

# BHUTAN IN SPRING: BIRDING THE PRISTINE FORESTS OF THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS SET DEPARTURE TOUR REPORT

05 - 28 APRIL 2023

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**Beautiful Nuthatch** is one of the many sought-after specials we found on our Bhutan tour.

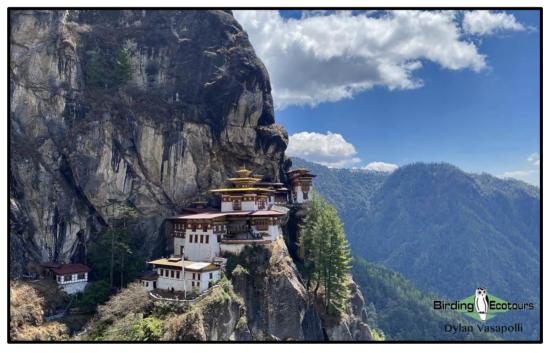


#### Overview

Fabled <u>Bhutan</u> is an isolated country in the Himalayas nestled between <u>India</u> and <u>China</u>. With tourist access strictly controlled and regulated, the country was for all intents and purposes firmly out of bounds to tourists for much of the Covid pandemic period from March 2020 until late 2022.

This tour was initially scheduled to take place during April of 2020, but had to be postponed for several years, and was finally allowed to run during April of 2023, once Bhutan's borders had opened. This Bhutan set departure birding tour was run solely for a couple, Ron and Ruth, with a few days added on at the start for more cultural-orientated activities. Almost immediately before the tour began, we were dealt with another blow as the land border between Bhutan and India, at Samdrup Jonkhar, was closed. This meant that we could no longer end our tour in Guwahati, India, as intended, and therefore needed to add an extra day to the tour, allowing us to catch a domestic flight from Trashigang back to Paro, where the tour would now end.

This long tour, spanning 24 days took in a long route from Paro in the west of the country, to the Tingtibi lowlands in the central-southern reaches, and all the way to Trashigang in the far east of Bhutan – before returning back to Paro. In addition, the auspicious hike up to the world-famous Tiger's Nest Monastery, or Taktsang, was a thrilling experience. Travel in the country is generally slow, due to the mixture of superb birding habitat found on the side of major roads (which necessitates time to slowly bird and explore these areas), and the very windy nature of these mountain roads.



Bhutan is a scenically unbeatable country! Incredible vistas await around almost every bend, and arguably none compare to the incredible Tiger's Nest Monastery, shown here – perched high up on a rocky ledge.



Despite three years of isolation, and a lack of birding generally around the country during that period, the tour went along reasonably well, with only a few bumps along the way. Birding was excellent, and we netted virtually all of Bhutan's major birding targets – from the mega **Satyr Tragopan** and beautiful **Himalayan Monal**, to denizens like **Ibisbill**, **Fire-tailed Myzornis**, **Beautiful Nuthatch**, **Ward's Trogon** and the very rare **White-bellied Heron**. All in all, over 300 species of birds were seen on this tour. Mammals are decidedly less numerous in Bhutan, and we did well to find a **Yellow-throated Marten**, along with the stunning **Gee's Golden Langur** and enormous **Black Giant Squirrel**.



Fire-tailed Myzornis is an uncommon and scarce bird in the country. We did well with several excellent sightings on this tour.

A detailed daily account can be read below, and the full bird and mammal lists are located at the end of the report.

#### **Detailed Report**

# Day 1, 05th April 2023. Arrival in Paro – Paro Festival and local birding

Following an early arrival into the spectacular Paro airport, we checked into our comfortable hotel for a short rest. Mid-morning came, and saw us heading to the massive Rinpung (Paro) Dzong, where we would enjoy the Paro festival for a while. In between all the dances and stories commemorating this festival, the many **Red-billed Choughs** that breed in the Dzong kept us company, and some of the quieter sections of the festival held the likes of **Chestnut Thrush** and **Grey-backed Shrike**. The Paro Chu (River) also gave us our first **River Lapwing**, **Brown Dipper** 



and **Plumbeous Water Redstart**. A break over the midday period followed, before we resumed with a more dedicated birding session – as we explored the Paro surrounds. Focusing on the upper reaches of the Paro Chhu (River), we did extremely well to find the scarce **Solitary Snipe** quietly feeding amongst the rocks, while **Green Sandpiper**, **River Lapwing**, **White-capped Redstart** and **Rosy Pipit** kept it company. A nearby marshy area delivered a stunning pair of **Black-tailed Crakes** that put on an excellent show, while the surrounding scrub gave up both **Black-throated** and **Red-throated Thrushes**, **Hodgson's Redstart**, **Russet Sparrow** and large numbers of **Little Buntings**. Content and tired, we settled in for the evening.



A Black-tailed Crake pops out from the dense cover for a short moment.

# Day 2, 06th April 2023. Birding Chele La Pass

The first of many early starts on this tour saw us tackling the winding road heading up to the famous Chele La Pass, outside of Paro. This pass winds up to almost 4000m at the top, and we slowly worked our way up, stopping off at various altitudes to look for different birds. The many different pheasants that can be seen on the pass are arguably the biggest attraction, and would indeed be our main focus. **Kalij Pheasant** showed extremely well on the lower slopes of the pass, with several pairs feeding quietly on the edge of the road. Satyr Tragopan also occurs along the middle elevations, but was conspicuous only by its absence. **Blood Pheasants** followed, and were dime a dozen in the upper reaches of the pass, with many birds showing well. Near the top is the realm of the **Himalayan Monal**, and during our (much-needed) coffee break high up, we heard the distinct call of this beautiful pheasant, and rushed off to try and find it, leaving our coffee behind. As if right on cue, we had a stunning male in the scope feeding in an open gap in the woods, before it climbed a small stump to call once again. We soaked up our amazing views of this incredible bird, before leaving it in peace, and returning back to our cold coffees. Comical



Yellow-billed Blue-Magpies roved about at our breakfast stop, while noisy Spotted Nutcrackers called from the tops of the pines. The very top of the pass still had a bit of snow, and here we enjoyed our first laughingthrush — Black-faced Laughtingthrush, as they bounced around. Careful scrutiny of the small shrubs here gave us busy White-browed Fulvettas and a large party of Rufous-vented Yuhinas, while stately Blue-fronted Redstarts were commonly seen. A large flock of Plain Mountain Finches was the last sighting of note, before we started working our way back down to Paro for a midday break. The afternoon was leisurely spent birding around the Paro Chhu (River) slightly further afield from town, and here, we did well to find a pair of the highly sought-after Ibisbills. We spent some time watching these masterfully camouflaged birds (they almost perfectly resemble the rocks they feed within) go about their business, before setting off to try for another highly desired bird, Wallcreeper. We were unsuccessful in our quest for Wallcreeper, but did find the likes of Eurasian Hoopoe, Eurasian Kestrel, Black Bulbul and the beautiful Rufous-breasted Accentor.



**Blood Pheasants** feeding in the road were an early tour highlight.

#### Day 3, 07th April 2023. Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery

Arguably Bhutan's biggest tourist attraction is the famous Tigers Nest Monastery, or Taktsang — where many tourists undertake the arduous and steep hike to visit this famous monastery, which is rich in Buddhism. We had the day dedicated to undertaking this hike, and set off in the morning, slowly making our way up the steep trail to get to the monastery. We soaked up this incredible area, making our way back down in the afternoon. Birds are sparse along the way, due to the high volumes of people that walk this path every day, and today was no different with birds thin on the ground. The denser areas lower down held a delightful family of **Streak-breasted Scimitar Babblers** along with **Rufous Sibia**, which would become one of our regulars on the tour. The pine



woods higher up produced numbers of **Green-backed Tits**, along with a party of **Grey-crested Tits**. **Blyth's Leaf Warblers** were extremely common and a small bird party right near the actual monastery delivered the stunning **Mrs. Gould's Sunbirds** and our first minivet – **Long-tailed Minivet**. A large flock of **Blyth's Swifts** wheeled about above the monastery, while we picked up our first **Alpine Accentor** on the monastery itself. Once back down from the hike, we stopped off to see our **Ibisbills** again, and tried once more for the Wallcreeper, which eluded us yet again, before calling it a day.



