

Sri Lanka

Jewel of the Indian Ocean

Sun 7th – Sun 21st February 2016



Photos (clockwise, from top left): Two of the stars of the trip: this male Pied Thrush at Nuwara Eliya... • ...and not far away was a fine Indian Pitta, but not on the nicest of perches • A fabulous Emerald Dove • Oriental White-eyes are common throughout Sri Lanka, but not always easy to see well • We did well for Orange-headed Thrush with one near the hotel lobby at Sigiriya • Black-rumped Flameback – what a bird! © Gary Elton/Limosa Holidays

report compiled by tour leader:
Gary Elton

SRI LANKA | Jewel of the Indian Ocean**Trip Diary**

**Tour leaders: Gary Elton and Tharanga Herath
with David Campbell, Sasha Foreman, Allan Moore, Tony & Greta Piper, Phillip Wallace
and Henry & Anne Wheatcroft**

Sri Lanka has a wonderful selection of birds from a broad cross-section of habitats. Forest birding can be frustrating at times with birds skulking or flitting through the trees. It is important to realise not everyone (and that includes the leaders) will see all the birds that are actually spotted. However, the wetland regions we visit offer some truly awesome birding, with many exciting species to be seen.

Colombo airport to Kithulgala

A trouble-free flight and a minimal amount of time spent collecting luggage and changing money saw us quickly meeting with local guide, Tharanga, plus Jayantha and Sunil - our driver and assistant respectively, for the week. The bus was loaded and we headed off through the outskirts of Colombo to our lunch stop. Lunch included our first real birding, with a pair of White-bellied Drongos drinking from the pool, a nesting Spotted Dove and both White-throated Kingfisher and Loten's Sunbird, though the sight of the kingfisher eating several young of the latter species was a stark reminder of the harshness of the natural world!

We stopped at a couple of paddyfields en route, which produced Little Cormorant, Indian Pond Heron and Asian Openbill only feet from the bus, plus other species such as Purple Heron, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Red-wattled Lapwing. A pair of soaring White-bellied Sea Eagles and a Crested Hawk-eagle were also seen further along the route. We arrived at the hotel in good time and spent the remaining 45 minutes of daylight enjoying views of the local resident species: Alexandrine Parakeet, Green Imperial Pigeon, Indian Swiftlets and Asian Palm Swifts along with a single Brown-backed Needletail and several endemic Sri Lanka Swallows.

Kithulgala Rest House

An early start the first morning was fortunately fuelled by coffee and tea, after which we enthusiastically set off in the half-light in search of our target species, Chestnut-backed Owlet a species that is known to roost with regularity near the hotel. After a short walk into a neighbouring garden we stood and listened. The woodlands were waking up with Square-tailed and Red-vented Bulbuls calling noisily from the treetops and, nearby a Tickell's Blue Flycatcher broke into song and showed well, perching out in the open for us as we walked on through the trees. Then Tharanga spotted the owlet perched under the leaf canopy in a tree ahead of us. The bird stayed put fortunately and although 'back on' we all enjoyed good looks through the telescope.

The rest of the pre-breakfast walk concluded with good views of a pair of Orange Minivets, Black-faced Munia, Oriental Magpie Robin, Yellow-fronted Barbet and Sri Lanka Green Pigeon. An immature Indian Cuckoo was very much a bonus for a fortunate few after breakfast, found in a tree close to the restaurant. After breakfast we made the short walk down to the Kelani River where we crossed on a small 'one-man-and-his-paddle'-operated ferry to spend the morning birding in the Makandawa Forest Reserve. Good birds appeared almost immediately with a Stork-billed Kingfisher on the wires as we crossed, followed by a brief fly-by Crested Honey Buzzard. Our walk lasted a couple of hours and species seen included Legge's Flowerpecker, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Black Eagle, an immature Rufous-bellied Hawk-

eagle and Yellow-browed Bulbul. A path-side pair of Black-naped Monarchs tending a nest were a real bonus with the second big surprise coming on the journey back over the river in the form of a pair of Black Bitterns, one standing in view for several minutes before flying back into cover.

A local walk, a short drive from the hotel, after our lunch siesta gave us more new birds, with many seen very well. These included a pair of nest-building Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrikes, a stunning perched Black-hooded Oriole and a Crested Honey Buzzard drinking from a water hole - views of the latter allowing us to age it as an adult male due to its bright red eye!

The following morning saw a slightly more leisurely start with a short pre-breakfast walk around the hotel grounds. New birds came in the form of several Golden-fronted Leafbirds and Layard's Parakeets, Asian Koel, an all-too-brief Lesser Yellownape and our first Sri Lanka Junglefowl found feeding high in a tree! After breakfast, whilst the bus was being loaded, the group enjoyed great views of a Crested Serpent Eagle drying its wings in the morning sun in a large tree on the other side of the river, no doubt on account of the torrential rainfall the night before.

Blue Magpie Lodge Sinharaja

We arrived in good time after a straightforward journey, which was broken by a well-appreciated tea break mid point courtesy of Tharanga. After a delicious lunch we were shown to our rooms, after which the majority of the group chose to use their siesta time for some gentle birding around the immediate area. New birds again came thick and fast with various members of the group adding Plum-headed Parakeet, Indian Paradise Flycatcher (a stunning white male), Crested Treeswift, Brown-bellied and Orange-billed Babblers, Brown Shrike, White-browed Fantail and Emerald Dove to their lists. The group reassembled, complete with Tharanga, for a more organized walk for the remaining hours of the day, managing to add many of the above species plus repeat views of several pairs of Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrikes, Black-hooded Oriole, Oriental White-eyes and Orange Minivets. The highlights though were arguably a pair of nest hole excavating Crimson-fronted Barbets, followed by great views of our main target species for the afternoon, Green-billed Coucal.

Sinharaja is a World Heritage site, home to much of the last remnants of Sri Lanka's once extensive rainforest, and we were to stay for two nights, allowing for a whole day exploring its forest. There are many important species and it is the best place to see several difficult ones, though as always these were far from guaranteed. Our day's excursion to the forest started early with the group up before daylight, thankfully supplied with tea, coffee and breakfast to start us on our way. A rather unique off-road experience followed in 'war-time' jeeps; we arrived shaken and well and truly awake at the park gates!

