



INDIA: WESTERN GHATS AND NILGIRI ENDEMICS SET DEPARTURE TRIP REPORT

12 - 25 JANUARY 2020

By Dylan Vasapolli



Malabar Trogon was one of the trip's main targets and showed well on a number of occasions.

Overview

This two-week set-departure tour takes in the best of southern Indian birding and gives one access to nearly all of the Western Ghats endemics. Beginning in Bangalore the tour gradually moves southward, first to Mysore and the excellent Mudumalai area, and, following some time here, to the high-elevation town of Ooty, where a number of prized endemics await in the Nilgiri Mountains. Continuing on our southward trajectory we move across the Palghat Gap into the Anaimalai Hills to the south, which have their own suite of endemics, and we focus our time on birding around Topslip, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, and the town of Munnar. The tour then progresses to the Kerala coast, where our remaining days are spent birding arguably *the* best birding area in southern India, Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, before the tour comes to an end in Kochi.



*The Critically Endangered (IUCN) **White-rumped Vulture** is perhaps best sought in southern India.*

This tour would see a small group joining, with only two participants, Danny and Ira. The tour went smoothly, with little interruptions from the weather; however, the Pongal festival did prevent us from gaining entry into several areas, although fortunately in the end this didn't cost us any particular bird species. The birding was extremely successful, and we did very well throughout the tour, finding almost all of the possible Western Ghats endemics and our targets generally, as evidenced by our commendable trip list, totaling over 270 species. Some of the highlights included the likes of **Painted Bush Quail**, **Red Spurfowl**, **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon**, **Great Eared Nightjar**, **Sri Lanka Frogmouth**, **Sri Lanka Bay Owl**, **Indian Pitta**, **Malabar Barbet**, **White-bellied Treepie**, **Malabar Trogon**, **White-bellied Minivet**, **Black-and-orange** and **Nilgiri Flycatchers**, **Indian Blue**, **White-bellied Blue**, and **Nilgiri Blue Robins**, **Nilgiri Thrush**, **Nilgiri** and **Palani**

Laughingthrushes, Nilgiri Pipit, and many more. Seeing a large flock of some 50+ of both the Critically Endangered (IUCN) **Indian** and **White-rumped Vultures** was a major privilege and one of the ultimate highlights, as was our great run on various nocturnal birds, noting all of the possible nightjars and almost all of the possible owls.

Mammals weren't to be forgotten, and we found the bulk of the expected species, which included **Chital** (Spotted Deer), **Sambar**, **Bonnet Macaque**, and **Nilgiri Langur**, with one of the highlights being a few separate sightings of **Asian Elephants**. Species lists can be found at the end of this report.

Detailed Report

Day 1, January 12, 2020. Arrival in Bangalore and transfer to Mysore, birding en-route

Danny arrived yesterday evening, while Ira had clocked in earlier in the morning, and at 6 a.m. we had all convened at our hotel and were loaded up in the car, ready to begin. It took a little while to negotiate the mega-city of Bangalore, but we arrived at our first birding site, the Ramanagara Ramdevara Betta Vulture Sanctuary, in good time. We immediately set off to a good vantage point to wait for the vultures (Indian and Egyptian Vultures – which are the major targets here) to begin moving about. It was still a little hazy in the early stages, and not much was moving, but a patient vigil eventually began to pay off as birds started becoming active. As if on cue two **Egyptian Vultures** came into view and spent a short while flying around just above us, while a number of other raptors were also visible – **Black**, **Brahminy**, **Black-winged Kites**, **Besra**, **Oriental Honey Buzzard**, and **Booted Eagle** were all noted, along with two **Woolly-necked Storks**. Despite our patience we were to luck out with the Indian Vulture, though. While waiting we enjoyed many other species in the surrounding area, top of which was the scarce and localized **Yellow-throated Bulbul**, which showed well in the end, along with **Laughing** and **Spotted Doves**, our first individual of the endemic **White-cheeked Barbet**, **Indian Golden Oriole**, **Common Woodshrike**, **Long-tailed Shrike**, **Jerdon's Bush Lark**, **Ashy Prinia**, **Dusky Crag Martin**, **Indian Robin**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**, **Purple-rumped** and **Purple Sunbirds**, and an assortment of small seedeaters including **Red Avadavat**, **Indian Silverbill**, and **Scaly-breasted Munia**. After this great start we continued toward the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, where we undertook a boat ride on the Kavery River to see all the nesting waterbirds. Boat rides are usually always excellent, and this one was certainly no different, giving us excellent looks and photo opportunities at all the various species present. These included **Great Stone-curlew** (Thick-knee), **Red-wattled Lapwing**, **Asian Openbill**, **Painted Stork**, **Oriental Darter**, **Indian** and **Little Cormorants**, **Spot-billed Pelican**, **Purple** and **Grey Herons**, and **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Great**, **Little**, and **Intermediate Egrets**, **Black-headed** and **Red-naped Ibises**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, and **White-throated Kingfisher**. A number of **Muggers** (Marsh Crocodiles) were also in evidence along the river. The surrounding scrub and bushes held a few other species, which included **Indian Grey Hornbill**, **Common Iora**, **White-spotted** (Spot-breasted) **Fantail**, **Cinereous Tit**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**, and **Pale-billed Flowerpecker**.

We had a late lunch before checking into our hotel in Mysore, where we relaxed for a short while before venturing out once again for the remainder of the day. We called in at the nearby Kukkarahalli Lake, where we birded parts of this large dam's shoreline. There were a number of

similar waterbirds to those we had seen at Ranganathittu earlier in the day, nesting here as well (albeit much more distantly), but we also picked up a few different species such as **Indian Spot-billed Duck**, **Greater Coucal**, **Grey-headed Swamphen**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Common Sandpiper**, and **Common Kingfisher**, while the surrounding trees and scrub played host to **Green** and **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters**, **Coppersmith Barbet**, **Rose-ringed Parakeet**, **Common Tailorbird**, **Blyth's Reed Warbler**, **Jungle Myna**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**, and **Purple-rumped Sunbird**. We ended a great first day with a wonderful meal.



