



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Southern India

4th - 15th January 2009



Tour Leaders: Keith & Glen Valentine

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader Keith Valentine

Top 10 Birds of the Tour as voted by participants:

1. Sri Lanka Frogmouth
2. Indian Pitta

3. Blue-bearded Bee-eater
4. Orange-headed Thrush
5. Jungle Owlet
6. Wynaad Laughingthrush
7. Heart-spotted Woodpecker
8. White-bellied Treepie
9. Black Baza
10. Grey Junglefowl

Tour Summary

The Indian subcontinent, a remarkable place for so many reasons, home to over one billion people and all set to overtake China as the most populous country on earth. Reading the stats and figures does not leave one with any great expectations and yet how wrong the numbers can be! India must surely be one of the finest countries in the world to explore, a sensory overload in total completeness. Traveling through the southern region not only produced many super endemics and highly localized birds but also showcased some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable, the mountains of the Western Ghats left us breathless at times.

We began our adventure in Bangalore and before we knew it we were being blown away at a wetland near town that produced Lesser Whistling and Indian Spot-billed Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Garganey, Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Western Marsh Harrier. We then struck out for the first intended birding stop near the little village of Kokkare Bellur, famous for its nesting Spot-billed Pelican, which did not disappoint as huge numbers of this rare species were sighted. The general birding here was very lively and we enjoyed close Painted Stork, Indian Bush Lark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark and stunning Chestnut-tailed and Rosy Starling. The peaceful Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary then



produced lovely views of nesting Asian Openbill, Indian Cormorant, Eurasian Spoonbill, Great Stone-curlew, graceful River Tern and Stork-billed Kingfisher all while cruising about the Cauvery River.

We started the following day birding some dry scrubby habitat near Mysore which turned up a lot more than we could ever have hoped for as we were quickly enjoying the much sought-after Red-naped Ibis, Indian Spotted Eagle, Barred Buttonquail, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Jacobin and Grey-bellied Cuckoo, male Montagu's Harrier, Indian Grey Hornbill, Jungle Prinia, Booted Warbler, Large Grey Babbler and Indian Silverbill. After our superb morning we then began the lengthy drive for the base of the much anticipated Nilgiri Mountains, an endemic hotspot that really set the tone for the rest of the tour. Our drive saw us adding Bar-headed Goose, Egyptian Vulture

and a pair of the scarce, endemic Rufous-tailed Lark.



The Mudamalai area, at the base of the Nilgiri Mountains gave us the opportunity to explore the scrub jungle and mixed bamboo habitat on foot. This is still a very remote area and Tiger, Leopard and Dhole can often still be encountered. One of the undoubted highlights here was bumping into a group of three Dhole (Indian Wilddog), while walking in the woodland. We watched in complete amazement as an adult dog together with two youngsters played for about a half hour in front of us before they casually made their way into the forest. A rare sighting indeed and how fortunate we were to experience something that special. The birding in the area did not disappoint in the slightest as we quickly began finding our first target endemics. Blue-winged Parakeet, Blue-faced Malkoha, Jerdon's Nightjar on a night excursion, White-cheeked Barbet, Jerdon's Bush and Malabar Lark, Grey-headed Bulbul and Yellow-billed Babbler all put in appearances and we also found Red-headed, Eurasian and White-rumped Vulture, Rufous-bellied and Changeable Hawk-

Eagle, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Spotted Owlet, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Lesser Goldenback, brilliant Indian Pitta, Black-hooded Oriole, Black-naped Monarch, secretive Puff-throated and Tawny-bellied Babbler, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, striking Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, gorgeous Indian Blue Robin, Golden-fronted Leafbird and the flitty Forest Wagtail.

Today we began our ascent of the Nilgiri Mountains and our first birding in the more forested habitat of the Western Ghats. This was to become the familiar habitat for the rest of the tour. We visited a number of forests in the Ooty area and found the target species with relative ease enjoying fine views of the scarce Besra, surprise Jerdon's Baza, Greater Goldenback, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Tickell's Leaf Warbler, Nilgiri Laughingthrush, brilliant White-bellied Shortwing (Nilgiri Blue Robin), striking Blue-capped Rock Thrush, the target Black-and-orange, Blue-throated Blue and Nilgiri Flycatcher and Crimson-backed Sunbird.



The remote Animalai hills were waiting for us next and although the accommodations here are basic, the food is delicious and the authenticity of the region can really be felt. Our time birding the incredible Karian Shola and surrounding bamboo forests produced numerous highlights with endemics such as Red Spurfowl, Grey Junglefowl, amazing Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Malabar Trogon, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Crimson-fronted (Malabar) Barbet, White-bellied Treepie, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Dark-fronted and Rufous Babbler showing off in style. Some of the other species that entertained us included Jungle Owlet brilliantly spotted on a day perch, Brown Hawk-Owl on a night excursion,

Indian Pitta and Orange-headed Thrush flicking over leaves in the forest undergrowth while Lesser Yellowname, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Black-crested Bulbul, Asian Fairy-bluebird and Dollarbird all performed admirably at a large forest clearing in Karian Shola.



It was with much excitement that we left for the Cardamom Hills, the small town of Munnar and its tea growing slopes welcomed us as we left Top Slip overjoyed with the experience. Erivakulam National Park is definitely the focal point of the area and a mornings birding in this scenically breathtaking spot was a delight as we picked up the target endemics namely; Grey-breasted (Kerala) Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Pipit and the distinctive race of White-bellied Shortwing (White-bellied Blue Robin). We also found a staggering number of the localized Nilgiri Tahr, a type of goat that lives on the steep rocky slopes in the area. While here we also took a drive to the impressive Bodi Ghat, a

mountaneous area that simply drops off very quickly and steeply into the lowlands below. The Bodi Ghat holds one very special species namely the Yellow-throated Bulbul, which we had little trouble finding and also had fabulous views of the scarce Blue-bearded Bee-eater. Birding closer to our accommodations produced the nomadic Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Common Goldenback, Black-naped Oriole, Black-lored Tit and Pacific Swallow.

