

Bhutan

Birding in a Himalayan Paradise

Wednesday 27th April - Wednesday 11th May 2022 (15 days)

Small group tour with Colin Bushell and Chubzang Tangbi



The stunning Fire-tailed Myzornis is one of the amazing birds we hope to find on our holiday to Bhutan © Chubzang Tangbi

The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan remains largely unspoilt by the pressures of modern society and is regarded as having one of the best-preserved environments in the world. With majestic, snow-capped peaks to the north and rich forests to the south, the valleys are adorned with traditional villages and the hilltops with monasteries and ancient fortresses. Within this beautifully preserved landscape, the birdlife and wildlife is simply wonderful and our exciting new Limosa tour goes in search of some equally spectacular birds including Himalayan Monal, Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon, White-bellied Heron, Fire-tailed Myzornis and Ibisbill. Join us for a never-to-be-forgotten personal journey to the 'Land of the Thunder Dragon'.

Highlights

- Incredible birdwatching trip to Bhutan
- 14 nights in Bhutan, from Yongkola west to Paro
- Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Cutia, Beautiful Nuthatch and Ibisbill
- Plus Ward's Trogon, Rufous-necked Hornbill and White-bellied Heron (critically endangered)
- Visiting sites for some of the best birding in all of Asia
- Incredible landscapes unspoilt by the pressures of modern society
- Valleys adorned with traditional villages and traditional Buddhist monasteries
- Expertly led by renowned Bhutanese guide Chubzang Tangbi and Limosa's Colin Bushell



Himalayan Monal – we have a great chance of seeing this stunning pheasant at Tharpaling Monastery © Chubzang Tangbi

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Bhutanese bird guide
- 14 nights accommodation in Bhutan staying at comfortable hotels
- All main meals with drinking water provided during the day
- Surface transportation by minibus
- All excursions, entry fees, tour-based tips (local guides, drivers, boatmen etc) and taxes

Outline Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive Paro and birding alongside the Paro Chhu (river)

Day 2

Birding at Chele La (3,988m) for some of Bhutan's high-altitude species

Day 3

A short flight from Paro to Bumthang with birding and cultural visit in Bumthang valley

Day 4

Bumthang to Yongkola exploring along one of the best birding routes in Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas

Days 5-6

Two full days to explore Thrumshing La National Park which is considered one of the top birding locations in Bhutan

Day 7

Yongkola to Bumthang with birding at Namling, Sengor, Thrumshing La and Ura valley

Day 8

Bumthang to Trongsa via Tharpaling Monastery for Himalayan Monals at close range

Day 9

Trongsa to Tingtibi, birding along the Zhemgang road

Day 10

Exploring the sub-tropical forests of Tingtibi (Royal Manas National Park)

Day 11

Tingtibi to Trongsa via Zhemgang. Birding sites include Dakphai, Zhemgang, Kosha La, and Wangduegang valley

Day 12

Trongsa to Punakha. Birding at Bje Zam, Chendibji, Pele La, Nobding and Puna Tshang Chhu valley

Day 13

Visit Punakha Dzong and continue to Paro with stops along Puna Tshang Chhu valley, Menchuna Farm Road and Lampelri Botanical Park

Day 14

Exploring around the Taksang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery

Day 15

Depart Bhutan

Tour Overview

The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan is home to the 'Dragon People' and is referred to by them as the 'Land of the Thunder Dragon'. Its enlightened and deeply religious inhabitants have ensured the country remains largely unspoilt by the pressures of modern society and it is widely regarded as having one of the best-preserved environments in Asia.

The landscape is characterised by snow-capped peaks to the north and large swathes of rich forests to the south, both deeply incised by powerful, fast-flowing rivers that ultimately drain south into the Brahmaputra in India. The main valleys are adorned with traditional villages and the hilltops with *dzongs* - a traditional style of Buddhist monastery or fortress.

