

# Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

Naturetrek Tour Report

5 - 14 November 2016



Ashy-headed Laughingthrush



Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill



Red-faced Malkoha



Sri Lanka Woodshrike

Report and 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](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour Participants: Saman Kumara and Indika Jayatissa (leaders) together with 11 Naturetrek clients

## Highlights

An impressive total of 32 of the 33 endemic birds of Sri Lanka were seen during this tour. We only missed the Serendib Scops Owl. Although its new roosting site was found by the leaders, it proved too difficult for the group to reach. Also seen were 15 mammal species and 13 species of reptiles and amphibians, making the tour exciting and interesting.

### Day 1

**Saturday 5th November**

The tour started with a flight from the UK to Sri Lanka.

### Day 2

**Sunday 6th November**

#### Kitulgala

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 12.25pm. After meeting the leaders, we left the airport at 1.35pm. En route Kitulgala we encountered Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Shikra, Black-hooded Oriole, Greater Coucal, Yellow-billed Babbler, Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback), Crested Serpent Eagle, White-throated Kingfisher, Brown Shrike, Sri Lanka Swallow, Yellow-fronted Barbet and Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill.

We arrived at the Plantation Hotel in Kitulgala at 5.30pm and after checking in at the hotel, we did a short bird walk around the hotel, spotting Indian Swiftlet and Blue-tailed Bee-eater. At 7.30pm we met to do our first checklist, and after a briefing for the next day, we had our dinner.

### Day 3

**Monday 7th November**

#### Kitulgala

During our pre-breakfast bird walk around Kitulgala village, sightings included Yellow-browed Bulbul, Black Bulbul, Common Emerald Dove, Sri Lanka Thrush, Chestnut-backed Owlet and Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot.

We returned to the hotel for breakfast at 8am and afterwards went to the Mahakandawa rainforest. Here we encountered Golden-fronted Leafbird, Malabar Trogon, Black Eagle, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Sri Lanka Drongo and Green-billed Coucal.

We returned to the hotel at 1.30pm for lunch and afterwards re-visited Kitulgala village, spotting Black-capped Bulbul, Sri Lanka Junglefowl and Southern (Lesser) Hill Myna.

Back at the hotel, we did the checklist at 7.30pm followed by a briefing for the next day before dinner.

## Day 4

## Tuesday 8th November

### Nuwara Eliya

We did a pre-breakfast birding session at 5.45am around Kitulgala village, spotting Green-billed Coucal and Layard's Parakeet. After returning to the hotel, we had breakfast at 8.30am and then checked out. On the way to Nuwara Eliya we saw an eagle with a kill in its beak.

We reached hotel Heaven Seven and had a late lunch. At 3pm we visited Victoria Park and sightings included Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Common Sandpiper, Indian Pitta, Kashmir Flycatcher, Lesser Cuckoo and Sri Lanka White-Eye.

We returned to the hotel and gathered in the restaurant to do the checklist, which was followed by dinner.

## Day 5

## Wednesday 9th November

### Nuwara Eliya

At 4.45am we had our tea/coffee and then left for Horton Plains. Our sightings there included Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Zitting Cisticola, Pied Bush Chat, Dark-fronted Babbler, Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Sri Lanka Junglefowl and Green Warbler.

We returned to the hotel for a late lunch and then visited Victoria Park again. This time we saw Pied Thrush and White-breasted Waterhen. Afterwards we visited a small forest patch in Seetha Eliya and observed the elusive Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush.

We came back to the hotel at 7pm and, after the checklist, we had dinner and then went to bed.

## Day 6

## Thursday 10th November

### Embilipitiya

We checked out of the hotel after breakfast and then proceeded to Udawalawe. En route we visited the Surrey Estate bird sanctuary and encountered Brown Wood Owl, Pied Thrush, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Orange-headed Thrush and Brown-capped Babbler. We stopped for lunch at the picturesque Ella Motel Restaurant which overlooks a vast valley below. Brown-headed Barbet, Oriental White-Eye, Crimson-backed Flameback and Yellow-fronted Barbet were seen here.

Further down the road to Embilipitiya we encountered Woolly-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Black-winged Kite, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Indian Peafowl. At the Tanamalvila tank we observed White-bellied Sea Eagle, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Oriental Darter and Little Grebe.

We reached our hotel by 6.45 pm and after checking in, we did the checklist at 7.30pm followed by dinner.