Our first birds were endemics, Sri Lanka Hill Mynas. Although distant, they gave views through the 'scopes, though a singing Spot-winged Thrush unfortunately didn't show. As is usual with forest birding, it was very much a case of feast or famine and the first 45 minutes of the walk were largely uneventful, the best birds being our first Sri Lanka Scimitar Babblers and two brief Sri Lanka Blue Magpies, these latter birds only seen by part of the group. We then stumbled on a large mixed flock and an exciting hour followed. The good birds just kept coming with a male Malabar Trogon, Red-faced Malkoha, Lesser Yellownape, White-faced Starling, Sri Lanka Crested Drongo, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and Ashy-headed Laughingthrush!

Flushed with success we made our way along the last part of the path to arrive at the research station. On arrival the first bird to greet us was a Blue Magpie obviously hoping for a meal. It was totally unafraid of us, which meant some great photo opportunities! Sri Lanka Thrush is another sought-after endemic and a very difficult bird to see and it was with some reservations that we set off in search of it. We clambered through the undergrowth to no avail then our local

guide called he had found one! We caught up with him and viewed the area in question, the bird or, I should say birds, there being two, were picking around on the leaf litter. Their time on view was frustratingly brief with only half the group managing to see them before they disappeared, this unfortunately coinciding with the arrival of another large group of birders which meant there was no realistic chance of re-finding them. We started our return walk back along the path towards the main gate where our lunch was waiting, though one more stop was planned. This involved clambering down the bank and up the other side, which at times was somewhat challenging! It was well worth the effort though as we were treated to fantastic views of a roosting pair of Sri Lanka Frogmouths, only three metres away and seemingly fast asleep, although I suspect they were well aware of our presence!

We continued on back to the main gate seeing our first snake, a Bronze-backed Tree Snake, and several Purple-faced Leaf Monkeys. We also took the opportunity to enjoy the large selection of butterflies on show around us which seemed particularly numerous along the last section of the path, species such as Great Crow, Blue Glassy Tiger, Clipper, Blue Mormon (the largest species in Sri Lanka) and Sri Lanka Tree Nymph, which was particularly memorable. Lunch was followed by a short walk back along the main path, after which we returned to the Blue Magpie Lodge. The remainder of the day was spent relaxing and birding around the immediate area. A selection of the expected species were seen, plus a small flock of Tawny-bellied Babblers which gave an opportunity for those had missed them earlier to catch up.

The following morning, another early start and bumpy jeep ride saw us crowded together in a small room at the back of a private house, peering out into the garden behind. Several Spot-winged Thrushes showed well (and were at times ridiculously close!) along with a female Indian Blue Robin, Sri Lanka Junglefowl and Emerald Doves. The location was proving popular so we moved outside to eat our packed breakfast, taking the opportunity to do some general birding whilst we ate. Sri Lanka Hill Mynas were easily seen in the treetops around us. Other species noted included Orange Minivet, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Black-rumped Flameback and Asian Koel. A message then filtered through to say there was a Mouse Deer on view from the now empty room at the back of the house. We returned to view it, finding not just the deer but also a pair of Sri Lanka Spurfowl! Quite how long they had been there was anybody's guess! With time ticking by we returned down the bumpy track to the Lodge where we finished packing and loaded our bags on the bus and started our journey to Embilipitiya.

En route Sinharaja to Embilipitiya

Birds spotted on the journey included Sri Lanka and Barn Swallows, four Black Eagles, an immature Crested Hawk-eagle and a Brown Shrike.

Kalametiya Sanctuary

Along the southern coast we spent an afternoon birding the scrub, rough grassland and wetlands of the Kalametiya Sanctuary. The birding started the moment we arrived with our first birds several Pintail Snipe, quickly followed by Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Jerdon's Bushlarks, Paddyfield Pipits, and Green Bee-eaters. Around the lagoons we found Garganey and Lesser Whistling Ducks, plus an assortment of waders and terns. Nearby, on an area of short turf, a small flock of Ashy-crowned Sparrowlarks were a good find and whilst watching these a vocal Blyth's Pipit appeared, giving useful comparison views with the much more common Paddyfield Pipits. Non-bird highlights included our first Tufted Langurs, a Land Monitor and a Ruddy Mongoose. A short visit to the beach revealed small numbers of Little Terns fishing just offshore with their larger cousins, Greater Crested and Lesser Crested Terns, just about identifiable on and around the distant rocks and harbour mouth. As always with this site we simply ran out of time and as we drove out along the track a Striated Heron proved to be the last find of the day.

Udawalawe National Park

A reserve famous for its Asian Elephants and the scrubby habitat with interspersed trees and waterholes is also a magnet for many birds. Seated in 'high rise jeeps' we drove along the tracks that run through the park, stopping regularly to enjoy the wildlife. Ashy, Plain and Grey-breasted Prinias were all seen well, whilst Indian Robins and Jerdon's Bushlarks wandered around on the roadside next to us. Black-winged Kites were particularly easy to see both due to the number of birds present, but also their habit of sitting out on the top of the dead trees. New birds appeared thick and fast, with species such as Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Coppersmith Barbet, Indian Roller and Hoopoe all added to the list. Somewhat scarcer were several Marshall's Ioras, Grey-bellied Cuckoos, four Blue-faced Malkohas, and a Sirkeer Malkoha.

Our breakfast stop at a large waterhole proved particularly successful, with the group having to multi-task by eating and keeping up with the birds at the same time (which the women obviously found easier than the men!). Eight Malabar Pied Hornbills started the ball rolling, perched in the trees as we drove in to park up. On and around the water's edge, amongst the birds on show, the more noteworthy included several Painted Storks, a Lesser Adjutant, several Black-crowned Night Herons, Grey-headed Fish Eagle and, from a non avian perspective, an Asian Elephant, two Golden Jackals and a large Muggler Crocodile.

Tissamaharama area

We visited the water tanks around Tissamaharama on three separate occasions, the last being a leisurely morning stroll after a sit down breakfast and followed by a pre-lunch swim - if only all birding could be as civilised as that! The tanks held an array of birds: Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns patrolled over the large expanse of water and lilies, where Pheasant-tailed Jacanas and Grey-headed Swamphens were numerous. Herons, egrets and cormorants, both Little and Indian, were easily seen and more unusual species seen included Stork-billed Kingfisher, Cotton Pygmy Geese, Yellow, Black and Cinnamon Bitterns plus Watercock. In the Rain Trees we found a couple of Sri Lanka Woodshrikes, four Small Minivets, Jerdon's Leafbird, and a couple of Oriental White-eyes and both Baya and Streaked Weavers were seen as well. Memorable moments included an encounter with a bullock with attitude, subsequently put in its place by a local woman street vendor, who shouted and waved a stick at it sending it running off!