We enjoyed spending time with the sought-after **Ibisbills** around Paro – surely the best place in the world to see this species!

#### Day 4, 08th April 2023. Birding Chele La Pass to Haa

We left our lovely Paro hotel, bound for the culturally-focused Haa valley – the route, however, takes us up and over the Chele La Pass, and we would spend the full morning birding along the pass once again. We did well on Day 2 earlier in the trip, notching up most of the pheasants, and we would focus more of our time on those we missed, like Satyr Tragopan. The mid-elevation pine woods were birdy, and parties of birds kept us entertained. **Buff-barred Warblers** and **Coal Tits** dominated, and were occasionally joined by the likes of **Long-tailed Minivet**, **Grey-crested Tit**, **White-browed Fulvetta**, **Rufous-vented Yuhina** and **Goldcrest**. We then heard the eerie call of a **Satyr Tragopan**, unfortunately though, it was deep into the forest and our attempts at finding it were unsuccessful. We refocused and ventured up to the Kila Goenpa Nunnery, set on a rocky ledge above the forest. We had some superb birding here with flocks of **Altai Accentors** feeding on the ground and parties of boisterous **Black-faced Laughingthrushes** flitting about. Some careful scanning between the laughingthrushes gave us our first **Spotted Laughingthrush** – a truly massive bird in comparison! Arguably the main drawcard here was the large flock of **Snow** 



**Pigeons** that frequent the buildings. We spent some time watching these dapper-looking birds and marveled at their beauty. Several other species we were now familiar with were seen as well. We passed over the top of Chele La Pass, taking in the spectacular views and seeing the surrounding peaks, all covered in snow from a late fall. Birding was slow up here, as it was approaching midday, and we pressed onwards down the other side of the pass into Haa. A circling **Himalayan Buzzard** was the only notable sighting. Following a short rest, we set out to explore the town of Haa, taking a walk along the river. A superb **Ibisbill** showed well early doors, as did several **Brown Dippers** and the expected **Plumbeous Water** and **White-capped Redstarts**. Little else was seen, though we enjoyed exploring the quaint town.



Beautiful **Snow Pigeons** put on a fine show for us.

#### Day 5, 09th April 2023. Back to Paro

Having enjoyed our time in the Haa valley, today would see us head back up and over the Chele La Pass for the final time, and back into Paro, where we would spend the night. We made sure we were at the top of the pass for the best morning birding, and enjoyed a wealth of activity. Several Blyth's Swifts were floating overhead, before a Common Kestrel replaced them, followed by a lovely Himalayan Buzzard. Several bird parties were present in the woods, and new birds included Hodgson's Treecreeper and White-winged Grosbeak. We also enjoyed other familiar species like Grey-crested Tit, Long-tailed Minivet, White-browed Fulvetta and Black-faced Laughingthrush. The rocky ledges at the very top finally delivered some Alpine Accentors. Flowers were starting to come out in the open areas, and this seemed to attract both Rosy and Olive-backed Pipits, with numerous birds feeding in the open fields. After having only managed glimpses before, we finally enjoyed excellent views of a bright male Himalayan Bluetail. Many Large-eared Pikas were dancing around as well. As we slowly made our way back towards Paro,



birding stops along the way yielded a showy **Green Shirke-babbler** and several **Ashy Drongos**. Near the bottom, we lucked onto a stunning **Yellow-throated Marten** crossing the road. We checked back into our familiar hotel, and after a short rest, headed off to see if we could find 'our' **Ibisbills**. We were glad to see they hadn't gone anywhere, and also got to watch them courting one another, which eventually resulted in mating. All the rest of our usuals were seen as well, with delightful **River Lapwings**, stately **Grey-backed Shrikes**, bright **Chestnut Thrushes** and bold **Russet Sparrows**.

# Day 6, 10th April 2023. Birding Thimpu and Jigme Dorji National Park

We were up and out of Paro nice and early, bound for the country's capital city, Thimpu. We headed straight for the local sewage works where we added a head of new birds. Several **Gadwall** were sitting on some of the ponds, and were soon joined by a lone **Common Pochard**, while several **Ruddy Shelduck** and a **Eurasian Coot** frequented another pond. Numbers of both **Common** and **Green Sandpipers** were present. The surrounds gave us several stunning **Black-throated Thrushes** along with a lone **White-browed Wagtail** feeding amongst the hordes of **White Wagtails**. We then set off for the Cheri Valley and the lower sections of Jigme Dorji National Park. Our first stop was at a known stakeout for the rare **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**, which after a little wait, obliged and gave us some good scope views.



Yellow-rumped Honeyguide are often seen around colonies of rock bees.

With the change to more broad-leafed forests, away from the coniferous forests we had spent virtually all our time until now, we had another heap of new trip birds come pouring in. A pair of **Grey-headed Canary-flycatchers** flitted into view, and were chased away by a territorial **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher**. A small flowering tree gave us both **Mrs. Gould's** and <u>Green-tailed</u>



<u>Sunbirds</u>, and the somewhat drab **Yellow-browed Tit**. An **Alpine Thrush** flushed up off the ground and settled high in the trees, and a curious **White-tailed Nuthatch** came to investigate. Bright **Chestnut-crowned Warblers** and **Rufous-bellied Niltavas** were crowd favorites and a group of noisy **Whiskered Yuhinas** left us wanting a bit more. The very different-looking **Moupin Pika** was seen as well. After lunch back in Thimpu, we explored the town for a little bit, before taking a visit to the Takin sanctuary on the outskirts of town. <u>Takin is a strange, large goat-like mammal</u> occurring in this part of the Himalayas, and we marveled at these unique animals, though in captivity. As always, there were lots of birds around, and we managed to add a group of shy **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes** to our tally, along with enjoying other familiar birds like **Long-tailed Minivet, Rufous Sibia** and **White-throated Laughingthrush**.

# Day 7, 11th April 2023. Birding Dochula Pass to Punakha

Another early start saw us heading up to the Dochula Pass, and our first bird went to a lovely **Kalij Pheasant** walking in the road. We started off our birding right at the top, around the temple, just as the sun was rising. Despite us nearly freezing, the birds were up and about, and we started off with a bang, finding one of our targets, **Great Parrotbill**, within seconds. This is an enormous bird – easily triple the size of most other parrotbills, and it put on quite the incredible show for us, showing at arm's length. We were then whisked off to search for **Fire-tailed Myzornis**. We heard them easily, and after a struggle managed our first views of this sought-after bird, though our views did leave a bit to be desired. We stuck it out for a while longer, and were aptly rewarded with stunning looks at a large flock of them. We also picked up our first **Stripe-throated Yuhina**. We retreated for a warm cup of coffee and breakfast at the restaurant.



The massive **Great Parrotbill** was a superb bird to start the day off with.



After having thawed out, we focused our search on Ward's Trogon. Try as we might, we were unable to find any trogons, but enjoyed numerous other birds as we went about our business. **Himalayan Cuckoo** played hide and seek with us, but we managed to pry one out without too much difficulty. Our first warbler flock netted us **Whistler's**, **Lemon-rumped** and **Grey-hooded Warblers**, and also found feeding with them were several **Rufous-capped Babblers**. Hulking **Striated Laughingthrushes** showed well, as did both the snazzy **Black-faced Warbler** and the shy **Brown-flanked Bush Warbler**. **Grey-bellied Tesia** refused to show, however, with the bird moving through the vegetation unseen on the edge of the road.

