



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## SRI LANKA

*21<sup>st</sup> November - 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007*



Sri Lanka Blue Magpie in Sinharaja National Park. All photos by David Shackelford

**Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader David Shackelford**

**Top 6 Birds of the Tour as voted by participants:**

1. Sri Lanka Blue Magpie
2. Yellow-eared Bulbul
3. Spot-winged Thrush
4. Chestnut-backed Owlet
5. Malabar Pied Hornbill
6. Indian Pitta



Boating across the Kelani River and Kangaroo Lizard.

## Tour Summary

Arriving from Kochi on the RBT Southern Indian tour, we began our explorations of Sri Lanka on the outskirts of the capital city Colombo, overall a very organized metropolis with tidy infrastructure, efficient transportation, and friendly local people. Travelling on windy roads through rubber tree and teak plantations we eventually found ourselves inside the vast mountainous forest of Sinharaja National Park, the country's last viable tract of primary tropical rainforest supporting over half of Sri Lanka's endemic species of mammals and butterflies. Our lodge tucked away in a valley overlooking a quiet sparkling stream allowed us to venture into the forest to study unique carnivorous pitcher plants, find a variety of fascinating reptiles including a vibrant Green and scarce Russell's Pit-Viper, awe at glittering bird-wing butterflies dancing over the forest floor, and enjoying the antics of sprightly Purple-faced Leaf-Monkey acrobatically swinging through the tree branches with fearless agility. Birds were no less impressive and we were bombarded by a plethora of endemics such as the retiring Spot-winged Thrush, eye-level scope views of the scarce White-faced Starling, Sri Lanka Myna, secretive Sri Lanka Spurfowl calling at less than twenty meters, amazing views of Layard's Parakeet, and of course we all enjoyed multiple views of the exquisitely colorful Sri Lanka Blue-Magpie, perhaps Sri Lanka's most vibrant endemic!

Continuing through warmer climates we enjoyed memorable encounters with Malabar Pied Hornbill, the scarce Sirkeer Malkoha, and numerous Asian Elephants in Uda Walawa Wildlife Reserve before continuing to the southern coast of this island nation. Here we splashed in the Indian Ocean before spending a day driving in an open-top jeep through Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary. Wildlife sightings were prolific throughout the extensive park including delights such as the elegant Painted Stork, both Black and Yellow Bittern, a profusion of wintering waders, migrant Jacobin Cuckoo, the dazzling Indian Peafowl, and excellent scope views of Small Pratincole. The dry scrub and open wetlands throughout the park were also very productive for mammals including Indian Spotted Deer, mammoth Water Buffalo, further views of Asian Elephant, and the playful black-faced Hanuman Langur.

A country widely recognized for producing the finest tea in the world, we continued through immense plantations where we could watch hundreds of local harvesters hard at work selecting the finest of leaves along with breathtaking views of several scenic waterfalls. The mountain highlands of Sri Lanka were pleasantly cool, and we found ourselves enjoying a morning in the Horton Plains picking through mixed flocks including sought-after species such as the Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler, the endemic Dull-blue Flycatcher, incredible scope views of Sri Lanka Wood-Pigeon feeding at eye-level, and outrageous Yellow-eared Bulbul. Other denizens of various stunted mountain sites



in the vicinity produced a gorgeous male Kashmir Flycatcher, very nice views of several agile Purple-faced Leaf-Monkeys, scarce Black-faced Munia, and the shy migrant Pied Thrush.

The final lodge of our tour was nestled along the dense montane forest banks of the Kelani River. Getting an early start the following morning we boarded the local ferry service comprising of a man and his dugout canoe who took us across the water rapids. The forest and surrounding areas was alive with activity that afforded us spectacular views of the reticent Green-billed Coucal, beautiful Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot cruising by overhead, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, and phenomenal views of the tiny Chestnut-backed Owlet. It was a memorable journey around this diverse island and we bid farewell with a final candlelit evening sharing our memories travelling together across the incredible nation of Sri Lanka.



Highland vegetable market and Indian Pitta.

### Annotated List of Birds Recorded

E = Endemic, SE = Sub-continent endemic

#### Grebes Podicipedidae

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

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

We enjoyed multiple views of this widespread species in the surrounding wetlands of Tissa as well as again the following day in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### Pelicans Pelecanidae

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

*Pelecanus phillipensis*

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

#### Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae

##### **Indian Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Not uncommon in the wetlands surrounding the town of Tissa as well as in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and Kitulgala.

