Southern India
Birding & Wildlife of the Western Ghats I
13\textsuperscript{th} January to 24\textsuperscript{th} January 2018 (12 days)
Trip Report

White-bellied Blue Robin by Stephan Lorenz

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: Stephan Lorenz
Trip Report – RBL India - Southern: Birding & Wildlife of the Western Ghats I 2018

Tour Summary

The tour through the Western Ghats of South India proved immensely successful, and we recorded nearly all available endemics and near-endemics with an overall total of 276 species. Highlights in the former category included excellent views of the scarcer Grey-headed and Yellow-throated Bulbuls, Painted Bush Quail, localised Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, shy Nilgiri Thrush, and difficult Wynaad Laughingthrush. Near-endemic highlights included Jungle Bush Quail, Malabar Trogon, Blue-faced Malkoha, Orange Minivet, and more. In addition, we managed to get good visuals of all five possible nightjar species, plus six species of owls and Sri Lanka Frogmouth on a day roost. Raptors were well-represented, and we especially enjoyed seeing all four possible vulture species, with good views of the critically endangered White-rumped and Indian Vultures. Some true surprises of the tour included a flock of Small Pratincoles and a lost Great White Pelican among the Spot-billed Pelican colony at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary. The undoubted mammal highlight was two Leopards during a night drive in the Parabikulam Tiger Reserve.

Tour in Detail

We started the tour with a bit of birding in the Bengaluru Hotel grounds just before breakfast and managed to add Purple-rumped Sunbird, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, and the first Blyth’s Reed Warbler among more common and widespread birds. Fortunately for us, it was Saturday, so traffic was light as we left this immense city, and we arrived mid-morning at our first birding stop, the Ramdevara Betta Vulture Sanctuary. Incredibly, within fifteen minutes we managed to get excellent views of all of our targets. As we drove up to the entrance station, an adult Egyptian Vulture flew in, landing on one of the granite outcrops for great scope studies, and a Common Hawk-Cuckoo landed in a roadside tree. On a massive ledge on one of the taller, rocky domes, we spotted two endangered Indian Vultures and later saw them in flight as they caught a thermal. Just minutes later, we heard a different call among the throngs of Red-whiskered Bulbuls, and soon a pair of the localised Yellow-throated Bulbuls flew in for very close views. With these excellent sightings in the bag, we decided to push on to our next locale, a lake near the village of Kokkare Bellur. The unusually full lake was brimming with waterbirds in one corner, and Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, three species of ibis, plenty of egrets and herons, plus Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Little Grebe, and Whiskered Terns were all scoped.

A flooded paddy field nearby held Little Ringed Plovers, Wood Sandpipers, a roosting Green Sandpiper, and an uncommon Little Stint. After a lunch of typical and delicious South Indian cuisine, we made our final stop for the day at the famed Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary. Before boarding the rowboat to take us to the nesting colonies of waterbirds, we scrutinised a fruiting tree and came up with White-cheeked and Coppersmith Barbets, Indian Grey Hornbill, and Chestnut-tailed Starlings. The boat ride was very enjoyable and we could study several species of waterbirds at close range as they tended nests, displayed, or roosted on islands and in riverside

Yellow-throated Bulbul by Stephan Lorenz
trees. We counted large numbers of Little and Indian Cormorants, all expected herons and egrets, Eurasian Spoonbills in breeding plumage, pairs of roosting Great Thick-knees, and among the throngs of Spot-billed Pelicans, we discovered the biggest surprise of the day, a breeding plumaged Great White Pelican – *a vagrant in the area and definitely a first for the tour*. The rowboat took us through some quieter channels, where we found nesting Pied Kingfishers, a small Streak-throated Swallow colony – *we saw several of these scarce swallows very well* – plus a brief flyover Lesser Fish Eagle was also most unexpected. After we left the reserve, we checked some paddy fields at dusk and were rewarded with three species of munias coming to drink and roost, and a flock of Baya Weavers. We arrived in good time to check into our beautiful accommodations in Mysore, with a bird list for the first day exceeding 100 species!

In the early morning of the following day, we headed out to a lake and park near our accommodations. Since it was a weekend, locals were already jogging and exercising and we walked along the main path scoping the lake and checking the scattered trees. On the water, we found several Indian Spot-billed Ducks that showed nicely in the early morning light; while the nearby trees held Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Greenish Warbler, Asian Koel, Cinereous Tit, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, and other widespread species. We returned to the hotel for breakfast and then made a brief stop at Mysore Palace to admire its architecture. We started the long drive to the Mudumalai area, stopping in some drier agricultural areas along the way, which proved fairly productive. Here, we added Common Kestrel, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Larks, Red Avadavat, Indian Silverbill, a single pair of Jerdon's Leafbirds, and a pair of roosting Spotted Owlets. Along a canal, we picked up the only Wire-tailed Swallow of the trip as it coursed back and forth among Barn and Red-rumped Swallows.

We finally arrived at the Jungle Retreat in Mudumalai for a late lunch, and birding continued right away as a Loten's Sunbird flew into a flowering bush nearby. The beautiful accommodations at the Jungle Retreat are set amidst extensive natural vegetation, and bird activity was high any minute of the day. We had to interrupt our lunch since the rare and difficult to see Nigiri Thrush had been spotted at a small pool on the edge of the property. We rushed to the location and were rewarded with superb looks of this large and usually difficult to see thrush. This proved to be the only sighting of the thrush for the trip, so we were glad we had taken a break from lunch; but over the coming two days the small pool hosted Indian Blue Robin, Orange-headed Thrush, Forest Wagtail, Malabar Whistling Thrush and Puff-throated Babblers. The only Thick-billed Flowerpecker and Verditer Flycatcher of the trip were seen right next to our
cabins after lunch. After checking in, we continued to a nearby hill and open area, quickly finding one of our main targets, four Malabar Larks strutting on the ground. We also picked up our first Grey Francolin, Yellow-footed Green Pigeons, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers, the only Yellow-crowned Woodpecker of the trip, a pair of vocal Jerdon's Bushlarks perched in a tree at close range, and best of all, a brilliant Savanna Nightjar on a day roost. A Bonelli’s Eagle that flew past and kited momentarily above the hill was a nice addition. We stayed out until dark and were rewarded with distant views of flying Indian Nightjars and a perched Jerdon's Nightjar back at the lodge. After that, we called it a night and enjoyed a delicious dinner.

We had a full day to explore the varied habitats around Mudumalai and we started in the drier, open areas dominated by scattered trees and acacias, before checking riparian areas along the streams that were dominated by massive stands of bamboo, and we ventured forth after dark on a short night drive. It was an incredible day and our many hours in the field rewarded us with the majority of target species and some incredible sightings of truly difficult birds. First, we stopped at a shady area of standing water among some dense bamboo right next to the lodge and it only took a minute or two to find a confiding Indian Pitta. We then continued to the next stake out and while we had to remain in the van, since the area is a designated tiger reserve and Asian Elephants are present in good numbers, we still managed to find our main target. After a patient twenty-minute wait, we finally laid eyes on the scarce White-bellied Minivet, which eventually flew in very close to the van, totalling two males and three females. We returned to the village area where we were allowed to walk and carefully checked several fields, seeing Booted Warbler, Bay-backed Shrike, Rufous Treepie, Plum-headed Parakeets, surprising Grey-bellied Cuckoo, before we struck gold with two coveys of Jungle Bush Quail with several birds giving excellent flight views.