A Brown Fish Owl at a roost site was complemented by two White-bellied Sea Eagles sat close by and a female Asian Koel also vied for our attention, heralding a memorable 45 minutes birding, very much a case of what to look at next! We visited the Flying Fox roost twice, once mid afternoon, which gave us an idea of the immense size of the roost and a second dusk visit just as they were starting to leave to feed. The latter experience was incredible, with the bats noisily leaving the roost. As we watched in the half light, as in their hundreds they spread further and further out into the night sky. Pressed for time, we left before the roost had emptied but as we drove adjacent to the tank, hundreds if not thousands of bats were flying parallel with us over the water with many dipping down to drink - well you would if you'd been hanging around in the heat all day wouldn't you!

Bundala National Park

This RAMSAR site is one of Asia's premier wetlands, and on arrival the birding started immediately with Black-crowned Night Herons watched returning to their roosts and singing Clamorous Reed Warblers, Yellow Bitterns and Watercock were all seen well. There were masses of wading birds, concentrated on and around the pans and bunds, with hundreds of Marsh Sandpipers, Little Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Lesser Sand Plovers. Good numbers of terns were also present offering an ideal opportunity to compare the likes of Whiskered, Caspian, Gull-billed, Greater Crested, Lesser Crested and Little Terns. More unusual were a

solitary Red-necked Phalarope, Broad-billed Sandpiper and three Small Pratincoles. But pride of place must go to the five-foot high Black-necked Stork, a very rare bird in Sri Lanka. The trackside pools gave us great views of species such as Grey-headed Swamphen, Purple Heron and Spoonbill. Other exciting birds seen included Ashy Woodswallow, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker and Grey-headed Fish Eagle. Non-avian highlights came in the form of Ruddy and Grey Mongooses, Black-naped Hare and Tufted Grey Langurs.

Yala National Park

Our visit to Yala was an experience to say the least, as seemingly every Jeep/Land Rover in Sri Lanka had converged on the site and Tharanga said it was a quiet day! This didn't stop us seeing some good birds though: two Indian Silverbills drinking at a small waterhole started the ball rolling, with the larger waterholes producing a selection of waders, egrets, storks and terns. Our second Black-necked Stork of the trip was a surprise find, especially knowing how rare they are, as was our second Brown Fish Owl which showed slightly better than our first and seemed totally unconcerned at the interest it was creating. Roadside views followed of Ashy-crowned Sparrowlark and Oriental Skylark, both white and brown forms of Indian Paradise Flycatcher and a pair of White-browed Fantails mobbing a Malabar Hornbill. A Great Egret swallowing a gigantic fish (and still managing to breath!) was both impressive and noteworthy. A single male Barred Buttonquail showed amazingly well, but was unfortunately seen only by those in the second Jeep. Mammals included several Wild Boars, Sambar, Spotted Deer and the expected Asian Elephants.

As we left the park, we stopped to try for Indian Nightjars, a strategy that was to prove successful with a calling bird heard as soon as we stopped and with a bit of effort several in-flight views of birds were also achieved. The day's excitement wasn't over though: as we left and drove along the road to where the buses were parked a pale shape was seen to run across the road in front of the vehicles that were now driving virtually parallel. "LEOPARD!!" was the cry as the animal disappeared back into cover as quickly as it had appeared with those in the outlying jeep achieving varying qualities of views.

En route to Nuwara Eliya

Birds en route included Black-winged Kite and Malabar Hornbill. A short tea and chocolate-puff biscuit stop (courtesy of Tony and Greta) was welcome at the Rawana waterfall, where we saw a distant Crested Serpent Eagle, Grey Wagtail and Purple-rumped Sunbird and had the opportunity to buy some rocks off the local street vendors!

During a half hour (or so!) stop at Surrey Tea Estate we picked out a few of the highland specialities: several Cinereous Tits, a brief Dull-blue Flycatcher, an even briefer Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon plus a couple of Oriental White-eyes, a Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Grey-breasted Prinia, White-browed Bulbul and Loten's Sunbird. Arriving at the hotel we were greeted with the customary rolled flannels to refresh ourselves, the only difference was this time they were warm (!) and served with hot tea, a reflection of the marked change in temperature.

Victoria Park at Nuwara Eliya

Arriving at the park we headed straight off to the unkept margins: several vocal Oriental Magpie Robins were immediately obvious and it wasn't long before Tharanga had caught a glimpse of one of our target species, Pied Thrush! As we searched through the undergrowth, an Indian Pitta appeared from the shadows and posed brilliantly in front of us, and as we watched it, a Yellow-eared Bulbul jumped into view followed by the Pied Thrush, a stunning male. With the majority of the group having seen the thrush we moved to the other side of the park, again to the margins, this time with a small stream running through it. Forest Wagtail was quickly found with around six birds in total for the afternoon, invariably in the company of either a Common Sandpiper or Grey Wagtail along the stream edge. Our searching amazingly resulted in a further

four Pied Thrushes being found, only one of which was a female. A second Indian Pitta showed even better than the first giving the photographers a great picture opportunity.

Unfortunately seeing Kashmir Flycatcher was not going to be so easy, with us spending the remainder of the afternoon trying to track down a bird seen briefly by Tharanga and several of the group which was almost certainly this species, unfortunately to no avail. Other birds of note included several Sri Lanka White-eyes and a female Indian Blue Robin, the latter was only seen by Gary.

We made a return visit the following afternoon, again in the hope of seeing the Kashmir Flycatcher. Despite our searching, and David and Phil hearing it call, we drew a blank. Consolation came in the form of three male Pied Thrushes together in one bush, with two flying into the nearby trees, one sitting on an exposed branch completely in the open for at least five minutes! Indian Pitta, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Forest Wagtails and numerous Oriental Magpie Robins made for an enjoyable, slightly more relaxed afternoon.

Horton Plains

As we drove up to Horton Plains, in the early hours of the morning, through the mist and rain, we knew the day would be challenging! Arriving at the park we joined the queue of buses, though any thoughts of finding Indian Blackbirds by the entrance was a bit of a long shot as it was still pitch black!