Within this beautifully preserved landscape the birdlife and wildlife is simply wonderful and our exciting new Limosa tour goes in search not just of many of the specialities, such as Himalayan Monal, Ward's Trogon, White-bellied Heron, Fire-tailed Myzornis and Ibisbill, but will also be a never-to-be-forgotten personal journey through this magical land.



Blood Pheasant © Chubzang Tangbi

Paro is our gateway to the mighty Kingdom of Bhutan and after a day birding here, we fly east to Bumthang, from where we slowly drive west back to Paro, exploring rich valleys, mountain passes and mix of habitats at varying altitudes. We have chances for more than 300 bird species including pheasants, laughingthrushes, warblers, fulvettas, yuhinas and sibilias, with the fascinating backdrop of the landscape, people and culture of Bhutan.

Our first afternoon at Paro will give us our first chance to find the sought-after and unique Ibisbill along the boulder-strewn Pa Chhu (river), as well as Plumbeous Water Redstart, Russet Sparrow and Rufous-breasted Accentor.

The next day, we will make an early morning departure for the high pass at Chele La (3,780m) passing through ancient high boreal forests. This will be one of the highest points on our tour and if conditions are clear, we will have breath-taking views of the high Himalayan peaks of Jhomolhari (7,219m), Jichu Drake (6,989m) and down into the Paro and Ha valleys.

This will be the first of several opportunities to look for two extraordinary and highly colourful pheasants, Himalayan Monal and Blood Pheasant and other possibilities include Himalayan Cuckoo, Rufous-fronted Tit, Red-tailed Minla, Dusky Thrush, Blanford's Rosefinch, Collared Grosbeak, White-throated Redstart, White-browed Bush Robin and Plain Mountain Finch.

After a short flight east to Bumthang, we spend the rest of our holiday slowly returning to Paro taking in much of the birdlife in the sparsely populated valleys and mountains. We can expect to be surrounded by spectacular scenery, see Bhutanese villages and impressive temples but also enjoy some fantastic birds.

Our itinerary has been organised to give us opportunities to look for many of Bhutan's special birds and possible highlights could include Chestnut-breasted Partridge and Rufous-necked Hornbill in Thrumsing La National Park or watching monks feed wild Himalayan Monals at Tharpaling Monastery. Another and equally stunning pheasant we will look for is Satyr Tragopan and there will also be opportunities to search for the localised and brightly coloured Ward's Trogon. We also plan to look for the critically endangered White-bellied Heron which may now number less than 250 individuals in the world.

Spring brings almost perfect weather to Bhutan and this is undoubtedly the best time to visit. Clouds can sometimes hang low in the valleys, but this will be more than compensated for by the superb array of birds and wildflowers. The wonderful pinks of the rhododendrons and wild azaleas form flowering carpets, whilst flowering meadows are truly wonderful.

Our new 2022 tour has been designed especially for us by highly regarded Bhutanese guide Chubzang Tangbi and will be accompanied by Limosa's East Asia specialist Colin Bushell. We plan to stay in comfortable hotels throughout our stay, without the need for camping!

In a country with a strong Buddhist belief in the balance of nature and well-being, where the philosophy is Gross National Happiness, we believe that our comprehensive itinerary is a perfect balance of birdlife, wildlife, landscape and culture that will improve your own personal happiness!

Please note: due to the ongoing uncertainty about border openings and flights, our daily itinerary starts from arrival in Bhutan.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive Paro, Bhutan

Our birdwatching tour to Bhutan will start with a flight into Paro and if conditions are clear, we could see some of the highest peaks in the world from the plane.

Our first birding will be at Pa Chhu (river) where we will search for Himalayan riverine species with one of the possibilities being the extraordinary Ibisbill. Other possibilities include Brown Dipper, Grey-backed Shrike, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Russet Sparrow, Rosy Pipit and Rufous-breasted Accentor.
Night Paro

Day 2

Chele La

We rise early for a drive up to Chele La, a pass that rises to 3,800m to the west of Paro. As the sun starts to rise and the light improves, we will enjoy views of the ancient high boreal forests and, if conditions are clear, have breathtaking views of the high Himalayan peaks of Jhomolhari (7,219m) and Jichu Drake (6,989m).

