Sri Lanka
Endemic Birds & Big Game II
23rd November to 3rd December 2017 (11 days)
Trip Report

Indian Pitta by Rich Lindie

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: Rich Lindie
For most of us, the tour kicked off at the Cinnamon Red Hotel in Colombo, where we left at 8am for a drive to the Heritance Hotel, and then the Wallawa, to collect the remaining members of our group, before heading straight to the Kithulgala area. Once there, we had lunch, and then crossed the river (by pontoon) for our first visit to the park, where we quickly got onto our first Red-backed Flamebacks, and a Serendib Scops Owl not long after, not to mention a few goodies like Sri Lanka Swallow, Layard’s Parakeet and Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot on the way! Returning to the river, we also saw our first Brown-breasted Flycatcher and a male Sri Lanka Junglefowl. After dinner, and back in the national park, a few of us tried for Sri Lanka Bay Owl but had to settle for a Dark-fronted Babbler and Brown Fish Owl instead.

On the second day of the tour, we started the morning off with a pre-breakfast stroll around a nearby resort, where several ‘trip birds’ put in an appearance, including our main targets – Chestnut-backed Owlet, Brown-capped Babbler and Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill. Following that, we returned to our lodge for breakfast, before heading out to the other side of the river once again. Taking the suspension bridge, for a change, we passed first through some very productive secondary forest, and then through a small village on the edge of the park. Both areas produced some good birds, starting with a popular Black-naped Monarch, a low-flying Black Eagle, a perched Besra and a couple of Sri Lanka Hill Myna in the forest, and a couple of Crimson-fronted Barbets inside the village itself.

Back at the lodge, we took a little time off in the heat of the day before making a final trip to the park headquarters, seeing our first Indian Pitta (in a garden) along the way, and an Indian Scops Owl after dark.

A leisurely breakfast saw in the start of the following day, followed by a 3-hour drive to Nuwara Eliya, where we checked into our hotel and went for a short stroll nearby – picking up a Paddyfield Pipit and a couple of White-bellied Sea Eagles for our efforts. We then ate lunch, and immediately set out for a spot of birding on the edge of town, where a Sri Lanka Bush Warbler put in a pretty lengthy appearance – albeit an on-and-off one. In Victoria Park, shortly thereafter, we saw yet more Indian Pittas and a few of the more common highland endemics, but not a single Pied Thrush! Making one more stop before dinner, this time to a spot along the Hakgala road, patience and persistence paid off when we all managed to grab views of a Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush or two.

The next morning, we departed for Horton Plains National Park at 5:30. Along the way, just outside the town of Pattipola, we were thrilled to spot a group of Sri Lanka Wood Pigeons sitting in a roadside tree. Up in the park itself, we were greeted by truly miserable weather but it didn't take long before we spotted the next of our targets, when a Dull-blue Flycatcher popped up on the edge of a small forest pond at our first stop. Things got a little slower thereafter, but we persisted, and eventually everyone caught up with Indian Blackbird and Hill Swallow before a brief stop in the rain on our way out produced one more Dull-blue Flycatcher for good measure. We then had lunch back in Nuwara Eliya, popped to the local racetrack for a spot of wetland birding, and ended up at the Victoria Gardens for one last attempt at Pied Thrush. Enjoying sightings of several of the species seen the day before, including Forest Wagtail, as well as our first sighting of Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, we enjoyed our time in the park, though it wasn't until the eleventh-hour that we could finally relax, when a lovely male Pied Thrush was eventually picked up!
Leavers the highlands behind the next morning, we made our way towards Tissa and the 'dry' south-east, with just one planned stop to make along the way. Unfortunately, the rain that greeted us in the morning had not let up at all during our drive to the Surrey Bird Sanctuary, and we arrived there to be greeted by a deluge and maze of wet and muddy trails. Unperturbed, however, the whole group set off to twitch a roosting Brown Wood Owl before retreating to the bus for the rest of the morning. A little drier, we ate lunch in Tissa, and went directly to the 'tanks' where, thankfully, the rain held off for long enough for us to see a great trio of owl species, and a host of waterfowl, including Cotton Pygmy Goose, Watercock and Pheasant-tailed Jacana. We then ended off the day with a long vigil for Whitename Woodpecker, a pair of which put in a stellar appearance.