The remainder of the morning was spent along the bamboo-dominated stream near our lodge, where we managed Grey Junglefowl, great views of Malabar Grey Hornbill, Lesser Yellownape, endemic Malabar Woodshrikes, and three species of drongos, but we could not locate the White-naped Woodpecker. Our luck was holding though, and after we returned to the lodge for lunch we found a gorgeous White-naped Woodpecker working a large tree right next to our bungalows! We returned to some of the same areas during the afternoon and located a roosting Brown Fish Owl in another dense stand of bamboo, had our first views of Indian Scimitar Babblers, got good views of the endemic Nilgiri Flowerpecker, and found the only Common Woodshrike of the trip. We started a night drive just after dusk and were rewarded with glimpses of a Sloth Bear and great studies of an Indian Chameleon. Yet, best of all, we had excellent views of Indian, Jungle, and Jerdon's Nightjars to round out all possible nightjars of the area. After a late dinner, we all deserved a good rest.
Today was essentially a travel day towards the highlands and the hill station of Ooty, but before leaving the Mudumalai area for good, we had to clean up one glaring omission from the list, Indian Nuthatch. So we focused the short morning on this species and staked out a section of open woodland where a five-minute search yielded somewhat distant, but good views of a single Indian Nuthatch. Yellow-wattled Lapwings in an open field nearby were also a welcome addition. We enjoyed a sit-down breakfast afterwards and then drove towards the highlands. Scanning the skies carefully as we were driving in the lowlands paid off, as we spotted an adult White-rumped Vulture, this species is critically endangered in India, and incredibly we also spotted a subadult Red-headed Vulture soaring up right below, thus seeing all four species of vultures – which is very difficult on this itinerary. We did not see anything of note as the road wound its way toward Ooty through forty plus switchbacks. The temperatures were definitely more pleasant in Ooty, and we ate lunch at our historic hotel while waiting to check in. Our first stop in Ooty was the nearby Cairnhill Shola, and while it was predictably quiet in the afternoon, we still added our first endemic Nilgiri and Black-and-orange Flycatchers to the list and had good studies of a Large-billed Leaf Warbler. We headed towards Doddabetta Peak – at 2,637 metres it is the highest mountain in the Nilgiris – and a road conveniently allows access all the way to the top. The area around the top is a protected forest reserve, but seeing the crowds of people upon arrival, it was difficult to imagine that we could locate any birds of note here. One has to only know where to look and we patiently overlooked a rubbish tip on the steep slope below, watching tame Nilgiri Laughingthrushes and Indian Blackbirds. The final target for the afternoon took a bit more effort, but after we snuck off the main path, we found a calling Nilgiri Blue Robin that came very close, offering superb views. I think five smiling tourists spilling out of the thickets afterwards surprised some of the locals. With such quick success, we stopped quickly at the main viewpoint overlooking the vast tea plantations far below and added our first Tickell's Leaf Warbler. With the target birds in the bag, we called it quits for the day and returned to our comfortable hotel.

For our morning’s birding session, we returned to Cairnhill Shola, hoping for better views of some of the species we had seen the day before, and while waiting in the hotel parking lot we noted a Tytler’s Leaf Warbler feeding in a tree nearby, this is a scarce winter visitor to the area and was an excellent start to the day. At Cairnhill Shola, a feeding flock consisting mainly of Tickell’s Leaf Warblers, but also Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Spot-breasted Fantail, and Oriental White-eye was following the first patches of sunlight, and
in the end we did manage incredible views of a male Black-and-orange Flycatcher, plus the only Greater Flameback of the trip. We had a drive of several hours ahead of us to Parabikulam Tiger Reserve as we left the highlands to drive across the Palghat Gap between the Nilgiri Hills to the north and the Anaimalai Hills to the south. Driving through lower and drier habitats, we spotted the only Large Grey Babblers of the trip in some roadside scrub and one of us had a glimpse of a Hume's Whitethroat here. We ate lunch along the way in Pollachi and finally arrived at our tented camp in the heart of the Parabikulam Tiger Reserve in the late afternoon. During the drive up into the foothills along a scenic and winding road, we chanced upon a Blue-faced Malkoha showing well right next to the van and once we arrived in the main parking lot, we found a large, active feeding flock. Even before we had the chance to check in we added great views of Heart-spotted Woodpecker, endemic Malabar Parakeets, Malabar Starling, and Jungle Owlet; while a Malabar Whistling Thrush sat right next to one of the cabins at dusk. After dark, we did a bit of owling in camp and were rewarded with fantastic views of a Brown Hawk-Owl calling right in the middle of camp. It took a bit more searching, but we tracked down one of the many calling Oriental Scops Owls as it vocalised right from its presumed nesting hole.

We had a full day in the beautiful Parabikulam Tiger Reserve, and we added many of the hoped-for species and also saw some surprises. After an early breakfast in camp, we set forth on a longer walking track through some beautiful dry forest that slowly became denser and wetter as we headed into the hills. The undoubted highlight of the morning was three or four Grey-headed Bulbuls – this localised and distinct species can be difficult to find, and we took our time once we had heard them, eventually getting everyone excellent, close views. A few minutes up the trail, we bumped into a pair of showy Flame-throated Bulbuls, thus completing the list of endemic bulbuls for the trip.

For the remainder of the morning, we continued our walk until about 10:30 am, making a loop that took us back to the main entrance station, adding Malabar Barbet, many Black-rumped Flamebacks, Small and Orange Minivets, glowing Indian Golden Orioles, noisy Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Yellow-browed Bulbuls, and a flock of the endemic Rufous Babblers. We enjoyed a rest after lunch before commencing our afternoon safari via bus. It was not easy to bird from the bus as it rattled along the gravel road, but at a stop to admire one of the largest and oldest teak trees in the park, we managed excellent views of the endemic White-bellied Treepie after we had only glimpses of it during the
previous afternoon. We stopped at a large reservoir and noted a flying Striated Heron, the only one for the trip, and while all of us elected to skip the bamboo rafting, we scoured the lake edge on foot, finding a surprise Small Pratincole. As we walked closer for better views, we noted more pratincoles on a small island, counting a total of 45 of this locally rarely recorded species. The tour took us to the nearby village, where we elected to stake out an area near the edge at dusk, hoping for nightjars. While it took some patient waiting, staring at empty sky at first, we finally had two Great Eared Nightjars fly over for quick, but good views. During the drive back after dark, we scanned carefully for mammals and birds, being rewarded with the best views yet of a Jerdon's Nightjar and two of the endemic Brown Palm Civets. The best was yet to come, and we spotted a Leopard walking in the middle of the road, the cat stepped off the track a bit and sat on the grassy verge. Incredibly, we spotted a second Leopard nearby and realised it was a female with a nearly full-grown youngster. We enjoyed great views in the spotlight before leaving them to continue their prowl in the darkness. Elated and very satisfied with the day overall, we returned to camp for some well-earned sleep.

We had another long drive ahead of us for the day, as we were leaving the Parabikulam area to head back into the highlands around Munnar in the Anaimalai Hills. We did another short trek along the Tunnel Trail before breakfast, with the undoubted highlight being a male Red Spurfowl that called and showed well among some rocks on the far side of a stream. As we continued down the trail, we came upon a pair of green pigeons and it took a moment to register that these were Orange-breasted Green Pigeons, a very scarce bird in south India and another surprise addition to the trip list. Otherwise, we added a pair of Stork-billed Kingfishers and finally had visuals of Large Cuckoo-shrikes before our time was up. We checked out and started the long drive towards the hill station of Munnar, which took us through the heart of the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. We did not have much time to stop, but a few strategic slowdowns – meaning we rolled down some of the hills with the engine off and windows open – finally got us three White-browed Bulbuls which had strangely been missing from the list up to that point, and a high-soaring Booted Eagle as a bonus. We ate lunch in Marayoor and then continued the steady climb to higher altitudes along the ever-winding roads. Once we arrived in Munnar, we proceeded straight to the birding spot near the Deshadan Resort, which proved to be a very good decision. While our list of targets was fairly short, some of them were not easy; but within an hour of birding, we had good views of most of them, including scope views of the scarce and endemic Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, endemic Grey-fronted Green Pigeon, Malabar Barbets, many Square-tailed Bulbuls, endemic Palani Laughingthrushes, stunning Blue-capped Rock

Nilgiri Wood Pigeon by Stephan Lorenz

Nilgiri Flycatcher by Stephan Lorenz
Thrush – *with a male perched at eye level for minutes on end*, and finally, the endemic and colourful Crimson-backed Sunbird. We drove back down towards town and checked into our very comfortable accommodations, enjoying a scrumptious dinner and early evening.

We left early after a good sit-down breakfast at our lovely resort and drove to the famous Eravikulam NP. We arrived with time to spare and fortunately avoided the long queues that can form as visitors wait for the shuttle buses. The bus ride took about twenty minutes and dropped us off at the main visitor centre, where we staked out a small rubbish tip across the tea shops. Some of the locals took note of us intently staring down the slope and we had to constantly explain that we were looking for birds. It worked, and during our thirty-minute vigil, we ended up with excellent views of the endemic White-bellied Blue Robin, a major target here, Palani Laughingthrushes, Indian Blackbird, and Malabar Whistling Thrush; while only some of us glimpsed the sought-after Painted Bush Quail. We continued up the road on foot until the end of the accessible area, and here we found Nilgiri Tahr – *an endemic ungulate for which Eravikulam NP is rightly famous for*. We waited here for a long time and bird activity was very low until we spotted a distant Nilgiri Pipit that offered reasonable scope views. We returned to the resort for lunch and then decided to tackle the difficult climb to the grassy ridge above Deshadan Resort – *an optional outing that most decided to take*. We knew that our chances of seeing the Broad-tailed Grassbird would be very slim, and the hike up into the right habitat proved as difficult as expected, especially the return trip. While we tried very hard for the grassbird, none were heard or seen, but we did add views of Painted Bush Quail for all, a very close Black-naped Oriole – *quite scarce in southern India*, and an adult Rufous-bellied Eagle that soared past twice for good views. We arrived for our afternoon safari on time, and, with the help of our local guide, tackled a loop trail starting at the boat landing. It was fun to cross a narrow channel of water by bamboo raft (enjoying a bamboo raft cruise after all) and as soon as we stepped ashore on the far side, a magnificent pair of Great Hornbills flew over. Another glimpse at the sky before entering the tall forest revealed a small flock of the