As we climb to the top of the pass, we will keep our eyes open for a shimmering male Himalayan Monal and other roadside birds could include the handsome White-collared Blackbird.

From the top of the pass, we will gradually make our way back to Paro for a second night exploring as we travel. There should be plenty to look for with the possibilities including Himalayan Cuckoo, Rufous-fronted Tit, Greenish Warbler, Red-tailed Minla, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Black-throated and Dusky Thrushes, Blanford's Rosefinch, Collared Grosbeak, White-throated Redstart, White-browed Bush Robin and Plain Mountain Finch. *Night Paro*

Day 3

Fly to Bumthang and birding along Selthang La Road

After a couple of busy days, we have a more relaxed day, with a somewhat later start and after breakfast, we head to Paro Airport for a short and picturesque 30-minute flight east to Bumthang.

Bumthang is the religious heartland of Bhutan and there are many ancient cultural and religious sites dating back well one thousand years.

As we drive along Selthang La (3,600m), we will hope for views of Mt. Gangkar Puensum which at 7,570m is the world’s highest unclimbed peak. All around are stunning landscapes of the High Himalayas, auspiciously placed prayer flags, typical Bhutanese villages and spectacular temples – this is truly a magical land!

Species we could encounter along this section include the brilliant Spotted Laughingthrush, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Long-tailed Minivet, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Brown Bullfinch, the chunky White-winged Grosbeak, White-browed Fulvetta, Grey-crested and Rufous-vented Tit. *Night Bumthang*



Satyr Tragopan © Chubzang Tangbi

Day 4

Bumthang to Yongkola. Exploring along the best birding routes in Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas

Leaving Bumthang valley, we will drive up through forests of larch, silver fir, spruce and towering hemlocks to Thrumshing La (pass) at 3,780m, where we begin our exploration of this magnificent forested road. This can be a great spot to look for one of Bhutan’s most highly-prized birds, the spectacular Satyr Tragopan and if we are fortunate, we may get close lengthy views.

Blood Pheasant is also present here and the flocks which feed along the roadside could also include the rarely-seen Great Parrotbill, the amazing Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler and the uncommon Speckled Wood Pigeon.

From the pass, we drive down to the nomadic village of Sengor and continue to Yongkola, stopping for birds such as Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Rufous-breasted Bush Robin, Rufous-vented Yuhina, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, the photogenic Chestnut-tailed Minla, Rufous Sibia, Grey-chinned Minivet, Grey-sided Bush Warbler and Hoary-throated Barwing. *Night Yongkola (3 nights)*

Days 5-6

Thrumshing La National Park

This area is considered to have some of the finest birding in Asia and we have three days to explore the pristine forests of Thrumshing La National Park using a paved but rarely used road.

There are many sought after species to search for here including the handsome Chestnut-breasted Partridge and the magnificent Rufous-necked Hornbill. We will also be on the look out for Bay and Crimson-breasted Woodpeckers, Long-tailed Broadbill, Yellow-throated and Golden-breasted Fulvettas and the weird looking Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler.



Himalayan Cutia © Chubzang Tangbi

Amongst the other possibilities here are Himalayan Cutia, Spotted Elachura (formally known as Spotted Wren Babbler), Broad-billed and Chestnut-crowned Warblers, Black-headed Shrike-babbler, Black Bulbul, Scaly and the near endemic Bhutan Laughingthrush, Orange-bellied Leafbird and Yellow-bellied Fantail.

