below Zhemgang.

Green Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius xanthochlorus*

This high altitude shrike-babbler was first seen well on Dochu La, a single on Yotong La, and three daily on Thrumsing La.

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler*Pteruthius melanotis*

Seen daily on the middle Limnethang Road with up to ten daily often associating with mixed species flocks.

Rusty-fronted Barwing*Actinodura egerton*

This low altitude barwing was first encountered along the Mo Chu where over thirty were seen with smaller numbers in the Zhemgang area, up to fifty daily on the Limnethang Road, and about twenty-five on Yotong La.

Hoary-throated Barwing*Actinodura nipalensis*

An attractive component of high altitude forest with fifteen atop Dochu La and twenty daily on the higher portions of Thrumsing La and Kori La.

Blue-winged Minla*Minla cyanouroptera*

First encountered in the Zhemgang area with a maximum of twelve daily and later very numerous to the east with up to thirty daily on Yongphu La.

Chestnut-tailed Minla*Minla strigula*

This handsome bird was seen most days in middle altitude forest with up to forty daily along the

Limnethang Road.

Red-tailed Minla *Minla ignotincta*

Almost as numerous as the preceding species, we first encountered this species on Pele La with maximum numbers of forty daily on the Limnethang Road.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis*

This attractive species of bamboo was seen only once near Namling with a fast moving flock of six individuals.

Yellow-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinerea*

Plentiful at lower altitudes of the Limnethang Road with up to fifty daily.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta *Alcippe castaneiceps*

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

Ludlow's (Brown-throated) Fulvetta *Alcippe ludlowi*

This attractive bird that replaces White-browed Fulvetta to the east of the Kuri Chu was found on Yongphu La where four birds were seen well and photographed in mixed feeding flocks.

White-browed Fulvetta *Alcippe vinipectus*

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

Nepal Fulvetta *Alcippe nipalensis*

Recorded on eight days of the tour with maximum sightings in the Zhemgang area of ten birds daily and five daily along the Limnethang Road.

Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata*

One of the most common species of Bhutanese forests and recorded most days with up to fifty daily along the Limnethang Road.

Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia picaoides*

Seen only in the Deothang area where we enjoyed daily sightings of up to seven birds.

Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps*

This low altitude species was only seen in the Zhemgang, Yonkhola, and Deothang areas with up to forty birds sighted daily near Tingtibi.

White-naped Yuhina *Yuhina bakeri*

This attractive bird was first encountered below Zhemgang with a least ten birds daily and later up to twenty daily along the Limnethang Road and finally smaller numbers near Deothang.

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*

The most commonly encountered yuhina in Bhutan and a conspicuous member of mixed flocks, we found over one hundred birds daily along the Limnethang Road.

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis*

First seen on Dochu La with large numbers daily on the upper Limnethang Road and Yongphu La.

Rufous-vented Yuhina *Yuhina occipitalis*

This high altitude species was first seen on Chele La and all high passes thereafter with maximum numbers of forty birds on Thrumsing La.

Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta*

This localized bird was never common during the tour with two seen on Dochu La and maximum of six per day below Zhemgang.

White-bellied Yuhina (Erpornis) *Erpornis zantholeuca*

Scattered sightings of this widespread bird with four birds below Zhemgang, a single on the Limnethang Road, and two below Deothang.

Fire-tailed Myzornis *Myzornis pyrrhoura*

This avian gem was encountered on only two occasions with two individuals in fast moving flocks on Dochu La and a pair seen very well atop Yotong La.

Parrotbills *Paradoxornithidae*

Great Parrotbill

Conostoma oemodium

Frequently heard and glimpsed in bamboo on Pele La and Yotong La before we finally connected with one highly cooperative bird on Thrumsing La where we eventually walked away from the bird.

Brown Parrotbill

Paradoxornis unicolor

Five individuals of this scarce species was seen and scoped in dense bamboo habitat in the Bumthang Valley.

Fulvous Parrotbill

Paradoxornis fulvifrons

Three individuals of this elusive bird were seen in a dense stand of bamboo on Thrumsing La.

Black-throated Parrotbill

Paradoxornis nipalensis

First seen briefly on the upper Limnethang Road with three amazingly cooperative individuals on the lower Limnethang Road allowing for intimate prolonged views of this exquisite bird.

[Greater] Rufous-headed Parrotbill

Paradoxornis ruficeps

Three birds were found accompanying a flock of Rusty-fronted Barwings and Coral-billed Scimitar-Babblers.

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 eight days of the tour with a maximum of ten one day on the Limnethang Road.

Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit

Aegithalos iouschistos

Over ten daily on Chele La and Dochu La with twenty later seen daily on Thrumsing La.

Tits & Chickadees *Paridae*

Coal Tit

Periparus ater

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

Rufous-vented Tit

Periparus rubidiventris

Small numbers at high altitudes with ten per day on Chele La and seen again in similar numbers on Yotong La and Thrumsing La.

