

Sri Lanka

Jewel of the Indian Ocean

TOUR INFO PACK
SRI LANKA BIRDING TOUR

2022

Sat 19 November-Sat 3 December (15 days)
Small group tour with David Walsh and Deepal Warakagoda

2023

Sat 18 November-Sat 2 December (15 days)
Small group tour with David Walsh and Deepal Warakagoda



Indian Pitta winters in Sri Lanka and southern India and then migrates further north to breed © David Walsh, Limosa

Limosa's long-running birdwatching tour to tropical Sri Lanka features a meticulously planned itinerary. We have good chances to see all of the island's 34 endemic birds, from Sri Lanka Blue Magpie to Serendib Scops Owl, along with Malabar Trogon, Indian Pitta and Sri Lanka Frogmouth amongst a host of Southern India specialities and winter visitors to Sri Lanka. In addition, we hope to see some special mammals, including Asian Elephant and Leopard, as well as a range of colourful butterflies and dragonflies.

Highlights

- Superb birding in tropical Asia, seeing over 200 species
- Sri Lanka Blue Magpie and Red-backed Flameback among 34 Sri Lankan endemics
- Southern India specialities including Sri Lanka Frogmouth and Malabar Trogon
- Seeking Indian Pitta, Pied Thrush and Kashmir Flycatcher in their winter quarters
- Mammals to watch for include Asian Elephant, Leopard, Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel
- Exotic butterflies: Sri Lankan Birdwing, Sri Lankan Rose and Sri Lankan Tree-Nymph
- Small group with a maximum of just 12 participants
- Expertly led by Limosa's David Walsh and Deepal Warakagoda

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- English-speaking Sri Lankan bird guide
- 13 nights accommodation in Sri Lanka
- All main meals with drinking water provided
- All local transport including 4WDs in the parks where required
- All excursions, entry fees, permits, tour-based tips (including local drivers and guides) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds, mammals, butterflies, dragonflies



The gorgeous Sri Lanka Blue Magpie © Uditha Hettige

Outline Itinerary

Days 1-2

Overnight flight to Colombo, short transfer to Seeduwa (1 night)

Days 3-4

Kithulgala forest (2 nights)

Days 5-7

Weddagala and Sinharaja forest (3 nights)

Day 8

Udawalawe National Park (1 night)

Days 9-10

Yala and Bundala National Parks, Tissa 'tanks' (2 nights)

Days 11-12

The hill country: Horton Plains and Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya (2 nights)

Day 13

Kandy (1 night)

Day 14

To the coast: Kandy to Seeduwa (1 night)

Day 15

Transfer to Colombo airport, flight to UK



Red-backed Flameback is one of many Sri Lankan endemics we hope to see on our holiday © David Walsh

Tour Overview

It would be difficult to think of a more perfect destination for birdwatchers to escape the winter blues than the warm and beautiful tropical island of Sri Lanka. Despite being relatively close to the southern tip of India, this Indian Ocean paradise has been isolated from the rest of Asia for so long it has evolved over 30 endemic birds.

We have a good chance of seeing all of them, from the Legge's Flowerpecker and Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot through to Sri Lanka Junglefowl and the gorgeous Sri Lanka Blue Magpie.

We have been fortunate in obtaining the services of Deepal Warakagoda, the country's foremost ornithological guide (and author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka*); he will be able to provide a wealth of background information on the birds as well as the culture and history of this wonderful island. Deepal was the finder of the recently described Serendib Scops Owl, and with his help we hope to find one tucked up at its daytime roost.

Sri Lanka's appeal runs deeper than its endemic birds, as it also has many species shared only with Southern India. Among these specialities are Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Malabar Trogon, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Loten's and Purple-rumped Sunbirds and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater.

A visit to Sri Lanka is even more welcome during Europe's late autumn and winter months, not just so we can enjoy some unseasonable sunshine and warmth, but because this bewitching tropical island is then a winter retreat for large numbers of birds from further north in Asia. Those we could find include the likes of Blyth's Reed and Green Warblers, Kashmir Flycatcher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Indian Pitta and the incredible Pied Thrush.