After birding in the upper region of Yongkola, we will then switch our attention to the wonderfully rich, warm broad-leafed forests of Lingmethang road. Here we hope to find more new species with the stunning but secretive Red-faced Liocichla being one of the possibilities. Other species we could see include Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Maroon Oriole, White-throated Fantail, Grey Treepie, Grey-bellied Tesia, Striated Prinia, Golden Babbler, Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Striated Bulbul, Black-chinned Yuhina, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Orange-headed Thrush and Blue-capped Rock Thrush.

On one evening, we will offer an optional short night drive hoping to find Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel as well as Hodgson’s Frogmouth, Brown Wood Owl and the tricky Mountain Scops Owl.

Day 7

Yongkola to Bumthang over Thrumshing La

After breakfast, we will continue our exploration of the Sengor valley, looking for special birds in the higher mid-temperate forests. There are several stunning birds we could see here including Fire-tailed Myzornis, Fire-tailed Sunbird (arguably the best-looking sunbird in the world) and the rare Satyr Tragopan.

From Sengor, we will drive back up through the high pass at Thrumshing La (3,780m), stopping enroute to look for the scarce Fulvous Parrotbill, as well as Black-throated Thrush and Stripe-throated Yuhina.

We will then descend through dense conifer forests which provides us with further opportunities for both Himalayan Monal and Blood Pheasant, as well as Himalayan Bluetail, Whistler’s Warbler, Spotted Nutcracker, White-collared Blackbird, Green-tailed and Gould’s Sunbirds and, if we are very fortunate, perhaps the rarely seen Chestnut Thrush or Robin Accentor.

The final part of journey today takes us through the picturesque village of Ura and we descend to Bumthang valley where we overnight. *Night Bumthang*



Yellow-throated Fulvetta is one of the species we could see in Thrumshing National Park © Chubzang Tangbi



Rufous-necked Hornbills © Chubzang Tangbi

Day 8

Bumthang to Trongsa via Tharpaling Monastery

We need to make an early start to arrive on schedule at Tharpaling Monastery where we hope to witness the monks feeding Himalayan Monals, as the birds have become accustomed to this practice.

Other species we will look in the area include Snow Pigeon, Black-faced Laughingthrush, White-bellied Redstart, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch and, with a bit of luck, we could see Godlewski’s Bunting.

After breakfast, we will descend to the Gattsa valley and continue to Yotong La (3,450m) for some high-altitude birds such as Red-throated Thrush, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Red-headed Bullfinch, Hume’s Bush Warbler, Tickell’s Leaf Warbler, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch, White-winged Grosbeak and Whiskered Yuhina.

Arriving in Trongsa, we may have the option to visit the historic Trongsa Dzong (fortress) built in 1637 and the Ta Dzong or Watch Tower, which is now the National Museum. *Overnight Trongsa*

Day 9

Trongsa to Tingtibi: Royal Manas National Park

We plan to drive along the quiet forest road towards Tingtibi. The whole section of today’s journey is spectacular as we look for an amazing variety of rare and special birds in the mixed broad-leafed forests that stretches from 2000m down to 700m. This is also home to the endangered Golden Langur, which can sometimes be seen in small groups along the roadside forests.



Golden Langur © Chubzang Tangbi



White-hooded Babbler is one of the species we hope to find in Royal Manas National Park © Chubzang Tangbi

In the early part of the morning, we will look for species such as Mountain Hawk Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Barred Cuckoo Dove, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Large Hawk Cuckoo, Collared Owlet, the noisy Great Barbet, Lesser Yellownappe, Rufous Woodpecker, Speckled Piculet, Green-backed Tit, White-throated Laughingthrush, Ashy Bulbul, White-tailed Nuthatch, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Black-throated Sunbird, Crested Bunting and Tibetan Siskin.