Today was essentially a travel day as we had to tackle the long drive from Munnar to the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The drive took nearly all morning, but we arrived at our very comfortable accommodations before lunch. This new hotel was surrounded by good habitat and we took a short walk nearby. Although it was quite warm in the middle of the day, we still added two excellent species in the form of a close Black-naped Oriole – *quite scarce in southern India*, and an adult Rufous-bellied Eagle that soared past twice for good views. We arrived for our afternoon safari on time, and, with the help of our local guide, tackled a loop trail starting at the boat landing. It was fun to cross a narrow channel of water by bamboo raft (enjoying a bamboo raft cruise after all) and as soon as we stepped ashore on the far side, a magnificent pair of Great Hornbills flew over. Another glimpse at the sky before entering the tall forest revealed a small flock of the
unpredictable White-rumped Spinetail. Along the loop trail winding through the beautiful forest, we found our first Malabar Trogon, a stunning male that allowed lengthy scope views, many more Great Hornbills, a locally scarce Common Flameback, another Orange-headed Thrush, and a vocal White-bellied Woodpecker – *although the latter refused to reveal itself except for a brief flyover*. As our time was up, we headed back to the bamboo raft; but we did not want to give up on the White-bellied Woodpecker, and persistence paid off again as the male flew in to perch in full view for all of us to enjoy. In the evening, I heard an Indian Scops Owl from my porch, and some judicious playback had the bird soon perching on the roof of the bungalow for unobstructed views – *a nice way to finish the day!*

This was our full day in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, and we traversed hilly forest, checked dense riparian tangles, followed elephant trails on steep slopes, and scoured small wetlands, coming away with most of the hoped-for birds and some extra surprises. We were able to skip the shuttle bus into the park today and continued directly on foot along the Green Walk, adding several Pin-tailed Snipes in a flooded, grassy field before heading into the forest. The best birds of the morning walk included a Rufous Woodpecker in a feeding flock, a stunning white morph Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Brown-cheeked Fulvettas, Rusty-tailed Flycatcher, and, best of all, a pair of White-bellied Blue Flycatchers in a steep ravine. Although our dedicated search for the endemic and sometimes elusive Wynaad Laughingthrush came up empty-handed, we still had hope for the afternoon's outing. We started the afternoon's hike in the same spot, but headed in the opposite direction, traversing the village, before climbing steeply into bamboo-covered hills. We made our way along steep and difficult elephant tracks, occasionally stopping and listening. Our local guide was determined to find us the missing birds and went ahead to check another slope. Suddenly, he came running back with news that he had found the laughingthrushes. A scramble along steep trails followed, with a quick climb off the trail to an area where the laughingthrushes were calling. It was difficult at first, but, eventually, we worked our way closer to the flock, with all of us obtaining close and stunning views of these large laughingthrushes, our efforts had paid off. During the hike out, we tracked down Dark-fronted Babblers and, as is typical, found more Wynaad Laughingthrushes and had the best views of Flame-throated Bulbuls yet. With all the possible endemics in the bag, we headed back through the village and had an early night with plans to depart early the following morning.

Our final day of the tour saw us driving towards Cochin, where the South India journey would conclude. We left early in the morning, hoping to have one final stop at the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary. We arrived by midmorning and although the dawn
chorus had passed, we still added several new species within the first hour of birding, including vocal Banded Bay Cuckoos, fast-flying Crested Goshawk that eventually perched, Oriental Dollarbird, Bronze-winged Jacana on a small wetland, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, a calling Green Warbler, and a male Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher. We then hiked along a forest track, where we found a pair of roosting Sri Lanka Frogmouths – which, for many, was the highlight of the trip. We reached the hotel near the Cochin Airport by late afternoon and found the final species for the trip, three Ashy Woodswallows huddled on a telephone wire.

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 (276 in total: 276 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

Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl Anatidae

Lesser Whistling Duck Dendrocygna javanica
(2) 5 en route 17.1 and 25 Thattekad BS 23.1.
A small flock seen on a pond en route and many seen on lake Thattekad BS.

Northern Shoveler Spatula clypeata
(1) 20 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
The Kokkare Tank held several, where scoped at a distance.

Eurasian Wigeon Mareca penelope
(1) 15 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
The Kokkare Tank held several, where scoped at a distance.

Indian Spot-billed Duck Anas poecilorhyncha poecilorhyncha
(2) 4 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 6 en route 14.1.
Flying past at Ranganathittu and then studied in scope in perfect light at Kukkarahalli lake in Mysore.

Northern Pintail Anas acuta
(1) 30 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
The Kokkare Tank held several, where scoped at a distance.

Green-winged Teal Anas carolinensis
(1) 20 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
Unusual to find this species on the tour, but many seen at Kokkare Tank.

Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies Phasianidae

Grey Francolin Francolinus pondicerianus pondicerianus
(3) 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Several good sightings, especially at Kokkare Tank and in the Mudumalai area.
Jungle Bush Quail  
*Perdicula asiatica vidali*

(1) 8 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
We searched for some time and eventually located two small flocks at the base of the temple hill in the Mudumalai area where we got excellent flight views.

Painted Bush Quail  
*Perdicula erythrorhyncha erythrorhyncha*

(1) 4 Munnar 20.1.
First glimpsed by some at the visitor centre Eravikulam NP and the rest of us saw it well on the ridge above Deshadan Resort.

Red Spurfowl  
*Gallopipes spadicea* stewarti

(2) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
A calling bird revealed itself at Parabikulam and we obtained prolonged views of it standing among rocks.

Grey Junglefowl  
*Gallus sonneratii*

(9) 2 heard Mudumalai NP 14.1, 6 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Munnar 20.1 and 4 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Common by voice and also many showy males were seen in a wide variety of locations.

Indian Peafowl  
*Pavo cristatus*

(6) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 3 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 en route 16.1.
Abundant with a spectacular male in full display at Parabikulam Tented Niche camp.

**Grebes Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe**  
*Tachybaptus ruficolis albecens*

(1) 5 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
Scoped on Kokkare Tank.

**Storks Ciconiidae**

**Painted Stork (NT)**  
*Mycteria leucocephala*

(2) 50 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 3 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Seen on nests at Ranganathittu BS and again in flight in the Mudumalai area, fantastic close views of this stunning stork.

**Asian Openbill**  
*Anastomus oscitans*

(3) 3 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1 and 1 en route 23.1.
Seen well in several locations with especially close birds at Ranganathittu.

**Woolly-necked Stork (VU)**  
*Ciconia episcopus episcopus*

(4) 1 en route 13.1, 2 en route 14.1, 6 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Mainly observed in flight during several days.

**Ibis and Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**

**Black-headed Ibis (NT)**  
*Threskiornis melanoccephalus*

(3) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 en route 23.1.
Best seen on day one in flooded fields.

**Red-naped Ibis**  
*Pseudibis papillosa*

(3) en route 14.1 and 4 en route 23.1.
Excellent views of this distinct ibis in the Kokkare area.

**Glossy Ibis**  
*Plegadis falcinellus*

Observed 1 day in total.
A small flock flew past with some feeding in the distance at Kokkare Tank.

**Eurasian Spoonbill**  
*Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*
(1) 6 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.
Close views of birds on nests at Ranganathittu Sanctuary with birds in full breeding plumage.

**Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns Ardeidae**

**Black-crowned Night Heron**  
_Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax_  
(2) 20 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 1 en route 19.1.  
Several roosting Ranganathittu.

**Striated Heron**  
_Butorides striata javanica_  
(1) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
A bird flushed and flew into view at the dam in Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.

**Indian Pond Heron**  
_Ardeola Greyii_  
(10) 1 en route 19.1.  
Abundant.

**Eastern Cattle Egret**  
_Bubulcus coromandus_  
Observed 3 days in total.  
Widespread.

**Grey Heron**  
_Ardea cinerea cinerea_  
(3) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.  
Common at larger wetlands.

**Purple Heron**  
_Ardea purpurea manilensis_  
(3) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 2 en route 23.1.  
Several observations at larger lakes and wetlands.

**Great Egret**  
_Ardea alba alba_  
Observed 1 day in total.  
Common.

**Intermediate Egret**  
_Ardea intermedia intermedia_  
Observed 1 day in total.  
Common and we had several excellent comparisons with Great Egrets.

**Little Egret**  
_Egretta garzetta garzetta_  
Observed 1 day in total.  
Common.

**Pelicans Pelecanidae**

**Great White Pelican**  
_Pelecanus onocrotalus_  
(1) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
An unexpected surprise with a bird in full breeding plumage that sat among a group of Spot-billed Pelicans. This marked the first record of the species for the sanctuary and is one of the very few records for southern India.