Although primarily a birdwatching tour, we should also encounter some fine mammals with possibilities including Asian Elephant, Leopard and Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel. This is a wonderful trip for anyone wishing to see some of Sri Lanka's abundant and exotic butterflies and we hope to see 40 species including the spectacular Sri Lankan Birdwing, Sri Lankan Rose and Sri Lankan Tree-Nymph, all of which are endemic to the island. If anything, the dragonfly names are even more appealing, with Foggy-winged Twister, Pied Parasol and Variegated Flutterer amongst those we may find!

Sri Lanka has a great variety of tropical habitats from palm-fringed coasts to relic patches of lowland rainforest and the cool, mountainous tea-estates to the sunbaked lagoons of the arid southeast. It is not only a very beautiful country but the generally excellent tourist infrastructure allows travelling birdwatchers to explore prime habitats whilst, in the main, staying at good hotels. Most of those we use have swimming pools and all have deliberately been chosen to be in delightful locations with a range of birdlife in and around the gardens.

The food has proved especially popular on previous tours with a mixture of both western and Asian cuisine to enjoy.

David Walsh has travelled widely in Asia over the past 15 years and has twice worked with Deepal on his recent visits to Sri Lanka - they make a superb team!

Limosa has been running birdwatching tours to Sri Lanka for more than 20 years now, and our 2022 tour features a meticulously planned, updated itinerary. With upwards of 200 species to be expected on our holiday, what could be better than spending a fortnight in tropical Sri Lanka, getting to know the birdlife of one of the world's most enchanting islands?

Daily Itinerary

Days 1-2

FLY TO COLOMBO, SHORT TRANSFER TO SEEDUWA

Our tour begins with a scheduled flight to Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, where we arrive in the afternoon of the following day. It is just a ten-minute drive to our hotel in Seeduwa, where we spend the first night.

Depending on the flight schedules, we hope to have time for some late afternoon birding in the hotel's extensive grounds. We have our first opportunity to get to grips with commoner species such as Yellow-billed Babbler, Red-vented Bulbul, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Asian Koel, Brown-headed Barbet, both House and Indian Jungle Crows, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing and Indian Pond Heron. Purple-rumped Sunbirds and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters should provide a real splash of colour, whilst scanning the skies for raptors might produce our first Shikra or White-bellied Sea Eagle.



Blue-tailed Bee-eater © David Walsh

The grounds are often home to a pair of Brown Hawk-Owls and we will try to find them at their roost, although the birds are expert at remaining hidden! The ponds support a fine array of dragonflies such as Foggy-winged Twister, Orange-winged Groundling, Oriental Scarlet, Pied Parasol, Variegated Flutterer and Yellow Waxtail: wonderful names to conjure with!

The cuisine is a real feature of this tour; at dinner the varied buffet will range from Sri Lankan fare to western dishes, whilst at breakfast some might opt for fish curry and string hoppers, others for cereal and toast! We can expect fresh pineapple and papaya to be on offer throughout our holiday. *Night at Airport Garden Hotel, Seeduwa*

Days 3-4

KITHULGALA FOREST

After some optional pre-breakfast birding in the hotel gardens, we will head off inland passing rice paddies and coconut palms. We plan to make one or two short stops but aim to arrive at our next hotel in good time for lunch where we stay for two nights.

Along the way, we will keep our eyes open for Indian Rollers on the wires, Eastern Cattle Egrets and Asian Openbills in the fields and perhaps a Brahminy Kite above us. We are sure to marvel at the way buses, cars, tuk-tuks, motorbikes, cyclists and pedestrians share the roads!

Kithulgala is located beside the Kelani River and is famed as the spot where *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was filmed. It is likely that, on our first afternoon, we will take the ferry across the river for our first chance to try for one of Sri Lanka's most eagerly sought-after endemic birds, Serendib Scops Owl.

First seen by our leader Deepal in January 2001, this delightful little bird is still only known from around half-a-dozen sites and is strictly nocturnal in its habits. Seeing one during daylight hours is, therefore, a rare privilege and our local information will give us the best possible chance, although success is, of course, never guaranteed.