Instead we drove straight in and headed to Arrenga Pool, disembarking and gathering in the half-light waiting for birds to start to show. A Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush sang deep in cover, but we had to satisfy ourselves with views of Dull-blue Flycatcher and Sri Lanka Bush Warbler. We re-traced our route to another possible site where, after a patient ten minutes, we finally caught up with our quarry, in fact a pair, with the majority of the group eventually gaining good views. We drove on towards the Visitor Centre, where we found some shelter for breakfast. After breakfast, we walked around the general area adding Pied Bushchat, Yellow-eared Bulbul and Sri Lanka White-eye to the list, the latter two filling list gaps for some of the group.

The weather was still far from ideal, though we did experience some clearer patches and birding from both the buses and on foot produced at least one Hill Swallow, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike and a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo for Tony and Greta. Pride of place though must go to Indian Blackbird. With us having missed our chance at the gate, the chances of seeing this species was virtually nil so the finding of two on a roadside track at 10 o'clock in the morning was a real bonus! Non-bird highlights included a Sambar, which at one stage was close to climbing in the bus (!), and the darker highland form of Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, commonly known as 'Bear Monkey'.

We stopped at several places on the way back to the hotel to search for Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon with no success. Shortly after continuing our journey, Sasha said she thought she had seen two sat in a roadside tree. The minibuses having now become separated, the second bus turned and went back to look and sure enough the birds were there! Despite then catching the first bus up, a return visit to the site was unsuccessful, the birds having unfortunately flown.

Nuwara Eliya to Kandy

We stopped at the Blue Field Tea Factory en route, for an interesting tour round the factory and a complimentary cup of tea. Invariably there were some birds seen and these included a soaring Black Eagle soaring over a distant mountain ridge, a Brown Shrike, Loten's Sunbird, Common Tailorbird and a very confiding pair of Purple-rumped Sunbirds.

Kandy

Arriving at Kandy we drove onto our lakeside hotel only to find we had been moved to its swankier sister hotel behind. Driving by the lake, we noted several Black-crowned Night Herons, Indian, Little and one Great Cormorant. After lunch we drove to the nearby Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, where we dodged the showers and enjoyed a relaxing walk around the gardens. Birds seen included a pair Golden-fronted Leafbirds, at least four Southern Hill Mynas, Asian Koel, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Black-rumped Flameback and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher. High-flying swifts were regularly noted: Little and Asian Palm, with birds occasionally coming quite low with a high-flying, larger swift spotted by David almost certainly an Alpine.

Udawattekele Royal Forest

The stroll through this peaceful forest was very relaxing. We began birding as soon as we arrived, with the first of several Tickell's Blue Flycatchers and two Yellow-browed Bulbuls by the entrance. The first of at least three different White-rumped Shamans was soon seen too, and other species included a female Orange Minivet, Bar-breasted Flycatcher-shrike and another striking white Indian Paradise Flycatcher. Two species we were particularly hoping to see at the forest were Brown-capped Babbler and Oriental Pygmy Kingfisher. We were successful with both, though the views were somewhat in contrast with each other, the babblers showing extremely well, the kingfisher frustratingly brief. Crested Hawk-eagle and another roosting Brown Fish Owl concluded our visit.

Our lunch stop today was a more traditional venue serving excellent food and offering a sideline in Ayurvedic remedies! After lunch we were treated to an entertaining 20 minutes sales pitch by Sri Lanka's answer to 'Del Boy Trotter', who apparently could speak ten languages and had spent 11 years studying medicine. Allan was used as a guinea pig and had a section of hair removed from his arm by one remedy, very much a success and apparently, according to 'Del Boy', it could be used on all sorts of areas of the body! Birds en route to Sigiriya included a Shikra at the lunch stop and a roadside Woolly-necked Stork, a new bird for the trip.

Sigiriya tank & Fortress moat

An afternoon stroll by the water-filled moat was enjoyed by all; Greta finding our first Orange-headed Thrush by the hotel lobby was a taste of things to come! We disembarked from the bus noting a pair of Indian Robins and a White-browed Fantail. Moving literally 50 metres we stumbled on another Orange-headed Thrush drinking at a tree-shaded small puddle, which was chased off by an Indian Pitta! A bird-packed hour or so followed with Jerdon's and Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Black-naped Monarch, Crimson-fronted and Copper-smith Barbets amongst the species seen well. As dusk started to fall we picked up both Common and White-throated Kingfishers in the fortress moat, whilst a White-rumped Sharma could be heard singing from the nearby woodland. As the light diminished further we stood watching the bats emerging from their roosts and finished the visit with a flyover Jerdon's Nightjar.

On the final morning, a brief pre-breakfast walk around the hotel grounds saw Tony and Greta adding another pair of Orange-headed Thrushes to the trip list. The rest of us had to wait until after breakfast to see ours, which was found rooting around under bushes near the hotel reception. Chestnut-winged Cuckoo followed, a confiding bird near the main gate. After enjoying that we took a stroll between our hotel (via the Sigiriya tank) and the Sigiriya Fortress moat. The tank held a selection of commoner waterbirds including Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Grey-headed Swamp-hen and Lesser Whistling Ducks and the walk gave us several new birds for the trip namely Jungle Prinia, Large-billed Leaf Warbler and Brown-headed Pygmy Woodpecker.

After an good lunch we headed off through the traffic to Colombo and onto our last hotel where we had an enjoyable last evening. The following morning an early flight meant breakfast at the hotel then off to the airport to catch our return flights home.

My thanks go to Baur's for making such smooth arrangements, and especially to Tharanga for his brilliant leading, Jayantha for his careful driving and his mate Sunil too, both of whom looked after us extremely well.

ITINERARY

8th February: AM Arrive Colombo, drive to Kithulgala, PM Kithulgala
 9th February: All day Kithulgala
 10th February: Early AM Kithulgala, drive to Sinharaja, PM Sinharaja
 11th February: All day Sinharaja
 12th February: AM Sinharaja, drive to Embilipitiya PM Kalametiya
 13th February: AM Udawalawe NP, drive to Tissa, PM Tissa tank
 14th February: AM Bundala NP, PM Tissa tank
 15th February: AM Tissa tank, PM Yala NP
 16th February: AM drive to Nuwara Eliya, PM Victoria Park
 17th February: AM Horton Plains, PM Victoria Park
 18th February: AM drive to Kandy, PM Peradeniya Botanical Gardens
 19th February: AM Udewattekele Forest Reserve, drive to Sigiriya PM Sigiriya
 20th February: AM Sigiriya, PM drive to Negombo
 21st February: Return to London.

ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BIRD SPECIES RECORDED (*n*=240)

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

Regularly seen at wetland areas.

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

A maximum of three, on two dates, at Tissamaharama tank.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Distant birds at Bundula, with Garganey alongside for useful size comparison.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Seen at Kalametiya Sanctuary, Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristata*

Common in dry wooded grasslands.

Sri Lanka Spurfowl *Galloperdix bicalcarata* ENDEMIC

A pair at Sinharaja.

Sri Lanka Junglefowl *Gallus lafayetti* ENDEMIC

Seen and heard on a dates during the trip at a variety of locations.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Three Kalametiya Sanctuary.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

Four at Kithulgala and seen regularly in the south were its fairly common.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*

Fairly widespread in small numbers.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

Three in total during our time at Sigiriya.

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*

The rarest stork species in Sri Lanka, with only a handful of breeding pairs, so we did well to see two, one at Bundula NP and one at Yala NP.

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*

One Udawalawe National Park.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

A widespread and fairly common species, particularly in the south.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A maximum of ten, on four dates, at Kalametiya Sanctuary, Udawalawe and Yala National Parks.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

Two dates with at least five at Tissamaharama tanks.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

Very much the rarest of the three Bittern species seen; one seen in flight at Tissamaharama Tank.

Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*

Two at Kithulgala and one at Tissamaharama tanks.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Best counts of about 15 Udawalawe National Park, also seen at Bundula, Yala and Kandy.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

A roadside bird showed well at Kalametiya Sanctuary

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Common and widespread.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Widespread and abundant.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Fairly common and widespread.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Common and widespread.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Fairly common and widespread.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Regularly seen, but undoubtedly overlooked.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common and widespread.

Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*

Seen daily in the south.

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*

Common.

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Much less widespread than Little Cormorant.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Singles at Kithulgala and Kandy, with half or dozen or so noted at Tissa tanks.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Quite common in the south and one at Sigiriya on 19th.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Easily seen at Udawalawe National Park, with at least six birds noted. Singles were also seen at Bundala NP and on two occasions as we travelled from Tissamaharama to Nuwara Eliya.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Several seen at the start of the tour at Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela spilogaster*

Surprisingly scarce and only seen on four dates.

Changeable [Crested] Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis*

Noted on seven dates with largest number, four at Udawalawe National Park, with best views of a confiding perched bird at Yala National Park. Sri Lanka and southern Indian birds display a prominent long crest, quite different to races of Changeable Hawk-eagle inhabiting the remainder of the species' range.

Rufous-bellied Hawk-eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii*

One near Kithulgala on 9th.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*

Two Kithulgala Forest Reserve, four en route to Embilipitiya and one at the Blue Field Tea Factory.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Singles at Udawalawe and en route to Tissamaharama tanks.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Seen on six dates. Best view of male perched on a gate near Bundala National Park.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Fairly common and widespread.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Noted on eight dates, with a maximum of four on 13th.

Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus ichthyaetus*

Five individuals on three dates in the south.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Widespread and fairly common in wetland areas.

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*

Seen well with four at both Udelalawe National Park and Tissamaharama tank.

Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*

Fairly common and easily seen in suitable habitat. Now 'split' by IOC.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Four at Bundula and two at Yala National Parks.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator leggei*

A male at Yala NP was seen extremely well but unfortunately only by half the group.

Great Stone-curlew *Burhinus recurvirostris*

Four Kalametiya Sanctuary, eight Bundala National Park, two Tissamaharama tank and ten Yala National Park.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Common in freshwater and coastal wetlands in the south.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*

Fairly common in dry habitats in south.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus lankae*

Common and widespread.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

20+ Kalametiya Sanctuary; similar numbers at Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Two Bundala National Park.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

One Bundala National Park.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Two Udawalawe National Park.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus seebohmi*

Easily seen in wetland areas visited in the south.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

50+ Kalametiya Sanctuary and easily seen at Udawalawe, Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Easily seen in suitable habitats particularly numerous at Tissamaharama and Sigiriya tanks.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura*

Six Kalametiya sanctuary, singles Udawalawe and Yala National Parks, and seven approachable individuals at Horton Plains.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

A female bird was a good find by Tharanga as we left Udawalawe National Park.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Most numerous at Bundala National Park, and noted at all wetland areas visited in the south.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

15 at Kalametiya Sanctuary.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

One at Bundala National Park.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Common in coastal wetlands.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Common in and near coastal wetlands with particularly large numbers at Bundala National Park.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Up to six in wetland areas in the south.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Fairly common at fresh water wetlands in the south.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Noted at all freshwater wetlands in the south, and two along the stream edge at Victoria Park.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

10+ Kalametiya Sanctuary and 20 Bundala and a single at Yala National Park.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

40+ Kalametiya Sanctuary and easily seen at other wetland sites visited in the south.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

One at Kalametiya Sanctuary and hundreds at Bundala National Park.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

One somewhat elusive individual at Bundala National Park.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Singles at Kalametiya Sanctuary and Bundala National Park.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

One Bundala National Park.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*

Four Bundala National Park.

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*

Six at Bundala National Park

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Seen regularly in small numbers in the south.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Seen at Kalametiya Sanctuary, Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

Distant birds were seen offshore at Kalametiya sanctuary, 50+ Bundala NP and 30+ at Yala NP.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

Seen amongst the above species at Kalametiya Sanctuary and Bundala NP, a useful comparison.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Seen at Kalametiya Sanctuary, Bundala and Yala National Parks

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

The most numerous and widespread tern.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Noted amongst the commoner Whiskered Terns, most numerous at Yala.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Noted daily.

Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon *Columba torringtoniae* ENDEMIC

Several brief individuals at Sinharaja Forest and Surrey Tea estate were followed by a roadside pair for a fortunate half of the group near Horton Plains.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis ceylonensis*

Common and widespread.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica robinsoni*

Fairly common in wet zone.

Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicincta leggei*

Fairly common in the dry zone.

Sri Lanka Green Pigeon *Treron pompadora* ENDEMIC

Common in wet zone. Formerly, this taxon was the nominate race of Pompadour Green Pigeon, restricted to Sri Lanka.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

Fairly common, seen virtually daily.

Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchus* ENDEMIC

Good views were had of pairs at Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Ones and twos here and there on eight dates in total.

Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultia*

A skulking bird at Udawalawe National Park.

Red-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* ENDEMIC

Two Sinharaja Forest.

Blue-faced Malkoha *Rhopodytes viridirostris*

Two lots of two at Udawalawe National Park.