Our final birding of the tour was at Periyar Tiger Reserve, a fine park with a variety of habitats from bamboo, broadleaved forest and montane grasslands all bordering the picturesque Lake Periyar. This reserve has good numbers of mammals as well as brilliant birding and a highlight on any tour here is the boat excursion on the lake where we found Asian Elephant, Smooth-coated Otter, Wild Boar, Sambar and Gaur (Indian Bison). With the list fairly stacked with great birds we were down to searching for the last few specials of the region and walks in the forest produced elegant Black Baza, Pintail Snipe, Crested Treeswift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, regal White-bellied Woodpecker, over wintering Rusty-tailed and endemic White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, a huge flock of the restless and rare Wynaad Laughingthrush, Little Spiderhunter and finally Loten's Sunbird.

What an enjoyable time we had in India, fantastic birding and mammal viewing, lovely countryside and I just can't rave enough about the culinary delights that tantalized our taste buds. Sri Lanka was now waiting, our excitement at full tilt after our rewarding efforts in India. We were set to hit the ground blazing....



Annotated List of Birds Recorded

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the bird species list follows that of IOC, Birds of the World. (Notes follow the latest IOC update 2,0)

E = Endemic, SE = Sub-continent endemic

(257 Species)

Pheasants & Partridges *Phasianidae*

- Red Spurfowl (E)** *Galloperdix spadicea*
A rather secretive species, we found two at Top Slip and then had further views in Periyar National Park
- Grey Junglefowl (E)** *Gallus sonneratii*
This species was fairly common and we had great views on many occasions throughout the tour.
- Indian Peafowl (SE)** *Pavo cristatus*
A truly magnificent species that was recorded during the first portion of the tour with great views especially in the Mudumalai hills.

Swans, Geese & Ducks *Anatidae*

- Lesser Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*
We had views of ten birds at a roadside wetland just outside Bangalore on the first day of the tour.
- Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus*
We were fortunate to find at least ten of this rather uncommon species at a roadside wetland near Bangalore.
- Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*
We found a lovely group of 15 birds at a roadside lake on our drive from Mysore to Mudumalai.
- Indian Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*
We found three birds at a roadside wetland on our first day of the tour.
NOTE: A.poecilorhyncha is split by IOC into two species, Indian Spot-billed Duck (A.poecilorhyncha) and Eastern Spot-billed Duck (A.zonorhyncha) of China and SE Asia.
- Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
At least 25 birds were found in non-breeding plumage at a roadside wetland near Bangalore on the first day of the tour.

Grebes *Podicipedidae*

- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Our only sightings were of five near Kokkare Bellur, another five birds sighted the following day and a pair at a small dam near Munnar.

Storks *Ciconidae*

- Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala*
An elegant species that was found at Kokkare Bellur and Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.
- Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*
At least 50 birds were found at Ranganathittu where close up views were had from our boat.
- Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*

A pair of birds was seen at Periyar National Park.

Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

Black-headed Ibis

Threskiornis melanocephalus

At least 15 were estimated en route from Bangalore to Mysore and the following day about a dozen birds were seen along the roadside.

Red-naped Ibis

Pseudibis papillosa

Good sightings of nearly thirty birds were enjoyed en route from Mysore to Mudamalai on our second day after we found none on the drive from Bangalore to Mysore, their usual hangout.

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

A single bird was seen at a wetland near Bangalore on the first day of our tour.

Eurasian Spoonbill

Platalea leucorodia

At least 20 birds were found nesting at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns *Ardeidae*

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

This globally-occurring species was found roosting in overhanging trees at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.

Indian Pond Heron

Ardeola Greyii

A very common species that was encountered almost daily.

(Eastern) Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Commonly recorded throughout Southern India.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements but is recognized by the IOC.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Just a single bird was found along a roadside wetland on the first day of the tour.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Two birds total were seen at the same roadside wetland as the previous species.

(Eastern) Great Egret

Ardea alba

Seen at most wetland areas that were visited on the tour.

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

Yellow-billed Egret

Ardea intermedia

We found this species in similar habitats as the Great Egret on a few occasions throughout the tour.

NOTE: This group may be split into 3 species, the Africa Yellow-billed Egret (*E. brachyrhyncha*), Plumed Egret (*E. plumifera*) and the nominate Intermediate Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements or IOC.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Good numbers seen at wetlands throughout the tour.

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

Pelicans *Pelecanidae*

Spot-billed Pelican

Pelecanus phillipensis

Good numbers of roughly seventy-five birds were found in the town of Kokkare Bellur where they nest in trees around the village.

Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

Little Cormorant*Phalacrocorax niger*

Also seen in good numbers throughout the tour at most wetland sites with our first sightings of more than thirty birds at Ranganathittu.

Indian Cormorant*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Our only sighting was of at least 15 birds nesting at Ranganathittu, where extremely close views were obtained.

Great Cormorant*Phalacrocorax carbo*

Commonly encountered at Lake Periyar where good numbers were recorded.

NOTE: The race *P. lucidus* or White-breasted Cormorant is sometimes split as a separate species from the nominate Great Cormorant, *P. carbo*. We saw the nominate in Southern India and this split is accepted by the IOC.

Anhinga & Darter *Anhingidae***(Oriental) Darter***Anhinga melanogaster*

We found this aquatic bird at several wetland sites throughout the tour.

NOTE: The African form *P. rufa* is sometimes lumped with the Asian *P. melanogaster* and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms, whereas IOC splits "Darter" into three species.

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

Small numbers were observed at Mudamalai and at least a dozen sightings were had around Eravikulam NP near Munnar.

NOTE: *M.caerulescens* is split into two species by IOC according to the latest update, Common Kestrel (*F.tinnunculus*) and Rock Kestrel (*F.rupicolus*) in S Africa.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures *Accipitridae***Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

We found a single bird at Lake Periyar on our boat trip.

NOTE: *P.haliaetus* is now split into two species by IOC according to the latest update. Clements does not, however, recognize this split.

Black Baza*Aviceda leuphotes*

What a striking species! A single bird was found perched beautifully at close range near our Wynaad Laughingthrush site in Periyar NP.

Jerdon's Baza*Aviceda jerdoni*

This is a very rare bird in this part of the world and we were extremely lucky to find a single bird displaying over forest near Ooty.