The endemic Serendib Scops Owl © Uditha Hettige



Chestnut-backed Owlet © David Walsh

We have another full day to explore this bird-rich area; indeed, it is possible to see over 40 species from our base! Around the hotel grounds and along some of Kithulgala's quieter trails are several exciting endemics such as Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Orange-billed Babbler, Sri Lanka Drongo, Black-capped Bulbul, Brown-capped Babbler and Spot-winged Thrush. The sight of a Red-backed or Crimson-backed Flameback will take our breath away if one lands on a nearby trunk! We will also make a special effort to find a Chestnut-backed Owl, although perseverance may be required.....

Other interesting birds include Brown-breasted and Tickell's Blue Flycatchers, Square-tailed Bulbul, Southern Hill Myna and Green Warbler and we have our first chance of seeing the beautiful Indian Pitta.

We also hope to find Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Toque Macaque and Layard's Palm Squirrel, three endemic mammals. As bird activity diminishes in the midday heat, we are likely to be entertained by an array of colourful butterflies such as Common Leopard, Crimson Rose, Jezebel and Tamil Yeoman.
Two nights at Kithulgala Rest House.

Days 5-7

WEDDAGALA AND SINHARAJA FOREST

We ascend to Weddagala, close to the heart of the wet zone forests, for a three-night stay at a well-positioned rural lodge, arriving in time for lunch.

Birding in the vicinity of our base should produce more endemics with our main targets being Legge's Flowerpecker and the diminutive Crimson-fronted Barbet. Other species to look out for include Loten's Sunbird, White-browed Bulbul and Rufous-bellied Eagle.

The next day, we make an early start and head to Sinharaja which is one of the best remaining forests on the island. It is home to more than half of Sri Lanka's endemic species of mammals and butterflies and all but one of the endemic birds! As the first rays of sunlight start to filter through the verdant canopy, one of the species we will hope to find is the colourful Sri Lanka Junglefowl foraging on the tangled forest floor.

We spend the morning walking slowly along a wide trail and hope to find feeding flocks. Deepal will be able to explain the distinct roles of the different species within the groups. Noisy Orange-billed Babblers and Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes forage low to the ground, whilst movements in the canopy high above may reveal the presence of the colourful Red-faced Malkoha or Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler. Scanning the treetops might produce a perched Green Imperial Pigeon or White-faced Starling, whilst Changeable Hawk-Eagle and Oriental Honey Buzzard can be seen above the forest. If we are very lucky, we may encounter the elusive Sri Lanka Thrush which is perhaps the hardest of all the endemics to find.

We should reach an open area where we can enjoy our picnic, whilst keeping a close eye out for the stunning Sri Lanka Blue Magpie and Malabar Trogon.

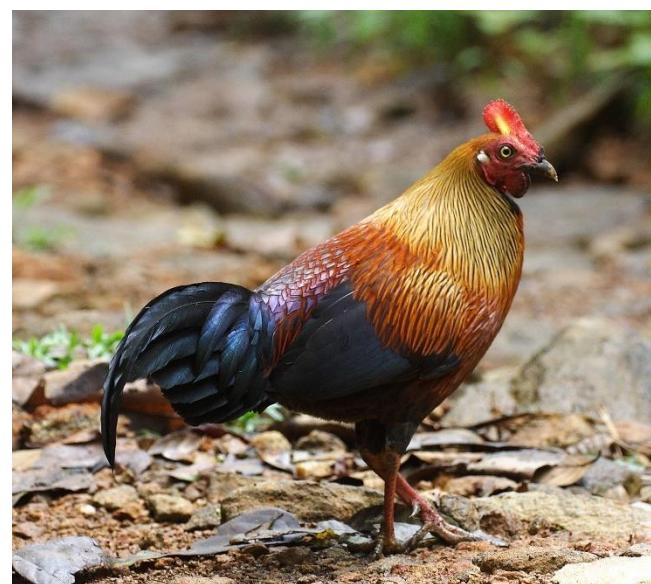
After lunch we head back and bird activity is likely to have quietened down but there should still be plenty of butterflies to entertain us including Sri Lankan Tree-Nymph, Blue Glassy Tiger, Cruiser, Common Bluebottle and Sri Lankan Rose.