We also spent a bit of time birding the <u>Royal Botanical Park</u>, where we successfully tracked down one of the many calling **Large Hawk-Cuckoos**. **Great Barbets** showed well perching in the open, as did a pair of fine **Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers**. Warbler flocks here contained the same species, along with **Ashy-throated** and **Tickell's Leaf Warblers**, and a busy party of **Rufous-winged Fulvettas** showed well. A vocal **Grey-sided Laughingthrush**, a scarce species, left us wanting a bit more. An attempt to see a calling **Hill Partridge** was completely unsuccessful, however. A stunning **Black Eagle** also graced us with a flyby.

We broke for lunch in between all the birding, and our afternoon saw us head down the pass into the Punakha valley. A birding stop along the way added a lovely **Blue-capped Rock Thrush**. In the Punakha valley, a fierce wind was blowing, and we opted to rather head to our hotel and venture out for some late afternoon birding, once the wind had hopefully died down. Unfortunately, this didn't happen and we braved the wind for a little bit. We found a nice gathering of waterfowl in the river, which included many species — **Common** and **Ruddy Shelducks**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Pintail**, **Tufted Duck** and **Red-crested Pochard** were all frolicking about together. Nearby, a **Common Merganser** was also bobbing away. A stunning **Pallas's Fish Eagle** flew over the river, giving us all good views. Tired of the wind, and with sand everywhere, we called it a day and settled in the for the evening.

#### Day 8, 12th April 2023. White-bellied Heron at Punakha

The main birding target of the Punakha valley is **White-bellied Heron**. This Critically Endangered bird is, unfortunately, in a very bad way, and fewer than 250 birds are thought to be left in the wild. A few birds roam up and down the river in the Punakha valley, and this is usually the most reliable spot in the country to see this mega bird. Several other birding groups were working the area as well, and it was almost too easy. Word reached us that a bird had been found and we headed off down the river. We arrived and on cue, enjoyed some distant scope views of a lone **White-bellied Heron**. Thrilled and brimming from ear to ear, we enjoyed watching the bird, before it took flight down the river. A few of us tracked the bird and enjoyed better views. We also broke for coffee here, and came up trumps with a showy **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** and a fine **Grey Treepie**. We worked the river back to our hotel and found a **Small Pratincole** along the shoreline.

We had a quick brunch, before resuming our birding – this time, we headed in the opposite direction and up into the magical riverine forests. Skulkers are the order of the day up here, with the ultra-shy Spotted Elachura being one of the main targets, along with several tesias and cupwings. Perhaps by a factor of us being a bit on the later side up here, things were fairly quiet already, and we had a tough time with the skulkers. **Slaty-bellied Tesia** gave us only the briefest of views, while **Scaly-breasted Cupwing** left us watching only the vegetation move. **Spotted** 



Elachura took a bit more effort to track down, and also only gave us glimpses as it hopped through the dark undergrowth. It wasn't all bad as we tracked down a stunning Golden-throated Barbet, enjoyed the flashy Hair-crested Drongo, found a bright Small Niltava, saw several Maroon Orioles feeding in a fruiting tree and enjoyed a mixed party of Nepal Fulvetta and Black-chinned Yuhina. A Slaty-backed Forktail on the river left us wanting a bit more, though a Crested Serpent Eagle and a large flock of White-throated Needletails gave us excellent views. Our first Assam Macaques were seen as we were departing. We settled in for lunch back in the Punakha town, and following which, we headed off to what is easily the main non-birding target of Punakha – the incredible Punakha Dzong. We had a superb tour around this magnificent fortress, adding the likes of Crested Kingfisher and Bar-headed Goose from the river in front in the process. The lower altitude valley here also has several more typical lowland species, and we added the likes of the common Red-vented Bulbul, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Asian Koel, White-throated Kingfisher, Eurasian Hoopoe and Chestnut-tailed Starling. Content, we settled in for the evening following a successful day of birding.



We were extremely privileged to see the now very rare White-bellied Heron.

# Day 9, 13th April 2023. Birding Nubding and Pele La Pass

Early morning saw us heading up and out of the Punakha valley en route to Nubding, where we would spend the morning. Our first stop was at a rock bee colony to see if we could find the scarce **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**, which duly obliged. Here, we also found a large flock of **Speckled Wood Pigeons**. The beautiful mossy, broad-leafed forest here is a good site for Ward's Trogon, and it was our main target. We hunted high and low for several hours, but it was conspicuous only by its absence. An early highlight went to a feeding group of the sought-after **Himalayan Cutia**, which gave us excellent views! A **Barred Cuckoo-Dove** gave us a quick, yet good view, while a



Large Hawk-Cuckoo perched in the open for ages. The forest was birdy as we went about our search, and we encountered many birds, including Long-tailed Minivet, Whiskered Yuhina, White-tailed Nuthatch, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Ultramarine Flycatcher and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. A Grey-bellied Tesia played hide and seek with us, giving us only brief views. We had breakfast in a beautiful clearing with several active Bhutan Laughingthrushes around.

We then headed further up to the Pele La Pass, where we spent some time birding the mixed coniferous woods and rhododendrons at the summit. A fallen tree across the road blocked our progress and basically meant we were unable to get to the site for Satyr Tragopan. We then had to focus on the areas we could access. A large flock of **Himalayan Vultures** passed low overhead, and some careful scrutiny of them also yielded a stunning **Bearded Vulture**. **Spotted Nutcrackers** were common, and many **Blue-fronted Redstarts** fed in the fields. We finally found a **Rufous-vented Tit**, amongst the masses of **Coal Tits**, and enjoyed some great sightings of the shy **Grey-sided Bush Warbler**, snazzy **Bar-throated Minla**, bright **Fire-tailed Sunbird** and busy **Red-headed Bullfinches**. Unable to do the pass justice due to the fallen tree, we pressed onwards to Trongsa.



**Bar-throated Minla** is bird full of colors and attitude.

A few stops on the way added a nesting colony of **Nepal House Martins**, amongst others, and we arrived in time for a late lunch. Following a short siesta, we headed up the nearby Yotong La Pass for our spell of afternoon birding. The birding was slow to start, but a party of **Green-backed Tits** brought the area to life, and we soon found ourselves in the middle of an intense bird party. A tiny **Green Shrike-babbler** hopped into view, followed by a **Yellow-bellied Fantail**, while some high-pitched calls heralded the arrival of a group of **Fire-tailed Myzornis**. A mixed flock of noisy **Whiskered**, **Stripe-throated** and **Rufous-vented Yuhinas** were soon joined by an equally rowdy



group of Bar-throated Minlas, while some careful watching also gave us our first Red-tailed Minla. It wasn't close to done, as a vast warbler flock moved in, and we quickly picked up Ashythroated, Buff-barred, Lemon-rumped, Tickell's Leaf, Blyth's Leaf and Whistler's Warblers. A comical party of Rufous-fronted Bushtits saw the party off. We carried on a little further, coming across a large flock of well over 100 White-throated Laughingthrushes, and also found a perched White-winged Grosbeak. With sunset approaching, we found a few Kalij Pheasants feeding on the edge of the road, and just as it was getting dark, we heard our main target, a Satyr Tragopan calling from way up the hillside. We stuck around until it got dark, with no sighting sadly, and vowed to try again in a few days' time.

## Day 10, 14th April 2023. Birding to Tingtibi

The drive down to Tingtibi from Trongsa is a long, windy road, and combined with regular birding stops, takes the bulk of the day. The higher broad-leafed forests nearer Trongsa were very birdy in the morning. A superb sighting of a **Himalayan Cuckoo** kicked things off, and was followed soon after by the scarce **Plaintive Cuckoo**. A pair of the stunning **White-browed Shrike-babblers** quietly went about their business, before the perhaps even more stunning **Black-eared Shrike-babbler** took their place. **Black-throated Bushtits** were seen in places, as were **Streak-breasted Scimitar Babblers** along with several warblers and yuhinas. A **Rusty-fronted Barwing** was a good find in an open patch, and here we also picked up both **Himalayan** and **Black-throated Prinias**. A roadside stream gave us a fine **Spotted Forktail**, and **Verditer Flycatcher** and both **Blue-capped** and **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrushes** were commonly seen. We had several sightings of **Mountain Hawk-Eagles** flying overhead, and also added a lone **Crested Bunting** and a pair of very loud **Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes** to our list.