We began our full day in Yala Park with the usual pile-up outside the park, though it wasn’t long before we escaped the crowds by taking the first turn from the main road. And, despite wet weather throughout the day, we managed to find almost 130 species of birds and 5 leopards! We even managed to make it through our lunch break without getting drenched. Needless to say, highlights were many and included seeing several Painted Stork, a Black-necked Stork, Barred Buttonquails, Great Stone-curlews, Yellow-wattled Lapwings, countless Green Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall’s Iora, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, up-close Jerdon’s Bush Larks and Jungle Prinia. On the rarity front, we were thrilled to find singles of both Daurian and Chestnut-tailed Starlings. A roadside stop on the way back to our hotel also produced our first Indian Nightjar of the trip.
Another night of heavy rain led straight into a morning of the same, and it soon became clear that we would not be getting to experience the dry south-east as advertised – confirmed by media warnings of flooding in nearby parts of the country and southern India. Spirits not dampened, however, we set off for Bundala National Park in the wee hours of the morning, where, despite the weather, the birds were good to us again. Indeed, during just a few hours in the wetlands and mudflats there, we picked up more trip birds and lifers than I think any of us had expected, including Indian Stone-curlew, Lesser Adjutant, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Small Pratincole!

Returning to our hotel mid-morning, we packed our bags and headed for our second stop in the ‘dry’ zone – Udawalawa National Park. As expected, it wasn’t long before we found our first elephants, though yet more rain, and what seems to be an unmanageably spreading quantity of invasive plants, meant our experience in Udawalawa wasn’t quite the same as that in Yala and Bundala National Parks. We ALL managed to catch up on Sirkeer Malkoha, however, and that’s all that mattered. Our second evening excursion for Jerdon’s Nightjar was a complete wash (blow?) out.

By then, fed up with the seemingly incessant rain, none of us was to argue with the idea of some early morning coffee and tea in lieu of rushing out into the field. Then, as if to reward our patience, we were given a window of clarity (relative, of course), allowing us an hour of birding in woodland near our hotel. The catch being that we didn't see anything of particular interest, save for a couple of Pale-billed Flowerpeckers (eaters?), so it was off to breakfast we headed, before boarding the bus for the final stop in our Sri Lankan adventures – Sinharaja.
Once there, we waited out yet more rain at our hotel, before popping down to Kudawa village, where persistence paid off with great views of Black-throated Munia.

Our first day in Sinharaja was, wait for it...a washout. Well, almost – we did pick up our main target for the morning, White-faced Starling, even if nothing else. And by midday, there was enough of a break in the weather to allow us a stroll in the national park proper, where Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Spot-winged Thrush and Sri Lanka Frogmouth put in appearances. In addition, we added Crimson-backed Flameback, near Martin’s Place, before calling it a day.

Our second day in Sinharaja, by contrast, saw much clearer conditions, and we not only enjoyed several hours of rain-free birding, we achieved the seemingly impossible, by not only finding all the remainder of the island's endemics and specials, we did so before lunch! Our last bird? A Sri Lanka Thrush, which FINALLY put in an appearance, preceded by our penultimate target, Red-faced Malkoha – a flock of which swung by as we were taking shelter from another midday downpour! Oh, and who can forget the Sri Lanka Spurfowl and Slaty-legged Crake that preceded that!

Somehow, despite the conditions, we pulled off a remarkably successful tour, and a thoroughly enjoyable one at that. Persistence and patience, by all in the group, payed off on so many occasions, ensuring we managed to find a record-equalling number of local specials (57 out of 60 possibles) – including all of the island's endemics, a handful of regional rarities – Daurian Starling at the top of the list, and a very respectable 236 species. This in only 11 days, 8 of which were almost rained out, and in addition to the great experiences, both cultural and natural!

Annotated List of species recorded

Note: Number in brackets ( ) indicate number of days on the tour the species was recorded.
List powered through the report generator of our partner iGoTerra.

Birds (236 in total: 236 seen)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2017. IOC World Bird List (v 7.3).

Status codes: E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced
IUCN codes: CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

Recording codes: (H) = Heard only

Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl Anatidae

Lesser Whistling Duck
Daily sightings in the south-east.

Dendrocygna javanica

Cotton Pygmy Goose
A handful at the Tissa tank.

Nettapus coromandelianus coromandelianus

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies Phasianidae
Sri Lanka Spurfowl  
Unbeatable views! Sinharaja.

Sri Lanka Junglefowl  
Several sightings.

**Storks Ciconiidae**

**Painted Stork (NT)**  
*Mycteria leucocephala*  
Daily sightings during our time in the south-east.

**Asian Openbill**  
*Anastomus oscitans*  
Near-daily sightings in the south-east, as well as a couple near Colombo.

**Woolly-necked Stork (VU)**  
*Ciconia episcopus episcopus*  
A handful in Yala NP.

**Black-necked Stork (NT)**  
*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus asiaticus*  
One sighting in Yala NP.

**Lesser Adjutant (VU)**  
*Leptoptilos javanicus*  
Great views of a small group in Bundala NP.

**Ibises and Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**

**Black-headed Ibis (NT)**  
*Threskiornis melanocephalus*  
Several sightings in the south-east, as well as during our drive to Kithulgala.