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*

Our first, a brief view for the occupants of one of the jeeps at Udawalawe, then one seen by Tony and Greta at Horton Plains, followed finally by a showy confiding bird at Sigiriya.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*

Fairly common and widespread, noted on six dates.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*

One at Kithulgala on 9th.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*

Two Udawalawe National Park and one at Sigiriya. These grey-bellied birds are now treated as specifically distinct from the rufous-bellied Plaintive Cuckoo *C. merulinus* of southeast Asia.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

First year birds were seen at Kithulgala and Sigiriya.

Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*

A pair of roosting birds in the hotel grounds at Embilipitiya.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*

Roosting birds were seen at Tissamaharama, Yala NP and Udewattekele Forest Reserve.

Chestnut-backed Owlet *Glaucidium castanonotum* ENDEMIC

One seen well thanks to Thranga's sharp eyes at Kithulgala.

Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*

A pair at Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Despite its name, this species also occurs in the mountains of southwestern India and is not endemic to Sri Lanka. The male greyer, the female more rufous.

Jerdon's Nightjar *Caprimulgus atripennis*

One briefly at dusk at Sigiriya.

Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus*

Several heard and seen at dusk, on the outskirts of Yala National Park.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*

Several around the Blue Magpie Lodge, also seen at Udawalawe and Yala National Parks.

Indian Swiftlet *Collocalia unicolor*

Widespread though only noted in the first week. The nests are still harvested in some areas.

Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*

One Kithulgala and two Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Noted throughout the trip.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

A distant high-flying swift at Peradeniya Botanical Gardens was thought to almost certainly be this species.

Little Swift *Apus affinis singalensis*

Seen throughout the trip with largest numbers seen around Sigiriya. Sri Lanka birds belong with Little Swift of the race *A. a. singalensis* which is considered to be closest to the African and Indian races of Little Swift *A. affinis*.

Malabar Trogon *Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus*

A female at Kithulgala Forest Reserve and a male at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Three at Udawalawe National Park, one viewable from the hotel at Tissamaharama and one at Yala National Park.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*

Singles at Kithulgala and enroute to Sigiriya, with several at Tissamaharama tanks.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Widespread throughout the country.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common, seven dates in total.

Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca*

One Udewattekele Forest Reserve.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis travancorensis*

Seen at Kalametiya Sanctuary, Udawalawe, Bundula and Yala National Parks.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis ceylonicus*

Regularly encountered throughout the dry lowland regions of Sri Lanka.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*

A common and widespread winter visitor.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaultii*

Two at Kithulgala were followed by two confiding birds at the Blue Magpie Lodge with one further bird seen at Yala National Park.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Singles at Udawalawe and Bundula National Parks

Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthraceros coronatus*

Eight at Udawalawe and two Yala National Parks, with singles Tissamaharama tank and enroute to Nuwara Eliya.

Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill *Ocyrceros gingalensis* ENDEMIC

Common Kithulgala Forest Reserve and Sinharaja Forest Reserve, with one a juvenile seen at Sigiriya

Brown-headed Barbet *Psilopogon zeylanic zeylanica*

Widely recorded throughout.

Yellow-fronted Barbet *Psilopogon flavifrons* ENDEMIC

Common at Kithulgala and Sinharaja in the Wet Zone, but absent from the Dry Zone.

Crimson-fronted Barbet *Psilopogon rubricapillus* ENDEMIC

Three Sinharaja/ Blue Magpie Lodge, Three Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, singles two dates Sigiriya.

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephala*

One Udawalawe NP, two Tissamaharama tank, singles two dates Sigiriya.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopus nanus gymnophthalmos*

One, a female, Sigiriya.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Dendrocopus mahrattensis*

Pairs at Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus wellsii*

One briefly at Kithulgala on the 10th, was followed by a very showy bird the next day at Sinharaja Forest reserve.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense psarodes*

A maximum of three birds, seen on seven dates. The endemic subspecies *D. b. psarodes* which we encountered shows a red, rather than golden orange, wings and mantle.

Crimson-backed Flameback *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* ENDEMIC

One Sinharaja Forest Reserve unfortunately only seen by Greta. This bird differs from Greater Flameback in showing red, rather than golden-orange wings and mantle.

Peregrine Falcon (Shaheen) *Falco peregrinus peregrinator*

One seen very well, circling above us with Little Swifts at Sigiriya. *Falco peregrinus calidus* A pale adult bird photographed at Udawalawe appeared to be of this race, a rare but regular wintering bird to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot *Loriculus beryllinus* ENDEMIC

Common in wet zone.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

Common Kithulgala Forest Reserve, also noted in the south and around Sigiriya. **Rose-ringed**

Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Common and widespread throughout the dry zone.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*

A pair showed well at the Blue Magpie Lodge with a further two at Udawalawe National Park.

Layard's Parakeet *Psittacula calthropae* ENDEMIC

Two Kithulgala Forest Reserve, up to four Blue Magpie Lodge.

Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*

Seen well on both visits to Victoria Park, with singles also seen on two dates at Sigiriya.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus leggei*

Fairly common in wet zone.

Sri Lanka Woodshrike *Tephrodornis affinis* ENDEMIC

Seen at Udawalawe, Bundala and Yala National Parks and Sigiriya.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*

One Bundala National Park and two at Tissamaharama tank.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*

Noted on six dates.

Marshall's Iora *Aegithina nigrolutea*

Three Udawalawe National Park.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Coracina melanoptera*

A male at Sigiriya.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

A very smart little bird, with two pairs at Udawalawe NP and Tissamaharama tank, plus single pairs at Sigiriya (two dates) and Sinharaja.

Orange Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*

Several pairs at Kithulgala and Sinharaja with a female also seen at Udawattekele River Forest. Now split from Scarlet Minivet *P. speciosus* of N India and southeast Asia.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

Widespread, seen virtually daily.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*

Fairly common and regularly seen. Endemic subspecies *O. x. ceylonensis*.

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*

Recorded on eight dates, common at Kitugala and Sinharaja. Endemic subspecies *D. c. leucopygialis* in which only the undertail-coverts are white is restricted to the Wet Zone. A second endemic race, *D. c. insularis* in which the entire belly is white also occurs in Sri Lanka where it is restricted to the Dry Zone.