Arriving in the warmer sub-tropical area of Tingtibi, new possibilities include Plaintive Cuckoos, Green-billed Malkoha, the localised Himalayan Bulbul, Asian Emerald Dove, Streaked Spiderhunter, as well as flocks of noisy White-crested Laughingthrushes. *Overnight Tingtibi (2 nights)*

Day 10

Exploring the Royal Manas National Park

We will continue our exploration of the Royal Manas National Park and will make an early start along the Tingtibi–Gomphu road. This area has rich bamboo forests and there are plenty of new species to look for.

We may well start by visiting a known roosting site for the impressive Tawny Fish Owl but even if the owls aren't "at home" there will still be lots of other birds to see.

Possibilities including Red Junglefowl, White-browed Piculet, White-hooded Babbler, White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, White-rumped Munia, Blue-throated Flycatcher and Crimson Sunbird.

One of the main species we will be concentrating on trying to locate, however, is White-bellied Heron which is one of the rarest birds in the world with a total population which may be less than 200 individuals. This region is considered the most reliable in Bhutan for this critically-endangered species but, nevertheless, we will count ourselves as extremely fortunate if we do locate it.

As we continue to explore the beautiful area of Gomphu other birds we could see include Nepal Fulvetta, White-naped Yuhina and the amazing blue and yellow Sultan Tit.



Sultan Tit is one of the possibilities in Royal Manas National Park © Chubzang Tangbi



Although our trip is primarily focussed on birds, it is important not to ignore the amazing culture in Bhutan © Chubzang Tangbi

Other tougher species we will hope to locate include the fine-looking Rufous-throated Partridge and near-threatened Rufous-bellied Eagle.

Returning to our hotel in Tingtibi for a second night, we will listen out after dark as occasionally Spot-bellied Eagle Owl and Collared Scops Owl are heard.

Day 11

Tingtibi to Trongsa

We will start early as we want to get to suitable habitat for the appropriately named Beautiful Nuthatch and locating this globally vulnerable species will be one of our priorities for the morning.



The appropriately named Beautiful Nuthatch © Chubzang Tangbi

Other species we will hope to encounter here include Crested Serpent Eagle, Common Green

Magpie, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Asian House Martin, Shikra, Golden-throated Barbet, Black Drongo, Pale Blue Flycatcher, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, as well as the impressive Blue-winged Laughingthrush.

The scenery in this area is spectacular with forested slopes, prayer flags fluttering in the breeze and amazing culture and we will occasionally pause to make the most of all of this too.

Continuing along the Zhemgang road, there will be plenty more for us to look for including the gorgeous Red-headed Trogon, with other possibilities including Asian Barred Owlet, Red-billed Leiothrix, White-browed Shrike Babbler, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and Brown-flanked Bush Warbler.

As we near Trongsa, we will make one last stop near a high cliff face where we will look for Yellow-rumped Honeyguide. There are some nests of Giant Rock Bees here giving us an opportunity to look for this unusual bird. *Night Trongsa*

Day 12

Trongsa to Punakha over Pele La

Another early start as we drive to Bje Zam for our first birding stop of the day. Birds we hope to find here could include Black-tailed Crake, Greater Yellowlegs and the stunning Large Niltava.

On nearby roadside streams, we will hope to find White-capped Water Redstart with Striated Laughingthrush and Fire-breasted Flowerpecker also possible.

The road takes us on through the village of Chendibji, where a Nepalese styled Chorten (Buddhist shrine) is picturesquely situated alongside the river. Here, our top target is the appropriately named Crested Kingfisher and if we are fortunate, we may also locate a Solitary Snipe.

Passing over Pele La, where both Himalayan Griffon Vulture and Lammergeier are both possible, we will descend to Nobding where we have an opportunity to locate another of Bhutan's top target birds, the exquisite Ward's Trogon. This montane species is classified as near threatened and is restricted to the Eastern Himalayas.



Ward's Trogon © Chubzang Tangbi

With Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Long-billed Thrush, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, dazzling Scarlet Minivets, as well as Yellow-cheeked Tit and Small Niltava all possible, it promises to be a great morning!