##### **Great Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

We found three birds in the wetlands surrounding the town of Tissa.

##### **Little Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax niger*

Seen regularly at most water bodies countrywide with more than eight hundred bird estimated during one day at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.



### Anhinga & Darter Anhingidae

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

*Anhinga melanogaster*

Seen at wetlands in the Tissa area and again in strong numbers in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

#### **Grey Heron**

*Ardea cinerea*

Seen daily in the wetlands of Tissa and again in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Purple Heron**

*Ardea purpurea*

More camouflaged than the preceding species, we found this attractive heron in wetlands around the town of Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Great (White) Egret**

*Ardea alba*

A common sight at all wetlands and rice paddies throughout the tour including good numbers in the Tissa area and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Intermediate Egret**

*Mesophyx intermedia*

This species was recorded in similar numbers and sights as Great Egret.

#### **Little Egret**

*Egretta garzetta*

Encountered often at the many rice paddies around Tissa and surrounding areas.

#### **Indian Pond Heron**

*Ardeola Greyii*

A very common species, many in breeding plumage, which was encountered almost daily.

#### **Cattle Egret**

*Bubulcus ibis*

Commonly recorded throughout Sri Lanka where it was seen almost daily.

#### **Black-crowned Night-Heron**

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Only a single bird found in the Tissa area.

#### **Yellow Bittern**

*Ixobrychus sinensis*

A single bird was seen around Tissa and a further three birds were found at wetlands in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Black Bittern**

*Ixobrychus flavicollis*

We were fortunate to locate a single bird at a roadside wetland in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Storks Ciconidae

#### **Painted Stork**

*Mycteria leucocephala*

At least ten fantastic birds were found near Tissa with a further twenty seen at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Asian Openbill**

*Anastomus oscitans*

Good numbers were noted at all wetland localities in the Tissa area and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Woolly-necked Stork**

*Ciconia episcopus*

Five birds were found just outside the town of Tissa.

### Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

#### **Black-headed Ibis**

*Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Common in the wetlands and rice paddies around Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Eurasian Spoonbill**

*Platalea leucorodia*

Good numbers were noted in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary with excellent close views.

### Swans, Geese & Ducks Anatidae

#### **Lesser Whistling Duck**

*Dendrocygna javanica*

Several birds were first observed in the wetlands around Tissa with another sixty birds estimated in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.



**Garganey***Anas querquedula*

We found several large wintering flocks totalling no less than fifteen hundred birds in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Northern Pintail***Anas acuta*

A total of ten wintering birds were noted in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary

**Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures Accipitridae****Oriental Honey-Buzzard***Pernis ptilorhynchus*

We found our first bird soaring over the Sinharaja forest with further sightings of this widespread Asian species in Uda Walawa NP and near the Kelani River.

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

Seen frequently in the grasslands of Uda Walawa NP and near the highlands of Nuwara Eliya.

**Brahminy Kite***Haliastur Indus*

Several birds were noted foraging overhead in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and near Tissa.

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

Two of these impressive raptors were found at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and near Tissa.

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

Good views were had at least six individuals in Sinharaja forest as well as the highlands of Nuwara Eliya.

**Western Marsh Harrier***Circus aeruginosus*

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

**Crested Goshawk***Accipiter trivirgatus*

We found a single bird that called and displayed while in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Shikra***Accipiter badius*

Both widespread and fairly common accipiter of Africa and Asia, we found a single bird in the secondary forest near Tissa.

**Black Eagle***Ictinaetus malayensis*

Excellent views were had of four handsome soaring birds along the Kelani River.

**Booted Eagle***Hieraratus pennatus*

A single bird was found near Tissa with a further sighting in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Common (Steppe) Buzzard***Buteo buteo*

We found a single bird that perched near the highlands of Horton Plains.

**Changeable [Crested] Hawk-Eagle***Spizaetus cirrhatus*

One bird was first seen near Sinharaja forest and a further two impressive birds were perched in Uda Walawa NP.

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

One bird was noted by participants flying over the Kelani River FR.

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

Two birds were found in open woodland outside Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and again near Tissa.