*The attractive **Painted Stork** showed well at Ranganathittu.*

Day 2, January 13, 2020. Transfer from Mysore to Masinagudi, birding en-route.

We had a light travel day, transiting to Masinagudi in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve area, which plays host to a number of southern Indian specialties. Following breakfast we checked out and began the drive to Masinagudi, where we eventually arrived for lunch. We had a number of stops along the way, which included a few dams and some dry roadside scrub and fields, which produced a fine array of species. The top birds seen along the way were a small flock of **Bar-headed Geese**, **Woolly-necked Stork**, **Asian Openbill**, **Spot-billed Pelican**, **Red-naped** and **Glossy Ibises**, **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **Indian Spotted Eagle**, **Shikra**, **Besra**, **Green Bee-eater**, **Indian Golden Oriole**, **Long-tailed Shrike**, **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark**, **Jerdon's Bush Lark**, **Pied Bush Chat**, **Booted Warbler**, **Yellow-billed Babbler**, and **Red Avadavat** among many others. Following our arrival and lunch at our stunning lodge we had a brief siesta before venturing out on an afternoon walk around the property and the nearby vicinity. Although afternoon birding can sometimes be a bit on the slower side, we were fortunately privy to an action-packed afternoon, filled with many birds and some glorious sightings. We began things with the likes of **Orange Minivet**, **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**, and **Greenish Warbler** before we

added a whole suite of new woodpeckers in quick succession, **Rufous Woodpecker**, **Greater** and **Black-rumped Flamebacks**, **Lesser Yellownape**, and **Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**, followed by a suite of new **Drongos**, namely **Bronzed**, **Ashy**, the spectacular **Greater Racket-tailed**, and **White-bellied**, all also in a rapid sequence. We spent a while admiring some of the glorious **Plum-headed Parakeets** and picked up a few other species such as **Bay-backed Shrike**, **Jungle Babbler**, **White-browed Bulbul**, **Golden-fronted Leafbird**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Brahminy Starling**, and **Common Rosefinch** among others, before ending the day in a blaze of glory, finding a stunning **Changeable Hawk-Eagle** that perched for ages, giving us excellent views, along with a pair of the sought **Indian Nuthatches**. We enjoyed our first **Chital** (Spotted Deer) along with **Sambar**, the huge **Indian** (Malabar) **Giant Squirrel**, our first of many **Bonnet Macaques**, the large **Black-footed Gray Langur**, **Wild Boar**, and **Indian Grey Mongoose** on the mammalian side. Following a great day we retired to a wonderful meal, following which we took a brief night walk, which produced a stunning and confiding **Brown Fish Owl**! We settled in for the evening, high with anticipation for what the following day would hold.



*We had a wonderful encounter with a confiding **Brown Fish Owl**.*

Day 3, January 14, 2020. Birding Masinagudi and surroundings

We had a full day at our disposal to bird the diverse area around Masinagudi and set off into the nearby dry-scrub forests, where we'd begin the day. We attempted to track down the localized and rare **White-bellied Minivet**, but were somewhat hampered by unusual thick fog, which kept the visibility down and made this a tall order. We spent a long while working all the main haunts for this species, but sadly came up empty-handed, although we did have a wide array of other species to keep us entertained during our search. These included our first **Indian Peafowl**, **Grey Francolin**, the regional endemic **Grey Junglefowl**, **Asian Koel**, **Crested Treeswift**, **White-**

cheeked Barbet, Small Minivet, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, White-browed Fantail, Brown and Bay-backed Shrikes, Grey-breasted Prinia, White-browed Bulbul, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Indian White-eye, Yellow-billed Babbler, and Chestnut-tailed Starling among others. We called a halt to the minivet search and instead turned our efforts to **Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl**, which was supposed to be on a nest in the area. We set off on a short walk to the nesting area and soon afterwards were reveling in views of this absolutely majestic owl, perched on its nest in a hole in a tree. Having had our fill of the owl we turned our attention to some of the other birds in the area and picked up many more exciting species, including **Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**, **Spotted Owlet**, our first endemic **Blue-winged (Malabar) Parakeet**, **Large Cuckooshrike**, **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**, **Indian Scimitar Babbler**, **Puff-throated Babbler**, and **Yellow-throated Sparrow**. With smiles all around we decided to give the **White-bellied Minivet** another try, and sure enough we struck gold when we picked up a pair perched quietly low to the ground, right next to the road. We had glorious views of this difficult bird before continuing onward and picking up a large number of vultures in the sky. We headed to an area where we could get out of the car, and working through the large flock showed the bulk to be **Indian Vultures**, but there were a few **White-rumped Vultures** in between. It was a real privilege to see these Critically Endangered (IUCN) birds. A soaring **Indian Spotted Eagle** was the last bird of note we found before calling it a morning, and heading back to our lodge.



*The scarce **White-bellied Minivet** eventually showed.*

Having been cooped up in a car for most of the morning we opted to take a short walk around the lodge grounds to stretch the legs, and, although it was on the quiet side, we did well to pick up many of the same species we had seen yesterday afternoon, along with a stunning low-flying **Black Eagle**. We took a rest over the hottest part of the day and headed out later in the afternoon to some more open habitats, where we tried for a few of our outstanding targets. First up was **Malabar**