**Eurasian Spoonbill**  
*Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*  
A few sightings, split between Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns Ardeidae**

**Yellow Bittern**  
*Ixobrychus sinensis*  
One sighting near Nuwara Eliya, a couple more in the south-east.

**Black Bittern**  
*Dupetor flavicollis flavicollis*  
A handful of sightings in the south-east.

**Black-crowned Night Heron**  
*Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*  
Tissa and Bundala NP.

**Indian Pond Heron**  
*Ardeola grayii*  
Near-daily sightings.

**Eastern Cattle Egret**  
*Bubulcus coromandus*  
As with the species above.

**Grey Heron**  
*Ardea cinerea cinerea*  
Nuwara Eliya and the south-east.

**Purple Heron**  
*Ardea purpurea manilensis*  
Tissa and Bundala NP.

**Great Egret**  
*Ardea alba modesta*  
Kithulgala, Nuwara Eliya and Bundala NP.
**Intermediate Egret**  
*Ardea intermedia intermedia*
Nuwara Eliya and the south-east.

**Little Egret**  
*Egretta garzetta garzetta*
Several, scattered sightings.

---

**Pelecanidae**

**Spot-billed Pelican (NT)**  
*Pelecanus philippensis*
Colombo and throughout the south-east.

---

**Phalacrocoracidae**

**Little Cormorant**  
*Microcarbo niger*
Daily sightings until we reached Sinharaja.

**Indian Cormorant**  
*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
Two sightings in Bundala NP.

**Great Cormorant**  
*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*
A couple of sightings in the south-east.

---

**Anhingidae**

**Oriental Darter (NT)**  
*Anhinga melanogaster*
First sighted near Colombo, then throughout the south-east.

---

**Accipitridae**

**Crested Honey Buzzard**  
*Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis*
A handful of sightings, including a few at Kithulgala.

**Crested Serpent Eagle**  
*Spilornis cheela spilogaster*
Several, scattered sightings.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle**  
*Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis*
Several sightings, including a few close-ups during our time in Yala NP.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle**  
*Lophotriorchis kienerii kienerii*
A single sighting from Martin’s Lodge, Sinharaja.

**Black Eagle**  
*Ictinaetus malaiensis perniger*
Two sightings – one at Kithulgala, another in Sinharaja.

**Shikra**  
*Accipiter badius badius*
A handful of sightings, split between Kithulgala and the south-east.

**Besra**  
*Accipiter virgatus besra*
One sighting just outside Tissa, another at Sinharaja.

**Brahminy Kite**  
*Haliastur indus indus*
Sighted daily outside the two rainforest sites.

**White-bellied Sea Eagle**  
*Haliaeetus leucogaster*
First seen well around Nuwara Eliya.
Grey-headed Fish Eagle

A handful of sightings in the south-east.

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots *Rallidae*

Slaty-legged Crake

Fantastic views during our second morning in the Sinharaja area.

White-breasted Waterhen

Near-daily sightings.

Watercock

One sighting in Tissa, another in Bundala NP.

Grey-headed Swamphen

Large numbers in the south-east.

Common Moorhen

A couple in Tissa.

Buttonquails *Turnicidae*

Barred Buttonquail

A handful of sightings, split between Bundala and Yala national parks.

Thick-knees *Burhinidae*

Indian Stone-curlew

A great sighting in Bundala NP.

Great Stone-curlew (NT)

Several great looks during our time in the south-east.

Stilts and Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

Black-winged Stilt

Daily sightings in the south-east.

Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae*

Yellow-wattled Lapwing

A few great looks during our time in Yala NP, followed by more the next day.

Red-wattled Lapwing

Ubiquitous away from heavily forested sites.

Pacific Golden Plover

One sighting in Yala NP, followed by several in Bundala NP.

Grey Plover

Bundala NP only.

Little Ringed Plover

One sighting in Yala NP.
Kentish Plover  
Yala and Bundala national parks.  
*Charadrius alexandrinus*

Lesser Sand Plover  
As with the species above.  
*Charadrius mongolus atrifrons*

Greater Sand Plover  
Two sightings in Yala NP.  
*Charadrius leschenaultii leschenaultii*

**Jacanas Jacanidae**

Pheasant-tailed Jacana  
Great looks at several in the south-east.  
*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

**Sandpipers and Allies Scolopacidae**

Eurasian Curlew (NT)  
Bundala NP.  
*Numenius arquata orientalis*

Black-tailed Godwit (NT)  
A small group in Bundala NP.  
*Limosa limosa*

Ruddy Turnstone  
Bundala NP.  
*Arenaria interpres interpres*

Ruff  
Bundala NP.  
*Calidris pugnax*

Broad-billed Sandpiper  
A small group in Bundala NP.  
*Calidris falcinellus falcinellus*