Gray-crested Tit

Lophophanes dichrous

Numerous at high altitudes with more than twenty daily on Chele La, Dochu La, and Thrumsing La.

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 sibilator

Scattered sightings in small numbers below Zhemgang, Limnethang Road, Kori La, Yongphu La, and near Deothang.

Yellow-browed Tit

Sylviparus modestus

Numerous on Dochu La with more than twenty birds seen with smaller numbers on Pele La and the Limnethang Road.

Sultan Tit

Melanochlora sultanea

Only three sightings of this handsome bird with pairs on two days below Zhemgang and a single bird below Deothang.

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

The low altitude nuthatch in Bhutan with six birds over two days below Zhemgang and seven over three days near Deothang.

White-tailed Nuthatch*Sitta himalayensis*

The high altitude nuthatch in Bhutan with small numbers seen most days and a maximum of seven per day on Kori La.

Beautiful Nuthatch*Sitta formosa*

Sandwiches attitudinally between the two above species, this rare and localized bird was seen on two occasions at separate localities below Zhemgang with our second sighting being excellent prolonged scope views of a pair possibly constructing nest.

Wallcreeper Tichodromidae**Wallcreeper***Tichodroma muraria*

A single late wintering bird flushed from the roadside embankment in the Paro Valley.

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

This widespread species was only seen on Chele La with six birds total encountered

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper*Certhia nipalensis*

Only a single prolonged sighting of this solitary bird in rhododendron forest atop Dochu La.

Brown-throated Treecreeper*Certhia discolor*

First heard below Zhemgang with four birds seen over two days along the lower Limnethang Road followed by a single on Yongphu La.

Penduline Tits Remizidae**Fire-capped Tit***Cephalopyrus flammiceps*

A single male seen by some participants in a mixed flock on the lower Limnethang Road.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae**Gould's Sunbird***Aethopyga gouldiae*

This resplendent bird was delightfully common on the high passes with more than ten daily on Chele La and over fifty daily on the upper Limnethang Road.

Green-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga nipalensis*

The most commonly encountered sunbird during the tour with good numbers most days including a high of more than one hundred birds on Dochu La and along the Limnethang Road.

Black-throated Sunbird*Aethopyga saturata*

Another numerous sunbird with small numbers most days at low altitudes including twenty daily along the Mo Chu and the lower Limnethang Road.

Crimson Sunbird*Aethopyga siparaja*

First seen at Tingtibi with singles below Yongphu La and later especially numerous below Deothang with up to ten daily.

Fire-tailed Sunbird*Aethopyga ignicauda*

A single pair of these nomadic but beautiful birds was encountered atop Yotong La.

Purple Sunbird*Aethopyga asiaticus*

Three individuals of this widespread species were seen in the scrub just above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*

A single sighting below Deothang of this widespread species.

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*

Fairly common at low altitudes with more than five daily near Tingtibi and below Deothang.

Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae**Plain Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum concolor*

Two birds seen near Samdrup Junkhar.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*

Numerous at middle altitudes with over ten daily in the Zhemgang area and up to twenty daily along the Limnethang Road.

Yellow-vented Flowerpecker *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*

Four individuals of this attractive bird were found between Deothang and Samdrup Jonkhar representing the 7th – 10th records of this species in Bhutan.

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

Numerous in broadleaf forest throughout with more than twenty daily in suitable habitat.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae**Slender-billed Oriole** *Oriolus tenuirostris*

Heard on our first afternoon in the Punakha Valley where it was ignored in lieu of White-bellied Heron. Later we tracked down a spectacular pair scoped in similar habitat below Mongar.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*

Commonly encountered at lower altitudes with over ten seen along the Mo Chu and smaller numbers below Zhemgang.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

This species was heard calling above Samdrup Jonkhar.

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

Encountered only below Deothang with almost thirty sightings over the course of three days.

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

This uncommon migrant was seen only in Samdrup Jonkhar where two individuals were seen along the riverside scrub.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

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

Gray-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

A numerous as the above with up to twenty per day in similar habitat.

Helmetshrikes & Allies Prionopidae**Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis gularis*

Only two sightings of a pair and a single below Zhemgang.

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

Two individuals of this widespread species encountered in the Punakha Valley where it was greatly outnumbered by the Ashy Drongo.

Ashy Drongo*Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Common and conspicuous in broadleaf forest through the tour with more than twenty birds sighted most days.

Bronzed Drongo*Dicrurus aeneus*

Fairly common at lower altitudes with nine birds over three days below Zhemgang and thirty over three days in the Deothang areas.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo*Dicrurus remifer*

A pair below Zhemgang and two individuals seen along the lower Limnethang Road were our only sightings of this attractive bird.