Lark, and we found an individual with minimal effort, which showed well, and present in the same area were **Yellow-wattled Lapwing**, **Blyth's Reed** and **Booted Warblers**, **Yellow-eyed Babbler**, **Indian Silverbill**, **Scaly-breasted Munia**, and several **Paddyfield Pipits**. We headed to another area to search for **White-naped Woodpecker**, but despite working the area extensively, the closest we came was hearing a distant bird call for a bit. However, one of the surprises of the day came while we were trying for the woodpecker, when an **Indian Pitta** hopped to the edge of the road right in front us. Unfortunately, only a few of us managed to see it before it scurried off back into the thick brush, never to be seen again. We didn't have to wait long, however, as we picked up another individual perched quietly in the open at the edge of some thick brush, which showed well for all of us. Any day is a good day with a pitta in it! We had a quick break for some coffee and cookies before loading up again and heading off, this time on a night drive. We spent a long while working various areas, and our time was rewarded with stunning, close views of **Indian**, **Savanna**, and **Jungle Nightjars**, while **Jerdon's Nightjar** only showed briefly and **Oriental Scops Owl** was only heard. On the mammalian side vast numbers of **Indian Hares** kept us company, but, try as we might, we just couldn't find anything else except a few **Indian Chameleons**. We eventually called it a day and retired for a late dinner following a good and successful day out in the field.

Day 4, January 15, 2020. Birding Masinagudi and transfer to Ooty

We had a short transfer to the old colonial hill station of Ooty and spent our morning trying to clean up on some of the species we had missed yesterday – notably **White-naped Woodpecker** and **Jungle Bush Quail**. We had woken to another morning of dense fog, which fortunately cleared much earlier than yesterday and didn't hamper us too much as we set about tracking down our targets. It was a fairly difficult start, not having any luck, but we transferred to another area and immediately picked up some vocal **White-naped Woodpeckers**. But we had to suffer through a few tense moments as we only picked up the birds in flight as they moved about almost continuously, but they soon settled down, and we enjoyed lengthy scope studies of these scarce woodpeckers, with a few of the similar **Black-rumped Flameback** present nearby, allowing for a great comparison. **Jungle Bush Quail** was proving difficult to find, and we had all but given up, having searched many fields and open areas, when we arrived at our last field in a village and somehow struck gold, first picking up on some calling birds and then seeing a group of them scuttling between bushes. A few local dogs were around, noticed the birds, charged right into the bushes, and flushed a fairly large flock (of around 12 birds) from the brush – we had good flight views rather fortuitously. During our early-morning birding we also picked up a number of other birds, some of which included **Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**, **Yellow-wattled Lapwing**, **Crested Honey Buzzard**, **Plum-headed** and **Blue-winged** (Malabar) **Parakeets**, **White-browed Fantail**, **Bay-backed Shrike**, **Jerdon's Bush Lark**, **Booted Warbler**, **Indian Nuthatch**, **Pale-billed Flowerpecker**, and **Jerdon's Leafbird**. We eventually called in for breakfast, after which we gathered our things, checked out of our comfortable lodge, and pressed on to Ooty.

We wound our way upward through 36-odd switchbacks and soon found ourselves in this high-altitude town and checked into our grand hotel before taking a break. Later we headed out for the afternoon and spent it birding various sites around Ooty. We did extremely well and had our main target, **Nilgiri Blue Robin**, in the bag at our first stop. It took a little while and some patience, but after having had only a few glimpses we were rewarded with good views of this skulking and highly localized bird. **Black-and-orange Flycatcher** was less cooperative and frustrated us throughout the afternoon, remaining a heard-only bird. The forested areas were relatively quiet, but the few birds we saw included **White-spotted Fantail**, **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**, **Greenish Warbler**, **Nilgiri Flowerpecker**, and **Common Rosefinch**. Then a dam livened things up with **Garganey**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Indian Spot-billed Duck**, and **Northern Pintail** in a large raft, while **Common** and **Green Sandpipers**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, and **White-throated Kingfisher** patrolled the edges. A group of **Nilgiri Langurs** was seen on the mammalian side. With the sun going down we retired for the evening.



The prized Nilgiri Blue Robin is one of the denizens of the Ooty area.

Day 5, January 16, 2020. Birding Ooty and transfer to Sethumadai

Following a good breakfast we began our morning with a visit to the nearby Doddabetta Peak, hoping to beat the crowds. This peak is the highest in the Nilgiri Mountains, rising to over 2600 meters (8530 feet) above sea level. We enjoyed birding the area for a short while before it started to get a bit too busy, so we headed farther down the mountain to some quieter areas. We did extremely well this morning and on our birding sites enjoyed the likes of **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon**, **Hill Swallow**, **Square-tailed Bulbul**, **Tickell's Leaf Warbler**, **Nilgiri Laughingthrush**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**, and both the endemic Nilgiri and **Black-and-orange Flycatchers**, among others. We then transferred to Kotagiri, where we tried to get into one of the sholas (patches of

stunted tropical montane forest), but due to the ongoing Pongal festival this area was unfortunately closed. So we continued birding in some of the outskirts of the town. The area was a bit on the quiet side, as the time was approaching midday, but we did find species such as **Grey Junglefowl**, **White-spotted Fantail**, **Indian Scimitar Babbler**, and **Nilgiri Flowerpecker**, along with flybys from **Black** and **Booted Eagles** and **Shikra**, while **Tytler's Leaf Warbler** frustrated us by calling incessantly from a tree a short way up the slope from us, but despite our best efforts it remained unseen. We eventually left the highlands and made our way to the lowlands, where we crossed the Palghat Gap and completed our long journey to the Sethumadai area, where we arrived in the late afternoon, eagerly looking forward to exploring the Topslip area the following day. A walk around the lodge after checking in was very quiet, but we did enjoy a small family of **Spotted Owlets**.