**Spot-billed Pelican (NT)**  
_Pelecanus philippensis_  
(1) 60 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
Great, close views of the nesting colony at Ranganathittu, this species is still fairly common in southern India.

**Cormorants and Shags Phalacrocoracidae**

**Little Cormorant**  
_Microcarbo niger_  
(4) 20 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 5 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 2 en route 23.1.  
Common in a wide variety of wetlands.

**Indian Cormorant**  
_Phalaenocorax fuscicollis_
We enjoyed close studies of this species at Ranganathittu and could really appreciate the differences compared to the two more common cormorant species and several were on nests.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*


Widespread.

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**Oriental Darter (NT)** *Anhinga melanogaster*

(4) 4 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 en route 14.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 en route 23.1.

A few sightings in various wetlands.

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**Hawks, Eagles, and Kites Accipitridae**

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus vociferus*

(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Munnar 20.1.

Seen well in the Mudumalai area and high above the Deshadan Resort in Munnar.

**Egyptian Vulture (EN)** *Neophron percnopterus ginginianus*

(1) 1 en route 13.1.

We saw an adult bird soar in front of the van at the Ramdevara Betta Vulture Sanctuary which then proceeded to land on a nearby granite outcrop for great scope views.

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis*

(7) 2 en route 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 en route 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 en route 21.1, 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.

Common.

**White-rumped Vulture (CR)** *Gyps bengalensis*

(1) 2 Mudumalai NP 16.1.

We luckily picked up two of these endangered vultures as we left the Mudumalai area, one was quite low for good views.

**Indian Vulture (CR)** *Gyps indicus*

(1) 2 en route 13.1.

We saw two high on a ledge at Ramdevara Vulture Sanctuary and eventually saw them soar above. This species is also endangered.

**Red-headed Vulture (CR)** *Sarcogyps calvus*

(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1.

One immature soaring next to the White-rumped Vulture in the Mudumalai area was a great bonus.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela melanotis*

(6) 1 heard Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 2 en route 19.1, 2 en route 21.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.

The most widespread raptor of the trip.

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus cirrhatus*

(5) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 en route 19.1 and 1 Munnar 20.1.

One was seen especially close in the open field in the Mudumalai area.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii kienerii*

(1) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
A short pre-lunch stroll at our hotel in the Periyar area resulted in excellent views of a soaring adult bird.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis perniger*  
Several sightings between Munnar and Periyar with one passing by us within 10 meters along the ridge above Deshadan Resort being especially memorable.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*  
(2) 1 en route 19.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1. 
Distant bird in the Chinnar WLS and better views just outside the Periyar Tiger Reserve both were pale morphs.

**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax vindhiana*  
(1) 1 en route 14.1. 
Distant and brief views of a high soaring bird in the dry country south of Mysore.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata fasciata*  
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1. 
An adult bird soaring and showing very well above the temple hill Mudumalai, where observed again the following day.

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus peninsulae*  
(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1. 
First seen in flight and then perched (dive bombed by Dollarbirds) in the scope in the Thattekad area.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius badius*  
The common and widespread accipiter.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
(1) 1 Munnar 20.1. 
A distant bird in flight from the ridge above Deshadan Resort

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*  
Observed 5 days in total. 
The most numerous raptor of the trip.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus indus*  
(5) 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 en route 23.1. 
Common near rivers and wetlands.

**Lesser Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus humilis plumbeus*  
(1) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1. 
Brief views of a bird flying over the boat at Ranganathittu was surprising, usually Grey-headed Fish Eagle is much more expected here.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*  
(1) 1 Ooty 16.1. 
Good views of one soaring above Cairnhill Shola.

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**Rails, Gallinules, and Coots** *Rallidae*  
**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
Common and found in most wet areas.

**Grey-headed Swamphen**  
Porphyrio poliocephalus poliocephalus  
(3) 1 Kokkare Bellur 13.1, 5 en route 14.1 and 6 en route 23.1.  
Good views in the larger wetlands, this is a split from Purple Swamphen.

**Common Moorhen**  
Gallinula chloropus chloropus  
(2) 1 en route 14.1 and 2 en route 17.1.  
Seen at the lake in Mysore.

**Eurasian Coot**  
Fulica atra atra  
(3) 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1, 2 en route 14.1 and 2 en route 17.1.  
Very few sightings.

**Buttonquails Turnicidae**

**Barred Buttonquail**  
Turnix suscitator taigoor  
(1) 1 en route 19.1.  
One trundled into the middle of the road at Chinnar WLS causing us to bring the van to a rather sudden stop, a quick exit and manoeuvring brought the bird back into view for good studies, a surprise addition.

**Thick-knees Burhinidae**

**Great Stone-curlew (NT)**  
Esacus recurvirostris  
(1) 4 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
Seen close and well during the boat trip at Ranganathittu.

**Stilts and Avocets Recurvirostridae**

**Black-winged Stilt**  
Himantopus himantopus  
(1) 10 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.  
A small flock scoped distantly Kokkare tank.

**Plovers and Lapwings Charadriidae**

**Yellow-wattled Lapwing**  
Vanellus malabaricus  
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 4 Mudumalai NP 16.1.  
Good views of one at night at the temple hill and again the following morning in the Mudumalai area.

**Red-wattled Lapwing**  
Vanellus indicus atronuchalis  
(4) 3 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Common and widespread.

**Little Ringed Plover**  
Charadrius dubius jerdoni  
(2) 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1 and 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Seen well in the flooded rice fields Kokkare tank and again on an island in the reservoir at Parabikulam Tiger Reserve.

**Jacanas Jacanidae**

**Bronze-winged Jacana**  
Metopidius indicus  
(1) 6 en route 23.1.  
Thattekad wetland and several behind the hotel at Kochi airport.

**Sandpipers and Allies Scolopacidae**

**Little Stint**  
Calidris minuta
(1) 1 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.
A single bird in the flooded rice fields Kokkare tank was a rare find for the tour.

**Pin-tailed Snipe**  \textit{Gallinago stenura}
(2) 8 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 en route 23.1.
Several flushed and seen feeding on the ground in wet, grassy fields just outside Periyar Tiger Reserve.

**Common Sandpiper**  \textit{Actitis hypoleucos}
(2) 1 Kokkare Bellur 13.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Only a few sightings.

**Green Sandpiper**  \textit{Tringa ochropus}
(2) 1 Kokkare Bellur 13.1 and 2 en route 23.1.
A single seen in flooded rice field Kokkare tank and two seen along lake edge Thattekad.

**Wood Sandpiper**  \textit{Tringa glareola}
(2) 10 Kokkare Bellur 13.1 and 6 en route 23.1.
The most common shorebird of the trip.

**Common Greenshank**  \textit{Tringa nebularia}
(1) 1 en route 19.1.
Seen briefly by leader only en route.

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**Pratincoles and Coursers** \textit{Glareolidae}

**Small Pratincole**  \textit{Glareola lactea}
(1) 45 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
A flock at the reservoir in Parabikulam Tiger Reserve was a surprise and a rare find for the tour, we saw two birds very closely and watched the main flock in flight and settle on an island.

**Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers** \textit{Laridae}

**River Tern** (NT)  \textit{Sterna aurantia}
(2) 4 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 20 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Excellent studies of this elegant tern, especially on the lake in Parabikulam.

**Whiskered Tern**  \textit{Chlidonias hybrida hybrida}
(2) 20 Kokkare Bellur 13.1 and 4 en route 23.1.
Seen in the larger wetlands.

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**Pigeons and Doves** \textit{Columbidae}

**Rock Dove**  \textit{Columba livia var. domestica}
Observed 1 day in total.
Common and widespread.

**Nilgiri Wood Pigeon** (VU) \textit{Columba elphinstonii}
(2) 2 Munnar 19.1 and 1 Munnar 20.1.
We first heard a bird call and then had close studies of one perched near the Deshadan Resort in Munnar.

**Eurasian Collared Dove**  \textit{Streptopelia decaocto decaocto}
(2) 1 en route 13.1 and 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Only a few sightings.

**Spotted Dove**  \textit{Spilopelia chinensis suratensis}
(9) 5 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Common and widespread.
Laughing Dove  
*Spilopelia senegalensis cambayensis*

(1) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Surprisingly scarce and glimpsed only by the leader in the Mudumalai area.

**Common Emerald Dove**  
*Chalcophaps indica indica*

(2) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1 and 1 Munnar 19.1.
Only two sightings and both birds flying past, also heard only at Parambikulam.

**Orange-breasted Green Pigeon**  
*Treron bicinctus bicinctus*

(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1.
Another very surprising find with a pair feeding low along the tunnel trail in the Parambikulam Reserve. The male showed very well and the bright orange breast alerted us to their identity, another species rarely recorded in southern India.