On another morning, our excellent local knowledge will give us a great chance of finding three more endemics, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Green-billed Coucal and Sri Lanka Hill Myna, as well as a pair of roosting Sri Lanka Frogmouths. Mammals in this area include the endemic Dusky-striped Squirrel, whilst Sri Lankan Birdwing is one of many species of butterfly we could find. *Three nights at Rainforest Edge Lodge, Weddagala.*

Day 8

UDAWALawe NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast we leave Weddagala, breaking our journey to do some final wet zone birding, perhaps finding Sri Lanka Swallow and Jerdon's Leafbird as well as both Plum-headed and Layard's Parakeets. We then descend to Udawalawe where our hotel is very different from the previous lodge and we stay for one night.



Sri Lankan Junglefowl © Uditha Hettige

In the afternoon, we visit Udawalawe National Park, an area of grassland and water-associated forest. We will enjoy the first of three jeep rides at lowland reserves and there should be plenty of variety! One of the park's most conspicuous residents is the breathtaking Indian Peafowl, looking even more spectacular here in its native haunts! By way of contrast, Ashy, Plain and Jungle Prinias can be compared as they pop up and sing alongside the 'prinia impersonator', the curious Yellow-billed Babbler. Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Coppersmith Barbet, Indian Roller, Alexandrine Parakeet and Green Bee-eater should provide plenty of colour, whilst the more subtle Blyth's Pipits and Blyth's Reed Warblers both winter here.

Our main target species in and around the park are the endemic Sri Lanka Woodshrike and both Sirkeer and Blue-faced Malkohas, the former looking remarkably mongoose-like as it runs between the bushes! If we are fortunate, we may also encounter Marshall's Iora, a striking Indian species only recently discovered in Sri Lanka.

We hope to spot good numbers of Asian Elephants and in many ways they are more impressive deep in the bush than by the tracks!

At dusk, we will look for Indian and Jerdon's Nightjar before returning for another fine Sri Lankan dinner. *Night at Centauria Wild Hotel, Udawalawe.*

Days 9-10

YALA AND BUNDALA NATIONAL PARKS, TISSA 'TANKS'

We may start today by making a short drive for some early morning birding to give us a second opportunity to see some of the species from the previous day. After breakfast, we then head to Tissamaharama for a two-night stay, with plenty of time to birdwatch en route.



Although familiar to many as a 'cage bird', we hope to see genuinely wild Indian Peafowls © Uditha Hettige

After lunch, we plan to visit Yala, Sri Lanka's oldest and most famous National Park, which comprises scrubland, grassy flats, rocky outcrops and waterholes. We will try to concentrate on looking for birds not seen at Udawalawe which might include Indian Robin, Crested Treeswift, Tricoloured Munia, Small Minivet, the exceptionally 'spotty' Yellow-crowned Woodpecker and the minute Brown-capped Woodpecker plus both Grey-bellied and Jacobin Cuckoos. The magnificent Malabar Pied Hornbill is sure to impress, both in flight and perched up!

Depending on recent rainfall, the waterholes may provide opportunities to get close views of Lesser Whistling Duck, as well as waders such as Pacific Golden Plover. Marsh Mugger crocodiles are also likely to be lurking on the banks!

If we are very lucky, we may find a Leopard, as in Sri Lanka this species is less nocturnal than in Africa and, occasionally, one is found dozing and draped over a shady tree bough. We will also hope to encounter a group of Wild Boar as dusk approaches.



Malabar Pied Hornbills © David Walsh

The next morning, we intend to visit Bundala National Park, Sri Lanka's first RAMSAR wetland site and where the saltpans are a haven for birds. This should be a real treat and taking a picnic breakfast with us, we will be able to make the most of the morning, before the heat gets up.

Although quite close to Tissa, it may take quite some time to reach our destination as the access road bisects a wonderful wetland that is simply alive with bird. We can expect to see a multitude of herons, egrets, ibises, spoonbills and waders!

We will sift through the large numbers of spindly-legged Marsh Sandpipers and other shorebirds at Bundala striving to identify Greater Sand Plovers amidst the flocks of Kentish and Lesser Sand Plovers, whilst Red-necked Phalaropes spin out on the open water. If we are fortunate, we could encounter several diminutive Small Pratincoles roosting on the nearby bunds and whilst this species is unspectacular when perched, it is much more colourful in flight!