*Verditer Flycatchers* were commonly seen in Bhutan – but never did we tire of seeing them.



We took a break for lunch at a conveniently placed picnic overlook. Despite the heat kicking in, the birds were still active, and we enjoyed a good walk around the lunch site. We lucked onto a hulking Rufous-necked Hornbill as one flew by, and found a Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon perched quietly in the trees. Both Great and Blue-throated Barbets were common, and we added several new birds like the scarce Grey-headed Parrotbill, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Greychinned Minivet, Ashy Bulbul and Blue-winged Minla. A Streaked Spiderhunter gave us fleeting views and left us wanting a bit more. After lunch, as the altitude started dropping, we did well to find a group of the sought-after Long-tailed Broadbills. A few of their high-pitched calls sent us all piling out of the car, and it took some patience and careful scanning, but we soon picked them up and enjoyed some good views. We also found a few Orange-bellied Leafbirds feeding nearby. As we rounded a corner, a feeding troop of Gee's Golden Langur brought us to a halt once more, and this also gave us a fine **Oriental Hobby** perched next to the road. Further along, we were forced to pile out of the car once more when a **Sultan Tit** flew across the road. We enjoyed some superb views of this bird, and enjoyed White-throated Bulbul, White-browed Scimitar Babbler and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch in the same vicinity. In the late afternoon, we rolled into Tingtibi, and headed to our rustic, yet charming lodge located on the river out of town. A productive forest patch right before the lodge gave us a pair of scarce **Rufous Woodpeckers**, along with several showy **Blue-throated Barbets** as our final birds of this excellent day.

#### Day 11, 15th April 2023. Birding Tingtibi

Tingtibi is located towards the southern part of Bhutan, and is firmly lowland territory, being only a few hundred meters above sea level, as opposed to a few thousand meters, as with much of the rest of the country. The area is covered in pristine lowland forest, with stands of bamboo thickets, and we headed out this morning with lots of excitement. We didn't get very far as we spotted a stunning male **Rufous-necked Hornbill** perched right outside our lodge ground and duly stopped to take it in. Several **Common Emerald Doves** were feeding on the roadside, and we enjoyed bright **Bronzed Drongos** along the way. Soon we found ourselves at our first birding area, and set off to explore the mixed forest and bamboo. Large numbers of **Scarlet Minivets** were flitting around, as were numerous **Pin-tailed Green Pigeons**. Shy **Golden Babblers** showed well after some effort, and we added a few **Yellow-vented Warblers**. The special **Rufous-faced Warbler** left us all wanting a bit more, while a flock of **Pale-billed Parrotbills** kept us all on our toes. **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** showed well, as did both **Black-throated** and **Crimson Sunbirds**. Just as we broke for breakfast, we picked up on the massive and iconic **Great Hornbill** flying along the ridgetop.

We carried on working the area after breakfast, but the activity started dying down. We finally got satisfying looks at **Streaked Spiderhunter**, enjoyed a flock of **White-rumped Munias**, marveled at how bland the **Plain Flowerpecker** was and got much better views of the shy **White-throated Bulbul**. Raptors also started coming out, and we notched up the scarce **Rufous-bellied Eagle**. Several **Ashy Woodswallows** were seen flying around, and a vocal **Banded Bay Cuckoo** gave us excellent views, especially considering this is normally a very shy bird. We broke for lunch, and had our customary short siesta, before resuming with an afternoon walk around the lodge, and the wild surrounds. Activity was a bit slow to start off with, but gradually picked up. A **Grey-headed Woodpecker** played hide and seek with us, while the comparatively diminutive **Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** showed very well. A **Large Woodshrike** swooped in and some raucous calling nearby meant a party of **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes** were moving through. We



latched onto the laughingthrushes, and got some good views, before they melted back into the scrub. A hawking pair of **Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters** put on a good show, as did several **Streaked Spiderhunters**. Our last sighting of note went to the enormous **Black Giant Squirrel** we found moving through some trees, and brought our day to a close.



Rufous-necked Hornbill is a desirable special found in the lower altitudes in Bhutan.

#### Day 12, 16th April 2023. Birding Zhemgang

Our day was dedicated to exploring the higher-altitude forests of Zhemgang, located up above Tingtibi. Here, our main target is the highly sought-after Beautiful Nuthatch. We arrived in good time at the top of the Zhemgang pass, and immediately hopped out of the van and started birding. We caught a bright Red-faced Liocichla napping as it was foraging in the open, but it soon melted back into the scrub. A noisy group of Rusty-fronted Barwings showed well, as did a Greater Yellownape. An explosive call led us to a stunning Asian Emerald Cuckoo, which was perched in the open, while a soft melodic call gave us a Pale Blue Flycatcher. A large feeding flock of the stunning White-naped Yuhinas had a heap of other birds with them which included Chestnutcrowned and Grey-hooded Warblers, Golden and Rufous-capped Babblers, Blue-winged Minla and Orange-bellied Leafbird. A fidgety Little Pied Flycatcher showed well, but try as we might, our nuthatch seemed to be absent. Crimson-breasted Woodpecker showed well, and it took some searching, but we finally got onto some flighty Blue-bearded Bee-eaters. The dramatic Silver-eared Mesia also put on a show for us in a clearing, as did the tiny Fire-breasted Flowerpecker. Breakfast and lunch were enjoyed, and we gradually started making our way back down the mountain to Tingtibi. A fine Great Hornbill showed well en route, while calling Silverbreasted Broadbills frustratingly remained as heard only. We added to our mammal list with an Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel. We spent the late afternoon birding around the lodge and



nearby river, with the likes of Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Scarlet Minivet, Black-crested Bulbul and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch all showing well.



Gee's Golden Langurs were a highlight of our time around Tingtibi.

## Day 13, 17th April 2023. Birding to Trongsa

We would depart our rustic lodge today, and make our way back up to Trongsa, where we were a few days prior. We had a few hours in the morning for some birding, and spent a bit of time exploring the lush forest around our lodge. Here, both **Great** and **Rufous-necked Hornbills** put on a fine show for us, and a bright **Red-headed Trogon** was a magic sighting. We also did well to find a **Lesser Yellownape** feeding in the trees. We then headed out to the bamboo areas we explored a few days ago, and enjoyed further excellent birding. Somehow, we found a **Collared Owlet** perched in the open which gave us great views. A large mixed flock of **White-breasted** and **Pale-billed Parrotbills** came through, but we again missed the hoped-for White-hooded Babbler. A party of noisy **Nepal Fulvettas** gave us a fine **White-browed Scimitar Babbler** and a **Yellow-bellied Warbler**. Several **Common Emerald Doves** were seen on the roadside, and we also got lucky with a **Red Junglefowl** crossing the road. A lovely **Mountain Hawk-Eagle** flyby capped off our morning.

Before long, we were tackling the slow and windy drive back up to Trongsa. We had multiple birding stops along the way and our first one was for a calling **Spotted Elachura**. We had obtained only very poor glimpses previously of this shy bird, and spent a while working a very vocal bird calling from the roadside edge. Sadly, we didn't even get a glimpse this time, but did enjoy repeat views of **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** and another **White-browed Scimitar Babbler**. A **Crested Serpent Eagle** perched nicely next to the road a bit higher up and we added widespread species like **Himalayan Bulbul** and **Siberian Stonechat**. A low feeding flock of **Blyth's Swifts** 



gave us excellent views of these aerial masters. A colony of rock bees gave us another **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**, a species we were doing well with and had seen numerous times on the tour so far, while a pair of **Black Eagles** gave us a good flyby as well. The late afternoon birding in the lush forests near Trongsa was very quiet, though a **Scaly-breasted Cupwing** showed for some.