**Grey-fronted Green Pigeon**  
*Treron affinis*

(4) 2 Munnar 19.1, 1 heard Munnar 20.1, 2 heard Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
First a male seen overhead near the Deshadan Resort in Munnar and a female seen close in Periyar.

**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**  
*Treron phoenicopterus chlorigaster*

(3) 5 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Numerous in the Mudumalai area with good scope studies of this large pigeon.

**Mountain Imperial Pigeon**  
*Ducula badia cuprea*

(1) 6 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Excellent views of several in fruiting trees during our first afternoon in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, allowing for lengthy scope studies.

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**Cuckoos Cuculidae**

**Greater Coucal**  
*Centropus sinensis parroti*

Common.

**Blue-faced Malkoha**  
*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

(1) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1.
Seen well by the roadside as we travelled into Parabikulam Tiger Reserve, a very welcome find.

**Asian Koel**  
*Eudynamys scolopaceus scolopaceus*

(2) 1 en route 14.1.
Common by voice with a few scattered sightings of males and females, best seen in the park in Mysore.

**Banded Bay Cuckoo**  
*Cacomantis sonneratii sonneratii*

(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.
This is a rare bird on the tour, but we saw a vocal individual high in a bare tree in Thattekad.

**Grey-bellied Cuckoo**  
*Cacomantis passerinus*

(2) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1.
Excellent observations of at least two responsive birds at the base of the temple hill Mudumalai.

**Common Hawk-Cuckoo**  
*Hierococcyx varius varius*

Very common by voice with a few sightings early in the trip.
Owls Strigidae

Indian Scops Owl Otus bakkamoena bakkamoena
(1) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Wow, first seen from the porch at the hotel in Periyar and then the bird perched atop the bungalow for extended views, ear tufts raised and calling!

Oriental Scops Owl Otus sunia rufipennis
(2) 1 heard Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1.
Several heard in the tented camp Parabikulam with one finally found calling from its presumed nesting hole, with good views of two-thirds of it, also heard Mudumalai.

Brown Fish Owl Ketupa zeylonensis leschenaulti
(3) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
Excellent scope views in the Mudumalai area along the bamboo-lined ravine opposite Campfire Nights, glimpsed in Parabikulam and Periyar.

Jungle Owlet Glaucidium radiatum malabaricum
Common and widespread, often calling right outside our rooms, excellent scope views of the first one.

Spotted Owlet Athene brama brama
(2) 2 en route 14.1 and 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Best seen south of Mysore with two birds near a nesting hole.

Brown Hawk-Owl Ninox scutulata hirsuta
(1) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1.
Calling from a snag right in the middle of the tented camp Parabikulam offering views as long as we liked.

Frogmouths Podargidae

Sri Lanka Frogmouth Batrachostomus moniliger roonwali
(1) 4 Thattekad BS 23.1.
Two pairs on day roosts Thattekad with one pair exceptionally close, doing their strange shuffling.

Nightjars and Allies Caprimulgidae

Great Eared Nightjar Lyncornis macrotis bourdilloni
(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
After a lengthy wait we saw two flying over as the light was failing in the village in Parabikulam, also heard from the tented camp.

Jungle Nightjar Caprimulgus indicus indicus
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Excellent views during the night drive in Mudumalai with a bird perched in a tree on the slopes of the temple hill.

Jerdon's Nightjar Caprimulgus atripennis atripennis
(3) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Several good views in the Jungle Retreat grounds and again during the night drive Parabikulam.

Indian Nightjar Caprimulgus asiaticus asiaticus
(2) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Best seen during the night outing to the temple hill Mudumalai.

**Savanna Nightjar**  
*Caprimulgus affinis monticolus*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1.  
Seen very well on a day roost Mudumalai.

**Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae**

**Crested Treeswift**  
*Hemiprocne coronata*  
(5) Up to 1 Mudumalai NP 14-16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 3 en route 19.1.  
Common in drier habitats, but only seen in flight.

**Swifts Apodidae**

**Indian Swiftlet**  
*Aerodramus unicolor*  
Common and widespread.

**White-rumped Spinetail**  
*Zoonavena sylvatica*  
(2) 5 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1 and 3 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
This distinctive swift was seen very well circling above the forest edge our first afternoon in Periyar and seen again in Thattekad.

**Asian Palm Swift**  
*Cypsiurus balasiensis balasiensis*  
(4) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 2 en route 19.1.  
Fairly common in the vicinity of palms.

**Alpine Swift**  
*Tachymarptis melba dorabtatai*  
(3) 4 Munnar 19.1, 2 Munnar 20.1 and 2 en route 21.1.  
Several sightings high above Munnar.

**Little Swift**  
*Apus affinis singalensis*  
Common and widespread.

**Trogons Trogonidae**

**Malabar Trogon**  
*Harpactes fasciatus malabaricus*  
(2) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1 and 2 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
A male scoped for several minutes in Periyar and seen again in Thattekad, one of the favorites of the trip.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

**Indian Roller**  
*Coracias benghalensis indicus*  
(6) 1 en route 13.1, 2 en route 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 en route 19.1 and 1 en route 23.1.  
Often seen while travelling through open country between birding sites.

**Oriental Dollarbird**  
*Eurystomus orientalis laetior*  
(1) 1 en route 23.1.  
Finally seen well along the roadside Thattekad.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

**Stork-billed Kingfisher**  
*Pelargopsis capensis capensis*  
(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1.  
A pair heard and seen well along the small river in front of the tented camp Parabikulam.
**White-throated Kingfisher**  
*Halcyon smyrnensis fuscata*  
(8) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 2 en route 19.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Common and widespread.

**Common Kingfisher**  
*Alcedo atthis taprobana*  
(1) 1 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.  
One flew in right in front of us as we were scanning through the waterfowl flock at Kokkare tank.

**Pied Kingfisher**  
*Ceryle rudis travancoreensis*  
(1) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
A pair studied closely near their nesting hole during the boat trip Ranganathittu.

### Bee-eaters *Meropidae*

**Green Bee-eater**  
*Merops orientalis orientalis*  
(4) 4 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
Widespread.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater**  
*Merops philippinus*  
(1) 4 en route 14.1.  
Fairly common in open country south of Mysore and again Thattekad.

**Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**  
*Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti*  
(1) 4 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
Finally, we found a group on our last day in Thattekad.

### Hoopoes *Upupidae*

**Eurasian Hoopoe**  
*Upupa epops ceylonensis*  
(3) 3 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 en route 16.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Several sightings in various locations, always a fantastic bird to see.

### Hornbills *Bucerotidae*

**Great Hornbill (NT)**  
*Buceros bicornis*  
(1) 8 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.  
First, a pair flew right over our heads and then we had some perched closely in fruiting trees our first afternoon in Periyar, another trip favourite.

**Malabar Grey Hornbill**  
*Ocyceros griseus*  
(5) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1, 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
Good views of one perched atop a fruiting tree in the Mudumalai area and more views later in the trip.

**Indian Grey Hornbill**  
*Ocyceros birostris*  
(2) 3 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 1 en route 14.1.  
Seen well at Ranganathittu and again briefly in the park in Mysore.

### Asian Barbets *Megalaimidae*

**White-cheeked Barbet**  
*Psilopogon viridis*  
(10) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, up to 1 Mudumalai NP 14-16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 2 Munnar 19.1, 1 heard Munnar 20.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
A common and widespread endemic, heard daily with many good views.
Malabar Barbet  
*Psilopogon malabaricus*


Briefly at a fruiting tree in Parabikulam and better views in Munnar of this neat, endemic barbet.

Coppersmith Barbet  
*Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus*

(4) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 2 en route 14.1 and 1 heard Mudumalai NP 15.1.

Seen in lowland, drier areas during the first part of the trip.

### Woodpeckers Picidae

**Heart-spotted Woodpecker**  
*Hemicircus canente*

(3) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.

Exceptional close views our first afternoon in Parabikulam right in the parking lot just after we arrived and seen again in the middle of the tented camp the following day, one of the favourite birds of the trip.

**Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**  
*Yungipicus nanus cinereigula*

(5) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 en route 23.1.

Common and seen frequently in feeding flocks.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker**  
*Leiopicus mahrattensis mahrattensis*

(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1.

Seen briefly near the bamboo-lined creek Mudumalai, including brief scope studies.

**White-bellied Woodpecker**  
*Dryocopus javensis hodgsonii*

(1) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.

A calling bird flew overhead in Periyar near the boat landing, but we persisted during the final minutes of our walk and it eventually came in for good perched looks.

**Lesser Yellownape**  
*Picus chlorolophus chlorigaster*

(3) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.

Some glimpses of birds following feeding flocks with the best views in Parabikulam.

**Common Flameback**  
*Dinopium javanense malabaricum*

(1) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.

We observed a vocal female that showed very close during our first afternoon in Periyar.