Crested Honey Buzzard*Pernis ptilorhyncus*

A regular sighting throughout the tour with good views obtained on a number of occasions.

Common Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

We found two birds in the surroundings of Eravikulam NP.

NOTE: *B.buteo* is split by IOC into three species according to the latest update, Common Buzzard (*B.buteo*), Eastern Buzzard (*B.japonicus*) and Himalayan Buzzard (*B.refectus*) in the Himalayas.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans lineatus*

Recorded on most days at most sites throughout the tour.

NOTE: This species could be split into at least three different species namely the nominate Black Kite *M. migrans*, the migratory African species Yellow-billed Kite *M. aegyptius* and the species we recorded Black-eared Kite, *M. lineatus*. This split is not accepted by the IOC or Clements.

Brahminy Kite*Haliastur Indus*

Recorded in smaller numbers than the previous species but regular over much of the region.

Indian Spotted Eagle*Aquila hastata*

We were fortunate to observe a single individual of this uncommon species soaring above us just outside the town of Mysore.

NOTE: IOC splits *pomarina* into two species, Lesser Spotted Eagle (*A.pomarina*) and Indian Spotted Eagle (*A.hastata*) of India.

Egyptian Vulture*Neophron percnopterus*

A single adult bird was seen flying over our heads at close range on our drive from Mysore to Mudamalai.

Eurasian Griffon*Gyps fulvus*

We were amazed to find two birds in the Mudamalai Hills. A species usually encountered further north.

White-rumped Vulture*Gyps bengalensis*

A single bird was seen flying in the Mudumalai hills near Jungle Hut.

Red-headed Vulture*Sarcogyps calvus*

We were fortunate to have great flight views of a single bird in the Mudamalai Hills.

Short-toed Snake Eagle*Circaetus gallicus*

A single bird was sighted by some members of the group in the Mysore area.

Crested Serpent-Eagle*Spilornis cheela*

Individual birds were seen both perched and in flight in scattered locations throughout the tour.

Western Marsh-Harrier*Circus aeruginosus*

Two birds total were found at a wetland near Bangalore on the first days drive.

Montagu's Harrier*Circus pygargus*

Uncommon in this area, we had great views of a male bird cruising over our heads while in the Mysore area.

Shikra*Accipiter badius*

This widespread species was seen on a few occasions at widely scattered localities.

Besra*Accipiter virgatus*

This is a rather scarce species and we were fortunate to get fantastic scope views of a single bird near Ooty.

Black Eagle*Ictinaetus malayensis*

We first found two of these beautiful raptors in the Munnar area followed by a further sighting at Periyar.

Tawny Eagle*Aquila rapax*

A single bird was seen well near Mysore.

Rufous-bellied Eagle*Hieraaetus kienerii*

A single adult bird was well seen very well in flight near the Jungle Hut and we also enjoyed a further view of one at Periyar.

Crested Hawk Eagle*Spizaetus cirrhatus*

We first found this attractive species near the Jungle Hut in the Mudumalai area followed by a single at Top Slip.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split into two species. The nominate *C. Limnaetus* is now called Changeable Hawk Eagle and is confined to the Himalayas and east into South-east Asia. *C. cirrhatus*, the race seen by us in South India is found throughout the plains of the Indian subcontinent. IOC does not recognize this split.

Mountain (Legge's) Hawk Eagle (SE)*Spizaetus nipalensis*

We enjoyed a single bird in flight at Periyar.

NOTE: The race occurring in the south of India and in Sri Lanka is split as Legge's Hawk Eagle from the nominate bird by IOC.

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

This species was seen in suitable habitat throughout the tour in small numbers with our first sighting at Ranganathittu.

Purple Swamphen*Porphyrio porphyrio*

At least six birds were seen in a marshy area on the first day of our tour near Bangalore.

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

Eurasian Coot*Fulica atra*

Large numbers were found at a tank near the town of Kokkare Bellur as well as a few birds the following day.

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

A single bird was flushed a couple of times while walking in scrubby habitat near Mysore.

Thick-knees *Burhinidae***Great Stone-curlew***Escacus recurvirostris*

Ten of these striking birds were found at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.

Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae***Yellow-wattled Lapwing (SE)***Vanellus malabaricus*

This smart lapwing was first sighted in fields close to Mysore followed by numerous views in the Mudamalai area.

Red-wattled Lapwing*Vanellus indicus*

This is a very common species that was encountered regularly during our tour.

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius*

A total of three birds were seen near Kokkare Bellur and a single bird was found on the waters edge en route to Mudumalai.

Jacanas *Jacanidae***Pheasant-tailed Jacana***Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

An amazing eight birds in non-breeding plumage were seen at length at a wetland near Bangalore.

Bronze-winged Jacana*Metopidius indicus*

This gorgeous species was scoped at length when three birds were located at a roadside wetland near Bangalore.

Sandpipers & Allies *Scolopacidae***Pintail Snipe***Gallinago stenura*

A single bird was sighted at the waters edge at Lake Periyar.

Green Sandpiper*Tringa ochropus*

A single bird was seen by some of the group at Mudamalai.

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

A number of birds were seen at roadside ponds and marshy areas en route to Mudumalai and Mysore on

the first two days of the tour.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

A couple birds were seen at roadside wetlands as well as at Lake Periyar.

Terns *Sternidae*

River Tern

Sterna aurantia

While on the boat at Ranganathittu we were fortunate to have eight individuals fly very close to us as well as perch nearby on the river rocks.

Whiskered Tern

Chlidonias hybridus

We had at least 20 birds at a tank near Kokkare Bellur.

Doves & Pigeons *Columbidae*

Rock Pigeon

Columba livia

Common at urban centres on the tour.

Nilgiri Wood Pigeon (E)

Columba elphinstonii

A scarce Western Ghats endemic that was scoped at a shola near our accommodation in Munnar.

Eurasian Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Six birds were found in the Mysore area.

Spotted Dove

Streptopelia chinensis

Very common at every locality visited on the tour.

Laughing Dove

Streptopelia senegalensis

Commonly encountered at many localities throughout Southern India.