#### Day 14, 18th April 2023. Satyr Tragopan birding

We were up pre-dawn and heading up the Yotong La Pass above Trongsa, where we would try for Satyr Tragopan. Numerous calling Hill Partridges greeted us in the early morning, but refused to show. A lovely Crested Goshawk flew over us, and a pair of Darjeerling Woodpeckers drummed from a dead tree. Before long, we heard our tragopan calling, and as it turned out, we heard many different birds calling throughout the morning. The gods weren't smiling on us sadly, as no matter what we tried or how much patience we showed, we came away empty handed. It was generally a birdy morning and we had many good sightings of species we had seen on the tour already, with tits, warblers, yuhinas, sunbirds and laughingthrushes all obliging. A Dark-sided Flycatcher showed well perched atop a spruce, as did several Olive-backed Pipits, all displaying from the tree tops with spring in the air. As the morning went on, the tragopans stopped calling, and we reluctantly carried on our journey. Fortunately, we weren't heading far – virtually over the hill to Bumthang. We birded our way down the opposite side of the pass, where we enjoyed a few Large-billed Leaf Warblers along with multiple feeding flocks that included several other warblers, yuhinas, minlas and tits.



**Satyr Tragopan** is not only the "top-of-the-list" special for visiting birders to Bhutan, but easily one of the ultimate birds to be found anywhere in the world. We hunted high and low on this tour, and eventually had our day with this mega.



The highly localized **Black-rumped Magpie** didn't prove difficult to find once we got into the Bumthang valley. We settled in for a midday break, before heading out for the afternoon. In a last-gasp attempt for the **Satyr Tragopan**, we headed quite some distance to the Sheytang La Pass. We arrived with a bit of time to bird in the late afternoon, and set about our search, walking around and listening. With time running out before we had to call it a day, we finally heard the mournful call of the bird. Fortunately for us, the call was much closer than we had ever heard it before, and we were quietly confident. We got into position and began scanning the steep forest floor below us, and as if on cue, a bright red shape materialized out of the undergrowth. We all scrambled around for a bit as not everyone could see it, but the bird settled and started calling from a rock. We soaked up magic views of this coveted bird – arguably the most sought-after special for Bhutan. Remarkably, the bird started walking closer and up towards us. We repositioned and had to avoid getting distracted by a close-feeding **Hodgson's Treecreeper**, as sure enough, the magnificent **Satyr Tragopan** hopped onto the road in front of us, quickly crossed and carried on its way. Elated and relieved, we called it a day.

## Day 15, 19th April 2023. Alpine birding to Sengor

Our day would involve quite a bit of travel, as we made our way to the Sengor village, located high up on the famous Lingmethang Road. With the Satyr Tragopan monkey off our back, we were able to concentrate our time on finding other birds along the route. We returned over the Sheytang La Pass, where we had our success the previous day, and while we heard a few tragopans calling once more, none were seen. Various bird parties along the route gave us the likes of **Coal** and **Rufous-vented Tits**, **Lemon-rumped** and **Whistler's Warbelrs**, **White-winged Grosbeak** and **Red Crossbill**, amongst others. We also enjoyed low-flying **Himalayan Vultures**. Heading onto the Thrumshing La Pass, conditions worsened to a dense cloud cover with bouts of snow and drizzle, but we managed to find a few of the brightly colored **Blood Pheasants** nonetheless. These birds are of a different race than the earlier birds seen around Chele La Pass. We also did well to finally see a **Collared Grosbeak**, after having heard them on multiple previous occasions. After some patience, we also finally saw our first **Chestnut-headed Tesia**, as we watched a pair hopping through an open stream valley in the forest, and the local race of **Red Fox** was seen crossing the road. We pulled into our very rustic Sengor accommodations, and had a good meal to warm us up.

Our late afternoon was spent birding the small remaining patches of natural vegetation around Sengor. Sadly, major construction on the road here and throughout the rest of the upper Lingmethang Road has resulted in major rockfalls and removed huge swathes of natural habitat. This former birding mecca is now a shadow of what it used to be. The tiny remaining bits of natural habitat were extremely birdy despite the poor conditions. Noisy **Yellow-billed Blue Magpies** jumped through the trees, while flock after flock passed through. Dainty **Yellow-bellied Fantails** were common members, along with the usual tits, warblers and yuhinas. **Rufous-fronted Bushtits** were present, along with several **Rufous-winged Fulvettas**, and both **Red-tailed** and **Barthroated Minlas** came through in small groups. A fruiting bush attracted a group of **Crimson-browed Finches**, while both **Green-tailed** and **Mrs. Gould's Sunbirds** vied for attention. With our tesia duck finally broken for good from our sighting earlier in the day, naturally, we enjoyed incredible views of at least two pairs of **Chestnut-headed Tesias** in a territorial skirmish late in the day, at times almost hopping onto us. A good, hearty and warm meal settled us down for the evening.



#### Day 16, 20th April 2023. Birding to Yongkhola

Having seen the major habitat destruction, we opted to cut our time in Sengor short, and headed further down the Lingmethang Road to the village of Yongkhola. The windy road took some time to negotiate, and we stopped off for birding wherever suitable patches of natural habitat remained. Many of the same birds seen yesterday afternoon were enjoyed again, though with several Mountain Hawk-Eagle flybys and a very showy Grey-sided Bush Warbler joining the melee. Further down the road, in the mid-elevation Namling region, we found a few suitable patches of remaining habitat, where we spent a while birding. Notably, a few bamboo patches can be accessed and this area offers a different suite of birds to those in the alpine zone higher up. We entered the realm of the cuckoos, with **Plaintive**, **Himalayan** and **Common Cuckoos** all seen, and the closely related Large Hawk-Cuckoo exceedingly common. Our first stand of bamboo gave us the much hoped-for Golden-breasted Fulvetta, and some dedicated birding further along netted us a large party of the dainty Black-throated Parrotbills and the rare Broad-billed Warbler. Golden and Rufous-capped Babblers were welcomed re-finds, as were the likes of Golden-throated Barbet and Rufous-bellied Niltava. While watching a large party of Blue-winged Minlas, typical tit grating calls lead us to a pair of the snazzy Yellow-cheeked Tits, which showed well. We also spent a while looking for Ward's Trogon, and came close when we finally heard a bird calling off in the distance. With no sighting forthcoming, we vowed to try again. We rolled into the lovely village of Yongkhola, and checked into our excellent accommodations. Unfortunately, major rain curtailed our birding plans for the rest of the day.



Golden-breasted Fulvetta is a beautiful denizen of bamboo stands within forests. These curious birds put on a fine show for us!



# Days 17-19, $21^{st}-23^{rd}$ April 2023. Birding Yongkhola and the lower Lingmethang Road

We had virtually three full days of birding around Yongkhola, with the final afternoon (Day 19/23rd April) spent transferring the short distance to the nearby town of Mongar. Due to the similar nature of birds seen and sites visited, these days are discussed as one account below.

We concentrated the bulk of our time in the mature, moss-clad, broad-leafed forests that feature in a few places around Yongkhola. **Ward's Trogon**, another of Bhutan's sought-after specials was our first priority. We headed up to the region where we had it calling from on Day 15, and as if right on cue, picked up on not just a single vocal bird, but at least three. The birds were calling intermittently from all around us, and took a great deal of effort to track down. Some careful positioning paid off and we had our views of a male Ward's Trogon. We ended up spending a while with the bird, watching as it went about its business, totally oblivious to us and giving us excellent close-up views.



Ward's Trogon is another of the more sought-after birds occurring within Bhutan.