**Black-rumped Flameback**  
*Dinopium benghalense tehminae*


The most common and widespread woodpecker of the trip.

**Greater Flameback**  
*Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus socialis*

(1) 1 en route 17.1.

A vocal bird flew right in at Cairnhill Shola and surprisingly the only one of the trip.

**White-naped Woodpecker**  
*Chrysocolaptes festivus festivus*

(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.

After searching in several spots in the Mudumalai area we found one working a tree right next tour our bungalow back at Jungle Retreat. The female showed very well to all.

**Rufous Woodpecker**  
*Micropternus brachyurus jerdonii*

(1) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
One seen briefly in a feeding flock in Periyar.

**Falcons and Caracaras Falconidae**

**Common Kestrel**  
*Falco tinnunculus objurgatus*  
Widespread but uncommon.

**Peregrine Falcon**  
*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1  
A single sighting of a bird flying fast past the temple hill Mudumalai.

**Old World Parrots Psittaculidae**

**Plum-headed Parakeet**  
*Psittacula cyanocephala*  
(6) Up to 20 Mudumalai NP 14-16.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Common and seen very well in the scope.

**Blue-winged Parakeet**  
*Psittacula columboides*  
This endemic parakeet was common in the foothills and mountains.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet**  
*Psittacula krameri manillensis*  
Observed 1 day in total.  
Common in dry lowlands and agricultural areas.

**Vernal Hanging Parrot**  
*Loriculus vernalis vernalis*  
(7) 5 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Munnar 19.1, 1 Munnar 20.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
After they zipped past in good numbers we finally had close views at Deshadan and a flowering tree in Thattekad was full of them.

**Pittas Pittidae**

**Indian Pitta**  
*Pitta brachyura*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1  
Only one sighting, but it was a good one in a shady bamboo patch near Jungle Retreat, Mudumalai.

**Pittas Pittidae**

**Woodshrikes and allies Tephrodornithidae**

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**  
*Hemipus picatus picatus*  
(3) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1 and 2 en route 17.1.  
Only a few sightings in feeding flocks Mudumalai.

**Malabar Woodshrike**  
*Tephrodornis sylvicola*  
(5) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
A feeding flock follower in drier foothill forest and we enjoyed several excellent views of this endemic.

**Common Woodshrike**  
*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*  
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1  
Seen briefly in the Mudumalai area.
Woodswallows, butcherbirds and allies *Artamidae*

**Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*

(1) 3 en route 23.1.

Surprisingly absent until we found three huddled on telephone wires near the Kochi airport.

**Ioras Aegithinidae**

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia deignani*

(5) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1 and 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.

Good views in various feeding flocks.

**Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**

**Large Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei macei*

(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1.

This bird gave us some trouble, but we finally found a female perched our final morning in Parabikulam.

**Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus cinnamomeus*

(6) 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1, 2 en route 14.1, 6 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.

Common in drier forests.

**White-bellied Minivet** *Pericrocotus erythropygius*

(1) 5 Mudumalai NP 15.1.

One of the best finds of the trip included a flock of five of this species with males and females seen well at close distance in the Mudumalai area.

**Orange Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*

(6) 6 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 4 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.

This stunning bird was pleasantly common.

**Shrikes Laniidae**

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus cristatus*


Common in open areas.

**Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus vittatus*

(3) 4 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 4 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 en route 19.1.

Numerous in the Mudumalai area where we had excellent views of this attractive shrike.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach caniceps*

(5) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 en route 19.1 and 1 en route 21.1.

Seen well in more open habitats.

**Old World Orioles Oriolidae**

**Indian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus kundoo*

(6) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 en route 14.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.

This stunning species was seen several times.

**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis diffusus*

(2) 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.
This is an uncommon species in South India and we saw one well at our hotel in Periyar and again briefly in Thattekad.

**Black-hooded Oriole**  
*Oriolus xanthornus maderaspatanus*  
(4) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1.  
A beautiful bird that we enjoyed good views of in several locations.

**Drongos Dicruridae**

**Black Drongo**  
*Dicrurus macrocercus macrocercus*  
(8) 1 en route 17.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Common in open habitats and along roadsides.

**Ashy Drongo**  
*Dicrurus leucophaeus longicaudatus*  
(6) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
This migrant is more prevalent in wooded areas.

**White-bellied Drongo**  
*Dicrurus caerulescens caerulescens*  
(2) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 Mudumalai NP 16.1.  
Good views in the forests of Mudumalai, but not seen further south.

**Bronzed Drongo**  
*Dicrurus aeneus aeneus*  
(6) 4 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 en route 16.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 19.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
This drongo often occurs with feeding flocks, especially in wetter forests.

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo**  
*Dicrurus paradiseus paradiseus*  
This spectacular species was very common in Parabikulam and Periyar often harassing other bird species.

**Fantails Rhipiduridae**

**White-spotted Fantail**  
*Rhipidura albogularis albogularis*  
(2) 3 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 2 en route 17.1.  
Seen very well as we walked in the Ranganathittu reserve.

**White-browed Fantail**  
*Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*  
(2) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.  
This active species was confined to drier forest where we saw them well in the Mudumalai area.

**Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae**

**Black-naped Monarch**  
*Hypothymis azurea styani*  
(2) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Both sightings were brief, but seen by all in Parabikulam and Periyar.

**Indian Paradise Flycatcher**  
*Terpsiphone paradisi paradisi*  
Seen regularly, but the white morph male perched in the open and sallying with its long tail waving in a shady bamboo section of Periyar was most memorable.

**Crows, Jays, and Magpies Corvidae**
**Rufous Treepie**  
*Dendrocitta vagabunda parvula*  
(4) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.  
A few scattered sightings.

**White-bellied Treepie**  
*Dendrocitta leucogastra*  
One of the most stunning Western Ghat endemics and we enjoyed multiple studies of it in Parabikulam and Periyar.

**House Crow**  
*Corvus splendens*  
Observed 1 day in total.  
Abundant.

**Indian Jungle Crow**  
*Corvus culminatus*  
Observed 11 days in total.  
Very common throughout.

**Fairy Flycatchers Stenostiridae**

**Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**  
*Culicicapa ceylonensis ceylonensis*  
(2) 2 en route 17.1 and 1 Munnar 19.1.  
Seen well at Cairnhill Shola in Munnar.

**Chickadees and Tits Paridae**

**Cinereous Tit**  
*Parus cinereus mahrattarum*  
(7) 3 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 2 en route 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Common and widespread.

**Indian Black-lored Tit**  
*Machlolophus aplonotus travancoreensis*  
(2) 2 Munnar 19.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Excellent close views, including one perched on a wire near Deshadan Resort, Munnar.

**Larks Alaudidae**

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark**  
*Eremopterix griseus*  
(2) 3 en route 14.1 and 1 en route 17.1.  
We found a skylarking and singing individual in the dry country south of Mysore plus some females. Seen again briefly during our impromptu stop for Large Grey Babblers.

**Jerdon's Bush Lark**  
*Mirafra affinis*  
(1) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1.  
Great views of two in the Mudumalai area with one calling bird perched in a tree for scope views.

**Malabar Lark**  
*Galerida malabarica*  
(1) 4 Mudumalai NP 14.1.  
We found a small group of them rather quickly at the base of the temple hill Mudumalai.

**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**

**Grey-headed Bulbul (NT)**  
*Pycnonotus priocephalus*  
(2) 4 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 2 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
Usually this is a very difficult species but we found a small group in Parabikulam and all obtained good views of these shy bulbuls. Incredibly, we saw them again in Thattekad.

**Flame-throated Bulbul**  
*Pycnonotus gularis*  

(3) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 4 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.
A gorgeous bulbul especially in the good evening light we enjoyed in Periyar.

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*
(11) 20 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
Abundant.

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer wetmorei*
(7) 1 en route 13.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
Common.

**Yellow-throated Bulbul (VU)** *Pycnonotus xantholaemus*
(1) 2 en route 13.1.
Almost one of the first birds of the trip, we found a calling pair at the Ramdevara Vulture Sanctuary.

**White-browed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus luteolus luteolus*
(1) 3 en route 19.1.
We finally pulled some out in the Chinnar WLS, literally from the vehicle while slowly rolling through the right habitat.

**Yellow-browed Bulbul** *Acritillas indica indica*
(4) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1, 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 2 Thattekad BS 23.1.
Common in wetter forests.

**Square-tailed Bulbul** *Hypsipetes ganeesa ganeesa*
(2) 10 Munnar 19.1 and 2 Munnar 20.1.
Seen very well near the Deshadan resort, this near-endemic is more common at high elevations.

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**Swallows Hirundinidae**

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Observed 1 day in total.
Common and widespread migrant.