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

A very secretive species however it does call and two birds were seen by some in Sinharaja forest and otherwise heard vocalizing loudly in front of us from the dense cover.

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

Fairly common and seen at many sites throughout the tour with our first excellent views of this endemic in Sinharaja forest.

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

A truly magnificent species that was recorded in large numbers in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas.

### Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae

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

*Rallina Eurizonoides*

Views were had by some of a single bird that showed at the edge of the Victoria Botanical Gardens.

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

*Porzana fusca*

A single bird was seen crossing the road briefly at the edge of Sinharaja forest.

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

*Amaurornis phoenicurus*

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

#### **Watercock**

*Gallicrex cinerea*

Often a hard bird to catch up with, we found a single bird at a roadside wetland near Tissa

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

*Porphyrio [Porphyrio] poliocephalus*

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

#### **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, we found this species at suitable habitat at several roadside wetlands including birds in immaculate breeding plumage.

### Painted Snipes Rostratulidae

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

*Rostratula benghalensis*

A single male bird was found in marshy habitat in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae

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

*Himantopus himantopus*

This species was common at wetlands in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and near Tissa.

### Thick-knees Burhinidae

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

*Escacus recurvirostris*

An impressive species that was encountered in good numbers at wetlands outside Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and near Tissa.

### Couriers & Pratincoles Glareolidae

#### **Small Pratincole**

*Glareola lacteal*

This dainty species was scoped at length after extensive searching in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary where we found it perched on a sand dike near salt pans.

### Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

#### **Yellow-wattled Lapwing (SE)**

*Vanellus malabaricus*

A bird of dry, open areas that was encountered in such habitat near Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Red-wattled Lapwing**

*Vanellus indicus*

Generally more common than the previous species and it was encountered throughout the tour with peak numbers surrounding Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Pacific Golden Plover**

*Pluvialis fulva*

We enjoyed a couple hundred birds seen very well in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Black-bellied Plover**

*Pluvialis squatarola*



Palearctic birds were found near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

We scoped a single bird along the mudflats near Tissa.

**Snowy (Kentish) Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Fairly common at pans near Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding Tissa.

**Mongolian Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*

Good numbers were seen along the edge of a pan near Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and shallow pans near Tissa.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Several birds were noted at pans near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*

Great views were had of five birds total near a marsh in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

Four birds were seen well at the saltpans in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

An uncommon bird in Sri Lanka, we found three birds along the shoreline in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

A single bird was found in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

Seen at pans both near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

This species was fairly common at pans near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Another common species of the pans in the Tissa and Bundala areas.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Only a single bird was found at a pan near Tissa.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Several birds were seen at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surroundings.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Commonly sighted at several localities throughout the country.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Several birds were found at pans in the Tissa area with further sightings in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*

We found two birds in the saltpans of Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

A single bird was found at a pan along the coastal area of Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Common at pans near Tissa and Bundala areas.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Another common species near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

A flock of approximately forty birds were found along the peninsula in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Terns Sternidae

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*

Good numbers were found in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and at a pan outside Yala National Park.



<b>Caspian Tern</b>	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
Strong numbers were seen at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding coastal areas.	
<b>Great Crested Tern</b>	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Up to twenty-five birds were seen at the salt pans in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.	
<b>Common Tern</b>	<i>Sterna Hirundo</i>
We scoped this species in mixed tern flocks in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.	
<b>Little Tern</b>	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Several birds were found at a pan outside Yala National Park and in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.	
<b>Whiskered Tern</b>	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>
Many seen at wetlands in the Tissa area and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.	
<b>White-winged Tern</b>	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Seen in smaller numbers at Bundala pans.	

### Doves & Pigeons Columbidae

<b>Rock Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>
Common at every locality throughout the entire tour.	
<b>Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon (E)</b>	<i>Columba elphinstonii</i>
This special pigeon is very localised and found only in the higher areas of the country. We found a single bird at the Horton Plains National Park followed by simply mind boggling views of no less than fifteen birds within twenty meters distance feeding on a fruiting tree one afternoon near Nuwara Eliya.	
<b>Spotted Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Very common throughout Sri Lanka.	
<b>Emerald Dove</b>	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
This species was seen at the lowland forest sites of Sinharaja forest and Kelani River FR.	
<b>Orange-breasted Green Pigeon</b>	<i>Treron bicincta</i>
Several birds were seen well during our jeep drive through Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.	
<b>Pompadour [Ceylon] Green Pigeon</b>	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
Several birds were seen in the Kelani River FR and briefly in the Sinharaja forest.	
<b>Green Imperial Pigeon</b>	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
This large pigeon is common on the island and was sighted nearly every day on the tour in the lowlands.	