Up to eight species of tern roost on Bundala's extensive saltpans, ranging from the massive Caspian to the tiny Little Tern. We should see both Greater Crested and Lesser Crested Terns standing side by side and will aim to pick out some winter-plumaged White-winged Black Terns amongst the more numerous Whiskered, with the odd-looking Great Thick-knee offering less of an identification challenge!

Oriental Skylarks, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Larks and the recently split Jerdon's Bush Lark also occur in the scrub, while the big 'Indian' Reed Warbler proclaims itself loudly from the stands of tall Papyrus.

Mammals could include Tufted Grey Langur, Ruddy Mongoose or a wallowing Water Buffalo.

On the way back to the hotel, in a stand of palm trees we will look for the elusive White-naped Woodpecker as well as Jungle Owlet.

Tissa is renowned for the concentration of rich wildlife sites which are within close proximity. We will visit a number of 'tanks', man-made irrigation reservoirs, and a prominent feature of the local area. Those with reedy margins are suitable for Streaked Weaver as well as Yellow, Black and Cinnamon Bitterns, Grey-headed Swamphen and Watercock.

Other birds in the area include Cotton Pygmy Goose, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Spot-billed Pelican, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Oriental Darter. *Two nights at Oak Ray Wild Yala Hotel, Tissamaharama.*

Days 11-12

THE HILL COUNTRY: HORTON PLAINS AND VICTORIA PARK, NUWARA ELIYA

As we leave Tissa and the heat of the dry coastal lowlands behind, the rice paddies give way to tropical hardwood and rubber plantations, then tea estates and, towards the end, tiny terraced market gardens growing familiar crops. Our journey this morning is one of the longest of the tour, but with plenty of interest along the way.

We arrive in Nuwara Eliya in time for a late lunch at the hotel where we stay for two nights. Located at a 'cool' elevation of 1800 metres, this famous hill-station is the hub of Sri Lanka's tea estates and we may welcome the more 'English' climate!

After lunch, we plan to visit Victoria Park, the haunt of many montane forest specialities and perfect for an afternoon stroll. The bird list includes more endemics including Yellow-eared Bulbul and Dull-blue Flycatcher, as well as a number of sought-after wintering species such as the stunning Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, Indian Pitta, Indian Blue Robin, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher and Forest Wagtail. Sri Lanka White-eye and Cinereous Tit are other birds for us to enjoy either in the park or close to our hotel.



Dull-blue Flycatcher © Uditha Hettige

The following morning, we intend to make an early start and head to Horton Plains National Park, a moorland plateau, stopping en route to look for Sri Lanka Wood Pigeons as they make their first flights of the day and there may even be frost on the ground!

Once inside the park, we will concentrate our efforts on two remaining endemic species, Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush and Sri Lanka Bush Warbler. Neither are easy to find, so we will certainly need to be patient if we are to see them both. There are a number of other interesting birds in the area including the elusive Sri Lanka race of Indian Blackbird, best viewed at first light, whilst feeding flocks might contain Dark-fronted Babbler and Orange Minivet.

A viewpoint in the grasslands may allow us the chance to see right across to some high mountains including Adam's Peak, the fourth highest in Sri Lanka. Birds in this area include Zitting Cisticola, Paddyfield Pipit, Pied Bush Chats and 'Steppe Buzzard'.

We return to the hotel for lunch before having a second chance to birdwatch locally, trying for any species we may have missed the previous day. *Two nights at Galway Heights Hotel, Nuwara Eliya.*

Day 13

KANDY

After breakfast, we leave Nuwara Eliya for Kandy, stopping en route to visit a tea factory. We will have a fascinating short tour and the chance to buy some tea, as well as hopefully enjoying some good views of Hill Swallows flying around the buildings.

The grounds of the hotel near Kandy, where we spend one night, are extensive, with our rooms overlooking the canopy of some wonderful trees! We have the afternoon and a full morning to explore its secondary rainforest with vast liana-covered trees. Here we have a second chance to catch up with the wet zone forest birds seen during the first few days of our holiday with Crimson-fronted Barbet, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Orange Minivet, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Green Warbler and both white and rufous phases of Indian Paradise Flycatcher amongst the possibilities. We may also add a number of new species, such as White-rumped Shama, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike and Large-billed Leaf Warbler.