Beautiful Nuthatch was our second big target for the area, and we shifted focus towards it after our trogon success. Luck was firmly with us, as we enjoyed several excellent sightings of the special Beautiful Nuthatch in various places. Our first sighting took some time and effort, but a short and sharp rain shower brought the forest to life, and with it a stunning sighting of this special bird. As we went about our time searching for these two major targets, we naturally saw many other species. Great and Golden-throated Barbets were exceedingly common and virtually a continuous soundtrack. Woodpeckers were oddly scarce and we only found Crimson-breasted and Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers, along with Lesser Yellownape, while Bay Woodpeckers frustrated us by remaining unseen. Colorful Red-billed Leiothrixs were seen in a fruiting tree, which also attracted others like Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Mountain Bulbul, Large Niltava,



White-naped Yuhina, Rusty-fronted Barwing and Black-throated Sunbird, amongst many others. We spent a while with the skulkers, and had mixed results. Normally extremely shy birds like Lesser Shortwing and Long-billed Wren-Babbler showed amazingly well to all, and gave us extended close-up views, while others like Scaly and Blue-winged Laughingthrushes put up quite the challenge but showed briefly in the end. Some, like the prized Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler and Spotted Elachura remained heard-only despite our best efforts.

Bamboo patches gave us groups of White-breasted and Pale-billed Parrotbills and several Mountain Tailorbirds, while scrubby thickets delivered up Grey-cheeked Warbler, Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, the stunning Black-crowned (Coral-billed) Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Silver-eared Mesia, Red-faced Liocichla, Grey-throated Babbler and White-gorgeted Flycatcher. Bright Scarlet Finches dotted some open trees, and parties of the stunning Himalayan Cutia came roving through. We enjoyed several sightings of Collared Owlets, bumping into birds perched in the open, while other favorites included Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Sultan Tit, Blue Rock Thrush, White-crested Laughingthrush and both Greater Necklaced and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes. Keeping an eye to the sky rewarded us with Himalayan Swiftlets, along with multiple Mountain Hawk-Eagles and Black Eagles. A nighttime search gave us a heard-only Mountain Scops Owl, while mammals were limited to Capped Langurs, which we saw daily. The birding here was generally excellent, and all of our daily lists exceeded 100 species.



Himalayan Cutia forage amongst the mossy branches.

## Day 20, 24th April 2023. Birding Kori La Pass and transfer to Trashigang

We were up and out of Mongar early on, and found ourselves at the top of the Kori La Pass with the sun beginning to warm everything up. It was a cold morning, and activity was limited early on.



As we slowly birded along the roadside, we picked up a pair of flashy Greater Yellownapes, which were soon replaced with a **Darjeerling Woodpecker**. Bird parties started up and brought a bit of life to the area, filled with tits, vuhinas, minlas and warblers we were well familiar with, along with a flock of Yellow-breasted Greenfinches. Several male Ultramarine Flycatchers posed well, as did some Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes. We got close to laying eyes on the ever-vocal Hill Partridge, but a poorly timed appearance from some local dogs spooked the partridges and we vowed to fight again. Following a much-needed breakfast and coffee break, we veered off the main road, and onto a forestry track running through the lusher parts of the forest. The birding was immense along here, and we enjoyed several excellent hours of birding. Skulking White-tailed Robins played hide and seek with us, and unfortunately would end up remaining as heard-only despite lots of patience and effort. Grey-bellied Tesia on the other hand, finally showed well, and we enjoyed a few excellent sightings of these tiny birds singing in the open. Parties of the bright Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced Warblers kept us entertained whilst we were trying for a shy White-gorgeted Flycatcher. A small stream produced a fine Spotted Forktail, and the surrounding scrub held a vocal Spotted Elachura, which gave us only glimpses once more. Various flycatchers, laughingthrushes, niltavas, nuthatches and scimitar-babblers all capped off a fine morning of birding! We broke for a traditional lunch in a nearby village, and completed the journey to Trashigang, where we would spend the night. We opted for a bit of sightseeing around the town in the afternoon, before heading to our scenic lodge set in the hills. Grey Nightjars and Collared Scops Owls were vocal around the lodge, but frustratingly both remained unseen.

## Day 21, 25th April 2023. Birding Yonphula and Wamrong

On our 'ordinary' scheduled tour, this would have been the day we transferred to the lowlands of Samdrup Jonkhar, but the closure of India's borders meant we could no longer exit Bhutan and end the tour there. Thus, we had set ourselves to overnight along the way, before returning to Trashigang where the tour would end. We spent the entire morning birding along the route, and started the day off well with a party of White-crested Laughingthrushes on the outskirts of our lodge. Starting off in the highlands around the Yonphula airport was productive, and gave us a lovely Northern Goshawk. At the same time, mixed feeding flocks contained a bounty of birds. including favorites like Black-throated Bushtit, Whiskered Yuhina, White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Bhutan Laughingthrush, Bar-throated Minla, Rusty-fronted Barwing and Greentailed Sunbird, amongst others. Further stops lower down gave us Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, White-throated Fantail, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Red-billed Leiothrix and Mrs. Gould's Sunbird.

We eventually arrived in the Wamrong area, where we spent the rest of the morning in superb mixed forest habitat. **Great** and **Golden-throated Barbets** called from the treetops once more, while **Long-tailed Minivets** flitted about and the colorful **Black-eared Shrike-babbler** entertained us. Vocal **Scaly-breasted Cupwings** kept us on the hook, and despite being only a few meters away from us, incredibly remained unseen. Some leaf-tossing in the dry undergrowth led us to a pair of **Grey-sided Laughingthrushes** which put on a good show – a species we had seen somewhat poorly early on in the trip, and a good one to get more satisfactory views of. A particularly dense thicket held a calling **Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler**, and we were blown away by the incredible views we obtained of this normally ultra-shy bird. A fine party of **Himalayan Cutias** feeding on the moss-clad trees rounded off a productive morning.



Following a hearty lunch, we ventured off on the windy roads. Unfortunately, major construction was underway, which meant we had to change our plans, and we headed back to Wamrong, where we would spend the night, allowing us access to the excellent forest nearby in the early morning.



This Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler is a master skulker and rewarded us with incredible views.

## Day 22, 26th April 2023. Birding Wamrong and transfer to Trashigang

Dawn arrived and saw us on the excellent Wamrong birding track. We started off well, finding a Pygmy Flycatcher right at the car. Bay Woodpecker was another bird we had been struggling to see on the tour – hearing them on many occasions but without views yet. Our luck was to change this morning, as we finally managed to track down a bird, and enjoyed some great views of this surprisingly large woodpecker with its glorious pale beak! A patch of bamboo gave us the stunning Golden-breasted Fulvetta, while Yellow-cheeked Tits were out in force today. It would also prove to be a good day for tesias, with multiple Chestnut-headed and Grev-bellied Tesias all strutting their stuff and putting on a fine show for all of us. Presumably the same pair of Greysided Laughingthrushes we had seen yesterday were still fiddling about in the same area, and we lucked onto a stunning young male Ward's Trogon whilst having coffee. White-tailed Robin again proved elusive despite our best efforts. Once the day started warming up, the cuckoos came out in full force and we enjoyed picking out a Lesser Cuckoo, from the similar Himalayan and Common Cuckoos – its very different call confirming its identity. Content with another superb morning, and our tally just shy of 100 species, we made the journey to Trashigang, arriving in the mid-afternoon to our comfortable lodge. We spent the remainder of the day sorting our bags and getting ready for our domestic flight back to Paro, the following morning.





Tesias are normally ultra-shy birds, and this **Grey-bellied Tesia** showed uncharacteristically well for us – along with its close cousin, Chestnut-headed Tesia.

#### Day 23, 27th April 2023. Flight to Paro

We had an early morning flight to Paro, from the Yonphula airport. Located high on top of the mountains, on a small ridge, this small regional airport has a somewhat nerve-wracking runway and is one of the more dramatic airports out there. While this largely signaled the end of the birding for the tour, we always kept a beady eye open, and were rewarded with a fine **Black-backed Forktail** en route, as well as several **Greater Yellownapes**, **Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** and **Oriental Skylark**. Our flight was uneventful once we made it through the take-off, and we arrived in Paro in good time. Some final birding in the evening gave us our last **White-capped Redstarts**, **Brown Dippers** and, at the last moment, **Ibisbill**. We settled in for a final dinner, reflecting on all of our many exciting birding moments, and some non-birding memories as well.