Pompadour (Grey-fronted) Green Pigeon (E) *Treron pompadora (affinis)*

This species was first seen well in the Top Slip area and again in good numbers at Periyar.

NOTE: This particular species is split by IOC into 6 species, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon (T.pompadora) of Sri Lanka, Grey-fronted Green Pigeon (T.affinis) of S India, Ashy-headed Green Pigeon (T.phayrei) of E Asia, Andaman Green Pigeon (T.chloropterus) of the Andamans & Nicobars, Philippine Green Pigeon (T.axillaris) of the Philippines and Buru Green Pigeon (T.aromaticus) of the Buru Islands.

Yellow-footed Pigeon

Treron phoenicoptera

We had great views of three birds in the scope while walking in scrubby habitat near Mysore.

Mountain Imperial Pigeon

Ducula badia

We found this species once when two birds were sighted near Munnar.

Parrots & Allies *Psittacidae*

Vernal Hanging Parrot

Loriculus vernlis

We enjoyed brilliant views of at least six birds in a fruiting tree near Mudamalai with further views in the Periyar area.

Rose-ringed Parakeet

Psittacula krameri

Good numbers were seen during the first two days of the tour.

Plum-headed Parakeet (SE)

Psittacula cyanocephala

We found this attractive species at several localities with up to thirty birds seen in a single days birding in the Mudumalai hills.

Blue-winged Parakeet (E)

Psittacula columboides

This is a fairly common endemic of the Ghats that we found on many occasions, our first views were of an individual brilliantly scoped in the Mudumalai Hills..

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

Fairly secretive however we enjoyed some outstanding views of one near Jungle Hut in the Mudumalai Hills and again at the Bodi Ghat when a pair was found.

Greater Coucal*Centropus sinensis*

This species was encountered a couple of times on tour first seen well at Ranganathittu.

Jacobin Cuckoo*Clamator jacobinus*

A single bird was located in scrubby habitat near Mysore.

Asian Koel*Eudynamys scolopacea*

This widespread Asian and Australian species was found at Ranganathittu, Mysore and in the Mudumalai Hills.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo*Cacomantis passerinus*

We had good luck with this species when we found a single bird in the Mysore area.

NOTE: IOC splits *C.merulinus* into two species, Plaintive Cuckoo (*C.various*) and Grey-bellied Cuckoo (*C.passerinus*) of India.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo*Hierococcyx varius*

We enjoyed fantastic close views of birds on consecutive days in the Mudumalai Hills.

Typical Owls Strigidae**Oriental Scops Owl***Otus lettia*

We heard a single bird calling at fairly close range at Top Slip however it just would not budge from its calling position.

Jungle Owlet*Glaucidium radiatum*

We had superb views of a single bird that was brilliantly spotted and then scoped at Karian Shola, Top Slip.

Spotted Owlet*Athene brama*

A total of five birds were seen at very close range near the Jungle Hut in the Mudumalai area.

Brown Hawk-Owl*Ninox scutulata*

On our night excursion at Top Slip we had fabulous views of a single calling bird for an extended period.

Frogmouths Podargidae**Sri Lanka Frogmouth (SE)***Batrachostomus moniliger*

We managed incredible close views of a pair on their day roost at Karian Shola, Top Slip.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae**Jerdon's Nightjar (SE)***Caprimulgus atripennis*

This rather scarce species was seen well on our night excursion at Mudumalai.

Indian Nightjar*Caprimulgus asiaticus*

This species was heard calling at Top Slip.

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

We had views of at least six birds flying above Lake Periyar.

Swifts Apodidae

Indian Swiftlet*Aerodramus unicolor*

We found large numbers of this species on our drive from Top Slip to Munnar.

White-rumped Needletail*Zoonavena sylvatica*

We found this quick-flying species on several occasions in Periyar NP.

Brown-backed Needletail*Hirundapus giganteus*

A large swift species that was seen by some members of the group in Periyar NP.

Asian Palm Swift*Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Birds were sighted in the Mudumalai and Top Slip areas.

NOTE: IOC splits *C.parvus* into two species, African Palm Swift (*C.parvus*) of Africa and Asian Palm Swift (*C.balasiensis*) of Asia.

Alpine Swift*Tachymarptis melba*

Singles were sighted in the Mudumalai area

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

Singles were sighted on our first two days of the tour with further views in Periyar NP.

NOTE: IOC splits *A.affinis* into two species, Little Swift (*A.affinis*) of Africa and House Swift (*A.nepalensis*) of Asia.

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

Our first sighting of this superb species was a female bird at Top Slip and later three associated with bird parties in Periyar NP.

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

Birds were seen regularly throughout the first half of the tour.

Dollarbird*Eurystomus orientalis*

We enjoyed prolonged scope views of a single bird at a clearing in Karian Shola, Top Slip.

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

A single bird was found in the riverine vegetation at Ranganathittu.

White-throated Kingfisher*Halcyon smyrnensis*

This is the regions most common Kingfisher, a gorgeous species that we recorded on almost every day.

Common Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Our first views were a single at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary followed by fair numbers at Periyar NP.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

This, the world's most widespread kingfisher, was seen at Lake Periyar.

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

This scarce bird surprised everyone on the tour, especially the leader as we found a stunning pair at the Bodi Ghat.

Green Bee-eater*Merops orientalis*

We had good views of several near Mysore.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater*Merops phillipinus*

We enjoyed lovely views of a few birds on the first two days of the tour.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater*Merops leschinaulti*

This beautiful species was seen well in the forests of Periyar NP.

Hoopoes *Upupidae*

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops

This distinctive species was well seen on a number of occasions in the Mysore and Mudumalai areas.

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

Hornbills *Bucerotidae*

Malabar Grey Hornbill (E)

Tockus griseus

Good views were obtained at Top Slip and Periyar.

Indian Grey Hornbill (SE)

Tockus birostris

Six birds were found near Mysore.

Great Hornbill

Buceros bicornis

We heard this species calling from inside dense forest at Karian Shola, Top Slip.

Barbets *Capitonidae*

White-cheeked Barbet (E)

Megalaima viridis

One of the most common endemics of Southern India, we found them every day at all localities.