Day 6, January 17, 2020. Birding Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

Following an early breakfast we set off to Topslip in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve, where we planned to spend the morning birding. A brief wait at the entrance gate while checking in gave us a family of **Large Grey Babblers**, along with **Common Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Plain Prinia**, and **Loten's Sunbird**. Before long we were on our way, but sadly, on arrival at Topslip, we learned what they had failed to tell us at the gate, namely that due to the ongoing Pongal festival all park activities were suspended for the day, meaning that we couldn't walk around on the trails. We headed over to the nearby Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (which is effectively the same reserve, except just across the border in Kerala rather than in Tamil Nadu) to try our luck, but since everyone had been turned away from Anamalai and had gone to Parambikulam there were no guides available for any activities. We were resigned to birding from the car along the public access road, much to our dismay, but we made the most of the situation and very slowly drove around, stopping regularly. Our efforts were somewhat rewarded, and we enjoyed a wide array of species seen from the car, which far exceeded what we had expected to see. We did well, finding a number of Western Ghats endemics, such as **Grey-fronted Green Pigeon**, **Malabar Barbet**, **Malabar Grey Hornbill**, **Flame-throated** and **Yellow-browed Bulbuls**, **Rufous Babbler**, and **Malabar Whistling Thrush**. In addition to these specials we also saw a number of other species like **Indian Swiftlet**, **Black Eagle**, **Crested Goshawk**, **Brown-headed Barbet**, **Plum-headed** and **Blue-winged Parakeets**, **Ashy Woodswallow**, **Bronzed** and **Greater Racket-tailed Drongos**, **Brown-breasted Flycatcher**, and **Jerdon's Leafbird**. Satisfied with our efforts we returned to our lodge for lunch and some rest before heading out later in the afternoon to some nearby areas. Although it was still quite hot and humid there was quite a bit of bird activity, and we did well while exploring the woods along some of the canals running through the area. We picked up **Common Emerald Dove**, **Asian Koel**, **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**, **Black-rumped Flameback**, **Indian Golden** and **Black-hooded Orioles**, more **Ashy Woodswallows**, **Common Woodshrike**, **Indian Paradise Flycatcher**, **White-browed Bulbul**, **Chestnut-tailed Starling**, **Pale-billed** and **Nilgiri Flowerpeckers**, **Loten's Sunbird**, and **Grey Wagtail** before calling it a day. Following dinner we set out on a brief owling stint and were eventually rewarded with excellent views of a close **Indian Scops Owl** and a vocal pair of **Mottled Wood Owls** – a great way to end the day!

Day 7, January 18, 2020. Transfer to Munnar, birding Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary en-route

We were out early this morning, still smiling from our excellent end to the previous day, and made good progress to our first birding site, the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. We had a short wait before they opened, and then immediately set off on a walk through some of the drier, acacia-dominated sections of the sanctuary with some time along the river as well. It was an overcast morning, and the birdlife was absolutely brimming with activity. Over the course of our two-odd-hour walk we recorded over 80 species, showing the great diversity of this area. The open, scrubby areas produced **Asian Koel**, a brief **Grey-bellied Cuckoo** that left us wanting more, great looks at the handsome **Crested Treeswift**, perched **Crested Honey Buzzard** and **Changeable Hawk-Eagle**, **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**, **Brown-headed Barbet**, **Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** at long last, numbers of **Small Minivets**, **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**, **Bay-backed Shrike**, **Jungle Prinia**, **White-browed Bulbul**, **Tawny-bellied Babbler**, **Thick-billed** and **Nilgiri Flowerpeckers**, **Jerdon's Leafbird**, **White-rumped Munia**, and **Yellow-throated Sparrow**. **Banded Bay Cuckoo** and **Black-throated Munia** eluded us, though, and had to remain heard-only. The riverine scrub didn't exhibit as much activity, but we did well to pick up **Common Kingfisher**, **Black-hooded Oriole**, **Indian Paradise Flycatcher**, **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**, **Puff-throated Babbler**, **Brown-breasted Flycatcher**, **White-rumped Shama**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**, and **Asian Fairy-bluebird**. This is only a short list of some of the better species seen here, while the others were species we had seen many times on the trip already. We were able to add **Tufted Gray Langur** to our mammal list here as well. We slowly continued toward Munnar, and a brief roadside stop gave us calling **Red Spurfowl** and **Malabar Woodshrike**, but we had to be content with only hearing them before continuing. The road around Eravikulam National Park to Munnar was jam-packed and made for a slightly frustrating transit, as it took quite some time to negotiate around the cars and busses all parked on the roadside. Following a much-needed lunch we checked into our glorious lodge near Munnar and set out to explore the surrounding area for the remainder of the day. The small patches of forest that line the area were brimming with birds, much like in the morning, and we made slow progress just because there were too many birds to look at. A wonderful male **Indian Blue Robin** started things, parading around our lodge, before we picked up the shy **Dark-fronted Babbler**, a species which could soon find itself on the Western Ghats endemic list, **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**, **Greater Flameback**, **Yellow-browed** and **Square-tailed Bulbuls**, and **Black-and-orange Flycatcher**. A lovely pair of adult and juvenile **Bonelli's Eagles** gave us great views as they flew low overhead. Then we ended the day in a flurry of birds, finding the stunning **Blue-capped Rock Thrush** and **Southern Hill Myna**, and also enjoyed **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon**, **Blue-tailed Bee-eater**, **Malabar Barbet**, **Blue-winged Parakeet**, **Golden-fronted Leafbird**, and numbers of **Common Rosefinches**.