Hair-crested (Spangled) Drongo*Dicrurus hottentottus*

At similar altitudes as Bronzed Drongo with eleven over three days in the Zhemgang area, six below Yonkhola, and eleven over three days near Deothang.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo*Dicrurus paradiseus*

Only a single sighting of this spectacular bird below Deothang.

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

Three sightings of this widespread species with a single bird perched on a prayer flag in Zhemgang and two flight views below Deothang.

Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae**Eurasian Jay***Garrulus glandarius*

Small numbers on many of the high passes with four on Dochu La, five on Pele La, a single on Yotong La, three on Kori La, and two on Yongphu La.

Gold-billed Magpie*Urocissa flavirostris*

Another attractive bird that was pleasantly common in Bhutan with up to ten seen daily on the high passes.

Green Magpie*Cissa chinensis*

A dramatically colored yet elusive bird that we managed to track down on the lower Limnethang Road with prolonged scope views of three responsive individuals, also heard near our camp in Tingtibi.

Gray Treepie*Dendrocitta formosae*

Numerous at lower altitudes with maximum of twenty birds daily below Zhemgang and the lower Limnethang Road.

Eurasian Magpie*Pica pica*

First seen on top of Pele La at the extreme west of its range in Bhutan followed by numerous birds in the Bumthang and Ura Valleys with more than twenty daily.

Eurasian Nutcracker*Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Numerous in coniferous forests with more than twenty on Chele La and lesser numbers on Yotong La, Thrumsing La, and Yongphu La.

Red-billed Chough*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

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

House Crow *Corvus splendens*
Seen only in Samdrup Jonkhar with more than twenty in a single afternoon.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
Ubiquitous in Bhutan and recorded all but one day of the trip with up to one hundred birds in a single day.

Starlings Sturnidae

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*
Found only below Deothang with thirty-six birds sighted over three days.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*
Only four birds seen at a flowering tree above Samdrup Jonkhar.

White-vented Myna *Acridotheres grandis*
Apparently only recently established in Bhutan but now fairly common in the Samdrup Jonkhar area where we encountered up to ten daily.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*
Fairly common at lower altitudes near cultivation with more than one hundred birds in Punakha.

Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra*
A single bird seen in Samdrup Jonkhar.

Spot-winged Starling *Sturnia spiloptera*
Two sightings of this nomadic species with a flock of three flying along the Mo Chu and later four birds seen between Zhemgang and Tongsa in an arid valley.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*
Numerous between Samdrup Jonkhar and Deothang with up to fifty daily.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Although this bird is known from small numbers in the western part of the country, we stumbled onto several birds near Samdrup Jonkhar with more than forty birds.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
Numerous in agricultural country with more than ten birds seen most days of the tour and more than fifty daily in the Bumthang and Ura Valleys.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Seen almost daily throughout the tour in good numbers near urban areas.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*
Scattered sightings of small flocks most memorably below Deothang where a total of twelve were recorded over three days.

Nutmeg Mannikin *Lonchura punctulata*
Only two sightings of this widespread species with three in rice patties along the Mo Chu and a pair at Tingtibi.

Weavers & Allies Ploceidae

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*
Small colonies between Deothang and within Samdrup Jonkhar itself supporting more than thirty birds.

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

Seen only on Chele La with large roving flocks numbering over one hundred birds strong.

Common Rosefinch*Carpodacus erythrinus*

Found only in the eastern half of the country with a small flock near our Yonkhola flock and up to fifty in a day on Kori La.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch*Carpodacus edwardsii*

Small numbers seen on the eastern side of Thruming La with six birds over two days.

[Himalayan] White-browed Rosefinch*Carpodacus thura*

Sometimes split by some authorities as Himalayan White-browed, we found four birds near the tree line on Chele La.

Red Crossbill*Loxia curvirostra*

Common in coniferous areas with more than ten birds sighted on Chele La, five on Dochu La, twelve on Yotong La, and over fifty over two days on Thruming La.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch*Carduelis spinoides*

Flocks of up to thirty these attractive finches were encountered on six occasions first on Dochu La and memorably near our Yonkhola camp site.

Tibetan Serin*Serinus thibetanus*

A single flock of this scarce nomadic bird with sixty birds scoped feeding in alder trees on the western slope of Pele La.

Brown Bullfinch*Pyrrhula nipalensis*

This scarce bird was scoped on the lower section of Chele La where a group of three was watched foraging along the forest edge.

Red-headed Bullfinch*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*

First heard on Chele La and subsequently seen very well on Thruming La with up to twenty daily.

Collared Grosbeak*Mycerobas affinis*

This striking bird was pleasantly numerous on Chele La with more than twenty noisy and conspicuous individuals and later seen again with four birds on Thruming La.

