



**INDIA: THE NORTHEAST –  
SPECTACULAR BIRDS AND MAMMALS**

**27 FEBRUARY - 13 MARCH 2023**



*Temminck's Tragopan is one of our stunning target birds on this trip (photo Summer Wong).*

This small-group birding tour of northeast India visits some spectacular scenery in the eastern Himalayas and the floodplain of the mighty (and extremely lengthy) Brahmaputra River long before it joins the River Ganges in Bangladesh. The mountains and floodplains here are two of the most biologically diverse places in India, and our tour will focus on these areas.

After our arrival in New Delhi we will take a domestic flight (included in the tour cost) to the largest city in Assam, Guwahati, situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra River. From here we will head into the undisturbed wilderness of the Himalayan foothills of Nameri National Park. This area protects numerous species, and we will look for special birds including at least two that are classified as Endangered by IUCN, **Greater Adjutant** and **White-winged Duck** (a secretive forest duck). We will also search the area for the highly sought monotypic **Ibisbill**, one of three monotypic families of birds possible on this tour, the others being **Wallcreeper** and **Spotted Elachura**. Nameri also hosts many other interesting birds, such as **Great Hornbill**, **Wreathed Hornbill**, **Red-breasted Parakeet**, **Grey-headed Fish Eagle**, **Great Stone-curlew**, **River Tern**, **Small Pratincole**, **Bengal Bush Lark**, and **Sand Lark**.



*The monotypic **Ibisbill** is of great interest to bird family listers and all birders wanting to see a unique and interesting species.*

After our stop at Nameri we will climb into the incredibly beautiful mountains and spend almost a week birding within and around the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the best-known and highly regarded mountain birding sites in the whole of Asia. This is one of our favorite birding destinations in the world. The scenery, forests, and birding here are all spectacular, and we will be looking for some amazing birds such as **Temminck's Tragopan**, **Blyth's Tragopan**, **Blood Pheasant**, **Snow Partridge**, **Himalayan Monal**, **Spotted Elachura**, **Bugun Liocichla**, **Ward's Trogon**, **Beautiful Nuthatch**, **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**,



**Himalayan Cutia**, and **Fire-tailed Myzornis**, along with plenty more gorgeous laughingthrushes, parrotbills, rosefinches, barwings, and related species, with species such as **Spotted Laughingthrush**, **White-breasted Parrotbill**, and **Rusty-fronted Barwing** likely to be some of the highlights. The area is also great for babblers, of which we will seek out many, with **Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler** and **Bar-winged Wren-babbler** being on the opposite sides of the size spectrum. But there is so much more to this area than the brief highlight reel above!



*There are so many highlights when birding at Eaglenest; however, we are sure you will be impressed by the rather large and very pretty **Ward's Trogon**.*

Finally, and gradually, we will descend back down to the Assamese plains of the Brahmaputra, where we will continue our adventure, looking for some difficult yet highly prized species in and around the wondrous Kaziranga National Park, such as **Bengal Florican**, **Greater Adjutant**, **Lesser Adjutant**, **Blue-naped Pitta**, **Indian Grassbird**, **Swamp Francolin**, **Black-breasted Weaver**, **Finn's Weaver**, **Dusky Eagle-Owl**, **Black-necked Stork**, **Spot-billed Pelican**, and **Pallas's Fish Eagle**. Once we've finished here we will head back to Guwahati for our flight to New Delhi, where the tour will conclude.

This tour will also focus on finding some of the major mammals of the region, such as **Greater One-horned (Indian) Rhinoceros**, **Asian Elephant**, **Barasingha (Swamp Deer)**, **Gaur**, **Wild Water Buffalo**, **Indian Leopard**, and **Western Hoolock Gibbon**, along with plenty of more common and widespread species. With extreme luck we may even find **Arunachal Macaque**, **Red Panda**, or **Bengal Tiger**, either one sure to be yet another highlight on this wonderful wildlife-packed tour.

