BIRDING TOUR INDIA: THE NORTHEAST – SPECTACULAR BIRDS AND MAMMALS

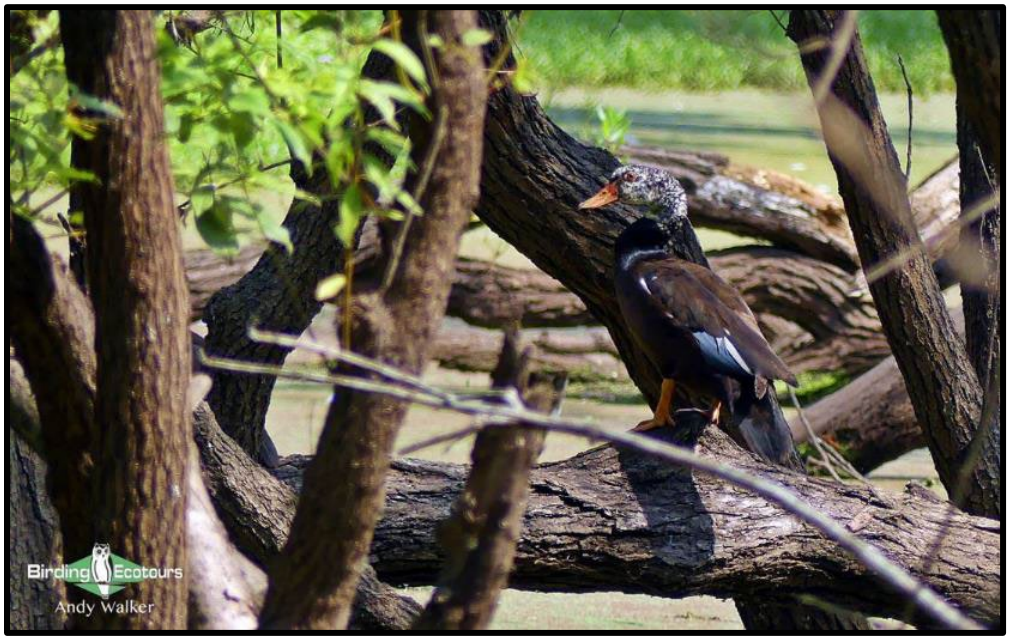
31 March–14 April 2028
31 March–14 April 2029

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

Overview

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.

We start this exciting tour in 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). 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 shy, secretive, and rare **White-winged Duck** can be found, with luck, in swampy forest areas in Nameri National Park.*

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**. We will also look for 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!

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

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. Highlights might include **Bengal Florican** (rare here now) **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 where the tour ends.

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.

Wallcreeper and **Ibisbill** both occur in the area of this tour during the winter period (i.e. before this tour occurs). Although seeing them on this tour is considered unlikely (please see this North India bird tour for a great chance of seeing both), we will of course consult with our local team ahead of the tour in case any birds are known to be lingering along our route, in which case we will try and look for them.

Detailed Itinerary (15 days/14 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Guwahati

After your arrival in Guwahati, 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: Kiranshree Grand Hotel or similar, Guwahati

Day 2. Transfer to Nameri National Park

After breakfast, we will head to the Guwahati local waste facility, where we should find the humongous (and exceedingly ugly) **Greater Adjutant** scavenging among the rubbish. We will then continue towards Nameri National Park, looking for **Lesser Adjutant** at a nest along the way. After checking in at our Nameri hotel, we may find **Great Hornbill**, **Red-breasted Parakeet**, **Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**, **Oriental Scops Owl** and other goodies.

Overnight: Nameri National Park

*The stunning **River Lapwing** can be found on the rivers around 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 (sightings are not guaranteed, but we will try!). 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**, **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

*We will look for **River Tern** while birding at 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 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

Today will be a very exciting and memorable day as we visit 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).*

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 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**, and the stunning **White-capped Redstart**, **Little Forktail**. 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

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

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** (with luck, if they have arrived), **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

Days 7–9. Bompu Birding Camp, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary

We will embark on a long drive 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 **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**.

*The spectacular **Fire-tailed Myzornis** provides an incredible hit of color.*

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** (with luck, if they have arrived), **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

*There are so many highlights when birding at Eaglenest; however, we are sure you will be impressed by the rather incredible **Beautiful Nuthatch**.*

Day 10–11. Lama Camp, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary

We will bird a large chunk of Eaglenest on the exciting mountain road between Bompu Birding Camp and Lama Camp, where we will spend two nights.

The recently discovered **Bugun Liocichla** is one of our main targets here. Some of the other thrilling birds we will try and find include **Blyth's Tragopan** and **Temminck's Tragopan** (two very impressive, but scarce and often shy birds) along with **Himalayan Bluetail**, **White-browed** (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

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 the very basic accommodation at Eaglenest, we stay at a comfortable hotel in Kaziranga.

Overnight: Iora Niltava, near Kaziranga National Park

Bar-headed Geese *overwinter in Kaziranga National Park and should still be present in April.*

Day 13. Kaziranga National Park

This morning, we'll enjoy our first Kaziranga National Park safari (as game drives are called in India). During this safari, a major target will be the pre-historic-looking **Greater One-horned** (Indian) **Rhinoceros** (this is the only place in the world to see this huge and incredibly impressive species reliably).

Some very special birds are possible today, and we will look for **Bengal Florican** (but it is now rare here), **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**, **Asian 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**.

*The fantastic male **Kalij Pheasant**.*

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

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: Iora Niltava, near Kaziranga National Park

Day 14. Kaziranga National Park to Guwahati

After a final birding session at Kaziranga looking for any of the aforementioned species we might still be looking for, or would like to try and see again, we will head back to Guwahati.

Overnight: Kiranshree Grand Hotel or similar, Guwahati

Day 15. International departure

This is a non-birding day with departure from Guwahati.

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 guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration:	15 days
Group size:	4–8
Dates:	31 March–14 April 2028 31 March–14 April 2029
Start:	Guwahati
End:	Guwahati
Prices:	US$ 7,490 per person sharing – based on 4–8 participants (2028) US$ 7,880 per person sharing – based on 4–8 participants (2029)
Single supplements:	US$ 960 (2028) US$ 1,030 (2029)

Price includes:

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). In Kaziranga, we use better than average accommodation though.
Meals (from dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 15)
Bottled water from the 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
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 (please see our tipping guidelines blog)