

Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 February - 9 March 2015



Blue Magpie



Serendib Scops Owl



Sri Lanka White Eye



Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl

Report & images compiled by Saman Kumara



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leader: Saman Kumara

Participants: Francis Wallington
Sally Wallington
Pura Mohsenzadeh
Susan Bryan

Highlights

The highlight of the tour was seeing the 33 endemic bird species in 7 days, while having a very light-paced tour. At Nuwara Eliya we were fortunate to see the shy Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush on two days and, at Singharaja, we were able to see eight endemic bird species, including the elusive Scaly Thrush and the Serendib Scops Owl, on the same day

Day 1

Saturday 28th February

The group met at the Airport and boarded the flight to Sri Lanka, for their 10-day endemic birdwatching tour.

Day 2

Sunday 1st March

The group arrived at Colombo Airport at 12.45 pm and we left the airport at 2.00pm. En-route to Kithulgala we encountered House Crow, Spotted Dove, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Indian Pond Heron, Spot-billed Pelican, Asian Openbill, Common Myna and Red Vented Bulbul.

We reached Kithulgala at 4.30pm, and were greeted with a hot cup of tea. After settling in, we started birding around the hotel property where we encountered Black-headed Ibis, Brahminy Kite, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Indian Swiftlet, House Swift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, Yellow-billed Babbler, Oriental Magpie Robin, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple Sunbird and Oriental White-eye.

We came back to the hotel at 6pm and met for the checklist at 7pm. After the briefing for the next day, we had dinner

Day 3

Monday 2nd March

We started the day with tea at 5.45am, and headed out at 6am for some pre-breakfast birding, near the hotel. We encountered Chestnut-backed Owlet, Little Cormorant, Indian Cormorant, Black Eagle, Booted Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Emerald Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Greater Coucal, Alpine Swift, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Lesser Yellownappe and Black-rumped Flameback.. We returned to the hotel for breakfast, and then set out to the Kithulgala Makandawa forest, to start the rest of the day's birding.

Our journey to the forest started with a boat trip in a narrow dug-out canoe which took us across the Kelaniya River. Once on shore, we hiked through a small village which leads up to the forest entrance. At the forest, we

encountered Common Iora, Jerdon's Leafbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Sri Lanka Swallow, Black Drongo, Sri Lanka Drongo, Grey Wagtail, Black-capped Bulbul, Yellow Browed Bulbul, Black Bulbul, Common Tailorbird, Black-naped Monarch, Asian Paradise-flycatcher, Brown-capped Babbler, Orange-billed Babbler, Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Spot-winged Thrush, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Loten's Sunbird and White-rumped Munia.

We headed back to the hotel at 6.15pm and met up for the checklist at 7pm. After dinner, the group retired to their rooms, for another early start the following day.

Day 4

Tuesday 3rd March

We started our day at 5.45 am with tea, and headed out for another pre-breakfast birding session. We crossed over a suspension bridge to a nearby village where we encountered Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Shikra, Crested Serpent Eagle, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, Alexandrine Parakeet, Green-billed Coucal, Scarlet Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Large-billed Crow, Paddyfield Pipit, Ashy Prinia, Greenish Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Great Tit, House Sparrow and Scaly-breasted Munia.

After a very successful birding session we headed back to the hotel for breakfast, and left for Nuwara Eliya at 9.45 am. Our journey took us along winding roads to the central hills, and the scenery changed at every bend we took. We reached our next hotel at 1.30 pm and had lunch, before setting out to a nearby forest for some more birding. We encountered Pied Bushchat, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Yellow-eared Bulbul and Sri Lanka White Eye.

We headed back to the hotel at 6pm and met up for the checklist for 7pm. After dinner, we returned to our rooms, as we would be leaving for Horton Plains at 5am.

Day 5

Wednesday 4th March

At 5am, after tea, we left for Horton Plains. We reached the Horton Plains entrance by 6am and proceeded to an area outside the National Park, to see the elusive Whistling Thrush. We also encountered Common Sandpiper, Rock Pigeon, Indian Pitta, Brown Shrike, Hill Swallow, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler and Pied Thrush, inside the park. We saw some Sambhar Deer as we exited the park and, on our journey back to the hotel, we saw Bear Monkey (Montane Purple-faced Langur).

We reached the hotel at 2.30pm for lunch, and set out again to Victoria Park at 3.30pm, where we saw Kashmir Flycatcher, Forest Wagtail, Zitting Cisticola and Indian Blackbird. We came back to the hotel at 6pm and, after the checklist, we had dinner and went to bed.

Day 6

Thursday 5th March

Once again we started the day early with a pre-breakfast birding session and returned to the hotel for breakfast at 7am. After breakfast, we checked out of the hotel and proceeded to Embilipitiya, en-route stopping at the Surrey

Estate for some birding. We reached Ella at 12.30pm and had lunch at the picturesque Ella Motel, which overlooks the mountain range of Ella.

Before reaching the hotel, we stopped at a tank where we encountered Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Painted Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, Little Egret, Common Kestrel, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Whiskered Tern, Collared Scops Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Asian Palm Swift, Common Kingfisher, Coppersmith Barbet, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Barn Swallow, White-browed Bulbul and Booted Warbler. We reached the hotel at 6pm, met at the restaurant at 7pm and, after dinner, headed back to our rooms.