*The stunning **Indian Blue Robin** gave us wonderful views.*

Day 8, January 19, 2020. Birding Eravikulam National Park and Pothamedu View Point

Following an early breakfast we left our hotel and made our way to the Eravikulam National Park, wary of the crowds that would show due to it being a weekend and the last day the park would be open before it would be closed for a few months due to the Nilgiri Tahr's breeding season (which commences at this time). We had a little while to wait before the park opened and enjoyed some brief birding around the outside, but we were soon on our way by the shuttle busses to Rajamala. As we arrived, quite early, we decided to rather walk up to the top and try out hand at the grassland species before returning to the bus station, which is often a great stakeout for many species. We did well at the top, finding the scarce **Nilgiri Pipit** with minimal effort and enjoying prolonged scope views before finding a confiding **White-bellied Blue Robin** that showed well at length. But sadly Broad-tailed Grassbird remained absent. Some of the other species seen here during our brief presence included **Plain Prinia**, **Hill Swallow**, **Tickell's Leaf Warbler**, and **Nilgiri** and **Black-and-orange Flycatchers**. We then got a call that some of our other targets had been seen at the main stakeout and quickly made our way back down. We arrived only to be told that the Nilgiri Thrush that had just been seen had been chased away, but a short while later we were able to observe a stunning **Nilgiri Thrush** feeding quietly in the leaf litter. We had barely even had our fill of the thrush when a small family of the prized **Painted Bush Quails** strolled into sight, giving us excellent and prolonged views – what more could we ask for? During our time here we also picked up a number of other species, which included **Indian Scimitar Babbler**, **Palani Laughingthrush**, **Indian Blackbird**, another **White-bellied Blue Robin**, and **Malabar Whistling Thrush**, among others. Then we ended our time in the park and made our way back to the lodge. Just before leaving, however, we ran into a small family of **Asian Elephants** feeding next to the road, and we finally laid eyes on **Nilgiri Tahr** – the protection of which is the main objective of this reserve. Following a bit of a rest after lunch we headed out for the afternoon for

a walk around the Deshadan Mountain Resort, including the Pothamedu View Point. Bird activity, as it was yesterday, was high, and we enjoyed a wealth of birds on our walk, including finding some of our missing targets such as **Brown-cheeked Fulvetta**, **Verditer Flycatcher**, **Indian Black-lored Tit**, and **Crimson-backed Sunbird**. Other species we saw were **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon**, **Grey-fronted Green Pigeon**, **Malabar Barbet**, **Orange Minivet**, **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**, **Yellow-browed** and **Square-tailed Bulbuls**, **Tickell's Leaf Warbler**, **Palani Laughingthrush**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch**, **Indian Blackbird**, **Indian Blue Robin**, **Malabar Whistling Thrush**, and **Blue-capped Rock Thrush**, among others. At the end of a good day with a productive afternoon walk we retired for the evening.



*We had some great views of the sought-after **Painted Bush Quail**.*

Day 9, January 20, 2020. Birding Munnar and surroundings

We had another full day at our disposal around Munnar, but woke to cool and windy conditions. Following breakfast we set off to explore some areas different from those we had visited during the past few days. But with the poor weather conditions it was a slow morning. We eventually made our way to a river, and some sunshine there seemed to help, making the birds more active. We spent some time working this area before heading to Munnar to pick up a few things. Our morning was saved, however, with an incredible show of raptors, with a pair of **Black Eagles**, **Bonelli's Eagle**, **Crested Honey Buzzard**, **Common Buzzard**, and **Shikra** all moving above us at one point, while a **Peregrine Falcon** sat perched on a pylon nearby. Other species seen included **Indian Spot-billed Duck**, **Little Swift**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Common** and **White-throated Kingfishers**, **Dusky Crag Martin**, **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**, **Indian Scimitar Babbler**, **Palani Laughingthrush**, **Nilgiri Flycatcher**, **Malabar Whistling Thrush**, **Nilgiri Flowerpecker**, and **Common Rosefinch**. We took it easy over the midday period before resuming

birding later in the afternoon with a walk above our lodge and then to the Deshadan area. It was a quiet afternoon, and we had to work hard to pick up any birds, with the windy conditions not helping much. We persisted until the early evening, picking up many of the same species that we had seen the last few days, with a few **Tytlers' Leaf Warblers** frustrating us by remaining out of sight, one of these sightings not being helped by a **Shikra** that came flying into the same tree from which the bird was calling. As soon as we arrived back at our lodge we got word that a **Large-scaled Pit Viper** had been seen nearby, and we headed off to see whether we could find it. It took a short while, but soon we were enjoying great looks at this handsome species, as it sat quietly on some branches near the road. We could hardly believe our luck! Following a good dinner we took a brief night walk, but the wind hampered us regarding the birds; so we did not find any owls or nightjars. But we did run into a stunning **Brown Palm Civet**, which gave us great and extended views.



*The stunning **Large-scaled Pit Viper** was a major highlight.*

Day 10, January 21, 2020. Transfer to Thattekad and birding the surroundings

Following breakfast we checked out and began the drive to the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary area, where we would be based for the next four nights. We made good progress, arrived in the late morning, and immediately set out for a short birding walk. Our chief quarry was **Streak-throated Woodpecker**, and after a bit of a search we eventually found an individual that showed well. While searching for this species we also picked up a few others, such as our first **Jungle Owlet**, **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Whiskered** and **River Terns**, a huge raft of **Lesser Whistling Ducks**, **Rufous Treepie**, **Black-hooded Oriole**, **Oriental Dollarbird**, **Plum-headed Parakeet**, **Ashy Woodswallow**, and **Southern Hill Myna**. What a great start to the day! We then headed over to our comfortable lodge, where we checked in and relaxed for a little while during the heat before

continued birding later in the afternoon. We visited a nearby site and enjoyed a glorious afternoon's birding, enjoying some of our most-wanted species. First was the prized **Malabar Trogon**, of which both male and female showed well, before a **Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo** flew in and stole the show for a while. **Malabar Grey Hornbill** and a noisy **Lesser Yellownappe** kept us distracted along with the likes of **Green Imperial Pigeon**, **Black-headed Cuckooshrike**, and **Brown-breasted Flycatcher**. A small group of **Malabar Woodshrikes** were next and showed well before we picked up the incredible **White-bellied Treepie** – this must be one of the best-looking Western Ghats endemics! It took a little while, but we finally got good views of one of the many **Orange-headed Thrushes** in the area, along with **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher**. We tried our luck at finding day-roosting owls, but sadly none were home. All was not lost, however, as we picked up two tiny **Gray Slender Lorises** roosting in a tree – incredible! It took some special maneuvering, but everyone eventually was able to enjoy good looks at this scarce nocturnal mammal – during the day! Another fabulous sighting! With the light fading we moved to a nearby open area, where we tried for night birds, and right on cue we picked up a vocal **Great Eared Nightjar**. Within no time we had spotted the bird, and enjoyed both perched, and flight views of this huge nightjar! Next was **Jerdon's Nightjar**; it took a little while to track down one of the calling individuals, but we too enjoyed excellent views at this nightjar, making up for somewhat poor views earlier during the trip. Then we called it a day and settled in for the evening after another good day in the field.