Crimson-fronted (Malabar) Barbet (SE)

Megalaima rubricapilla (malabarica)

This good looking bird was first seen very well when a pair was scoped at Top Slip and then again in Periyar NP.

NOTE: IOC splits *M. rubicapillus* into two species, Crimson-fronted Barbet (*M. rubicapillus*) of Sri Lanka and Malabar Barbet (*M. malabarica*) of S India.

Coppersmith Barbet

Megalaima haemacephala

We enjoyed many sightings of this common species on the first half of the tour.

Woodpeckers & Allies *Picidae*

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (SE)

Dendrocopos nanus

This woodland species was brilliantly seen when a pair was found and watched at length in the Mudumalai Hills.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker

Dendrocopos mahrattensis

Some of the group found a single bird foraging in the dry woodland of Mudumalai.

White-bellied Woodpecker

Dryocopus javensis

What a fantastic species that we found and scoped while on one of our forest walks in Periyar NP.

Lesser Yellowback

Picus chlorolophus

A single bird was observed very well at Top Slip.

Streak-throated Woodpecker

Picus xanthopygaeus

A single bird was sighted by some of the group in the Mudumalai Hills.

Common Goldenback

Dinopium javanense

This is not a particularly common species in this area and we had good views near Munnar and again at Periyar.

Lesser Goldenback

Dinopium benghalense

This species was fairly common and seen at a number of different sites on the tour.

Greater Goldenback*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

Fairly common in Southern India where its characteristic calls are obvious. The species was most common at Top Slip where we found several attractive birds.

Heart-spotted Woodpecker*Hemicircus canente*

A brilliant species to watch, we found a pair of birds that were scoped and watched at length in Karian Shola, Top Slip.

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

A real stunner that we were fortunate to watch for a long time through the scope at Karian Shola, Top Slip! Our initial sighting was of a single bird at Jungle Hut, Mudumalai.

Helmetsrikes and Allies Prionopidae**Large Woodshrike***Tephrodornis gularis*

One bird was found in the Mudumalai hills followed by several more sightings in the forest of Top Slip.

NOTE: IOC splits T.virgatus into two species, Large Woodshrike (T.virgatus) and Malabar Woodshrike (T.sylvicola) of S India. Clements does not recognize this split.

Common Woodshrike*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

Recorded in small numbers at several sites with our most sightings coming from the open woodlands surrounding the Mudumalai area.

NOTE: IOC splits T.pondicerianus into two species, Common Woodshrike (T.pondicerianus) and Sri Lanka Woodshrike (T.affinis) of Sri Lanka.

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

A common species that is easily picked up on their calls; we found this bird on several days of the tour with ten individuals on one day birding at Top Slip.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**Large Cuckooshrike***Coracina macei*

Good views were enjoyed of a few birds in mixed flocks in the Mudumalai Hills.

Small Minivet*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

This stunning species was found to be fairly common at many sights on the tour.

Scarlet (Orange) Minivet (SE)*Pericrocotus flammeus*

We encountered these attractive birds frequently at many sights on tour with peak numbers seen in the Top Slip surroundings.

NOTE: P.flammeus is the race/species that we saw and is endemic to South India and Sri Lanka. This is not split by Clements but is regarded as a full species by IOC according to the latest update.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike*Hemipus picatus*

This species was first seen at Mudumalai and again in the Top Slip area.

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

Fairly common at most localities on tour preferring open areas in woodland.

Bay-backed Shrike*Lanius vittatus*

This handsome species was found in the Mudumalai hills with good numbers being recorded.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Regularly recorded at many localities on the tour.

Old World Orioles *Oriolidae*

Eurasian (Indian) Golden Oriole (SE) *Oriolus oriolus (kundoo)*

This species was recorded at Top Slip and again in Periyar.

NOTE: IOC has split *O. oriolus* into two species, Eurasian Golden Oriole (*O. oriolus*) and Indian Golden Oriole (*O. kundoo*)

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*

This rather scarce species in the South of India was found in a huge mixed flock close to our accommodation in Munnar.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Singles were sighted at Mudumalai and again at Top Slip.

Drongos *Dicruridae*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Regularly seen in more open woodland than the species to follow.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Very common in forested areas where it was seen daily.

White-bellied Drongo (SE) *Dicrurus caerulescens*

Good numbers were seen from the Mudumalai hills and Ooty.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*

A bird of forest that was seen at Mudumalai and Top Slip.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

This is a spectacular and common sighting at all localities, especially common at Top Slip where we saw no less than fifteen individuals.

NOTE: *D. lophorinus* is not split by Clements but is regarded as a separate species endemic to Sri Lanka by IOC according to the latest update.

Fantails *Rhipiduridae*

White-throated (White-spotted) Fantail (SE) *Rhipidura albicollis (albogularis)*

Birds were found in thick riverine vegetation near Jungle Hut, Mudumalai.

NOTE: IOC splits *R. albicollis* into two species, White-throated Fantail (*R. albicollis*) and White-spotted Fantail (*R. albogularis*) of S India.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

Good numbers of this smart species were seen in the Mudumalai hills.

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

An attractive and widespread Asian species that was seen at Mudumalai and Periyar NP.

Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

This gorgeous species was seen throughout the tour with our first views in the Mudumalai Hills.

Crows, Jays & Magpies *Corvidae*

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

Two noisy bids were first observed in the Mudumalai hills followed by scattered sightings thereafter

during the tour.

White-bellied Treepie (E) *Dendrocitta leucogastra*

We found this beautiful bird of the Western Ghats forest in healthy numbers in Periyar National Park and initially in Karian Shola at Top Slip.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Very common throughout the region.

Large-billed (Indian Jungle) Crow (SE) *Corvus macrorhynchus (culminatus)*

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

NOTE: C.macrorhynchus is split into three species by IOC according to the latest update, Eastern Jungle Crow (C.levaillanti), Large-billed Crow (C.cacrorhynchus) and Indian Jungle Crow (C.culminatus). Clements does not accept these splits.

Tits Paridae

Great (Cinereous) Tit *Parus major (cinereous)*

This species is often associated with mixed feeding flocks and was seen throughout the tour.