Immediately before this trip we have a short (four day) **Birding Tour India: The West – Forest Owlet Extension** for the Endangered (IUCN) **Forest Owlet**, a species considered extinct for

over 100 years before it was rediscovered in the mid-1990s, and just prior to that we also have our **Birding Tour India: The Northwest – Lions and Desert Birding in Gujarat** where we find some pretty special wildlife too. We can also easily offer you extensions at each location if you would like to prolong your stay in this exciting country and we offer a wide range of other Indian tours, shown **here**.

## Itinerary (15 days/14 nights)

### Day 1. Arrival in New Delhi

After your arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi you will be transferred to our hotel, where the rest of the day will be at your leisure, followed by a group welcome meal.

Overnight: New Delhi

### Day 2. New Delhi to Guwahati, transfer to Nameri National Park

Leaving New Delhi in the morning we will fly to Guwahati, the capital of the state of Assam, arriving there around noon. After leaving the airport we will most likely head straight to the local waste facility, where we should find the humongous (and exceedingly ugly) **Greater Adjutant** and **Lesser Adjutant** foraging/scavenging among the rubbish. After stopping here we will start our journey in earnest to Nameri, where we will likely arrive late in the afternoon, hopefully for some time birding in our accommodation grounds before dark, where we may find **Great Hornbill, Red-breasted Parakeet, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, and Oriental Scops Owl**.

Overnight: Nameri National Park

### Day 3. Nameri National Park

We will have a morning and afternoon birding session in Nameri National Park (also known as Nameri Tiger Reserve). Nameri is a gorgeous, undulating wilderness area in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas. A large proportion of the national park area consists of swamp forest interspersed with areas of open grassland split up by many river tributaries. Nameri is one of the best places in the world to find the rare, highly elusive, and Endangered (IUCN) **White-winged Duck**, and this will be one of our major objectives during our time here. There is also a small chance of seeing **Bengal Tiger** here, but there will be better chances for that later in the tour.

There are, however, numerous other great species possible, such as **Greater Adjutant, Great and Wreathed Hornbills, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Pied Falconet, Pied Harrier, Oriental Hobby, White-browed Piculet, Pale-chinned Blue Flycatcher, and Black-backed Forktail**. A boat ride along the river here might produce some highly sought species such as **Small Pratincole, Ibisbill, River Tern, River Lapwing, Great Stone-curlew, Sand Lark, Striated Grassbird**, and the huge **Crested Kingfisher**. We will make sure to try to find as many of these as possible during the day and during the following morning before leaving the area.

Overnight: Nameri National Park



*The shy, secretive, and rare **White-winged Duck** can be found in swampy forest areas in Nameri National Park.*

#### **Day 4. Nameri National Park to Dirang**

After a morning birding session in the Nameri National Park we will head toward Dirang. This part of India is one of the most diverse in the country due to the huge gain in elevation of the Eastern Himalayas in a relatively small area, e.g. sea-level to 7,000 meters (22,650 feet) in about 150 kilometers (93 miles). We will pass through some gorgeous scenery and a wide range of habitats (stopping along the way to look for the monotypic **Ibisbill**) as we make our way up to the 1,500 meters (5,259 feet) elevation zone. Over the course of our journey and the rest of the afternoon we may find **Rufous-bellied Eagle**, **Northern Goshawk**, **Pied Falconet**, **Hill Partridge**, **Golden-throated Barbet**, **Grey-chinned Minivet**, **Blue-fronted Robin**, **Little Forktail**, **Golden Bush Robin**, **Rufous-breasted Bush Robin**, **Green Cochoa**, **Purple Cochoa**, **Long-tailed Broadbill**, **Scaly Laughingthrush**, **Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler**, **Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Black-headed Shrike-babbler**, **Green Shrike-babbler**, **White-naped Yuhina**, **White-breasted Parrotbill**, **Pale-billed Parrotbill**, and **Sultan Tit**.