## Day 7

Friday 11th November

### Sinharaja

We had tea/coffee at 5.45am and then checked out of the hotel. We then visited Udawalawe National Park for our safari. We spotted Blue-faced Malkoha, Barred Buttonquail, Plum-headed Parakeet, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon and Sri Lanka Woodshrike along with Asian Elephant, Spotted Deer, Water Buffalo and Land Monitor.

After lunch at the Nivahana restaurant, we proceeded to Sinharaja. En route we spotted Crimson-fronted Barbet before reaching Blue Magpie Lodge at 4.30pm. We did a bird walk around the village and observed Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and Brown-breasted Flycatcher.

We met again at 7.30pm for our evening routine of checklist, briefing and dinner.

## Day 8

Saturday 12th November

### Sinharaja

We started the day at 5.15am with tea/coffee and then proceeded to the Sinharaja rainforest in jeeps. At the ticket counter we witnessed Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, White-faced Starling and Red-faced Malkoha. A mixed flock of birds arrived with the sunlight and included Sri Lanka Drongo, Orange-billed Babbler, Malabar Trogon, Asian Paradise Flycatcher and Orange (Scarlet) Minivet. We had our picnic lunch in the forest before driving back to the hotel, en route encountering Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Sri Lanka Hill Myna and Sri Lanka Thrush.

We returned to the hotel at 3.30pm and group members had some free time. Serendib Scops Owl had not been seen during the morning so the leaders returned to the rainforest to search for it. After an hour of searching the owl was located near a hill. The terrain was overgrown with a thick bamboo forest and a slippery rocky stream. Back at the hotel, group members were given the opportunity to return to see the owl but, as the terrain was very challenging, they decided not to pursue it.

In the evening we had our usual routine of checklist, dinner and a briefing about tomorrow.

## Day 9

Sunday 13th November

### Katunayake

We started the day at 5am after a cup of tea and left for the Ketlapatala area with a picnic breakfast to see Sri Lanka Spurfowl. During the morning we also saw Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Red-faced Malkoha, Indian Blue Robin and Legge's Flowerpecker. We returned to the hotel at 11am.

After lunch we checked out of the hotel by 1pm. We reached our next hotel at 5pm and had an evening bird walk around the hotel, encountering Collared Scops Owl.

At 7.30pm we did the checklist followed by dinner.

## Day 10

Monday 14th November

We did a pre-breakfast birding walk around the hotel garden between 6.30am and 7.30am. After breakfast we checked out and headed to the airport for our flight back to the UK, where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

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## Species Lists (Bold text denotes endemic or near endemic; some previous names shown in brackets)