# Day 24, 28th April 2023. Departure from Paro

Our departure day had arrived and saw us all departing from the stunning Paro airport, bound for New Delhi. <u>Bypassing Mount Everest along the route</u>, we arrived in Delhi, and said our farewells to one another.

I would kindly like to thank Ron and Ruth for making this tour the success it was. This fun bird-filled tour will remain a fond memory for all of us through our lives.



## **Bird List - Following IOC 12.2**

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 the IUCN Red List:

CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common Name	Scientific Name
<b>Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)</b>	
Bar-headed Goose	Anser indicus
Common Shelduck	Tadorna tadorna
Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea
Northern Shoveler	Spatula clypeata
Gadwall	Mareca strepera
Eurasian Wigeon	Mareca penelope
Northern Pintail	Anas acuta
Red-crested Pochard	Netta rufina
Common Pochard - VU	Aythya ferina
Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula
Common Merganser	Mergus merganser
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Hill Partridge (H)	Arborophila torqueola
Chestnut-breasted Partridge (H)	Arborophila mandellii
Rufous-throated Partridge (H)	Arborophila rufogularis
Blood Pheasant	Ithaginis cruentus
Satyr Tragopan	Tragopan satyra
Himalayan Monal	Lophophorus impejanus
Kalij Pheasant	Lophura leucomelanos
Red Junglefowl	Gallus gallus
Nightjars (Caprimulgidae)	
Grey Nightjar (H)	Caprimulgus jotaka
Swifts (Apodidae)	<u> </u>
Himalayan Swiftlet	Aerodramus brevirostris
White-throated Needletail	Hirundapus caudacutus
Blyth's Swift	Apus leuconyx





Tringa ochropus

Green Sandpiper

Common Name	Scientific Name
Coursers, Pratincoles (Glareolid	·
Small Pratincole	Glareola lactea
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocor	racidae)
Little Cormorant	Microcarbo niger
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo
Herons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
White-bellied Heron - CR	Ardea insignis
Ospreys (Pandionidae)	
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitrid	 ae)
Bearded Vulture	Gypaetus barbatus
Crested Honey Buzzard	Pernis ptilorhynchus
Himalayan Vulture	Gyps himalayensis
Crested Serpent Eagle	Spilornis cheela
Mountain Hawk-Eagle	Nisaetus nipalensis
Rufous-bellied Eagle	Lophotriorchis kienerii
Black Eagle	Ictinaetus malaiensis
Crested Goshawk	Accipiter trivirgatus
Shikra	Accipiter badius
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus
Northern Goshawk	Accipiter gentilis
Black Kite	Milvus migrans
Pallas's Fish Eagle - EN	Haliaeetus leucoryphus
Himalayan Buzzard	Buteo refectus
Owls (Strigidae)	
Collared Owlet	Taenioptynx brodiei
Mountain Scops Owl (H)	Otus spilocephalus
Collared Scops Owl (H)	Otus lettia
m (m 17)	
Trogons (Trogonidae)	
Red-headed Trogon	Harpactes erythrocephalus
Ward's Trogon	Harpactes wardi







Common Name	Scientific Name
Fantails (Rhipiduridae)	,
White-throated Fantail	Rhipidura albicollis
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius
Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	Urocissa flavirostris
Common Green Magpie	Cissa chinensis
Grey Treepie	Dendrocitta formosae
Black-rumped Magpie	Pica bottanensis
Spotted Nutcracker	Nucifraga caryocatactes
Red-billed Chough	Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax
House Crow	Corvus splendens
Large-billed Crow	Corvus macrorhynchos
Fairy Flycatchers (Stenostiridae)	
Yellow-bellied Fantail	Chelidorhynx hypoxanthus
Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	Culicicapa ceylonensis
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Yellow-browed Tit	Sylviparus modestus
Sultan Tit	Melanochlora sultanea
Rufous-vented Tit	Periparus rubidiventris
Coal Tit	Periparus ater
Grey-crested Tit	Lophophanes dichrous
Green-backed Tit	Parus monticolus
Yellow-cheeked Tit	Machlolophus spilonotus
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Oriental Skylark	Alauda gulgula
<b>Bulbuls</b> (Pycnonotidae)	
White-throated Bulbul	Alophoixus flaveolus
Striated Bulbul	Alcurus striatus
Ashy Bulbul	Hemixos flavala
Mountain Bulbul	Ixos mcclellandii
Black Bulbul	Hypsipetes leucocephalus
Red-vented Bulbul	Pycnonotus cafer
Himalayan Bulbul	Pycnonotus leucogenys



Common Name	Scientific Name
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae	)
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica
Nepal House Martin	Delichon nipalense
Asian House Martin	Delichon dasypus
Cupwings (Pnoepygidae)	
Scaly-breasted Cupwing	Pnoepyga albiventer
Cettia Bush Warblers & Allies (C	 !ettiidae)
Yellow-bellied Warbler	Abroscopus superciliaris
Black-faced Warbler	Abroscopus schisticeps
Mountain Tailorbird	Phyllergates cucullatus
Broad-billed Warbler	Tickellia hodgsoni
Brown-flanked Bush Warbler	Horornis fortipes
Grey-bellied Tesia	Tesia cyaniventer
Slaty-bellied Tesia (H)	Tesia olivea
Grey-sided Bush Warbler	Cettia brunnifrons
Chestnut-headed Tesia	Cettia castaneocoronata
<b>Bushtits</b> (Aegithalidae)	
Black-throated Bushtit	Aegithalos concinnus
Rufous-fronted Bushtit	Aegithalos iouschistos
Leaf Warblers (Phylloscopidae)	
Buff-barred Warbler	Phylloscopus pulcher
Ashy-throated Warbler	Phylloscopus maculipennis
Hume's Leaf Warbler	Phylloscopus humei
Yellow-browed Warbler	Phylloscopus inornatus
Lemon-rumped Warbler	Phylloscopus chloronotus
Tickell's Leaf Warbler	Phylloscopus affinis
Grey-cheeked Warbler	Phylloscopus poliogenys
Green-crowned Warbler	Phylloscopus burkii
Whistler's Warbler	Phylloscopus whistleri
Greenish Warbler	Phylloscopus trochiloides
Large-billed Leaf Warbler	Phylloscopus magnirostris
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	Phylloscopus castaniceps
Yellow-vented Warbler	Phylloscopus cantator
Blyth's Leaf Warbler	Phylloscopus reguloides
Grey-hooded Warbler	Phylloscopus xanthoschistos



Common Name	Scientific Name
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Himalayan Prinia	Prinia crinigera
Black-throated Prinia	Prinia atrogularis
Rufescent Prinia	Prinia rufescens
Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius
Parrotbills & Allies (Paradoxornith	idae)
Fire-tailed Myzornis	Myzornis pyrrhoura
Golden-breasted Fulvetta	Lioparus chrysotis
White-browed Fulvetta	Fulvetta vinipectus
Great Parrotbill	Conostoma aemodium
Grey-headed Parrotbill	Psittiparus gularis
White-breasted Parrotbill	Psittiparus ruficeps
Black-throated Parrotbill	Suthora nipalensis
Pale-billed Parrotbill	Chleuasicus atrosuperciliaris
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Striated Yuhina	Staphida castaniceps
Black-chinned Yuhina	Yuhina nigrimenta
Whiskered Yuhina	Yuhina flavicollis
White-naped Yuhina	Yuhina bakeri
Stripe-throated Yuhina	Yuhina gularis
Rufous-vented Yuhina	Yuhina occipitalis
Indian White-eye	Zosterops palpebrosus
Babblers, Scimitar Babblers (Timal	iidae)
Golden Babbler	Cyanoderma chrysaeum
Rufous-capped Babbler	Cyanoderma ruficeps
Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler	Spelaeornis caudatus
Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler	Pomatorhinus ferruginosus
Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler (H)	Pomatorhinus superciliaris
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler	Pomatorhinus ruficollis
White-browed Scimitar Babbler	Pomatorhinus schisticeps
Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler	Erythrogenys erythrogenys
Grey-throated Babbler	Stachyris nigriceps
Ground Babblers (Pellorneidae)	
Yellow-throated Fulvetta	Schoeniparus cinereus
1 CHOW-HII OAICU I UI VCIIA	schoemparus cinereus