Day 7

Friday 6th March

At 5.30 am, we left the Centauria Hotel and proceeded to Udawalawe National Park for a Jeep Safari. We encountered Barred Buttonquail, Grey Heron, Intermediate Egret, Great Cormorant, Darter, Black-winged Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Little Tern, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Plum-headed Parakeet, Layard's Parakeet, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Roller, Green Bee-eater, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Yellow Wagtail, Jerdon's Bushlark, Jungle Prinia, Plain Prinia, Blyth's Reed Warbler, White-browed Fantail, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Indian Robin and Thick-billed Flowerpecker.

We had lunch in Udawalawe and left for Singharaja at 2.30pm. By 6.30pm we reached Singharaja and were greeted with a hot cup of tea. After checking in, the group met for the checklist at 7pm, and concluded the day with dinner.

Day 8

Saturday 7th March

After an early breakfast at 5.30am, we left for the Singharaja Rainforest, with a picnic lunch. Our journey to the entrance of the rainforest was by jeep, as the roads are very steep and narrow. The walk started out with us seeing the Sri Lankan Spurfowl, Red-faced Malkoha, the famous Serendib Scops Owl, a couple of Malabar Trogons, Crimson-backed Goldenback, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, White-faced Starling, the elusive Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and Legge's Flowerpecker. By the end of the day we had seen all the 33 endemic bird species of Sri Lanka!

We returned to the hotel at 5.30pm, and met for the checklist at 7pm which was followed by dinner.

Day 9

Sunday 8th March

Since we had covered the 33 endemics the day before, the group decided to do some light birding around the hotel. After lunch, we checked out of the hotel and proceeded to Colombo. On the way, we saw many more of the birds that we had already encountered during the first few days of our trip.

We reached our hotel at 5.30pm and met for dinner at 8pm.

Day 10

Monday 9th March

After breakfast, the group checked out in time to reach the airport for their flight.

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Species Lists

Birds (Bold text are endemic or near endemic)

Common name	Scientific name
1 Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
2 Sri Lanka Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
3 Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetti</i>
4 Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
5 Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
6 Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
7 Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
8 Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
9 Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
10 Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
11 Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
12 Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
13 Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
14 Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
15 Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
16 Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
17 Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
18 Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
19 Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
20 Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
21 Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
22 Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
23 Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
24 White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
25 Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyaeus</i>
26 Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
27 Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
28 Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
29 Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
30 Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
31 Mountain Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus nipalensis</i>
32 White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
33 Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
34 Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
35 Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
36 Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
37 Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
38 Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
39 Feral Pigeon, Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
40 Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>
41 Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
42 Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
43 Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
44 Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
45 Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
46 Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
47 Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
48 Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
49 Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
50 Layard's Parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthrapae</i>
51 Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>
52 Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
53 Red-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
54 Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
55 Green-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus chlororhynchos</i>
56 Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
57 Serendib Scops Owl	<i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>
58 Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus lettia</i>
59 Chestnut-backed Owlet	<i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>
60 Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
61 Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
62 Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>
63 Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
64 Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
65 Little Swift (House Swift)	<i>Apus affinis</i>
66 Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
67 Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater)	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
68 Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
69 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
70 White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
71 Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx erithaca</i>
72 Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
73 Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
74 Yellow-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>
75 Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
76 Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
77 Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros gingalensis</i>
78 Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
79 Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
80 Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
81 Crimson-backed Flameback (Goldenback)	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>
82 Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>

Common name	Scientific name
83 Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>
84 Orange (Scarlet) Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
85 Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
86 Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
87 Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
88 Marshall's Iora	<i>Aegithina nigrolutea</i>
89 Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
90 Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
91 Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
92 Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>
93 House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
94 Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
95 Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
96 Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo domicola</i>
97 Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis hyperythra</i>
98 Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
99 White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
100 Sri Lanka Drongo (Sri Lanka Crested Drongo)	<i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i>
101 Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>
102 Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
103 Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
104 Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
105 Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
106 Black-capped Bulbul (Black-headed Yellow Bulbul)	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
107 Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
108 Yellow-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
109 White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
110 Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
111 Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
112 Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
113 Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
114 Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
115 Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
116 Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
117 Sri Lanka Bush Warbler	<i>Elaphrornis palliseri</i>
118 Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
119 Booted Warbler	<i>Iduna caligata</i>
120 Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
121 Large-billed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>
122 White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
123 Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
124 Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
125 Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
126 Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
127 Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
128 Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
129 Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
130 Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
131 Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
132 Ashy-headed Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
133 Sri Lanka Hill Myna (Sri Lanka Myna)	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
134 Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
135 White-faced Starling	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
136 Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>

	Common name	Scientific name
137	Pied Thrush	<i>Geokichla wardii</i>
138	Spot-winged Thrush	<i>Geokichla spiloptera</i>
139	Sri Lanka Thrush, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>
140	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>
141	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
142	Indian Robin (Black-backed Robin)	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
143	Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
144	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
145	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>
146	Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula subrubra</i>
147	Dull-blue Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>
148	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
149	Gray-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
150	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
151	Legge's (White-throated) Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
152	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
153	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>
154	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
155	Loten's Sunbird (Long-billed Sunbird)	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>
156	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
157	Sri Lanka White-eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
158	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
159	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
160	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
161	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
162	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>