Curlew Sandpiper  
Yala NP and Bundala.  
*Calidris ferruginea*

Sanderling  
Bundala NP.  
*Calidris alba alba*

Little Stint  
Yala and Bundala national parks.  
*Calidris minuta*

Pin-tailed Snipe  
First sighted in Nuwara Eliya, sighted daily in the south-east.  
*Gallinago stenura*

Common Snipe  
One sighting in Nuwara Eliya.  
*Gallinago gallinago*

Common Sandpiper  
Nuwara Eliya, Yala NP and Bundala NP.  
*Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper  
A couple of sightings in Yala NP.  
*Tringa ochropus*

Common Redshank  
Yala NP and Bundala NP.  
*Tringa totanus*

Marsh Sandpiper  
Yala NP and Bundala NP.  
*Tringa stagnatilis*
Wood Sandpiper  
Yala NP and Bundala NP.  

Common Greenshank  
Yala NP and Bundala NP.

Pratincoles and Coursers *Glareolidae*

Small Pratincole  
Glareola lactea
A couple of sightings in Yala NP, another in Bundala NP.

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers *Laridae*

Gull-billed Tern  
Gelochelidon nilotica
Daily sightings in the south-east.

Caspian Tern  
Hydroprogne caspia
Yala NP and Bundala NP.

Greater Crested Tern  
Thalasseus bergii velox
As with the species above.

Lesser Crested Tern  
Thalasseus bengalensis
One sighting in Bundala NP.

Little Tern  
Sternula albifrons sinensis
Yala and Bundala.

Common Tern  
Sternula hirundo
A singleton in Tissa.

Whiskered Tern  
Chlidonias hybrida
Tissa and Bundala NP.

White-winged Tern  
Chlidonias leucopterus
As with the species above, only lower numbers.

Pigeons and Doves *Columbidae*

Rock Dove  
Columba livia

Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon (VU)  
Columba torringtoniae
A great sighting near Pattipola.

Oriental Turtle Dove  
Streptopelia orientalis
One sighting in Udawalawa NP.

Eurasian Collared Dove  
Streptopelia decaocto
One sighting near the entrance to Bundala NP.

Spotted Dove  
Spilopelia chinensis
Ubiquitous.

Common Emerald Dove  
Chalcophaps indica robinsoni
Several habituated birds in the Sinharaja area. First sighted, however, in Kithulgala.

Orange-breasted Green Pigeon  
Treron bicinctus leggei
Multiple great looks during our time in both Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Sri Lanka Green Pigeon**
First sighted in Kithulgala.

**Green Imperial Pigeon**
As with the species above.

### Cuckoos *Cuculidae*

**Green-billed Coucal (VU)**
Eventually sighted along a trail in Sinharaja.

**Greater Coucal**
Several sightings throughout the tour.

**Sirkeer Malkoha**
Even I saw this one!

**Red-faced Malkoha (VU)**
A fantastic sighting of a small group near the Sinharaja research station.

**Blue-faced Malkoha**
Unfortunately, just one brief sighting in Udawalawa NP, and only for some of us.

**Jacobin Cuckoo**
A few sightings in Yala NP, and a couple more in Bundala NP.

**Asian Koel**
Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Banded Bay Cuckoo**
Great looks at one in Kithulgala.

**Grey-bellied Cuckoo**
Several sightings in Yala NP.

### Barn-Owls *Tytonidae*

**H) Sri Lanka Bay Owl**
Kithulgala.

### Owls *Strigidae*

**Serendib Scops Owl (EN)**
Fantastic views of a roosting pair in Kithulgala.

**Indian Scops Owl**
One during the second night walk in Kithulgala, two more on a day-roost in Tissa.

**Brown Fish Owl**
One during the first night walk in Kithulgala, another on a day-roost in Tissa.

**Brown Wood Owl**
Great views at Surrey Bird Sanctuary.

**Jungle Owlet**
Great views at Surrey Bird Sanctuary.
One on a day-roost in a garden in Tissa.

**Chestnut-backed Owlet (NT)**
Glaucidium castanotum
Fantastic views of a pair during a walk around the Sisira’s Country Lodge grounds.

**Frogmouths Podargidae**

**Sri Lanka Frogmouth**
Batrachostomus moniliger moniliger
Great views of a roosting pair in Sinharaja.

**Nightjars and Allies Caprimulgidae**

**Indian Nightjar**
Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos
Two - near the main road between Yala NP and Tissa.

**Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae**

**Crested Treeswift**
Hemiprocne coronata
A few sightings in the south-east.

**Swifts Apodidae**

**Indian Swiftlet**
Aerodramus unicolor
Near-daily sightings.

**Brown-backed Needletail**
Hirundapus giganteus indicus
One sighting at Kitulgala, another in Yala NP.

**Asian Palm Swift**
Cypsiurus balasiensis balasiensis
A few, scattered sightings.

**Little Swift**
Apus affinis singalensis
Kithulgala and the south-east.

**Trogons Trogonidae**

**Malabar Trogon**
Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus
One sighting in Kithulgala, a few in Sinharaja, including one of a male.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

**Indian Roller**
Coracias benghalensis indicus
Several sightings in the south-east, and a couple on the first day.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

**Stork-billed Kingfisher**
Pelargopsis capensis capensis
A sighting near the Plantation Hotel for some of the group, and one for all of us in Tissa.

**White-throated Kingfisher**
Halcyon smyrnensis fusca
Several fabulous sightings.

**Common Kingfisher**
Alcedo atthis taprobana
Also seen well on several occasions.

**Pied Kingfisher**  
*Ceryle rudis leucomelanurus*  
A few sightings in both Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Bee-eaters *Meropidae***

**Green Bee-eater**  
*Merops orientalis*  
Countless in the south-east.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater**  
*Merops philippinus*  
Sighted at nearly all sites visited.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**  
*Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti*  
One sighting in Kithulgala, another in Yala NP.

**Hoopoes *Upupidae***

**Eurasian Hoopoe**  
*Upupa epops ceylonensis*  
A few sightings in Yala NP.

**Hornbills *Bucerotidae***

**Malabar Pied Hornbill (NT)**  
*Anthracoceros coronatus*  
Sighted daily in the south-east.

**Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill**  
*Ocyceros gingalensis*  
Particularly great looks during our time in Sinharaja, where some individuals are fairly habituated.

**Asian Barbets *Megalaimidae***

**Brown-headed Barbet**  
*Psilopogon zeylanicus zeylanicus*  
Multiple sightings, and throughout the country.

**Yellow-fronted Barbet**  
*Psilopogon flavifrons*  
Also seen up-close on several occasions in Sinharaja, though first sighted at Kithulgala.

**Crimson-fronted Barbet**  
*Psilopogon rubricapillus*  
Great looks at a few during one of our walks in Kithulgala.

**Coppersmith Barbet**  
*Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus*  
A handful in the south-east – first in Yala NP.

**Woodpeckers *Picidae***

**Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**  
*Yungipicus nanus gymnopthalmos*  
One sighting in Kithulgala.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker**  
*Leiopicus mahrattensis mahrattensis*  
A handful of sightings in the south-east.

**Lesser Yellownape**  
*Picus chlorolophus wellsi*  
A couple of individuals in the Kithulgala area.

**Red-backed Flameback**  
*Dinopium psarodes*  
A few sightings in the south-east.
Sighted at all but two of the sites visited (Sinharaja and Horton Plains).

**Crimson-backed Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*
A couple of sightings in Sinharaja.

**White-naped Woodpecker** *Chrysocolaptes festivus tantus*
A great sighting of a pair in Tissa, and a well-deserved one at that!

**Old World Parrots Psittaculidae**

**Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala*
One sighting in Bundala NP.

**Layarad's Parakeet** *Psittacula calthropae*
A handful of sightings, the first of which was in Kithulgala.

**Alexandrine Parakeet (NT)** *Psittacula eupatria eupatria*
Several sightings, scattered throughout.

**Rose-ringred Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri manillensis*
Sighted at all but the two rainforest sites.

**Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus beryllinus*
One of the first endemics sighted (at Kithulgala), and seen on several occasions thereafter.

**Pittas Pittidae**

**Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyura*
First sighted in a small garden in Kithulgala, before going on to be seen on four other days!

**Woodshrikes and allies Tephrodornithidae**

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus leggei*
Sightings in Kithulgala and in the highlands.

**Sri Lanka Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis affinis*
A handful of sightings in Yala NP.

**Ioras Aegithinidae**

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia multicolor*
A few in Kithulgala, and several in the south-east.

**Marshall's Iora** *Aegithina nigrolutea*
Great views of a pair in Yala NP – at one point, side-by-side with the species above!

**Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**

**Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina melanoptera sykesi*
First sighted in Kithulgala, best views in Yala NP.

**Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus cinnamomeus*
Several sightings in the south-east.

**Orange Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*
A few great sightings in Sinharaja.

**Shrikes Laniidae**

**Brown Shrike**  
*Lanius cristatus*  
Near-daily sightings after we left Kithulgala.

**Old World Orioles Oriolidae**

**Black-hooded Oriole**  
*Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*  
Kithulgala and the south-east.

**Drongos Dicruridae**

**White-bellied Drongo**  
*Dicrurus caerulescens*  
Multiple sightings, scattered throughout the country.

**Sri Lanka Drongo**  
*Dicrurus lophorinus*  
Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

**Fantails Rhipiduridae**

**White-browed Fantail**  
*Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*  
A few sightings in both Yala NP and Bundala NP.

**Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae**

**Black-naped Monarch**  
*Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*  
Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

**Indian Paradise Flycatcher**  
*Terpsiphone paradisi*  
First sighted in Kithulgala, then sighted every day during the last week of the tour.

**Crows, Jays, and Magpies Corvidae**

**Sri Lanka Blue Magpie (VU)**  
*Urocissa ornate*  
Just two sightings in Sinharaja.

**House Crow**  
*Corvus splendens protegatus*  
A few sightings.

**Indian Jungle Crow**  
*Corvus culminatus*  
Sighted everywhere but for in Colombo and the two rainforest areas.

**Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae**

**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**  
*Culicicapa ceylonensis ceylonensis*  
Several in the highlands, including a couple of confiding individuals in Victoria Gardens.

**Chickadees and Tits Paridae**

**Cinereous Tit**  
*Parus cinereus mahrattarum*
Also sighted on a few occasions during our time in the highlands.

### Larks Alaudidae

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark**  
*Sighted in Yala NP by some, sighted by all in Bundala NP.*  
_Eremopterix griseus_

**Jerdon's Bush Lark**  
*Great views of several in Yala NP.*  
_Mirafra affinis_

**Oriental Skylark**  
*Nice close-ups of a few in Bundala NP.*  
_Alauda gulgula gulgula_

### Bulbs Pycnonotidae

**Black-capped Bulbul**  
*First sighted in Kithulgala, though our best views were of several birds seen at Martin’s feeder.*  
_Pycnonotus melanicterus_

**Red-vented Bulbul**  
*Ubiquitous.*  
_Pycnonotus cafer_

**Yellow-eared Bulbul (NT)**  
*Great sightings during our time in the highlands, most of which were in Victoria Gardens.*  
_Pycnonotus penicillatus_

**White-browed Bulbul**  
*Several in the south-east.*  
_Pycnonotus luteolus insulae_

**Yellow-browed Bulbul**  
*Great views at both rainforest sites, including some at Martin’s feeder.*  
_Acritillas indica_

**Square-tailed Bulbul**  
*Common at both rainforest sites visited, and also seen at Martin’s feeder.*  
_Hypsipetes ganeeusa humii_

### Swallows Hirundinidae

**Barn Swallow**  
*Sighted on all but three days – the three days we spent in rainforest.*  
_Hirundo rustica_

**Hill Swallow**  
*A couple of good sightings in Horton Plains NP.*  
_Hirundo domicola_

**Sri Lanka Swallow**  
*Several good sightings, and pretty much the first endemic sighted on the tour (at Kithulgala).*  
_Cecropis hyperythra_

### Leaf-Warblers Phylloscopidae

**Green Warbler**  
*Several sightings.*  
_Phylloscopus nitidus_

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler**  
*A couple of good looks during our time in Kithulgala.*  
_Phylloscopus magnirostris_

### Reed-Warblers and Allies Acrocephalidae

**Clamorous Reed Warbler**  
_Acrocephalus stentoreus meridionalis_
Good looks at a few in Bundala NP.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler**  *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
A handful of sightings during the first week of the tour.

**Grassbirds and Allies Locustellidae**

**Sri Lanka Bush Warbler**  *Elaphrornis palliseri*
Great views of two – one near Nuwara Eliya, another near the research station in Horton Plains NP.

**Cisticolas and Allies Cisticolidae**

**Zitting Cisticola**  *Cisticola juncidis*
Two sightings in Horton Plains NP, followed by a couple more in Bundala NP.

**Jungle Prinia**  *Prinia sylvatica valida*
Great views of a couple in the Yala NP picnic area.

**Ashy Prinia**  *Prinia socialis brevicauda*
A handful of good views, our first of which was near our hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

**Plain Prinia**  *Prinia inornata insularis*
Several sightings in the south-east.

**Common Tailorbird**  *Orthotomus sutorius*
Multiple sightings during the first week of the tour.

**Babblers Timaliidae**

**Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler**  *Pomatorhinus melanurus*
A few nice looks during our time in Sinharaja.

**Tawny-bellied Babbler**  *Dumetia hyperythra phillipsi*
A few at Kithulgala, and a couple more in the south-east.

**Dark-fronted Babbler**  *Rhopocichla atriceps*
One sighting (on a night-walk) in Kithulgala, a few in Sinharaja.

**Fulvettas and Ground Babblers Pellorneidae**

**Brown-capped Babbler**  *Pellorneum fuscocapillus*
One sighting in the Kithulgala area (near the Chestnut-backed Owlet site).