Common Name	Scientific Name
Rufous-winged Fulvetta	Schoeniparus castaneceps
Long-billed Wren-Babbler	Napothera malacoptila
Alcippe Fulvettas (Alcippeidae)	
	Alainna ninalansis
Nepal Fulvetta	Alcippe nipalensis
Laughingthrushes & Allies (Leiothr	 richidae)
Striated Laughingthrush	Grammatoptila striata
Himalayan Cutia	Cutia nipalensis
Scaly Laughingthrush	Trochalopteron subunicolor
Blue-winged Laughingthrush	Trochalopteron squamatum
Bhutan Laughingthrush	Trochalopteron imbricatum
Black-faced Laughingthrush	Trochalopteron affine
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	Trochalopteron erythrocephalum
Rufous Sibia	Heterophasia capistrata
Rufous-backed Sibia	Leioptila annectens
Blue-winged Minla	Actinodura cyanouroptera
Bar-throated Minla	Actinodura strigula
Rusty-fronted Barwing	Actinodura egertoni
Red-billed Leiothrix	Leiothrix lutea
Silver-eared Mesia - EN	Leiothrix argentauris
Red-tailed Minla	Minla ignotincta
Red-faced Liocichla	Liocichla phoenicea
Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush	Garrulax monileger
White-crested Laughingthrush	Garrulax leucolophus
Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush	Ianthocincla rufogularis
Spotted Laughingthrush	Ianthocincla ocellata
Rufous-necked Laughingthrush	Pterorhinus ruficollis
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	Pterorhinus pectoralis
White-throated Laughingthrush	Pterorhinus albogularis
Grey-sided Laughingthrush	Pterorhinus caerulatus
Goldcrests, Kinglets (Regulidae)	
Goldcrest	Regulus regulus
Elachura (Elachuridae)	
Spotted Elachura (H)	Elachura formosa
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Common Name	Scientific Name
Nuthatches (Sittidae)	-
Beautiful Nuthatch - VU	Sitta formosa
White-tailed Nuthatch	Sitta himalayensis
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	Sitta cinnamoventris
Treecreepers (Certhiidae)	
Hodgson's Treecreeper	Certhia hodgsoni
Sikkim Treecreeper	Certhia discolor
Starlings, Rhabdornises (Sturnidae	e)
Great Myna	Acridotheres grandis
Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis
Chestnut-tailed Starling	Sturnia malabarica
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Alpine Thrush	Zoothera mollissima
Grey-winged Blackbird	Turdus boulboul
Black-throated Thrush	Turdus atrogularis
Red-throated Thrush	Turdus ruficollis
Chestnut Thrush	Turdus rubrocanus
White-collared Blackbird	Turdus albocinctus
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Mu	ıscicapidae)
Oriental Magpie-Robin	Copsychus saularis
Dark-sided Flycatcher	Muscicapa sibirica
Ferruginous Flycatcher	Muscicapa ferruginea
White-gorgeted Flycatcher (H)	Anthipes monileger
Pale Blue Flycatcher	Cyornis unicolor
Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher	Cyornis rubeculoides
Rufous-bellied Niltava	Niltava sundara
Large Niltava	Niltava grandis
Small Niltava	Niltava macgrigoriae
Verditer Flycatcher	Eumyias thalassinus
Lesser Shortwing	Brachypteryx leucophris
White-tailed Robin (H)	Myiomela leucura
Himalayan Bluetail	Tarsiger rufilatus
Black-backed Forktail	Enicurus immaculatus
Slaty-backed Forktail	Enicurus schistaceus
Spotted Forktail	Enicurus maculatus



Common Name	Scientific Name	
Blue Whistling Thrush	Myophonus caeruleus	
Slaty-backed Flycatcher	Ficedula erithacus	
Pygmy Flycatcher	Ficedula hodgsoni	
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	Ficedula strophiata	
Ultramarine Flycatcher	Ficedula superciliaris	
Little Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula westermanni	
Slaty-blue Flycatcher	Ficedula tricolor	
Taiga Flycatcher	Ficedula albicilla	
Hodgson's Redstart	Phoenicurus hodgsoni	
Blue-fronted Redstart	Phoenicurus frontalis	
Plumbeous Water Redstart	Phoenicurus fuliginosus	
White-capped Redstart	Phoenicurus leucocephalus	
Blue Rock Thrush	Monticola solitarius	
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	Monticola rufiventris	
Blue-capped Rock Thrush	Monticola cinclorhyncha	
Siberian Stonechat	Saxicola maurus	
Grey Bush Chat	Saxicola ferreus	
Dippers (Cinclidae)		
Brown Dipper	Cinclus pallasii	
Leafbirds (Chloropseidae)		
Orange-bellied Leafbird	Chloropsis hardwickii	
Flowerpeckers (Dicaeidae)		
Plain Flowerpecker	Dicaeum minullum	
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	Dicaeum ignipectus	
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)		
Mrs. Gould's Sunbird	Aethopyga gouldiae	
Green-tailed Sunbird	Aethopyga nipalensis	
Black-throated Sunbird	Aethopyga saturata	
Crimson Sunbird	Aethopyga siparaja	
Fire-tailed Sunbird	Aethopyga ignicauda	
Streaked Spiderhunter	Arachnothera magna	
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)		
Russet Sparrow	Passer cinnamomeus	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	



Common Name	Scientific Name
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estr	ildidae)
White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata
Accentors (Prunellidae)	
Alpine Accentor	Prunella collaris
Altai Accentor	Prunella himalayana
Rufous-breasted Accentor	Prunella strophiata
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Citrine Wagtail	Motacilla citreola
Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea
White Wagtail	Motacilla alba
White-browed Wagtail	Motacilla maderaspatensis
Olive-backed Pipit	Anthus hodgsoni
Rosy Pipit	Anthus roseatus
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae	e)
Collared Grosbeak	Mycerobas affinis
White-winged Grosbeak	Mycerobas carnipes
Red-headed Bullfinch	Pyrrhula erythrocephala
Plain Mountain Finch	Leucosticte nemoricola
Common Rosefinch	Carpodacus erythrinus
Scarlet Finch	Carpodacus sipahi
Crimson-browed Finch	Carpodacus subhimachalus
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch	Chloris spinoides
Red Crossbill	Loxia curvirostra
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Crested Bunting	Emberiza lathami
Little Bunting	Emberiza pusilla

Species seen:	301
Species heard:	13
Total recorded:	314



## **Mammal List**

Mammals '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 the IUCN Red List:

EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common Name	Scientific Name	
Pikas (Ochotonidae)		
Large-eared Pika	Ochotona macrotis	
Moupin Pika	Ochotona thibetana	
Squirrels and Relatives (Sciuridae)		
Black Giant Squirrel	Ratufa bicolor	
Himalayan Striped Squirrel	Tamiops mcclellandii	
Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel	Dremomys lokriah	
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)		
Assam Macaque	Macaca assamensis	
Rhesus Monkey	Macaca mulatta	
Gee's Golden Langur - EN	Trachypithecus geei	
Capped Langur - VU	Trachypithecus pileatus	
Canids (Canidae)		
Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	
Mustelids (Mustelidae)		
Yellow-throated Marten	Martes flavigula	
Deer, Elk, Mooses (Cervidae)		
Northern Red Muntjac	Muntiacus vaginalis	
Species seen:	12	
Total recorded:	14	
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