Malabar Grey Hornbill was common in the Thattekad area.

Day 11, January 22. Full day birding in and around Thattekad

Due to an audit of the sanctuary area by authorities (which meant no access for the public) we had to adapt our plans for the day and spend it outside the sanctuary area itself. We started the day at a similar area to where we had been the previous afternoon, and while we enjoyed some good

birding it was definitely a morning on the slower side. We tried again for roosting owls in the area and even got close, having fleeting looks at a **Brown Wood Owl** as it flew off, while the resident **Brown Hawk-Owl** showed exceptionally well, much to our pleasure. While working the area we also picked up **Grey Junglefowl**, **Grey-fronted Green Pigeon**, the strange **Heart-spotted Woodpecker**, **Streak-throated Woodpecker**, **Greater Flameback**, **Malabar Woodshrike**, **Bronzed Drongo**, the stunning **White-bellied Treepie** (which allowed much better views than the one we had seen previous day), **Malabar Starling**, **Southern Hill Myna**, **Orange-headed Thrush**, **Asian Brown Flycatcher**, **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher**, and **Asian Fairy-bluebird**. A midday walk around our lodge provided a few others, such as **Asian Openbill**, **Purple Heron**, a number of other egrets, **Common** and **White-throated Kingfishers**, a large flock of **Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters**, and **Green Warbler**. Again we took a break during the heat and headed out later in the day for our afternoon birding. We were sadly privy to an exceptionally slow afternoon, as it sometimes goes, with next to no birds calling and hardly any activity in general while we were working the area very hard. We did manage to see a few birds, though, which included **Green Imperial Pigeon**, **Malabar Grey Hornbill**, **Blue-winged Parakeet**, **White-bellied Treepie**, and **Golden-fronted Leafbird**. A good dinner followed after a hard day's toil.

Day 12, January 23, 2020. Full day birding in and around Thattekad

Following our tough day yesterday we went into the morning with a bit more optimism, and fortunately weren't disappointed – we had an excellent morning's birding, filled with a number of our outstanding targets. Our first stop was a vigil over a river for **Black Baza**, and after a patient wait we found three birds perched on some trees, giving good scope views! A surprise **Black-naped Oriole** was another highlight here before we searched through a huge flock of **Indian Swiftlets** that produced a few of the tricky **White-rumped Spinetails** among them, which we saw a few other times during the day as well. We then headed into the Urulanthanni area, where we spent the rest of the morning, slowly exploring the network of trails and roads that runs through the area. The birds never seemed to let up, starting with a large **White-bellied Woodpecker**, which showed just after we had stepped out of the car. A pair of the prized **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** was next and gave us splendid, open views, showcasing their comical shuffling, before we finally connected with the endemic **White-bellied Blue Flycatcher**. We spent a long time searching for the near-mythical Sri Lanka Bay Owl, but sadly returned empty-handed. But our efforts weren't for naught as we enjoyed a great many other birds, such as **Green Imperial Pigeon**, **Grey-fronted Green Pigeon**, **Crested Honey Buzzard**, **Brown Fish Owl**, stunning **Malabar Trogons**, **Heart-spotted Woodpecker**, **Greater Flameback**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Malabar Woodshrike**, **Black-naped Monarch**, **Flame-throated Bulbul**, **Dark-fronted Babbler**, **Malabar Starling**, **Rusty-tailed Flycatcher**, **Crimson-backed Sunbird**, **Little Spiderhunter**, and **Asian Fairy-bluebird**. We took our customary break over the sweltering midday period and resumed birding in the afternoon, with our efforts focused on two species, both of which had given us a bit of a run-around recently, **Grey-headed Bulbul** and **Red Spurfowl**. The prime area for the bulbul had seen a recent influx of Asian Elephants into the area, and the forest department weren't allowing many/any folks in, but we were able to get ourselves in for a quick go. What a move it proved, as a short way down the trail we finally found a **Grey-headed Bulbul** calling, and after a patient wait we had views of the skulking bulbul as it flitted about, perching occasionally in its bamboo thickets. **Red Spurfowl** would prove trickier, and it took the rest of the afternoon to connect with it, trying a number of sites, and eventually getting tipped off by another birding group of some birds feeding nearby –

we headed to the area, and fortunately a pair were still around and we reveled in finally laying eyes on this species. Other species seen during our afternoon session included **Common Hawk-Cuckoo**, **River Tern**, **Blue-tailed** and **Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters**, far better looks at **Black-naped Oriole**, **Dusky Crag Martin**, and **Flame-throated Bulbul**, among others. We settled in for the evening and enjoyed a wonderful dinner after another good day in the field.



We enjoyed excellent views of the strange Sri Lanka Frogmouth.