If we are lucky, we may locate the huge Brown Fish Owl and diminutive Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, both of which are resident in the grounds. As dusk approaches we will look for the majestic Brown Wood Owl. *Night at Tree of Life Nature Resort, Kandy.*



Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher is one of the species we hope to find during our stay at the Tree of Life Nature Resort © David Walsh

Day 14

TO THE COAST: KANDY TO SEEDUWA

After another splendid buffet breakfast, with a choice of western and Asian dishes, we enjoy a relaxing morning exploring the hotel grounds with its impressive range of forest birds. Sri Lankan Giant Squirrels are occasionally bold enough to feast in the open on the jackfruits, whilst the ponds along a 'birdwatching trail' may give those interested the chance to add yet more dragonflies to our list such as Marsh, Spine-tufted and Pink Skimmers and Blue Pursuer.

Venturing a short distance outside the grounds may produce Tawny-bellied Babbler and give us a final chance to watch by now familiar species such as Greater Coucal and Brown Shrike.

We can scan the skies for the rare Black Eagle and the commoner Crested Serpent Eagle, the latter often revealing itself by its evocative call, one of 'the' sounds of Asia!

After lunch, we reluctantly descend from the hills as we make the return journey to Seeduwa. We can expect a warm welcome at the same hotel where we started our tour and, depending on our arrival time, there might be the chance for a last stroll in the gardens before we have our farewell dinner. *Night at Airport Garden Hotel, Seeduwa.*

Day 15

TRANSFER TO COLUMBO AIRPORT, FLIGHT TO UK

After breakfast, we make the short journey to the international airport for our flight home to the UK, where the tour concludes.



The huge Brown Fish Owl is another of the possibilities at the Tree of Life Nature Resort © David Walsh

Trip Information

Group Size Max 12 participants and 2 leaders

What To Expect This is primarily a birding tour but we usually encounter a good variety of mammals, with good chances of seeing Asian Elephant and Leopard. This is also a great trip to see some of Sri Lanka's exotic butterflies and dragonflies, with their wonderful English names!

In common with all birdwatching and wildlife tours to the tropics, you should be prepared for early starts to get the best from key areas before the day heats up and bird activity starts to wane.

Birds 200-240 species

Mammals 15-20 species

Butterflies 30-50 species

Dragonflies 15-20 species

Accommodation We use a mix of comfortable tourist hotels and lodges, all expertly chosen by our ground agents. Accommodation is relatively simple, as befits a rural lodge, at Kithulgala and Weddagala. All rooms have private facilities.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price (and with drinking water also provided), commencing with dinner in Sri Lanka on Day 2 and concluding with breakfast at our hotel on Day 15. Food is good to excellent featuring delicious Sri Lankan cuisine. Western food is available at most but not all of the hotels. Some breakfasts and lunches will be picnics but most will be taken at the hotels as will all dinners.

Walking Mostly easy, although the tropical heat can be tiring and the going more moderate at times along forest trails in the hills. There will be opportunities to try for nightjars and owls on some evenings so bring a torch if you plan to join these option excursions.

Weather Sri Lanka has a tropical climate. The uplands are cooler and more temperate, whilst the coastal areas are cooled by sea breezes. There are two monsoons, which usually occur from May to July and from December to the middle of January.

The maximum temperature is likely to be about 30C (86F) and the minimum about 4C (39F) in the hills. It will probably rain at some stage during your stay. The humidity will be around 70% but may be higher at times.

Clothing Sri Lanka is renowned for its sunshine and it is likely that the weather at this time of year will be hot. Light clothing should be worn during the day and long sleeved shirts are useful for warding off sunburn. It may, however, be cold first thing in the morning and at altitude and it is likely we will encounter some rain at Horton Plains, so it is essential that you bring a fleece or thick sweater, your waterproofs, a warm hat and gloves.

A small umbrella is useful for when it is wet but warm.

We ask that you wear dull-coloured clothes so that the birds and wildlife are not scared away!

Shoes for use in the field should be stout and hardwearing, as there may be some scrambling over uneven surfaces.

A wide-brimmed sun hat is essential on many days and use of an effective barrier cream and sunglasses is advised.