Sri Lanka Drongo *Dicrurus lophorinus* ENDEMIC

Three Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

An extremely confiding bird was at the Blue Magpie Lodge, with a second bird also present. Birds were also seen at Udawalawe, Bundala and Yala National Parks, where at the latter site a pair were watched mobbing a Malabar Pied Hornbill. Others were also seen at Tissamaharama tank and Sigiriya.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*

Our first a pair at nest at Kithulgala Forest Reserve with singles also seen at Sinharaja Forest Reserve and Sigiriya.

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Fairly common, a maximum of three, seen on six dates, with both Brown and White birds seen. Asian Paradise Flycatcher is now 'split' into three species – we saw Indian. Two races occur in Sri Lanka: the endemic race *ceylonensis* are not known to attain the white plumage, so those stunningly beautiful white males we saw would be migrants of the nominate form.

Sri Lanka Blue Magpie *Urocissa ornata* ENDEMIC

Three Sinharaja Forest Reserve including two well away from the research centre.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Widespread and extremely common.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus*

Widespread and fairly common. Formerly part of the Large-billed Crow complex, Sri Lanka and peninsular Indian birds are now part of a three-way split as *C. culminatus*.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus mahrattarum*

Four at the Surrey tea estate stop, two Horton Plains and one Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. These grey-and-white birds are now separated by IOC from Great Tit.

Jerdon's Bushlark *Mirafra affinis*

Common in dry zone, seen well in the National Parks. A recent change in the taxonomy of *Mirafra* bushlarks resulted in this taxon being split from the Rufous-winged or Bengal Bushlark *M. assamica*.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark *Eremopterix grisea*

Eight at Kalametiya Sanctuary and six at Yala National Park.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Our first, a high flying singing bird at Udawalawe NP, was followed by more confiding roadside birds at Bundala and Yala National Parks.

Black-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* ENDEMIC

Singles at Kithulgala Forest Reserve, three at Sinharaja Forest Reserve and singles at Sigiriya.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Common and widespread.

Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus* ENDEMIC

One Victoria Park and nine Horton Plains.

White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus insulae*

Ones and twos at Blue Magpie Lodge, Yala NP, Surrey tea estate and Sigiriya.

Yellow-browed Bulbul *Iole indica guglielmi*

Several Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserve and Sigiriya.

Square-tailed Bulbul *Hypsipetes ganeesa humei*

Common Kithulgala Forest Reserve and Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Noted on seven dates, with large flocks seen in and around the National Parks and Tissamaharama Tanks.

Hill Swallow *Hirundo domicola*

At least one in the misty conditions at Horton Plains, with three more at Pattipola Railway station a short while later. Formerly included in Pacific Swallow *H. tahitica*, and restricted to Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats region of southern India.

Sri Lanka Swallow *Cecropis hyperythra* ENDEMIC

Easily seen around Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*

Heard and seen at Kithulgala, Sinharaja, Victoria Park and Sigiriya.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

Two Sigiriya.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus meridionalis*

At least six seen and heard at Bundala National Park. Sometimes called Indian Reed Warbler.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Six plus at Udawalawe NP with another at Victoria Park.

Sri Lanka Bush Warbler *Elaphrornis palliseri* ENDEMIC

At least two Horton Plains.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Common in the dry zone, also noted at Horton Plains.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii pectoralis*

Singles Udawalawe, Surrey Tea Estate and Sigiriya.

Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica valida*

Single at Sigiriya

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis brevicauda*

Up to four seen at Udawalawe National Park, with one also noted near the hotel at Tissamaharama.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata insularis*

Commonest Prinia, seen at all the National Parks, around Tissamaharama and Sigiriya.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Widespread, noted virtually daily. Endemic subspecies *O. s. sutorius* occurs in the lowlands and *O. s. fernandornis* in the hills.

Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus melanurus* ENDEMIC

Three at Sinharaja Forest Reserve and singles at Surrey Tea estate and Horton Plains.

Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra*

Three were seen well at The Blue Magpie Lodge, with others seen at Udawalawe and Bundala National Parks.

Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps*

Two Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Brown-capped Babbler *Pellorneum fuscicapillum* ENDEMIC

At least three seen extremely well at Udewattekele Forest Reserve.

Orange-billed Babbler *Turdoides rufescens* ENDEMIC

Up to six at Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserves.

Yellow-billed Babbler *Turdoides affinis taprobanus*

Common and repeatedly seen. Endemic subspecies *T. a. taprobanus* is restricted to Sri Lanka where it occurs from sea level to the highest mountains.

Ashy-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax cinereifrons* ENDEMIC

One possibly two at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

One at Bundala National Park.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense nasalis*

Two again seen well at Udawalawe National Park.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosa egregia*

Seen throughout the trip.

Sri Lanka White-eye *Zosterops ceylonensis* ENDEMIC

Our first was at Sinharaja, with others at Victoria Park and Horton Plains.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*

Only one seen at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Sri Lanka Hill Myna *Gracula ptilogenys* ENDEMIC

Up to six Sinharaja Forest Reserve, with around twenty the following morning at the Spurfowl site.

Southern Hill Myna *Gracula indica*

Two briefly at Sinharaja Forest Reserve, with at least four showy birds at Peradeniya Botanical Gardens

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis melanosturnus*

Noisy, widespread and abundant.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum*

Four were seen well at Yala National Park.

White-faced Starling *Sturnornis albofrontalis* ENDEMIC

Two Sinharaja Forest Reserve

Pied Thrush *Geokichla wardii*

For such a secretive species we were treated to amazing views, with four males and a female seen on our first visit to Victoria Park and three males on our second, these latter birds all in the same bush!

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina citrina*

Two on 20th and three on 21st in the grounds of our hotel at Sigiriya.

Spot-winged Thrush *Geokichla spiloptera* ENDEMIC

Up to four Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 11th and 12th.

Sri Lanka Thrush *Zoothera imbricata*

Two briefly at Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Formerly treated as race of Scaly Thrush *Z. dauma*.

Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus kinnisii*

Two roadside birds surprised us mid morning at Horton Plains. Birds in Sri Lanka are of the endemic subspecies *T. s. kinnisii* and may warrant specific status.

Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata leucoptera*

Easily seen at the National Parks in the south with several seen at Sigiriya.

Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis*

Widespread and recorded daily.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus leggei*

Three Udewattekele Forest Reserve and one Sigiriya.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

Ones and twos at Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserves, Tissamaharama, Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and Sigiriya. A winter visitor from northern Asia.

Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*

Ones and twos Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserves.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni*

Up to six including some very smart male birds at Kithulgala Forest Reserve, Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and Sigiriya.