Continuing on to the warmer valley of Punakha, we plan to stop along the Puna Tshang Chhu (river) to look for various water birds including the endangered Pallas's Fish Eagle. There could also be some familiar ducks such as Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard but mixed in with these we will hope to find Indian Spot-billed Duck. We will then drive to Punakha where we spend the night. *Night Punakha*

Day 13

Punakha to Paro over Dochu La

This morning we will take a cultural break to visit the majestic Punakha Dzong which was built in 1637 and is situated on a promontory at the confluence of the Mo (mother) and Pho (father) Chhu (rivers).

Punakha Dzong is known as the "Palace of Great Happiness" and considered to be one of the most beautiful monastery-fortresses in Bhutan.

Continuing our journey through the terraced fields at Lobesa, we reach the mixed broad-leaved forest of Menchuna where we will take a short off-road trail.

This area can be productive for various species we may not have seen so far and the possibilities include Black Eagle, Speckled Wood and Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Barred Cuckoo Dove, Rufous-capped and Chestnut-crowned Warblers, plus Golden Babbler and the elusive Grey-sided Laughingthrush.

Our next stop is at Dochu La where colourful prayer flags and 108 glistening white chortens welcome us. Once again, on clear days there are magnificent views across the high Himalayan Mountains. Eventually we reach Paro where we will stay for the next two nights. *Paro (2 nights)*

Day 14

Taksang Monastery

We have a fabulous last day in Bhutan with a great mix of birding and some of the Paro Valley's cultural treasures.

The cultural highlight will be an optional walk to the famous Taksang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery which is perched some 600m up on a cliff overlooking the valley. This is said to be where the legendary Guru Padma Sambhava flew from East Bhutan on the back of a tiger to defeat demons who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan.

It is a steep uphill walk through woods of about 1½-2hrs to reach a cafeteria (an ascent of 340m). Apart from offering welcome refreshment, this is one of the principle viewpoints of the monastery and those who prefer not to climb any further can relax here whilst others continue onwards.

From the cafeteria, it is a further half hour's ascent which brings you to another viewpoint directly across from the monastery.

On rocky ledges near the monastery, we will look for flocks of Snow Pigeon and Altai Accentor, while the waterfall next to the buildings is home for the Little Forktail.

After visiting the monastery, we will then descend to the valley floor where our vehicle will be waiting.

In Paro, we will have a celebratory farewell dinner to mark the end of our fabulous tour through this magical land. *Overnight Paro*

Day 15

Depart Bhutan

With our trip drawing to a close, we will head to the airport and begin our journey back to the UK.

Trip Information

Group Size 10 participants and 2 leaders

What To Expect A small group birdwatching tour to Bhutan with 14 nights in Bhutan.

We fly east to Bumthang from Paro and then gradually make our way back to Paro. Our journey will involve crossing a number of passes, the highest of which has an elevation approaching 4,000m.

Early starts are the norm for birding tours in tropical regions, where the daylight hours are relatively short (approx. 5:30am-6.30pm in Bhutan during late April/May) and it takes time for the sun to reach the valleys. Bird activity is at its peak early morning and late afternoon but at altitude it can sometimes stay busy throughout the day.

Overall, the tour is not strenuous but you should be prepared for early starts to enjoy the best of the morning's birding. It will be important to be in the field at dawn so we can hear the birds singing and calling as the day begins. In some instances, this may be our only chance to discover if certain species are present, so we will naturally want to make the most of this opportunity.



Yellow-cheeked Tit © Chubzang Tangbi

On some days we do have longer transits, eg between Yongkola to Bumthang and Tingtibi to Tongsa. This will provide an opportunity to relax in the vehicle and take in the landscapes.

Birds 300-330 species

Mammals 15-20 species

Accommodation 14-nights accommodation in Bhutan. All nights will be in medium to good hotels in comfortable and clean rooms with private facilities. We aim to use the best available in the area. There is no camping on our tour.