**Laughingthrushes Leiothrichidae**

**Orange-billed Babbler (NT)**  *Turdoides rufescens*
A few in Kithulgala, multiple in Sinharaja.

**Yellow-billed Babbler**  *Turdoides affinis taprobanus*
Sighted on most days of the tour.

**Ashy-headed Laughingthrush (VU)**  *Garrulax cinereifrons*
A couple of great looks during our time in Sinharaja.
Old World Warblers Sylviidae

Yellow-eyed Babbler  
*Chrysomma sinense nasale*
One sighting in Bundala NP, a couple in Udawalawa NP.

Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies Zosteropidae

Oriental White-eye  
*Zosterops palpebrosus egregius*
Several sightings, scattered throughout the trip.

Sri Lanka White-eye  
*Zosterops ceylonensis*
A handful of sightings in the highlands.

Nuthatches Sittidae

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch  
*Sitta frontalis frontalis*
A lovely sighting in Victoria Gardens, and several in Sinharaja.

Starlings Sturnidae

Sri Lanka Hill Myna (NT)  
*Gracula ptilogenys*
On sighting in Kithulgala – near the village.

Southern Hill Myna  
*Gracula indica*
A handful of sightings in Kithulgala, including a great close-up in the village.

Common Myna  
*Acrocephalus tristis melanosternus*
Near-daily sightings.

Daurian Starling  
*Agropsar sturninus*
One sighting in Yala NP – a very unexpected one, and an appreciated bonus.

Chestnut-tailed Starling  
*Sturnia malabarica*
Another surprise sighting from Yala, and in the very same area as the species above!

Brahminy Starling  
*Sturnia pagodarum*
A handful in Yala NP.

White-faced Starling  
*Sturnornis albofrontatus*
Two sightings in Sinharaja – the first after a long, wet stakeout.

Rosy Starling  
*Pastor roseus*
A few sightings in the south-east, spread over three separate days.

Thrushes and Allies Turdidae

Pied Thrush  
*Geokichla wardii*
Eventually found, after a great deal of effort and patience, in Victoria Gardens.

Spot-winged Thrush  
*Geokichla spiloptera*
A few great looks during our time in Sinharaja.

Sri Lanka Thrush (NT)  
*Zoothera imbricata*
Who can forget this one!? – our final endemic, a cracker to boot!

Indian Blackbird  
*Turdus simillimus kinnisii*
One sighting near the restaurant in Horton Plains NP, a couple more near the research station.

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

- **Indian Robin**  
  Great views of several in the south-east.
  
  *Copsychus fulicatus leucopterus*

- **Oriental Magpie-Robin**  
  Near-daily sightings during the first week of the tour.
  
  *Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*

- **(H) White-rumped Shama**  
  Yala NP.
  
  *Copsychus malaboricus leggei*

- **Asian Brown Flycatcher**  
  Several in Kithulgala.
  
  *Muscicapa dauurica*

- **Brown-breasted Flycatcher**  
  Multiple encounters during our time in the highlands and rainforest areas.
  
  *Muscicapa muttui*

- **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**  
  Great looks at a few in Kithulgala, followed by more in Sinharaja.
  
  *Cyornis tickelli jerdoni*

- **Dull-blue Flycatcher (NT)**  
  Three sightings during our time in the highlands, though it wasn’t until the third that most caught up.
  
  *Eumyias sordidus*

- **Indian Blue Robin**  
  A few sightings in the highlands and in Sinharaja, including a few of some lovely males at the latter site.
  
  *Larvivora brunnea brunnea*

- **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush (EN)**  
  One relatively great sighting during our time in Nuwara Eliya.
  
  *Myophonus blighi*

- **Kashmir Flycatcher (VU)**  
  A few brief sightings in Victoria Gardens.
  
  *Ficedula subrubra*

- **Pied Bush Chat**  
  A few in the highlands.
  
  *Saxicola caprata atratus*

**Leafbirds Chloropseidae**

- **Jerdon's Leafbird**  
  A few sightings, split between Kithulgala and the south-east, though mostly in the latter.
  
  *Chloropsis jerdoni*

- **Golden-fronted Leafbird**  
  A couple of sightings in Kithulgala.
  
  *Chloropsis aurifrons insularis*

**Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae**

- **Thick-billed Flowerpecker**  
  One sighting in Udawalawa.
  
  *Dicaeum agile zeylonicum*

- **Legge's Flowerpecker (NT)**  
  A couple of sightings in Sinharaja.
  