Dull-blue Flycatcher *Eumyias sordida* ENDEMIC

One at the Surrey Tea Estate, four Horton Plains and one Victoria Park.

Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*

A female at the Spurfowl site at Sinharaja and another at Victoria Park. This species is a winter visitor to Sri Lanka from the forests of the Himalayas and western China.

Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush *Myophonus blighi* ENDEMIC

After a degree of effort a pair were seen at Horton Plains.

Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra*

One glimpsed and heard on both visits to Victoria Park, no one could accuse us of not trying! This species breeds in the northwestern Himalayas centred on Kashmir, and winters exclusively in the highlands of Sri Lanka.

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata atrata*

Two plus Nuwara Eliya and Horton Plains.

Jerdon's Leafbird *Chloropsis jerdoni*

Instructive views of pairs at Tissamaharama tank and Sigiriya. Now treated as a distinct species, separate from Blue-winged Leafbird.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*

Two adults and two juveniles at Sinharaja, pairs at Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and Sigiriya.

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*

One at Sinharaja.

Legge's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens* ENDEMIC

Several Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserves.

Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonensis*

Seen regularly at Sinharaja and during our time in the South.

Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*

Fairly common, seen virtually daily.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

A few seen in the south and Sigiriya.

Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenia lotenia*

Our first unfortunately were young birds discovered by a White-throated Kingfisher! Others seen at Embilipitiya, Surrey Tea estate, Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and Sigiriya.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Several in the highlands, largely around villages as would be expected. Treated by some as a distinct species, Indian Sparrow *Passer indicus*.

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*

A male at Tissamaharama tank.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Up to fourteen Tissamaharama tank.

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Two at Yala National Park.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Seen daily around Kithulgala and Sinharaja, with several others noted at Yala National Park.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

Eight dates, throughout the tour.

Black-throated Munia *Lonchura kelaarti*

Maximum of four, Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserves and Tissamaharama tank.

Tricoloured Munia *Lonchura malacca*

Common in the south and Sigiriya – also known as Black-headed Munia.

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*

At least six Victoria Park and two Udewattekele Forest Reserve.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

One male Grey-headed Wagtail Udewalawe National Park and a few unassigned *flava* types Bundala National Park and Tissamaharama tank.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Heard and seen regularly throughout the trip.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

A trackside bird at Udewalawe was seen well by half the group and unfortunately only briefly by the rest.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus malayanus*

Fairly common where found.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

A calling, instructive individual at Kalametiya Sanctuary.

MAMMALS

Black-naped Hare *Lepus nigricollis*

Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel *Rafula macroura*

Layard's Palm Squirrel *Funambulus layardi*

Indian Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmaru*

Black Rat *Rattus rattus*

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*

Leopard *Panthera pardus*

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*
 Tufted Grey Langur *Semnopithecus priam thersites*
 Purple-faced Leaf Monkey *Presbytis vetulus vetulus*
 Bear Monkey *Presbytis vetulus senex*
 Toque Macaque *Macaca sinica*
 Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*
 Sambar *Cervus unicolor*
 Spotted Deer [Chital] *Axis axis*
 Sri Lankan spotted chevrotain (Mouse Deer), *Moschiola meminna*
 Water Buffalo *Bubalus bubalis*
 Asian (aka Sri Lankan) Elephant *Elephas maximus maximus*

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris*
 Southern House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*
 Rat Snake *Ptyas mucosa*
 Bronze-backed Tree Snake *Dendrelaphis tristis*
 Green Garden Lizard *Calotes calotes*
 Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*
 Sri Lankan Kangaroo Lizard *Otocryptis wiegmanni*
 Common Indian (Bengal) Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*
 Water Monitor *Varanus salvator*
 Indian Black Turtle (Indian Pond Terrapin) *Melanochelys trijuga*
 Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata*

BUTTERFLIES

Glassy Tiger *Parantica aglea*
 Blue Glassy Tiger *Danaus similes*
 Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*
 Common Tiger *Danaus genutia*
 Great Crow *Euploea phaenareta*
 Common Indian Crow *Euploea core*
 Sri Lanka Tree Nymph *Idea iasonia*
 Common Evening Brown *Melanitis leda ismene*
 Glad-eyed Bush Brown *Nissanga patnia junonia*
 White Four-ring *Ypthima ceylonica*
 Common Palmfly *Elymnias hypermnestra fraternal*
 Common Bush Brown *Mycalesis perseus typhlus*
 Common Leopard *Phalanta phalanta*
 Tamil Yeoman *Cirrochroa thais lanka*
 Grey Pansy *Junonia atlites*
 Chestnut-streaked Sailor *Neptis jumbah nalanda*
 Common Lascar *Pantoporia hordonia sinuata*
 Commander *Moduza procris calidasa*
 Clipper *Parthenos sylvia*
 Red-spot Duke *Dophla evelina evelina*
 Baron *Euthalia aconthea vasanta*
 Common Lineblue *Prosotas nora ardates*
 Common Cerulean *Jamides celeno tissama*
 Indian Cupid *Everes lacturnus*
 Monkey Puzzle *Rathinda amor*
 Angled Pierrot *Caleta decidia*
 Common Pierrot *Castalius rosimon*
 Common Jezebel *Delias eucharis*
 Lesser Albatross *Appias paulina*

Large Salmon Arab *Colitis fausta fulva*
Dark Wanderer *Pareronia ceylanica ceylanica*
Lemon Emigrant *Catopsilia pomona*
Psyche *Leptosia nina*
Common Grass Yellow *Eurema hecabe*
Three-spot Grass yellow *Eurema blanda silhetana*
Common Bluebottle *Graphium sarpedon teredon*
Blue Mormon *Papilio polymnestor*
Red Helen *Papilo helenus mooreanus*
Lime Butterfly *Papilio demoleus demoleus*
Common Rose *Pachliopta aristolochiae*
Crimson Rose *Pachliopta hector*
Common Birdwing *Triodes darsius*
Common Banded Demon *Notocrypta paralysos alysia*

DRAGONFLIES

Variegated Flutterer *Rhyothemis variegata variegata*
Spine-legged Redbolt *Rhodothemis rufa*
Pied Parasol *Neurothemis tullia*
Common Bluet *Ischnura senegalensis*
Yellow Waxtail *Ceriagrion coromandelianum*

OTHER TAXA

Northern Golden Orb Weaver aka Giant Golden Orb Weaver aka Giant Wood Spider *Nephila pilipes*