The accommodation at Tingtibi is a little more basic than the rest but this is the best option for exploring this important part of Bhutan and looking for the critically endangered White-bellied Heron.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price with drinking water also provided.

We will have a catering team who will cook and serve some hot breakfasts and lunches 'picnic style' and these will be eaten in the field. Dinners are mostly buffets served at the hotels where we stay with continental, Indian and Bhutanese options usually available.

Walking The walking is mostly easy to moderate. We will be doing short walks at altitudes of up to nearly 4,000m. Throughout our tour, the majority of our birding will be done along quiet roadsides and close to our vehicle. Wherever possible, we walk downhill. Some forest trails may have occasional steeper sections, but these are generally quite short.

Some participants may find it helpful to carry a lightweight collapsible stool.

The optional walk to the Taksang Monastery is on uneven forest trails with 740m of ascent.

Weather Spring brings almost perfect weather to Bhutan and this is undoubtedly the best time to visit. Clouds can sometimes hang low in the valleys, but this will be compensated for by the superb array of wildflowers. The pinks of the rhododendrons and wild azaleas form flowering carpets, whilst flowering meadows are wonderful.

Temperatures can vary greatly depending on local conditions and altitude. Expect it to be very cold on the high passes early in the morning and hats, gloves and fleeces are the norm. In the valleys, it will be cool spring-like temperatures, rarely reaching 30C and usually in the range of 18-20C.

Some rain is possible but usually not enough to impede birding and snowfall is possible at the high mountains passes.

Ground Transport Air-conditioned minibus.

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 on which flights we are recommending for each holiday and he will be able to book these for you.

At the time this Tour Info Pack was last updated (August 2021), the Bhutan border remained closed due to the pandemic so it was not possible to anticipate which route we would use to reach Bhutan with options via New Delhi or Bangkok the most likely. Whichever route is used, it is likely to require an overnight stay at the beginning and end of our time in Bhutan and it is important to appreciate that this has not been built into the tour cost and will be an additional cost.

Insects Mosquitoes are present in Bhutan and you must check the current malarial risk and recommended precautions with your doctor in good time prior to travel.

Photography This is a birding tour but photographers will have great opportunities to photograph birds throughout the tour.

Bhutan is a Buddhist country where killing is considered sinful, therefore, birds and mammals often appear to be tamer than in some other parts of the world, allowing you to take stunning photos.

There will, of course, also be some amazing opportunities for landscape and cultural photography.

About Your Guides

Colin Bushell: Colin is a principal Limosa guide who lives near Spurn in East Yorkshire. Colin works as both a professional bird tour guide and freelance ornithologist for ecological consultancies.

His first forays into overseas birding were to Majorca, Austria, Greece and Morocco, before the draw of the tropics became irresistible and since then Colin has travelled widely in Africa, Central and South America and throughout Asia amassing many years of tour leading experience.

Chubzang Tangbi Chubzang is our resident and highly-rated English-speaking wildlife and cultural expert in Bhutan and a very experienced bird tour guide.

Tour Cost

2022 (15 days):

Land only cost: £4195

Single supplement: £450

Deposit: £1000

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Bhutanese bird and culture guide
- 14 nights accommodation in Bhutan
- All main meals with drinking water provided
- All surface transport in Bhutan
- All excursions, entry fees, permits, tour-based tips (including drivers and guides) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds

Cost excludes

Flights, any overnight hotel accommodation which may be required before/after our time in Bhutan, insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

Please note (and as also summarised on page 12 of this Tour Information Pack) due to the ongoing closure of the Bhutan border at the time this document was last updated (August 2021), the dates shown for this trip are those when we are in Bhutan.

It will almost certainly be necessary to fly via India or Thailand and additional accommodation will be required at the beginning and end of the trip. Due to the current uncertainty, we have not priced these into the cost of the tour but will organise these for those booked on this holiday.

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.