NOTE: IOC splits P.major into three species, Great Tit (P.major), Cinereous Tit (P.cinereous) and Japanese Tit (P.minor).

(Indian) Black-lored Tit (SE) *Parus xanthogenys (aplonotus)*

This good looking species was seen well at Periyar with our initial sightings at Erivakulam NP and around Munnar.

NOTE: P.xanthogenys is split into two species, Himalayan Black-lored Tit (P.xanthogenys) and Indian Black-lored Tit (P.aplonotus) of South India. Clements does not accept this split.

Swallows Hirundinidae

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

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

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

Good numbers of up to 12 birds were found in the Eravikulam NP.

NOTE: This species is often split as Hill Swallow H. domicola which occurs exclusively in South India and Sri Lanka. The split is not recognized by the IOC.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Two birds were found in the Mudumalai area.

Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor*

Very good numbers were recorded in the high areas of Erivakulam NP and Munnar.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

A common species that was encountered nearly every day during the tour.

NOTE: IOC splits H.daurica into three species, Red-rumped Swallow (H.daurica), Sri Lanka Swallow (H.hyperythra) of Sri Lanka and West African Swallow (H.domicella) of W Africa. Clements does not yet recognize these splits.

Larks Alaudidae

Jerdon's Bushlark (SE) *Mirafra affinis*

We had good close looks at a pair in the Mudumalai Hills.

Indian Bush Lark *Mirafra erythroptera*

Good views were had near Kokkare Bellur and again in the Mysore area.

Rufous-tailed Lark (E) *Ammomanes phoenicura*

This can be tricky endemic to find anywhere in India but especially in the south of its range. We were fortunate to have excellent views of a pair at the roadside on the drive between Mysore and Mudumalai.

Malabar Lark (E) *Galerida malabarica*

A pair showed exceptionally well in the dry fields in the Mudumalai area.

Ashy-crowned Sparrowlark (SE) *Eremopterix grisea*

Numerous birds were sighted on the first two days of the tour.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

We found a pair in the bamboo vegetation at Mudumalai

Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica*

A pair was first sighted at Mysore and then a further pair was well seen at Eravikulam NP.

Ashy Prinia (SE) *Prinia socialis*

Four birds were seen well our first day en route from Bangalore to Mysore and a further six on our Ooty to Top Slip day.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Several birds were found in the Eravikulam NP.

Family Uncertain Incertae sedis

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

This widespread species was seen well on our first day from Bangalore to Mysore.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

Grey-headed Bulbul (E) *Pycnonotus priocephalus*

Special efforts were made for this shy species in the Mudumalai hills where a number of people managed to get onto a very vocal pair in the dense bamboo habitat.

Black-crested (Flame-throated) Bulbul (E) *Pycnonotus melaniterus*

This species was seen only in Karian Shola, Top Slip where we had fabulous views of this distinctive race with a flame throat.

NOTE: P.melanicterus is split by IOC into six full species, Black-capped Bulbul (P.melanicterus) of Sri Lanka, Black-crested Bulbul (P.flaviventris) of N India to SE Asia, Ruby-throated Bulbul (P.dispar) of Sumatra, Java & Bali, Flame-throated Bulbul (P.gularis) of S India, Bornean Bulbul (P.montis) of Borneo & Andaman Bulbul (P.fuscoflavesces) of the Andaman Islands. Clements does not recognize these splits.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Very common and seen daily at all localities.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

An extremely common bird that was seen every day on the first half of the tour.

Yellow-throated Bulbul (E) *Hemixos xantholaemus*

This specialty of the Bodi Ghat was located within minutes of alighting from the vehicle. We had close views of half a dozen birds in total.

White-browed Bulbul (SE) *Hypsipetes luteolus*

This often skulky species was seen a number of times and heard even more frequently at most localities.

Yellow-browed Bulbul (SE) *Iole indica*

This attractive species was sighted near Ooty, at Top Slip and again at Munnar.

Black (Square-tailed) Bulbul (SE) *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

We had brilliant views of this flocking bulbul species near Ooty and especially in the forests near Eravikulam NP.

NOTE: H.leucocephalus is split into two species by IOC according to the latest update, Black Bulbul (H.leucocephalus) and Square-tailed Bulbul (H.ganeesa) of S India and Sri Lanka. Clements does not recognize this split.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*

Thick-billed Warbler*Acrocephalus aedon*

A single bird was sighted by some of the group at Top Slip.

Clamorous (Indian) Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Two birds were sighted on our first day of the tour at a tank near Kokkare Bellur.

NOTE: A.stentoreus may be split into a further species, Indian Reed Warbler (A.brunnescens) but neither Clements nor IOC recognize this split as yet.

Blyth's Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus dumetorum*

This is a common migratory species that was recorded from most localities on almost every day.

Booted Warbler*Hippolais caligata*

We found at least 10 birds while exploring the scrubby bush habitat near Mysore.

NOTE: IOC splits H.caligata into two species, Booted Warbler (H.caligata) and Sykes's Warbler (H.rama). Clements does not recognize this split.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus affinis*

This is a very distinctive *phylloscopus* that was seen on a number of occasions at Ooty and around Eravikulam NP.

Green Warbler*Phlloscopus nitidus*

A very common species that was seen almost daily.

NOTE: IOC splits trochiloides into two species, Greenish Warbler (P.trochiloides) and Green Warbler (P.nitidus) of India.

Greenish Warbler*Phylloscopus trochiloides*

This fairly common warbler was sighted on several days of the tour.

Lesser (Hume's) Whitethroat*Sylvia curruca (althaea)*

This species was noted in sparse, scrubby vegetation in the Mudumalai hills and around Mysore.

NOTE: IOC splits S.carruca into three species, Lesser Whitethroat (S.carruca), Desert Whitethroat (minula) and Hume's Whitethroat (S.althaea).

Babblers *Timaliidae*

Puff-throated Babbler*Pellorneum ruficeps*

A bird that spends most of the time on the forest floor, we found a pair in forest near the Jungle Hut.

Indian Scimitar-Babbler (E)*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*

Fairly common and easily located by its distinctive, far carrying calls, we had good views of this species at Top Slip and Periyar NP.