Spot-winged Grosbeak*Mycerobas melanozanthos*

An unexpected sighting of six birds along the Mo Chu with another two birds at a more appropriate altitude atop Yotong La.

White-winged Grosbeak*Mycerobas carnipes*

Quite numerous on the slopes of Chele La with more than ten birds seen well and later found again on Yotong La and Thruming La with up to fifteen daily.

Scarlet Finch*Haematospiza sipahi*

A single female seen flashing across the Linnethang Road followed later by a magnificent pair scoped at the roadside above Deothang.

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

Fairly common and conspicuous in open scrubby countryside with two males near Punakha, above Zhemgang, and scrubby countryside east of Yonku La.

Little Bunting*Emberiza puscilla*

Two birds flushed from riverside vegetation in the Paro Valley with a large flock on Pele La and an even larger group of more than thirty birds scoped near the Brown Parrotbills site in the Bumthang Valley.

Select Birds seen in northeast India during morning transfer to Gauhati:

Jungle Babbler	Intermediate Egret
Little Ringed Plover	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker
Cattle Egret	Black Drongo
Indian Pond-Heron	Purple Swamphen
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Jungle Myna
Red-wattled Lapwing	White-rumped Vulture
Black-hooded Oriole	Citrine Wagtail
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Rosy Pipit
Rose-ringed Parakeet	Bank Myna
Little Cormorant	Plain Prinia
Indian Cormorant	Zitting Cisticola
Great Egret	Striated Grassbird
Mallard	Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Bronze-winged Jacana	Alexandrine Parakeet
Wood Sandpiper	

Select Birds seen during afternoon airport transfer in Delhi:

Indian Robin	Brown Rock-Chat
Indian Peafowl	Yellow-wattled Lapwing
Black-shouldered Kite	Little Green-Bee-eater

Annotated List of Mammal Species:**(19 Species)**

Moupin Pika	<i>Ochotona thibetana</i>
We enjoyed several sightings of this species near the scrubby roadside at mountain passes.	
Large-eared Pika	<i>Ochotona macrotis</i>
We found this species in small numbers along the upper Lingmethang Road.	
Forrest's Pika	<i>Ochotona forresti</i>
We found three individuals seen well along the thick rhododendron ground cover of Thrumsing La.	
Black Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa bicolor</i>
One forest seen in the forest near Tingtibi with better views of a cooperative individual in riverine vegetation below Deothang.	
Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel	<i>Dremomys lokriah</i>
Observed throughout the tour with small numbers recorded almost daily.	
Hoary-bellied Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus pygerythus</i>
Two animals seen well in the remaining forest patches in the vicinity of Deothang.	
Irrawaddy Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus pygerythrus</i>
Seen in lowland forest both near Tingtibi and again near the Indian at Samdrup Jongkar border.	

Himalayan Striped Squirrel*Tamiops mccllellandii*

Numerous throughout the tour in forested areas.

Sikkim Vole*Microtus sikimensis*

We had admittedly excellent views of this often retiring species during the daytime both at atop Yotong La and again on Thrumsing La.

Yellow-throated Martin*Martes flavigula*

This widespread species is very rarely seen this well. We were fortunate to find an adult feeding on a fruiting tree during the daylight hours along the lower Lingmethang Road. We watched its behavior for about ten uninterrupted minutes.

Gray Langur*Semnopithecus schistaceus*

Several playful individuals observed along the forested edge of the Mo Chu.

Golden Leaf-Monkey*Trachypithecus geei*

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

Capped Leaf-Monkey*Trachypithecus pileatus*

Observed along the lower Lingmethang Road where we found several troops of these attractive mammals.

Assam Macaque*Macaca assamensis*

Found in small numbers throughout the tour in forested areas.

Rhesus Macaque*Macaca mulatta*

Seven individuals total were encountered near Samdrup Jonkhar before we crossed into India. This species replaces the above at lower elevations.

Indian Muntjac(Barking Deer)*Muntiacus muntjak*

Seen several times at scattered forested locations throughout the tour.

Sumatran Serow*Capricornis sumatraensis*

We had outstanding views of two individuals of this stout mountain goat along the Lower Linnethang Road.

Common Goral*Nemorhaedus goral*

Two animals briefly observed moving along a steep rocky ridge at the roadside along Pele La.

Sloth Bear*Melursus ursinus*

As we drove down the winding road to our camp at Tingtibi we were very fortunate to see a beautiful adult on the road in front of us. We watched as it then bounded away into the forest, and after stopping the bus some of us were able to obtain further views as it moved through the trees. This species is found at these slightly lower elevations; higher up it is replaced by the Asiatic Black Bear.

Photo Credits: All photographs taken by David Shackelford.

Rockjumper Birding Tours
Worldwide Birding Adventures
PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa
Tel: +27 33 394 0225
Fax: +27 88 033 394 0225
Email: info@rockjumper.co.za
Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumper.co.za