**Hill Swallow** *Hirundo domicola*
(4) 2 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 2 Munnar 19.1, 10 Munnar 20.1 and 2 en route 21.1.
A pair seen perched on a wire in the Mudumalai area and commonly seen around Munnar.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii filifera*
(1) 1 en route 14.1.
A single bird seen above a canal in the dry area south of Mysore.

**Dusky Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne concolor concolor*
Seen well at the vulture sanctuary with occasional sightings further south.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica nipalensis*
(6) 3 en route 13.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
The most widespread swallow of the trip.

**Streak-throated Swallow** *Petrochelidon fluvicola*
(1) 20 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.
We lucked into a good-sized flock at Ranganathittu and even watched them fly in and out of their nests at the small colony below an overhanging rock, a very scarce bird anywhere.

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**Leaf-Warblers Phylloscopidae**
**Trip Report – RBL India - Southern: Birding & Wildlife of the Western Ghats I 2018**

**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis*
(4) 2 Ooty 16.1, 4 en route 17.1, 2 Munnar 20.1 and 2 en route 21.1.
Commonly seen at higher elevations, a distinct *Phylloscopus*.

**Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*
(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.
A vocal bird was seen very well at Thattekad.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
The most common *Phylloscopus* of the trip, heard almost everywhere.

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris*
(4) 1 Ooty 16.1, 1 en route 17.1, 1 heard Munnar 20.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Heard and seen well in a few locations, but best seen at Cairnhill Shola.

**Tytler's Leaf Warbler (NT)** *Phylloscopus tytleri*
(1) 1 en route 17.1.
A bird was foraging in the hotel grounds in Ooty.

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**Reed-Warblers and Allies Acrocephalidae**

**Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus meridionalis*
(1) 1 en route 16.1.
Seen briefly from the bridge during one of our stops en route to Ooty.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
(10) 2 en route 13.1 and 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Common.

**Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata*
(1) 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Two birds seen well in dry areas of Mudumalai, looks very different than field guide illustration.

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**Cisticolas and Allies Cisticolidae**

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis salimalii*
(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
We lucked into some in the short grass along the lake edge Parabikulam.

**Grey-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii albogularis*
(2) 2 en route 14.1 and 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Best seen at Parabikulam where they moved through the edge of the tented camp.

**Ashy Prinia** *Prinia socialis socialis*
Fairly common.

**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata*
Fairly common with many vocal birds seen.

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius guzuratus*
(5) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Common.

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**Babblers Timaliidae**
Indian Scimitar Babbler  
*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii travancoreensis*  
(5) 1 heard Mudumalai NP 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 Munnar 19.1, 2 Munnar 20.1 and 1 heard Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
First seen at Mudumalai, but even better views in Munnar.

Dark-fronted Babbler  
*Rhopocichla atriceps bourdilloni*  
(1) 6 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
We finally caught up with this near-endemic in Periyar and after struggling with a pair in a dense thicket we found four more that showed very well. The subspecies found in Sri Lanka (with much reduced black on the head) may be split which would make this another Western Ghat endemic.

Fulvettas and Ground Babblers *Pellorneidae*

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta  
*Alcippe poioicephala brucei*  
(2) 1 Munnar 19.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Seen well in Munnar and Periyar.

Puff-throated Babller  
*Pellorneum ruficeps olivaceum*  
(2) 3 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 Munnar 20.1.  
Excellent studies at the waterhole Jungle Retreat and glimpsed again near the Deshadan Resort in Munnar.

Laughingthrushes *Leiothrichidae*

Large Grey Babller  
*Turdoides malcolmi*  
(1) 6 en route 17.1.  
A very sudden stop in open dry country got us onto a small group after Ansar spotted them.

Rufous Babller  
*Turdoides subrufa*  
(2) 8 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1 and 4 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Good views of a family group in Parambikulam and seen again well in Periyar.

Jungle Babller  
*Turdoides striata*  
(5) 8 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1 and 10 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Common in wetter forests.

Yellow-billed Babller  
*Turdoides affinis affinis*  
(5) 2 Kokkare Bellur 13.1.  
Common in more arid areas, noisy and conspicuous.

Wynaad Laughingthrush  
*Garrulax delesserti*  
(1) 17 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Wow, what a chase, after searching for them all morning our local guide finally found a group in the afternoon and we scrambled along narrow trails, climbed a slope, being rewarded with stellar views of a large group. Of course on the way back we spotted two right next to the main trail.

Nilgiri Laughingthrush  
*Montecincla cachinnans*  
(2) 4 Ooty 16.1 and 2 en route 17.1.  
Easy and confiding on Doddabetta Peak where they took advantage of the rubbish behind the tea stalls and seen again Cairnhill Shola.

Palani Laughingthrush  
*Montecincla fairbanki*  
(3) 4 Munnar 19.1, 10 Munnar 20.1 and 1 en route 21.1.  
Confiding at Eravikulam NP and also seen near Deshadan.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*
Hume's Whitethroat  
*Sylvia althaea*
(1) 1 en route 17.1.
Glimpsed by one person during our impromptu stop for the Large Grey Babblers.

Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies  
**Zosteropidae**

Oriental White-eye  
*Zosterops palpebrosus nilgiriensis*
(6) 2 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 4 Munnar 19.1.
Widespread.

Fairy-bluebirds  
**Irenidae**

Asian Fairy-bluebird  
*Irena puella puella*
(1) 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
Two calling males were seen well in tall forest during our first afternoon in Periyar.

Nuthatches  
**Sittidae**

Indian Nuthatch  
*Sitta castanea castanea*
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1.
We had to search for this one on the tour, usually it’s easier, but on our final morning we located one in open forest near Jungle Retreat, Mudumalai.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch  
*Sitta frontalis frontalis*
Observed 3 days in total.
Common at higher elevations and in wetter forests, usually a feeding flock member.

Starlings  
**Sturnidae**

Southern Hill Myna  
*Gracula indica*
Noisy and seen well on several occasions.

Jungle Myna  
*Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis*
Observed 5 days in total.
Abundant.

Common Myna  
*Acridotheres tristis tristis*
Observed 11 days in total.
Abundant.

Chestnut-tailed Starling  
*Sturnia malabarica*
A flock seen in Ranganathittu.

Malabar Starling  
*Sturnia blythii*
(3) Up to 6 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17-19.1.
We found one in the feeding flock right in the parking lot of the tented camp Parambikulam and many more seen later.

Brahminy Starling  
*Sturnia pagodarum*
(3) 20 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Common in the Mudumalai area, a really neat looking starling.

Rosy Starling  
*Pastor roseus*
(1) 1 en route 14.1.
Seen by one person from the van en route.
**Thrushes and Allies Turdidae**

**Orange-headed Thrush** *Geokichla citrina cyanota*  
(4) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Always a favourite and we enjoyed many views in several places.

**Nilgiri Thrush** *Zoothera neilgherriensis*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1.  
We had to rush from the lunch table for this one and caught up with it at the small pool at Jungle Retreat for lengthy views of one feeding.

**Indian Blackbird** *Turdus simillimus*  
(3) 4 Ooty 16.1, 1 Munnar 20.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Close and tame birds Doddabetta Peak where they were making the most of the tea stall scraps.

**Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

**Indian Robin** *Copsychus fulicatus fulicatus*  
(3) 1 en route 13.1 and 5 Mudumalai NP 15.1.  
Seen commonly in the drier, open habitats of the Mudumalai area and this subspecies has males all glossy blue-black.

**Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*  
(6) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 4 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
Common.

**White-rumped Shama** *Copsychus malabaricus malabaricus*  
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.  
Good views at the small pool Jungle Retreat and its song was also heard.

**Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapidae*  
Common.

**Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui*  
(3) 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 Munnar 20.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.  
First seen in the tented camp Parabikulam, the yellowish legs are a good clue.

**White-bellied Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis pallipes*  
(2) 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
A pair seen well in the Periyar Reserve, especially the male came very close, wagging and fanning its tail.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae tickelliae*  
(4) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Several sightings, especially in bamboo.

**Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides rubeculoides*  
(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
A male was seen exceptionally well in dense, wet forest Thattekad.

**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus thalassinus*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.  
Seen well but only by some in the Jungle Retreat grounds.

**Nilgiri Flycatcher (NT)** *Eumyias albicaudatus*  
(4) 1 Ooty 16.1, 1 en route 17.1, 1 Munnar 19.1 and 4 Munnar 20.1.
First seen at Cairnhill Shola with additional sightings in the Munnar area.

**Indian Blue Robin** *Larvivora brunnea brunnea*
(3) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
A sharp looking male made an appearance at the pool Jungle Retreat.

**Nilgiri Blue Robin** *Sholicola major*
(1) 2 Ooty 16.1.
One calling bird eventually showed very well at Doddabetta Peak in Ooty.