Day 13, January 24, 2020. Full day birding in and around Thattekad

Today was our last full day birding the area, and we still had a few targets to find. We started the day in Urulanthanni again. A few stops en-route eventually provided **Stork-billed Kingfisher**, which had somehow been missing from the trip until now, and we enjoyed further views of **River Tern**, **Great Cormorant**, **Crested Goshawk**, and **Ashy Woodswallow** as well. We then started walking, following a similar route to yesterday, and almost immediately found the massive **Blue-bearded Bee-eater**, perched in the open, before staking out a calling **Banded Bay Cuckoo**. We heard the cuckoo call for a long time before it gradually came closer, and we then picked it up flying into one the nearby trees and giving us great scope looks, at long last! We then headed off to try for some of the more difficult outstanding species, such as **Blue-eared Kingfisher** and **Sri Lanka Bay Owl**, and we struck gold when word of a **Sri Lanka Bay Owl** reached us. We headed a short distance up the road and into the woods and soon found ourselves face to face with this glorious and highly prized owl! We spent some time admiring this rare bird, reveling in our good fortune, before leaving the bird in peace and continuing on. A stop en-route back to the lodge gave us excellent looks at **White-rumped Spinetail**. Other birds seen over the course of the morning included a similar array to the species we saw yesterday, such as **Green Imperial Pigeon**, **Sri Lanka Frogmouth**, **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Indian Scops Owl**, **Brown Fish Owl**, **Greater**

Flameback, Malabar Woodshrike, Flame-throated Bulbul, Crimson-backed Sunbird, and Asian Fairy-bluebird, among others. We retired for a bit of a rest over the midday period, and following lunch we were whisked away to try for **Brown Wood Owl**, which was roosting nearby. Sadly, the wood owls were still as skittish as before, and we had to be content with flight views, while **Bronze-winged Jacana** was a bonus near the road. We resumed birding a bit later in the day, but with the humidity high it was slow going with little bird activity. We tried for some of the few species that were still outstanding, but our efforts went without reward. We did, however, manage to enjoy a few great species that we had seen many times before, such as **Asian Koel, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, and Malabar Grey Hornbill**, among others, before we retired to our local guide's home nearby for a quick rest and some of the local toddi (palm wine) before giving **Oriental Scops Owl** one more try in the evening. Right on cue at dusk we heard a few birds calling, but despite working the area for some time and getting close, with a bird calling from a line of trees in front of us, we just couldn't lay eyes on the birds and had to call it a day. We reminisced over our last dinner on what had been an incredibly successful tour.



The mythical Sri Lanka Bay Owl was one of the birds of the trip!

Day 14, January 25, 2020. Morning birding around Thattekad and departure

Our departure day had sadly arrived, but we still had the better part of the day available before we all departed in the late afternoon. Following an early breakfast we headed out to our stakeout over the river and settled in, awaiting what would be flying around. The activity was good, and during our vigil here we improved on our earlier views of **Black Baza** and found a **Malabar Pied Hornbill** perched distantly but offering good scope views, along with **Crested Honey Buzzard, River Tern, Pied and Stork-billed Kingfishers, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Black-naped Oriole, Large Cuckooshrike, and Malabar Starling**. **Mountain Imperial Pigeon** frustrated us

by calling from a concealed perch. We soon headed onward and called in at Urulanthanni once more for one final walk. We headed up to an open viewpoint, where we finally connected with **Mountain Imperial Pigeon** while also enjoying **Malabar Barbet**, **Grey-headed** and **Flame-throated Bulbuls**, **Asian Fairy-bluebird**, **Malabar Trogon**, and many more before having another try for Blue-eared Kingfisher. We were unsuccessful with this species, but great looks at the endemic **White-bellied Blue Flycatcher** were a good consolation prize! Following our good last morning we headed back to the lodge to pack our things, and following lunch we headed to the airport with a last few birding stops en route. We visited some wetlands and spent some time working them, as they were absolutely heaving with birds, dominated by large numbers of egrets, **Asian Openbills**, **Wood Sandpipers**, and **Western Yellow Wagtails**, and among them them we saw **Little Ringed Plover**, **Ruff**, **Common Greenshank**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, and a trio of **Stints**, namely **Temminck's**, **Little**, and a rarity in form of **Long-toed**. All too soon our time was up, however, and we headed to the airport, where the tour concluded and we all went our separate ways.



The stunning Nilgiri Flycatcher always adds a splash of color to the environment.

I just want to thank Danny and Ira for joining the tour and for being excellent clients that made the tour all the more enjoyable and the birding a delight! Overall we did have a successful tour, filled with far too many highlights to list, but some were finding the mythical Sri Lanka Bay Owl after a huge amount of effort and our impressive list of other owls, along with a host of difficult species such as White-bellied Minivet, Indian Pitta, Painted Bush Quail, and Nilgiri Thrush. Thanks must also go to our trusty local guide, Abilesh, whose knowledge of the area and route gave us the best chances at trying for all our targets, with nearly all of which we were successful. Looking forward to doing this again come 2021!

Bird List - Following IOC (10.1)

Birds 'heard only' are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen.

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following BirdLife International: CE = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.
India endemics are bolded.