NOTE: P.melanurus, which is endemic to Sri Lanka is not split by Clements but is regarded as a full separate species by IOC according to the latest update.

Tawny-bellied Babbler (SE)*Dumetia hyperythra*

Six birds were seen well skulking through the undergrowth during our walks in the Mudumalai hills.

Dark-fronted Babbler (SE)*Rhopocichla atriceps*

Fairly common at Top Slip in small groups in forest, we located 20 individuals total which were seen very well.

Rufous Babbler (E)*Turdoides subrufus*

A shy and often difficult bird, we found at least a dozen total in the Periyar NP.

Jungle Babbler (SE)*Turdoides striatus*

This very common species was encountered on many days of the tour in large numbers.

Yellow-billed Babbler (SE)*Turdoides affinis*

This near-endemic species was seen in the Mudumalai hills with up to 15 birds daily.

Large Grey Babbler*Turdoides malcolmi*

A group of five birds were located in dry, scrubby habitat near Mysore.

Wynaad Laughingthrush (E) *Garrulax delisserti*

Always tricky and tough to see, this skulker was seen amazingly well when a large group of at least 25 were encountered in Periyar NP.

Nilgiri Laughingthrush (E) *Garrulax cachinnans*

This is a localized species of high altitude forests. We found a few locations near Ooty where we had simply outrageous views of no less than ten beautiful individuals over a period of two days.

NOTE: IOC has split Cachinnans into two species, Nilgiri Laughingthrush (G.cachinnans) and Grey-breasted Laughingthrush (G.jerdoni).

Grey-breasted (Kerala) Laughingthrush (E) *Garrulax jerdoni (fairbanki)*

Another species that has a very small range, we found it to be fairly common in the forested gullies in Eravikulam NP.

NOTE: IOC has split G.jerdoni into two species, Grey-breasted Laughingthrush (G.jerdoni) and Kerala Laughingthrush (G.fairbanki) but in turn is considering lumping G.jerdoni with G.cachinnans.

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Acippe poioicephala*

These sombre birds with a lively song were regularly encountered in mixed feeding flocks in forest near the Jungle Hut and Periyar NP.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

A common species that was regularly sighted at most localities on tour.

Fairy Bluebirds Irenidae

Asian Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella*

This stunning bird was first seen in woodland in the Mudumalai hills followed by superb looks at Top Slip.

Nuthatches Sittidae

Chestnut-bellied (Indian) Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*

Singles were found in the Mudumalai hills foraging on the thicker tree branches.

NOTE: IOC splits S.castanea into three species, Indian Nuthatch (S.castanea) in N, C and S India, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch (S.cinnamoventris) in the Himalayas and across N and E Asia and Burmese Nuthatch (S.neglecta) from Burma to Vietnam. Clements does not recognize these splits.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*

A fairly common species associated with feeding flocks where we found it creeping up branches at most sites visited.

Starlings Sturnidae

Southern Hill Myna (SE) *Gracula indica*

Regular numbers were first recorded in Karian Shola, Top Slip followed by further views daily in Periyar NP.

NOTE: Southern Hill Myna is sometimes lumped with Common Hill Myna G. intermedia of south-east Asia. The IOC accepts this split.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*

Large numbers were recorded daily throughout the tour.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

This species is common in and around urban centres throughout the country.

Chestnut-tailed Starling*Sturnia malabarica*

We enjoyed scattered sightings of this species with our first views of a group in a fruiting tree near Kokkare Bellur and later further sightings in Periyar NP.

NOTE: IOC splits *S.malabarica* into two species, Chestnut-tailed Starling (*S.malabarica*) widespread and Malabar Starling (*S.blythii*) of S India.

Malabar Starling (E)*Sturnia blythii*

This recently split endemic was seen well on our first day en route to Mysore.

Brahminy Starling*Temenuchus pagodrum*

An attractive species that we encountered in fallow fields and scattered woodland of the Mudumalai hills.

Rosy Starling*Sturnus roseus*

We found a total of three birds at a fruiting tree near Kokkare Bellur on the first day of our tour.

Thrushes & Allies Turdidae**Malabar Whistling-Thrush (E)***Myophonus horsfieldii*

Often shy and secretive, we found a number of very cooperative birds at most localities with our most memorable view of one near Munnar on our drive to Eravikulam NP.

Orange-headed Thrush*Zoothera citrina*

Great views were obtained of this stunning species, first seen in Karian Shola, Top Slip with further views in Periyar NP.

Common (Indian) Blackbird (SE)*Turdus merula*

A few individuals were found in the Ooty surroundings foraging in the undergrowth.

NOTE: *T.simillimus* is not split by Clements but is regarded as a full species by IOC according to the latest update. This species is endemic to South India and Sri Lanka.

White-bellied Blue Robin (E)*Myiomela albiventris*

A skulker that is associated with streams in high altitude forests where we found two separate birds in the small stunted forests near Eravikulam NP. Our initial sightings came from the Ooty region where a distinctive subspecies is found; we recorded three birds in this area.

NOTE: The original White-bellied Shortwing (*Brachyterix major*) is now split by IOC into two separate species, White-bellied Blue Robin (*Myiomela albiventris*) and Nilgiri Blue Robin (*Myiomela major*) both endemic to S India.

Nilgiri Blue Robin (E)*Myiomela major*

Sightings of this shy endemic came from the Ooty region where we recorded three birds in this area.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**Indian Blue Robin***Luscinia brunnea*

This is a tricky species to see well and we obtained outrageous views of two in the thick forest undergrowth near Jungle Hut in the Mudumalai hills as well as later in the highlands.

Oriental Magpie-Robin*Copsychus saularis*

A common species that was seen at most localities on the tour.

Indian Robin (SE)*Saxicoloides fulicata*

This bird was easily found between Bangalore and Mysore and in the Mudumalai hills with up to ten vocal birds daily.

Pied Bushchat*Saxicola caprata*

Common and conspicuous, we found this bird at most localities and nearly everyday on tour.

Blue Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

Brilliant views were had of two birds that were found in the Eravikulam NP and surroundings.

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush*Monticola cinclorhynchus*

A gorgeous male was seen exceptionally well at Nadugani Forest and later on two females were sighted in the same forest.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

A single bird was seen at Top Slip and a further two were found in Periyar NP.

Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*

A scarce species that was found in Karian Shola, Top Slip.

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda*

Our only sightings of this localized migrant were in Periyar NP where three birds were located in total.

Black-and-orange Flycatcher (E) *Ficedula nigrorufa*

A truly stunning bird that was located at the edge of a small shola near Ooty.

Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra*

A single bird was briefly seen by some at a shola near Ooty. This rare species has its entire non-breeding range centered at Ooty in South India and the highlands around Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*

Singles were seen perched high in woodland near the Jungle Hut and Periyar NP.

Nilgiri Flycatcher (E) *Eumyias albicaudata*

Six of these localized endemics were found in total at Ooty, Munnar and Erivakulam NP.

White-bellied Blue Flycatcher (E) *Cyornis pallipes*

Another very localized species, we enjoyed great views of at least three pairs in Periyar NP.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Several birds were first found near our accommodation at the Jungle Hut followed by a single bird at Top Slip.

Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

This can often be a tough bird to find on the route and we were fortunate to have brilliant views of one singing male at Nadugani Forest.

Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

This widespread Asian species was found first in small numbers in the forest near Ooty with many then seen at Periyar NP.

Leafbirds *Chloropseidae*

Blue-winged (Jerdon's) Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*

This good looker was found at Top Slip after initial views on day one of the tour.

NOTE: C.jerdoni is not split by Clements but is regarded as a full species by IOC according to the latest update. This species is endemic to India and Sri Lanka.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*

Birds were found at Mudumalai and at Top Slip.

Flowerpeckers *Dicaeidae*

Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchus*

Very common and sighted on almost every day of the tour.

Plain (Nilgiri) Flowerpecker (E) *Dicaeum concolor*

Fairly numerous in the Mudumalai hills and at Top Slip.

NOTE: IOC has split D.concolor into three species, Nilgiri Flowerpecker (D.concolor) of S India, Plain Flowerpecker (D.minullum) and Andaman Flowerpecker (virescens) of the Andamans.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae*

Purple-rumped Sunbird *Nectarinia zeylonica*

Common and conspicuous, we found this species at every locality.

Crimson-backed Sunbird (E) *Nectarinia minima*

This endemic sunbird was only seen at Nadugani Forest and again in Periyar NP, we had fantastic views at close range.

Purple Sunbird *Nectarina asiatica*

Numerous and gaudy throughout the tour.

Loten's Sunbird (SE) *Cinnyris lotenius*

This fairly localized species was seen once in Periyar NP.

Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*

A single was located in Periyar NP.

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

Widespread and common in urban areas throughout India.

Chestnut-shouldered Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis*

This species is associated with drier habitats in open woodland and was encountered in fair numbers in the Mudumalai hills.

Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae***Indian Silverbill** *Lonchura malabarica*

We had superb views of at least 20 birds near Mysore.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Some members of the group found a small flock of birds in the dry scrub near Mysore.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

Many birds were seen near Kokkare Bellur and in the Mudumalai hills.

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

We were fortunate to have good scope views of several birds in forest near Jungle Hut.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Good numbers were sighted at wetlands near Mysore and Kokkare Bellur, we also had a couple in the Mudumalai Hills.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

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

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Two birds were seen at a small wetland site after having left Mysore.

White-browed Wagtail (SE) *Motacilla madaraspatensis*

First seen along the shoreline at Ranganathittu and in good at Mudumalai and Periyar NP.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Two birds were found in the Mudumalai area in a dry open field and also at Periyar NP.

Nilgiri Pipit (E) *Anthus nilghiriensis*

The site for the species is the Eravikulam NP where we had a total of four birds in the morning observed at length.

Annotated List of Mammals Recorded:

Mammals: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. Kingdon *The Kingdon Fieldguide to African Mammals* (1997) Academic Press.

(14 Species)

Fruit Bats *Pteropodidae*

Indian Flying Fox

Pteropus giganteus

Large roosts of these impressive creatures were found outside Bangalore and at the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys *Cercopithecidae*

Bonnet Macaque

Macaca radiata

Very common at all localities and along the roads while travelling.

Hanuman Langur

Semnopithecus entellus

This agile species was found commonly in the Mudumalai hills.

Nilgiri Langur

Semnopithecus johnii

Common in the highland forests of the Western Ghats and especially numerous in Periyar NP where we found up to 25 of these dark-colored primates daily.

Squirrels *Sciuridae*

Indian Palm Squirrel

Funambulus palmarum

Common and regularly encountered at most localities.

Indian [Malabar] Giant Squirrel

Ratufa indica

This beautiful species was found in the Mudumalai hills, Top Slip and at Periyar NP.

Hares & Rabbits *Leporidae*

Indian (Black-naped) Hare

Lepus nigricollis

Three animals were found in total in the Top Slip area.

Elephants *Elephantidae*

Indian Elephant

Elephas maximus

Five of these impressive beasts were seen in Periyar NP at the edge of Lake Periyar.

Pigs *Suidae*

Wild Boar

Sus scrofa

This species was commonly sighted at Periyar NP and Top Slip.

Deer *Cervidae*

Spotted Deer (Chital)

Cervus axis

Fair numbers of this attractively spotted deer were seen in the Mudumalai hills.

Sambar

Cervus unicolor

We saw this large species at close range in the Mudumalai hills, at Top Slip and again in large numbers

surrounding Lake Periyar.

Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)

Muntiacus muntjak

A single deer was briefly seen by some of the group scurrying away into dense cover in a tea plantation near Munnar.

Bovids Bovidae

Gaur (Indian Bison)

Bos gaurus

This huge beast was found in Periyar NP where we had a memorable encounter with at least 25 animals seen from the boat on Lake Periyar.

Nilgiri Tahr

Hemitragus hylocrius

This localized and endangered species was seen at extremely close range in the Eravikulam NP where we counted around 30 animals in total.

PHOTO CREDITS: Green Bee-eater, Great Stone-curlew, Nilgiri Tahr and White-bellied Shortwing (White-bellied Blue Robin) by Keith Valentine. Indian Pitta and Nilgiri Laughingthrush 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