Overnight: Dirang

#### **Day 5. Birding the Sela Pass and Sangti Valley**

A very exciting and sure to be a memorable day will have us visiting a wide-range of habitats and elevations. After an early start we will head up to around 4,200 meters (14,108 feet) on the famous Sela Pass – one of the highest drivable mountain passes in all of the Himalayas. Here in the alpine meadows we will focus on some very special, highly sought, and seriously stunning montane species such as **Blood Pheasant**, **Snow Partridge**, **Himalayan Monal**, **Himalayan Vulture**, **Snow Pigeon**, **Grandala**, **Hodgson's Redstart**, **Alpine Accentor**, **Tibetan Serin**,



**Plain Mountain Finch, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch, Spotted Laughingthrush, Rufous-breasted Bush Robin, and White-browed Tit-warbler.**



*Grandala is a rather striking bird of the high-elevation zone (photo Summer Wong).*



*We will look for **Spotted Laughingthrush** during the tour.*

It is certain to be a memorable morning's birding, and the afternoon is sure to be just as good as we will visit the Sangti Valley at an altitude of around 1,500-1,600 meters (4,920-5,413 feet), where we will look for several equally exciting species as those possible during our morning birdwatching session, such as the unique and monotypic **Ibisbill**, the secretive **Black-tailed Crake**, and the uncommon **Long-billed Plover**. Other interesting species in the valley at this time of year include **Rosy Pipit**, **Olive-backed Pipit**, **Yellow-breasted Greenfinch**, **Brown Dipper**, the stunning **White-capped Redstart**, **Little Forktail**, and the second possible monotypic family, **Wallcreeper**. There is a good chance that the 'bird of the trip' may be found today, because the quality of birds on offer is so high! We will end the day in Dirang.

Overnight: Dirang



*Wallcreeper doing what it does best*

## Day 6. Mandala birding

We will spend the full day birding around Mandala. Target species are plentiful and may include one of the world's best-looking birds, **Temminck's Tragopan**. It is scarce here, but we will certainly be putting a great deal of effort into trying to find it. There will be plenty of other species in the forests here, such as **Blanford's Rosefinch**, **Bhutan, Black-faced**, and **Spotted Laughingthrushes**, **Gould's Shortwing**, **Fire-tailed Myzornis**, **White-collared** and **Grey-winged Blackbirds**, **Grey-headed Bullfinch**, **Crimson-breasted Woodpecker**, **Rufous-breasted** and **Maroon-backed Accentors**, **Hodgson's** and **White-throated Redstarts**, **Golden-naped Finch**, **Rufous-fronted Bushtit**, **Grey Crested Tit**, and **Spotted Nutcracker**. **Ward's Trogon** is also a scarce possibility here. We are sure to have another memorable day.

Overnight: Dirang



### Day 7. Dirang to Lama Camp

After breakfast we will bird our way between Mandala and Lama Camp, where we will spend the night at a fully serviced camp. Lama Camp is on the periphery of the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, a phenomenal area and one of the best birding locations in India and in fact in all of Asia. We will have a total of five days in and around this exciting sanctuary, which will allow us to fully explore the wide altitudinal range and resultant habitats and birdlife on offer here.

There is a wide range of species possible during the day. There is some overlap with the previous and following days, but there are plenty of new and exciting birds too. Some of the most thrilling birds may include **Blyth's Tragopan** and **Temminck's Tragopan** (two very impressive, but scarce and often shy birds) along with **Himalayan Bluetail**, **Blyth's Shrike-babbler**, **Brown-throated** and **Golden-breasted Fulvettas**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Stripe-throated Yuhina**, **Rusty-fronted** and **Streak-throated Barwings**, **Himalayan Thrush**, **Rufous-chinned** and **Grey-sided Laughingthrushes**, **Fulvous** and **Black-throated Parrotbills**, **Slender-billed** and **Streak-breasted Scimitar Babblers**, and **Green-tailed Sunbird**.