  *Dicaeum vincens*

- **Pale-billed Flowerpecker**  
  Several sightings, most of which were in Sinharaja.
  
  *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*
Sunbirds and Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae*

**Purple-rumped Sunbird**
Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica
Sighted every day of the tour.

**Purple Sunbird**
Cinnyris asiaticus asiaticus
A few sightings in the south-east.

**Loten's Sunbird**
Cinnyris lotenius lotenius
Several sightings, including a few at Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

**House Sparrow**
Passer domesticus indicus

Weavers and Allies *Ploceidae*

**Baya Weaver**
Ploceus philippinus philippinus
A few sightings in the south-east.

Waxbills and Allies *Estrildidae*

**Indian Silverbill**
Euodice malabarica
A couple of pairs during our last hour in Yala NP.

**White-rumped Munia**
Lonchura striata striata
Close-ups of a flock in Kithulgala, and a couple of sightings in the south-east.

**Scaly-breasted Munia**
Lonchura punctulata punctulata
Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Black-throated Munia**
Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti
Great views of a pair attending a nest in Sinharaja.

**Tricolored Munia**
Lonchura malacca
A handful of sightings split between Tissa and Yala NP.

Wagtails and Pipits *Motacillidae*

**Forest Wagtail**
Dendronanthus indicus
Great views of a few individuals in Victoria Gardens.

**Western Yellow Wagtail**
Motacilla flava
Sightings in both Yala and Bundala national parks.

**Grey Wagtail**
Motacilla cinerea cinerea
Daily sightings during our time in the wet zone.

**Paddyfield Pipit**
Anthus rufulus
Sightings in the highlands and the south-east.

**Blyth's Pipit**
Anthus godlewskii
One sighting in Yala NP
Mammals (16 in total: 16 seen)

Status codes: E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced
IUCN codes: CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

**Elephants Elephantidae**

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus maximus*
Several great encounters during our time in the south-east.

**Old World monkeys Cercopithecidae**

Toque Macaque *Macaca sinica*
Sighted on 6 days.

Tufted Gray Langur *Semnopithecus priam thersites*
Daily sightings in the south-east.

Purple-faced Langur *Trachypithecus vetulus*
A couple of sightings in Kithulgala, several in Sinharaja.

**Rabbits, Hares Leporidae**

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis*
A few sightings in the south-east.

**Squirrels Sciuridae**

Layard's Palm Squirrel *Funambulus layardi*
A few in Sinharaja.

Common Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum*
Daily sightings until we reached Sinharaja.

Grizzled Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura*
A handful of encounters, mostly in Kithulgala.

**Cats Felidae**

Leopard *Panthera pardus kotiya*
Five in one day in Yala NP!

**Mongooses Herpestidae**

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*
Several sightings in the south-east.

**Wolves, Coyote, Foxes, Jackals Canidae**

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*
A couple of sightings in the south-east.
**Pigs Suidae**

**Wild Boar**  
*Sus scrofa*  
Several in the south-east.

**Deer Cervidae**

**Chital**  
*Axis axis*  
Common in the two national parks in the south-east.

**Sambar**  
*Rusa unicolor*  
Great close-ups in both Horton Plains and Yala NP.

**Cattle, Antelopes, Sheep, Goats Bovidae**

**Domestic Water Buffalo**  
*Bubalus bubalis*  
Daily sightings in the south-east.

**Old World Fruit Bats Pteropodidae**

**Indian Flying Fox**  
*Pteropus giganteus*  
Near-daily sightings.

**Reptiles (8 in total: 8 seen)**

**Status codes:**  
E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced  
**IUCN codes:**  
CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

**Agamas Agamidae**

**Eastern Garden Lizard**  
*Calotes sp*  
Kithulgala.

**Rhinoceros Agama/Horned Lizard**  
*Ceratophora sp*  
Kithulgala.

**Lyre Head Lizard/Hump-nosed Lizard**  
*Lyriocephalus sp*  
Sinharaja.

**Wiegmann's Agama/Kangaroo Lizard**  
*Otocryptis sp*  
Sinharaja.

**Monitor Lizards Varanidae**

**Bengal Monitor**  
Yala NP and Sinharaja.

**Colubrid snakes Colubridae**

**Green Vine Snake**  
*Ahaetulla nasuta*
Sinhara.

**Viperid snakes Viperidae**

**Ceylon Pit Viper**

Sinhara.

**Trimeresurus trigonocephalus**

**Crocodiles and relatives Crocodylidae**

**Mugger Crocodile**

Several in the south-east.

---

Rockjumper Birding Ltd
The Hive, Lot 23
Centre Commercial du Barachois
La Place Cap, Tamarin
Mauritius

Tel: (USA & Canada) toll-free: 1-888-990-5552
Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com
Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com