### Parrots & Allies Psittacidae

<b>Rose-ringed Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Commonly recorded during the tour with good numbers in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and Uda Walawa.	
<b>Layard's Parakeet (E)</b>	<i>Psittacula calthropae</i>
We enjoyed amazing views of this species first at Sinharaja forest and later again at the lowland forest site of Kelani River FR.	
<b>Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot (E)</b>	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
Common and conspicuous at Sinharaja forest and Kelani River FR where we obtained multiple scope views.	

### Cuckoos Cuculidae

<b>Pied Cuckoo</b>	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
This species was found in the woodland surrounding Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary on several occasions.	
<b>Chestnut-winged Cuckoo</b>	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>



A scarce migrant, some of us were fortunate to see a single bird on the second day of the tour near Sinharaja forest.

**Asian Koel***Eudynamys scolopacea*

Often heard however we had sightings of this species throughout the tour with numerous views in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and at Sinharaja forest.

**Sirkeer Malkoha***Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii*

An uncommon bird throughout its limited range, we were fortunate to find a single bird in the secondary habitat near Sinharaja forest.

**Blue-faced Malkoha (SE)***Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

Three sightings of single birds were had in the thick woodlands found in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

A single bird was seen only briefly in Sinharaja forest associating with a large mixed feeding flock.

**Coucals Centropodidae****Green-billed Coucal (E)***Centropus chlororhynchos*

A single vocal bird was very well seen exceptionally well in the forest of Kitulgala.

**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 we were fortunate to hear a bird calling one evening close by at the edge of Sinharaja forest.

**Chestnut-backed Owlet (E)***Glaucidium castanonotum*

Another endemic owl species of which a pair was seen incredibly well for nearly half an hour along the Kelani River.

**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 Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and Kelani FR.

**Crested Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae****Crested Treeswift***Hemiprocne coronata*

This attractive species was regularly encountered at several sites during the tour.

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

This is a stunning bird of dense forests on the island. We enjoyed incredible views of no less than seven total birds including several stunning males while exploring the forests at Sinharaja.

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

A common species that was seen in small numbers at water-bodies near Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx erichacus*

A flash of color is all that is normally seen of this shy, forest dweller, and some of us were fortunate to have good views of a single bird near the Kelani River.

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

This majestic species of kingfisher was seen several times on the tour and that was on the edge of a wetland in the Tissa and Kitulgala areas.

**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 Tissa and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Bee-eaters Meropidae

**Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis*

A delightful species that was found in the woodlands of Tissa surroundings, Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and Uda Walawa NP.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops phillipinus*

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

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

This gorgeous species was noted in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary in small numbers.

### Rollers Coraciidae

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*

Just a single bird was scoped in the open woodland near Tissa.

### Hornbills Bucerotidae

**Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill (E)** *Tockus gringalensis*

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

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

An impressive species that was very well seen in the Uda Walawa NP with three gorgeous birds that flew directly over our heads!

### Barbets Capitonidae

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

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

**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*

We heard the monotonous song of this species in Sinharaja forest and once more from a distance near Kitulgala.

**Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala*

One bird were seen perched up in the afternoon at the tops of trees in Uda Walawa NP.

### Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae

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

Close up views were obtained of a four birds total in open woodland in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.



**Rufous Woodpecker***Celeus brachyurus*

One cooperative bid was seen in the forest near the Kelani River.

**Lesser Yellownape***Picus chlorolophus*

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

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

This species was recorded at Bundala and again several times in the Kelani River FR.

**Greater Flameback***Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

We enjoyed amazing views of two of these uniquely colored birds of a unique subspecies to Sri Lanka in Sinharaja forest and again in the Horton Plains NP.

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

This stunning bird of dense undergrowth winters in this area and was sighted four times during the tour with great views in the Sinharaja area, Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary, and finally near Kitulgala.