Overnight: Lama Camp



*The male **Himalayan Bluetail** is an incredible hit of color.*

### Days 8 - 10. Lama Camp to Bompu Birding Camp

We will leave Lama Camp and bird our way to Bompu Birding Camp at 1,940 meters (6,364 feet), where we will spend the next three nights at a fully serviced camp inside the wonderful Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. Due to the good access here we will be able to enjoy three full days' birding across a wide elevational range to maximize our chances for the most exciting species and mixed-flocks/bird-waves on offer here. Barwings, yuhinas,



laughingthrushes, and related species are likely to be evident, such as the recently discovered **Bugun Liocichla**, the more well-known **Red-faced Liocichla**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Fire-tailed Myzornis**, **Blue-winged Minla**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Silver-eared Mesia**, **Rusty-fronted** and **Streak-throated Barwings**, **Long-tailed** and **Beautiful Sibias**, **White-naped**, **Whiskered**, and **Rufous-vented Yuhinas**, **Golden-breasted Fulvetta**, and **Blue-winged**, **Bhutan**, and **Black-faced Laughingthrushes**. **Beautiful Nuthatch** and **Rusty-flanked Treecreeper** along with **Yellow-cheeked** and **Sultan Tits** are likely to be in the bird-waves. A range of parrotbills too could be on offer, with **Black-headed**, **Pale-billed** and **Brown Parrotbills** all possible. Some color and further quality might be provided by **Ward's Trogon**, **Red-headed Trogon**, **Yellow-billed Blue Magpie**, **Rufous-necked Hornbill**, and **Scarlet Finch**.



*Found only in the Eaglenest area, **Bugun Liocichla** is Critically Endangered (IUCN), was only discovered in 1995, and was first described in 2006.*

By spending a few days here we will be able to concentrate our efforts on some of the more secretive and skulking but highly rewarding species such as **Spotted Elachura** (a recent elevation to monotypic family status), **Gould's Shortwing**, **Grey Peacock-Pheasant**, **Chestnut-breasted Partridge**, **Hodgson's Frogmouth**, **Blyth's Kingfisher**, **Brown Wood Owl**, **Speckled Wood Pigeon**, **Darjeeling Woodpecker**, **Black-faced Warbler**, **Chestnut-headed Tesia**, **White-browed Bush Robin**, **Golden Bush Robin**, **Long-tailed** and **Himalayan Thrushes**, and another possible 'bird of the trip', the shy and difficult but totally worth-the-effort **Blyth's Tragopan**. Two mammals we will be looking for here are the very rare and both Endangered (IUCN) **Red Panda** and **Arunachal Macaque**; with luck we may find one or even both of these in the forests.

Overnight: [Bompu Birding Camp](#)



*Spotted Elachura* is sought-after, as it is in its own family, but it is also a serious skulker!

### Day 11. Bompou Birding Camp to Lama Camp

We will spend the day birding our way back from Bompou Birding Camp to Lama Camp, looking for the birds already listed above.

Overnight: Lama Camp

### Day 12. Lama Camp to Kaziranga National Park

Today we will start our descent from the mountains to the Assamese plains. Leaving Lama Camp we will drop down to the famous and huge Kaziranga National Park in central Assam, eventually crossing the mighty and equally famous Brahmaputra River. Indeed, the national park is the largest undisturbed area of the river's floodplain and a spectacular sight in its own right, stacked full of jaw-dropping wildlife. This is one area of India that is a 'must-visit' for any birder and wildlife lover. After our arrival we will spend the afternoon on safari (as game drives are called in India) in the national park, where we will try to get a head start on finding some of the many incredible birds and wildlife listed for day 13, such as the magnificent, pre-historic-looking **Greater One-horned (Indian) Rhinoceros** (this is the only place in the world where you can see this huge and incredibly impressive species reliably).

Overnight: Kaziranga National Park

### Day 13. Kaziranga National Park

Some very special birds are possible today, and we will primarily look for **Bengal Florican**, **Greater Adjutant**, **Blue-naped Pitta**, **Indian Grassbird**, **Swamp Francolin**, **Spot-billed**



**Pelican**, and **Pallas's Fish Eagle**. However, while looking for the above species (and the mammals referenced below) there are plenty of other birds for which we will keep an eye out as we make our way through various open grasslands and wetlands of the area, such as **Black-necked Stork**, **Painted Stork**, **Woolly-necked Stork**, **Black Stork**, **Asian Openbill**, **Cotton Pygmy Goose**, **Bar-headed Goose**, **Grey-headed Lapwing**, **Alexandrine** and **Red-breasted Parakeets**, **Grey-headed Fish Eagle**, **Zitting Cisticola**, **Chestnut Munia**, **Red Avadavat**, **Bengal Bush Lark**, **Finn's Weaver**, **Baya Weaver**, **Streaked Weaver**, **Black-breasted Weaver**, and **Spot-winged Starling**.