Ground Transport By minicoach or minibus (appropriate to group size) switching to 4WD vehicles in some of the National Parks. The jeep ride from our Weddagala hotel to reach the park entrance at Sinharaja Forest is along a very bumpy track, so you might like to bring a cushion with you!

Flights Due to the pandemic, it is proving extremely difficult to predict future flight prices and schedules, especially when a trip is scheduled for beyond the period when flights can be booked. As a result, we have taken the decision to price our holidays as excluding all flights.

To keep the process as simple as possible for our clients, however, we are now working closely with a dedicated agent at Travel Counsellors who will be able to advise you which flights we are recommending and he will be able to book these for you.

Insects The usual tropical nuisances are present in Sri Lanka of course, so we recommend you bring some insect repellent with you.

Leeches Expect to encounter leeches in Sri Lanka's 'wet zone' forests. Although harmless, their presence can sometimes be distracting so we suggest applying insect repellent to your footwear and lower leg area. This can be effective in keeping them away although the effect is, of course, quickly lost if boots become wet or muddied. As a result, we recommend you bring a pair of 'leech socks', which will prevent leeches reaching the skin on your feet and lower legs. These are available in the UK from various outlets including the Oriental Bird Club (www.orientalbirdclub.org).

Photos Good to excellent photographic opportunities for birds, mammals, butterflies, dragonflies and scenery, especially in more open country, but more difficult in forested areas due to low light levels.

Tour Cost

2022 (15 days):

Land only cost: £3250

Single supplement: £850

Deposit: £800

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Sri Lankan bird guide
- 13 nights accommodation in Sri Lanka
- All main meals (with drinking water provided)
- All local transport including 4WD in some parks
- All excursions, entry fees, permits, tour-based tips (inc. drivers and guides) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds, mammals, dragonflies and butterflies

Cost excludes

Flights, insurance, visa, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

About Your Guides

David Walsh David lives in Suffolk, where he has recently retired from full-time teaching, although he continues with part-time maths tutoring and enjoys singing in local choirs. He has been a keen birdwatcher since his primary school days and still has his notebooks from the early 1970s to prove it!

At home in Suffolk, he puts his love of bird songs and calls to good use, running surveys to monitor breeding birds in the spring and searching out migrants in the autumn.

He has been leading tours since 1986 and in the last 12 years has focused especially on Europe, North Africa, Asia and South America, developing his interest in butterflies and dragonflies as well as birds.

David's boundless energy and enthusiasm, coupled with a determination to ensure that everyone in the group sees the birds, made him very popular with clients on the tours he led for Ornitholidays between 2007 and 2018 and we were very pleased when he became part of the Limosa team in 2019!

Our November 2022 departure will be David's third visit to Sri Lanka working alongside Deepal.

Deepal Warakagoda is Sri Lanka's best-known ornithologist and is one of the authors of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka* (Helm Field Guides 2012).

His knowledge and experience of bird sounds was instrumental in him finding the Serendib Scops Owl and he was the lead author on the scientific paper that described this species in 2004.

Deepal has many years of experience working as a bird guide and is also very knowledgeable about the island's mammals and butterflies.

What You Say

"Once again our Limosa trip did not disappoint on any level "

R&JB, Sri Lanka tour

"Both leaders excellent. A very enjoyable visit to a beautiful country. Much effort made to ensure we saw the birds."

NS, Sri Lanka tour

"Very happy with my first long-haul birding tour. Many thanks."

JM, Sri Lanka tour

How To Enquire

Due to the considerable uncertainty created by the pandemic, Limosa Holidays are not currently accepting bookings for any trips, however, you are welcome to contact us either by email or phone to register your interest in any of our holidays.

Whilst some tour companies may be willing to take a deposit from you and say a trip is a "confirmed departure", our approach is going to be to wait a little longer as we consider this both honest and realistic.

Once we are confident that the trip can run, we will be in touch to confirm your place and ask for a deposit.

We do encourage you to register your interest as we are expecting considerable demand, once the consensus is that it is safe to travel again.

Any Questions

Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or phone. Our office is generally open from 09:30-17:30 but you are welcome to contact us outside these times too. We are happy to take calls in the evening and at weekends but if no one is available the call will go to our answerphone.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us once the pandemic is over and we look forward to hearing from you.