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

This species of dry country was found in small groups at both Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding Tissa.

**Oriental Skylark***Alauda gulgula*

Only a single bird was seen near Uda Walawa NP.

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

This species was encountered at most sites throughout the tour in large numbers.

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

Five birds total were seen very well at the Horton Plains NP.

**Red-rumped [Ceylon] Swallow***Hirundo daurica*

This species was noted in small numbers at Kelani River FR and near Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary of the unique red-breasted form unique to Sri Lanka.

**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.

**Grey Wagtail***Motacilla cinerea*

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

**Oriental Pipit***Anthus rufulus*

Numbers of around fifteen birds were sighted in suitable grassy areas in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounds.

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

This species is subtly different from the previous species and most easily identified by call, we had a single bird seen well in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

Singles were sighted in both Uda Walawa NP and Kelani River FR.

**Small Minivet***Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

This boldly colored species was found in woodland around Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and Kelani River FR.



**Scarlet Minivet***Pericrocotus flammeus*

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

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

Birds were seen on numerous occasions at forested sites both in the lowlands and in the highlands.

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae****Black-crested [capped] Bulbul***Pycnonotus melaniterus*

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

**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 edge and surrounding areas in dense growth.

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

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

**Black [Square-tailed] Bulbul***Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

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

**Leafbirds Chloropseidae****Blue-winged [Jerdon's] Leafbird***Chloropsis cochinchinensis*

Several birds were found at the edge of forest at Sinharaja forest.

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

We found this species daily in lowland forest sites including several birds in Sinharaja forest followed by subsequent views in the Kelani River FR.

**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*

We heard this shy and endangered species at a highland stream near Nuwara Eliya.

**Pied Thrush***Zoothera wardii*

We found three beautiful birds in Victoria Park that sat up for many of including scope views for several participants.

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

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

**Scaly Thrush***Zoothera imbricata*

This species looks considerably different to the nominate bird; some of us glimpsed this shy skulker in thick bush in Sinharaja forest.

**Eurasian Blackbird***Turdus merula*

This species was seen only in the highlands where we found two birds 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 and suitable habitat near Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Grey-breasted Prinia***Prinia hodgsonii*

We had great views of several birds near Tissa and in the the Uda Walawa NP.

**Ashy Prinia (SE)***Prinia socialis*

A good-looking species that was recorded in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas.

**Plain Prinia***Prinia inornata*

This species was sighted in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and areas surrounding Tissa.

**Old World Warblers Sylviidae****Ceylon Bush-Warbler (E)***Bradypterus palliseri*

This is a highly localised endemic that favours areas of highland stunted bamboo. We had unobstructed views of a bird in the Horton Plains National Park and heard several other vocal individuals from the dense undergrowth.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Several birds were seen in the woodlands around Tissa and in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Clamorous [Indian] Reed Warbler***Acrocephalus stentorius*

One bird was coaxed into view in swampy vegetation in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Common Tailorbird***Orthotomus sutorius*

An extremely common species that was heard or sighted on almost every day of the tour.

**Greenish Warbler***Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Fairly common and observed at several forested sites on many days of the tour.

**Green Warbler***Phylloscopus nitidus*

This species was also fairly common and was seen regularly at many forested localities.

**Large-billed Leaf-Warbler***Phylloscopus magnirostris*

This forest species was found at Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja forest where we easily located them by their distinctive vocalizations.

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae****Asian Brown Flycatcher***Muscicapa dauurica*

Commonly sighted in the lowland forest of Sinharaja forest.

**Brown-breasted Flycatcher (SE)***Muscicapa muttui*

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

**Dull-blue Flycatcher (E)***Eumyias sordida*

This endemic is confined to the stunted high altitude forest in Horton Plains National Park where we found four birds.

**Kashmir Flycatcher (SE)***Ficedula subrubra*

This endangered bird has its wintering grounds almost confined to the island and we were fortunate to find a gorgeous male singing in Victoria Park.

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

A few were seen at the Kelani River FR and at Sinharaja.

**Grey-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 Horton Plains National Park in the highlands.

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

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

**White-rumped Shama***Copsychus malabaricus*

This widespread Asian species was heard singing in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

Good numbers were seen in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas of Tissa.

**Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata*

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

### Fantails Rhipiduridae

**White-browed Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola*

A woodland species that was observed in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea*

An attractive species that is normally associated with mixed feeding flocks, we found it in Sinharaja forest.

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

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

### Babblers Timaliidae

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

Four birds 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 at very close distance.

**Indian [Ceylon] Scimitar-Babbler (SE)** *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*

Birds were located at Sinharaja forest and again in the Horton Plains NP.

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

This species was fairly common at lowland forest sites throughout the island and we enjoyed great views on several occasions.

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

Birds were located in scrubby habitat outside Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**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 of Sinharaja followed by subsequent views in the town of Nuwara Eliya.

### Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae

**Purple Sunbird** *Nectarina asiatica*

This gaudy species was located at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas.

**Long-billed [Loten's] Sunbird (SE)** *Cinnyris lotenius*

Located in small numbers at the beginning and the end of the tour with our best views in the vegetation surrounding our hotel near Sinharaja forest.

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



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

### Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae

**White-throated [Legge's] Flowerpecker (E)** *Dicaeum vincens*

This endemic of the lowland forests was sighted in the Sinharaja forest with simply brilliant views of up to eight birds daily followed by a final bird at the Kelani River FR.

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

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

**Thick-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum erythrorhynchus*

A widespread Asian species, a single bird was found feeding on flowers at our accommodations along the Kelani River.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae

**Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Birds were noted at Sinharaja forest, Victoria Park, and Kelani River FR.

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

A highland endemic that was first seen well in Sinharaja forest followed by numerous views in Victoria Park and Horton Plains NP.

### Old World Orioles Oriolidae

**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus*

Birds were noted at Sinharaja forest with further sightings in Kelani River FR.

### Shrikes Laniidae

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*

Commonly seen at all localities throughout the country.

### Drongos Dicruridae

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Two birds were found on the first day of the tour en route to Sinharaja forest.

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

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

**Greater [Crested] 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*

Four birds were seen very well during our day exploring the Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

### 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 and scoped at Kelani River FR.

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

A total of twenty birds were found and scoped 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 a total of three birds during our stay in the Sinharaja area with simply outrageous eye-level views from our lunch site.

**Rosy Starling***Sturnus roseus*

Huge numbers were encountered at Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

Widespread and common in urban areas throughout India.

**Weavers and Allies Ploceidae****Baya Weaver***Ploceus phillipinus*

Two birds were found in woodland just outside Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

Large groups were regularly encountered at the edge of lowland forest 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 three birds scoped at the edge of the forest in the highlands near Horton Plains.

**Black-headed (Tri-colored) Munia***Lonchura Malacca*

We found good numbers in the grasslands of Uda Walawa NP and Tissa surroundings.

**MAMMAL SPECIES LIST****Fruit Bats Pteropodidae****Indian Flying Fox***Pteropus giganteus*

Large numbers of thirty animals were seen roosting on the drive from Sinharaja forest.

**Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae****Toque Macaque (E)***Macaca sinica*

We enjoyed scattered sightings of this endemic primate on numerous occasions throughout the tour.

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

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

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

This species was first seen at Sinharaja forest followed by sightings in Horton Plains National Park.

**Hares & Rabbits Leporidae****Indian (black-naped) Hare***Lepus nigricollis*

At least four were seen on our drive in Uda Walawa NP and Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.



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

Common and regularly encountered at most localities.

**Dusky Striped Squirrel** *Funambulus sublineatus*

Two of these dark squirrels were found at Sinharaja forest and again along the forest areas of the Kelani River.

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

This beautiful species was regularly found in the Sinharaja forest and again near Kitulgala.

**Mongoose Herpestidae****Ruddy Mongoose** *Herpestes smithii*

Good views were had of this species in the surroundings of Sinharaja forest.

**Ceylon Brown Mongoose (E)** *Herpestes fuscus*

Two animals were seen near the roadside en route to Kitulgala.

**Elephants Elephantidae****Indian Elephant** *Elephus maximus*

These impressive beasts were first found in good numbers in the Uda Walawa NP followed by a further sighting in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Deer Cervidae****Spotted Deer** *Cervus axis*

At least five were found in Bundala Wildlife Sanctuary during our morning game drive.

**Sambar** *Cervus unicolor*

We saw this large species at close range in Horton Plains National Park.

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