**White-bellied Blue Robin** *Sholicola albiventris*
(2) 3 Munnar 20.1 and 1 en route 21.1.

**Malabar Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus horsfieldii*
(8) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 16.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1, 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 Munnar 19.1 and 2 Munnar 20.1.
This stunning endemic was very common throughout and its slow, distinctive whistle heard most mornings. A confiding bird sat on the railing at the tented camp.

**Rusty-tailed Flycatcher** *Ficedula ruficauda*
(1) 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
Great views of at least one during our walk in the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 1 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 17.1.
Supposedly an uncommon bird in southern India, but we found two, one in the Mudumalai area and another in the tented camp Parabikulam.

**Black-and-orange Flycatcher** *Ficedula nigrorufa* (NT)
(3) 1 Ooty 16.1, 1 en route 17.1 and 1 Munnar 20.1.

On our second morning at the Cairnhill Shola we had even better views of the male seen the day before!

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius longirostris*
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Seen on the temple hill Mudumalai.

**Blue-capped Rock Thrush** *Monticola cinclorhyncha*
(1) 2 Munnar 19.1.
Wow, what a stunner and to have a male perch just next to the road for minutes on end close to the Deshadan resort in Munnar was a special treat, a female seen the same day.

**Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata nilgiriensis*
(8) 2 Ranganathittu BS 13.1 and 4 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
The common bird of open country in the highlands.

**Leafbirds Chloropsideae**

**Jerdon's Leafbird** *Chloropsis jerdoni*
(1) 2 en route 14.1.
Only two seen in the dry areas south of Mysore, but the pair was studied closely as they worked their way through scattered trees.

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons frontalis*
(5) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1, 1 en route 19.1 and 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1.
Excellent views of this stunning bird especially in Periyar.
Flowerpeckers *Dicaeidae*

**Thick-billed Flowerpecker**
*Dicaeum agile agile*
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Observed by some in the grounds of Jungle Retreat Mudumalai.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker**
*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos erythrorhynchos*
(3) 5 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Common in drier forest, but first seen in hotel grounds in Bangalore.

**Nilgiri Flowerpecker**
*Dicaeum concolor*
(6) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1, 2 Munnar 19.1, 4 Munnar 20.1, 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1, 2 Periyar Tiger Reserve 22.1 and 2 Thattekad BS 23.1.
Most common in the highlands and foothills with many close studies.

Sunbirds and Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae*

**Purple-rumped Sunbird**
*Leptocoma zeylonica flaviventris*
Observed 1 day in total.
Common in the lowlands.

**Crimson-backed Sunbird**
*Leptocoma minima*
(2) 4 Munnar 19.1 and 1 Munnar 20.1.
Best seen in the Munnar area where common around the Deshadan Resort.

**Purple Sunbird**
*Cinnyris asiaticus asiaticus*
(7) 1 Munnar 20.1.
Common.

**Loten's Sunbird**
*Cinnyris lotenius hindustanicus*
(2) 1 Mudumalai NP 14.1 and 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.
Birds were present around the Jungle Retreat Mudumalai with a female seen in the grounds within two minutes of our arrival.

**Little Spiderhunter**
*Arachnothera longirostra longirostra*
(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.
A single bird seen well Thattekad.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

**House Sparrow**
*Passer domesticus*
Observed 1 day in total.
Common and widespread.

**Yellow-throated Sparrow**
*Gymnoris xanthocollis xanthocollis*
(2) 10 Mudumalai NP 14.1.
Numerous in drier scrub Mudumalai area.

Weavers and Allies *Ploceidae*

**Baya Weaver**
*Ploceus philippinus*
(1) 40 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.
A distant flock in non-breeding plumage roosting in cane near rice fields Ranganathittu area.

Waxbills and Allies *Estrildidae*

**Red Avadavat**
*Amandava amandava amandava*
(1) 1 en route 14.1.
One male was seen well in cane as we explored dry areas south of Mysore.
Indian Silverbill  
*Euodice malabarica*  
(3) 4 en route 13.1, 4 en route 14.1 and 1 en route 17.1.  
Seen well in several locations.

**White-rumped Munia**  
*Lonchura striata*  
(1) 10 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
Excellent scope views among munia flock Ranganathittu.

**Scaly-breasted Munia**  
*Lonchura punctulata*  
(3) 40 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 4 Mudumalai NP 16.1 and 1 en route 19.1.  
Numerous in the rice fields near Ranganathittu.

**Black-throated Munia**  
*Lonchura kelaarti*  
(1) 1 Thattekad BS 23.1.  
Brief flight views of a single bird along grassy lake edge Thattekad.

**Tricolored Munia**  
*Lonchura malacca*  
(1) 15 Ranganathittu BS 13.1.  
Great scope views in the large munia flock at rice fields near Ranganathittu.

Wagtails and Pipits *Motacillidae*

**Forest Wagtail**  
*Dendronanthus indicus*  
(1) 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1.  
Leader only at the small pool Jungle Retreat in the Mudumalai area and another brief glimpse Periyar.

**Western Yellow Wagtail**  
*Motacilla flava*  
Observed 2 days in total.  
Numerous in paddy fields near Kokkare and again near Ranganathittu.

**Grey Wagtail**  
*Motacilla cinerea cinerea*  
(9) 1 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 6 en route 19.1.  
A common winter visitor and in some places almost abundant.

**White-browed Wagtail**  
*Motacilla maderaspatensis*  
(8) 3 Ranganathittu BS 13.1, 1 en route 14.1, 2 Mudumalai NP 15.1 and 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.  
Common and widespread, even in towns.

**Paddyfield Pipit**  
*Anthus rufulus*  
Observed 1 day in total.  
A few observations of this widespread pipit.

**Nilgiri Pipit (VU)**  
*Anthus nilghiriensis*  
(1) 3 Munnar 20.1.  
Distant scope views of one in Eravikulam NP and then a confiding pair seen close above Deshadan Resort.

Finches, Euphonias *Fringillidae*

**Common Rosefinch**  
*Carpodacus erythrinus*  
Common and seen in many locations, including deep red males.

**Mammals (20 in total: 19 seen, 1 heard)**

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

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**Elephants Elephantidae**

*Asian Elephant* *Elephas maximus indicus*

(1) 1 heard Periyar Tiger Reserve 21.1.
We heard one distantly at Periyar.

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**Old World monkeys Cercopithecidae**

*Bonnet Macaque* *Macaca radiata*

Observed 3 days in total.
The common, endemic primate in the lowlands.

*Tufted Grey Langur* *Semnopithecus priam*

Observed 1 day in total.

*Nilgiri Langur* *Trachypithecus johnii*

Observed 2 days in total.
This endemic primate was common in the foothills and mountains.

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**Rabbits, Hares Leporidae**

*Indian Hare* *Lepus nigricollis*

Observed 1 day in total.

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**Squirrels Sciuridae**

*Common Palm Squirrel* *Funambulus palmarum*

Observed 4 days in total.

*Dusky-striped Squirrel* *Funambulus sublineatus*

Observed 1 day in total.

*Western Ghats Striped Squirrel* *Funambulus tristriatus*

Observed 2 days in total.

*Large Brown Flying Squirrel* *Petaurista philippensis*

Observed 2 days in total.

*Indian Giant Squirrel* *Ratufa indica*

Observed 3 days in total.

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**Cats Felidae**

*Leopard* *Panthera pardus fusca*

(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Great views of a female with nearly full-grown young walking next to road after dark in Parambikulam. This was the undoubted mammal highlight of the trip.

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**Mongoose Herpestidae**

*Indian Grey Mongoose* *Herpestes edwardsii*

Observed 2 days in total.

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**Civets, Genets Viverridae**

*Common Palm Civet* *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*

(1) 2 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve 18.1.
Brown Palm Civet.
**Bears, Giant Panda** *Ursidae*

Sloth Bear  
*Melursus ursinus*
Observed 1 day in total.

**Pigs** *Suidae*

Wild Boar  
*Sus scrofa*
Observed 3 days in total.

**Deer** *Cervidae*

Chital  
*Axis axis*
Observed 6 days in total.  
Very common in national parks.

Sambar  
*Rusa unicolor*
Observed 1 day in total.  
Common.

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

Gaur  
*Bos gaurus*
Observed 1 day in total.  
A small heard seen in Periyar.

Nilgiri Tahr  
*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*
Observed 1 day in total.  
Tame in Eravikulam NP.

**Old World Fruit Bats** *Pteropodidae*

Indian Flying Fox  
*Pteropus giganteus*
Observed 1 day in total.

**Reptiles (2 in total: 2 seen)**

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**Chameleons** *Chamaeleonidae*

Indian Chameleon  
*Chamaeleo zeylanicus*
Observed 1 day in total.  
Seen well during our evening drive Mudumalai.

**Monitor Lizards** *Varanidae*

Bengal Monitor  
*Varanus bengalensis*
Observed 2 days in total.
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