### Birds:

Common name	Scientific name
1 <b>Sri Lanka Spurfowl</b>	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
2 <b>Sri Lanka Junglefowl</b>	<i>Gallus lafayettii</i>
3 Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
4 Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
5 Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
6 Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
7 Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
8 Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
9 Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>
10 Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
11 Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
12 Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
13 Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
14 Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
15 Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
16 Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
17 Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
18 Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
19 Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
20 Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
21 Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
22 Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
23 Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
24 Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
25 Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
26 Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>
27 Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
28 Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>
29 Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
30 White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
31 Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyaetus</i>
32 White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
33 Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
34 Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
35 Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
36 Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
37 Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
38 Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
39 Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
40 Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
41 Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
42 Rock Dove (Common Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>
43 <b>Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>
44 Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
45 Common Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove)	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
46 Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
47 <b>Sri Lanka Green Pigeon</b>	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
48 Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
49 <b>Green-billed Coucal</b>	<i>Centropus chlororhynchus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
50 Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
51 <b>Red-faced Malkoha</b>	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
52 Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
53 Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied Cuckoo)	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
54 Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
55 Grey-bellied Cuckoo (Plaintive Cuckoo)	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>
56 Lesser Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>
57 Indian Scops Owl (Collared Scops Owl)	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>
58 Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
59 <b>Chestnut-backed Owlet</b>	<i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>
60 Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
61 Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>
62 Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>
63 Brown-backed Needletail	<i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>
64 Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
65 Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
66 Little Swift (House Swift)	<i>Apus affinis</i>
67 Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
68 Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
69 Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
70 White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
71 Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
72 Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
73 Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater)	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
74 Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
75 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
76 Eurasian Hoopoe (Common Hoopoe)	<i>Upupa epops</i>
77 Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
78 <b>Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill</b>	<i>Ocyroceros gingalensis</i>
79 Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
80 <b>Yellow-fronted Barbet</b>	<i>Psilopogon flavifrons</i>
81 <b>Crimson-fronted Barbet</b>	<i>Psilopogon rubricapillus</i>
82 Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
83 Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>
84 Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
85 Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
86 Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
87 <b>Crimson-backed Flameback(Crimson-backed Goldenback)</b>	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>
88 Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
89 Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
90 <b>Layard's Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacula calthrapae</i>
91 Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
92 <b>Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot</b>	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
93 Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyuran</i>
94 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
95 <b>Sri Lanka Woodshrike</b>	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>
96 Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
97 Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
98 Marshall's Iora	<i>Aegithina nigrolutea</i>
99 Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
100 Orange Minivet (Scarlet Minivet)(Flame Minivet)	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
101 Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
102 Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
103 White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
104 <b>Sri Lanka Drongo (Sri Lanka Crested Drongo)</b>	<i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i>
105 White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
106 Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
107 Indian Paradise Flycatcher (Asian Paradise Flycatcher)	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
108 <b>Sri Lanka Blue Magpie</b>	<i>Urocissa ornate</i>
109 House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
110 Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed Crow)	<i>Corvus culminates</i>
111 Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
112 Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
113 Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
114 <b>Black-capped Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
115 Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
116 <b>Yellow-eared Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
117 White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
118 Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
119 Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
120 Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
121 Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo domicola</i>
122 <b>Sri Lanka Swallow</b>	<i>Cecropis hyperythra</i>
123 Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>
124 Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
125 Large-billed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>
126 Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
127 Sykes's Warbler	<i>Iduna rama</i>
128 <b>Sri Lanka Bush Warbler</b>	<i>Elaphromis palliseri</i>
129 Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
130 Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
131 Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
132 Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
133 Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
134 Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
135 <b>Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler</b>	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
136 Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
137 Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
138 <b>Brown-capped Babbler</b>	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
139 <b>Orange-billed Babbler</b>	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
140 Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
141 <b>Ashy-headed Laughingthrush</b>	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
142 Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
143 Oriental White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
144 <b>Sri Lanka White-Eye</b>	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
145 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
146 <b>Sri Lanka Hill Myna (Sri Lanka Myna)</b>	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
147 Southern Hill Myna (Lesser Hill Myna)	<i>Gracula indica</i>
148 Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
149 Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>
150 <b>White-faced Starling</b>	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
151 Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>
152 Pied Thrush	<i>Geokichla wardii</i>
153 Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>
154 <b>Spot-winged Thrush</b>	<i>Geokichla spiloptera</i>
155 <b>Sri Lanka Thrush (Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush)</b>	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>



Common name	Scientific name
156 Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
157 Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
158 Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
159 Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>
160 Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
161 <b>Dull-blue Flycatcher</b>	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>
162 Indian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora brunnea</i>
163 <b>Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush</b>	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>
164 Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula subrubra</i>
165 Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
166 Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
167 <b>Legge's Flowerpecker (White-throated Flowerpecker)</b>	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
168 Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
169 Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>
170 Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
171 Loten's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>
172 House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
173 White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
174 Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
175 Black-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>
176 Tricolored Munia (Black-headed Munia)	<i>Lonchura Malacca</i>
177 Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>
178 Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
179 Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
180 Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>

### Mammals:

Toque Macaque, <i>Macaca sinica</i>	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, <i>Trachypithecus (Presbytis) vetulus</i>
Ruddy Mongoose, <i>Herpestes smithii</i>	Brown Mongoose, <i>Herpestes fuscus</i>
Jungle Cat, <i>Felis chaus</i>	Asian Elephant, <i>Elephas maximus</i>
Spotted Deer, <i>Cervus axis</i>	Sambar, <i>Cervus unicolor</i>
Water Buffalo, <i>Bubalus Bubalis</i>	Indian Palm Squirrel, <i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
Grizzled Giant Squirrel, <i>Ratufa macroura</i>	Layard's Striped Squirrel, <i>Funambulus layardi</i>
Dusky Striped Squirrel, <i>Funambulus sublineatus</i>	Indian Hare (Black-naped Hare), <i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
Indian Flying Fox, <i>Pteropus gigantean</i>	

### Reptiles & Amphibians:

Hump-nosed Viper, <i>Hypnale hypnale</i>	Common Rat Snake, <i>Ptyas mucosus maximus</i>
Bengal (Land) Monitor, <i>Varanus bengalensis</i>	Asian Water Monitor, <i>Varanus salvator</i>
Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard, <i>Calotes versicolor</i>	Green Garden Lizard, <i>Calotes calotes</i>
Black-cheek Lizard, <i>Calotes nigrilabris</i>	Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard, <i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i>
Hump-nosed Lizard, <i>Lyricephalus scutatus</i>	Soft-shelled Terrapin, <i>Lissemys punctata</i>
Hard-shelled Terrapin, <i>Melanochelys trijuga parkeri</i>	Common House Gecko, <i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
Common Skink, <i>Eutropis carinata</i>	