Common name	Scientific name
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>
Jungle Bush Quail	<i>Perdica asiatica</i>
Painted Bush Quail	<i>Perdica erythrorhyncha</i>
Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>
Grey Junglefowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Frogmouths (Podargidae)	
Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
Nightjars (Caprimulgidae)	
Great Eared Nightjar	<i>Lyncornis macrotis</i>
Jungle Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>
Jerdon's Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i>
Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>
Savanna Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>
Treeswifts (Hemiprocnidae)	
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiproctes coronata</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>
White-rumped Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>
Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
Banded Bay Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>
Grey-bellied Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus dicruroides</i>
Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Nilgiri Wood Pigeon - VU	<i>Columba elphinstonii</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
Grey-fronted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron affinis</i>
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>
Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
Mountain Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula badia</i>
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
Grey-headed Swampen	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Stone-curlews, Thick-knees (Burhinidae)	
Great Stone-curlew	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Jacanas (Jacanidae)	
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
Woolly-necked Stork - VU	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Anhingas, Darters (Anhingidae)	
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Egyptian Vulture - EN	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
Black Baza	<i>Aviceda leuphotes</i>
White-rumped Vulture - CR	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>
Indian Vulture - CR	<i>Gyps indicus</i>
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>
Indian Spotted Eagle - VU	<i>Clanga hastata</i>
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
Crested Goshawk	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Barn Owls (Tytonidae)	
Sri Lanka Bay Owl	<i>Phodilus assimilis</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>
Oriental Scops Owl (H)	<i>Otus sunia</i>
Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>
Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
Mottled Wood Owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>
Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>
Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
Trogons (Trogonidae)	
Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
Hoopoes (Upupidae)	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Hornbills (Bucerotidae)	
Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
Malabar Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros griseus</i>
Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>
Rollers (Coraciidae)	
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx erithaca</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Bee-eaters (Meropidae)	
Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctyornis athertoni</i>
Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
Asian Barbets (Megalaimidae)	
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
White-cheeked Barbet	<i>Psilopogon viridis</i>
Malabar Barbet	<i>Psilopogon malabaricus</i>
Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Heart-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Hemicircus canente</i>
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus nanus</i>
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Leiopicus mahrattensis</i>
White-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus javensis</i>
Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
Streak-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
Greater Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus</i>
White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>
Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Old World Parrots (Psittaculidae)	
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
Blue-winged Parakeet	<i>Psittacula columboides</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Vernal Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>
Pittas (Pittidae)	
Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
Vangas & Allies (Vangidae)	
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
Malabar Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis sylvicola</i>
Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Woodswallows, Butcherbirds & Allies (Artamidae)	
Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
Ioras (Aegithinidae)	
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
Cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae)	
White-bellied Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus erythropygius</i>
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
Orange Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>
Black-headed Cuckooshrike	<i>Lalage melanoptera</i>
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>
Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>
Figbirds, Orioles, Turnagra (Oriolidae)	
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>
Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
Drongos (Dicruridae)	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
Fantails (Rhipiduridae)	
White-spotted Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albogularis</i>
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
Monarchs (Monarchidae)	
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
Indian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	

Common name	Scientific name
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
White-bellied Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta leucogastra</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>
Fairy Flycatchers (Stenostiridae)	
Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>
Indian Black-lored Tit	<i>Machlolophus aplonotus</i>
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
Malabar Lark	<i>Galerida malabarica</i>
Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)	
Grey-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus priocephalus</i>
Flame-throated Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus gularis</i>
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
Yellow-throated Bulbul - VU	<i>Pycnonotus xantholaemus</i>
White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
Square-tailed Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes ganeesa</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo domicola</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Dusky Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
Leaf Warblers & Allies (Phylloscopidae)	
Tytler's Leaf Warbler (H)	<i>Phylloscopus tytleri</i>
Tickell's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i>
Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
Large-billed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
Booted Warbler	<i>Iduna caligata</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
Babblers, Scimitar Babblers (Timaliidae)	
Indian Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>
Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
Fulvettas, Ground Babblers (Pellorneidae)	
Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>
Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
Laughingthrushes & Allies (Leiothrichidae)	
Nilgiri Laughingthrush - EN	<i>Montecincla cachinnans</i>
Palani Laughingthrush	<i>Montecincla fairbanki</i>
Large Grey Babbler	<i>Argya malcolmi</i>
Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Argya affinis</i>
Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>
Rufous Babbler	<i>Argya subrufa</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
Fairy-bluebirds (Irenidae)	
Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Nuthatches (Sittidae)	
Indian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornis (Sturnidae)	
Southern Hill Myna	<i>Gracula indica</i>
Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i>
Malabar Starling	<i>Sturnia blythii</i>
Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>
Nilgiri Thrush	<i>Zoothera neilgherriensis</i>
Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>
White-bellied Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis pallidipes</i>
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis rubeculoides</i>
Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassinus</i>
Nilgiri Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias albicaudatus</i>
Indian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora brunnea</i>
Nilgiri Blue Robin - EN	<i>Sholicola major</i>
White-bellied Blue Robin - VU	<i>Sholicola albiventris</i>
Malabar Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus horsfieldii</i>
Rusty-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula ruficauda</i>
Black-and-orange Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula nigrorufa</i>
Blue-capped Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola cinclorhyncha</i>
Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Leafbirds (Chloropseidae)	
Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
Flowerpeckers (Dicaeidae)	
Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
Nilgiri Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)	
Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>
Crimson-backed Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma minima</i>
Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
Loten's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>
Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Yellow-throated Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris xanthocollis</i>
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estrildidae)	
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
Indian Silverbill	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>
White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
Black-throated Munia (H)	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
Nilgiri Pipit - VU	<i>Anthus nilghiriensis</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>

Total seen	271
Total heard	3
Total recorded	274

Mammal List

Common name	Scientific name
Elephants (Elephantidae)	
Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
Lorises and Pottos (Lorisidae)	
Gray Slender Loris	<i>Loris lydekkerianus</i>
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)	
Bonnet Macaque	<i>Macaca radiata</i>
Black-footed Gray Langur	<i>Semnopithecus hypoleucos</i>
Tufted Gray Langur	<i>Semnopithecus priam</i>
Nilgiri Langur	<i>Trachypithecus johnii</i>
Squirrels and relatives (Sciuridae)	
Common Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
Dusky-striped Squirrel	<i>Funambulus sublineatus</i>
Indian Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa indica</i>
Rabbits and Hares (Leporidae)	
Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
Bats (Chiroptera)	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>
Civets, Genets, Linsangs and allies (Viverridae)	
Brown Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus jerdoni</i>
Mongoose and Fossa (Herpestidae)	
Indian Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
Hogs and Pigs (Suidae)	
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Deer, Elk and Moos (Cervidae)	
Chital	<i>Axis axis</i>
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>
Bovids (Bovidae)	
Nilgiri Tahr	<i>Nilgiritragus hylocrius</i>
Total	17

Reptile List

Common name	Scientific name
Crocodiles (Crocodylidae)	
Marsh Crocodile (Mugger)	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
Chameleons (Chamaeleonidae)	
Indian Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo zeylanicus</i>
Agamid lizards (Agamidae)	
Peninsular Rock Agama	<i>Psammophilus dorsalis</i>
Oriental Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
Southern Flying Lizard	<i>Draco dussumieri</i>
Vipers (Viperidae)	
Large-scaled Pit Viper	<i>Trimeresurus macrolepis</i>
Total	6