The more scrubby and wooded areas in and around the national park hold **Siberian Rubythroat**, **Common Green Magpie**, **Kalij Pheasant**, **Red Junglefowl**, **Common Emerald Dove**, **White-rumped Shama**, **Rufous Woodpecker**, **Grey-headed (Black-naped) Woodpecker**, **Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker**, **Speckled Piculet**, **White-browed Scimitar Babbler**, **Greater Necklaced**, **Lesser Necklaced**, and **Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes**, **Maroon Oriole**, **Blue-eared Barbet**, **Great Barbet**, **Verditer Flycatcher**, and **Smoky Warbler**.



*A fantastic portrait of a male **Kalij Pheasant***

A fine suite of mammals also occurs in Kaziranga National Park, and we will look for **Greater One-horned (Indian) Rhinoceros**, **Asian Elephant**, **Gaur**, **Wild Water Buffalo**, **Barasingha (Swamp Deer)**, **Sloth Bear**, and **Western Hoolock Gibbon**. With some luck we may even come across the rare and secretive **Bengal Tiger**, **Indian Leopard**, **Clouded Leopard**, **Jungle Cat**, **Fishing Cat**, or **Leopard Cat** while here. Our visit in and around this national park is sure to be a very interesting, bird-and-wildlife-packed time.

Overnight: Kaziranga National Park



*The **Greater One-horned (Indian) Rhinoceros** is an incredible sight.*

#### **Day 14. Kaziranga National Park to Guwahati and New Delhi**

Depending on our flight time from Guwahati to New Delhi there may be some time for a bit of early-morning, pre-breakfast birding and wildlife watching in the Kaziranga area. We will transfer to Guwahati in the morning and fly back to New Delhi, arriving there late in the afternoon or early in the evening.

Overnight: New Delhi

#### **Day 15. International departure**

This is a non-birding day with departure from New Delhi.

If you would rather not fly back home on this day we can organize additional nights in New Delhi, or we can arrange a birding or cultural tour around New Delhi or another part of India. Just let us know what you would like to do, maybe an extension to visit the Taj Mahal, or Ranthambhore National Park to look for the majestic **Bengal Tiger** and a whole load of different birds to those seen on this tour, like **Painted Spurfowl** and **Indian Courser**. Just let us know!

Overnight: Not included

*Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides*



*and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.*

**Duration:** 15 days  
**Group Size:** 4 - 8  
**Dates:** 27 February - 13 March 2023  
**Start:** Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi  
**End:** Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi  
**Prices:** US\$7,660 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants, which includes the domestic flights (2023)  
**Single Supplements:** US\$950 (2023)

**Price includes:**

Domestic flight New Delhi to Guwahati  
Domestic flight Guwahati to New Delhi  
All accommodation (as described above, please note that the accommodation in the mountains of northeastern India is basic to very basic, often with shared bathroom/toilets in permanent camp sites away from the cities)  
Meals (from dinner on day 1 until breakfast on day 15)  
Drinking water – two bottles of mineral water per day per person from our tour vehicle, please bring a refillable water bottle (if taken from the hotel this will be at your own cost)  
Expert tour leader  
Local bird and wildlife guide fees  
National park/birdwatching reserve entrance fees and jeep safaris  
All ground transport and tolls while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off  
Raft trip at Nameri  
Protected Area Permit (required for some of the areas we will visit during the tour)

**Price excludes:**

Flights to/from Indira Gandhi International Airport  
Visa  
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.  
Optional tours (e.g. monument entrance fees and associated additional travel expenses)  
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions  
Soft/alcoholic drinks  
Camera (still/video) permits  
Personal travel insurance  
Gratuities