

Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

Naturetrek Tour Report

11 – 20 August 2018



Sri Lanka Blue Magpie



Green-billed Coucal



Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill



Chestnut-backed Owlet

Report & images compiled by Saman Kumara Gamage



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Tour participants: Saman Kumara Gamage (leader) with five Naturetrek clients

Introduction

Whilst we had some spectacular views of Chestnut-backed Owlet, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill and many more of the endemics, our target of all 34 endemic bird species was foiled because of heavy unexpected showers that occurred due to a depression in the Bay of Bengal, which played havoc in the southern state of India and Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, we had an overall count of 158 species of birds, 15 mammal species and 11 of reptiles and amphibians.

Day 1

Saturday 11th August

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

Day 2

Sunday 12th August

Kitulgala

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 12.50pm. After meeting Saman, we left the airport at 1.40pm. During our journey to Kitulgala we encountered Common Myna, Lesser Hill Myna, Ashy Prinia, Plain Prinia, White-rumped Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia, Black-headed Munia, Ashy Woodswallow, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Spotted Dove, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-throated Kingfisher, Asian Openbill, Yellow-billed Babbler, Orange-billed Babbler, Indian Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Shikra, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Little Egret, Little Cormorant, Rock Dove, Little Swift, Crested Treeswift, Indian Roller, White-bellied Drongo, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Indian Robin, House Crow, Sri Lanka Swallow, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Lesser Yellownappe and Black-rumped Flameback.

We checked in at our hotel at 6.10pm and met for dinner at 7.15pm. After dinner we did our checklist and had a briefing about the next day's program before calling it a night.

Day 3

Monday 13th August

Kitulgala

We started the day at 5.30am by visiting a nearby patch of forest where we encountered Chestnut-backed Owlet, Brown-capped Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Greater Coucal, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Layard's Parakeet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Common Iora, Orange Minivet, Black-capped Bulbul, Black Bulbul, White-browed Bulbul, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Large-billed Crow, Spot-winged Thrush, Common Tailorbird, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Green Imperial Pigeon, White-breasted Waterhen, Black-hooded Oriole and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater.

After breakfast in the hotel we set out to the Kitulgala Rainforest by crossing the river on a raft. Our birding in the forest yielded most of the birds seen earlier, together with Crested Serpent Eagle and White-browed Fantail. We also saw Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard. We returned to the hotel for a late lunch and then set out to the nearby

village where, in addition to birds seen earlier, we also saw Crimson-fronted Barbet, Oriental White-Eye and Black-headed Cuckooshrike.

We were back at the hotel by 6.30pm and met for dinner at 7.30pm, which was followed by the checklist and a briefing for the next day.

Day 4

Tuesday 14th August

Nuwara Eliya

We did a pre-breakfast bird walk around Kitulgala village and saw Green-billed Coucal and Emerald Dove. We returned to the hotel for breakfast. Subsequently we checked out of the hotel at 9.20am and headed to Nuwara Eliya for our next two-night stay in the central mountains of the island.

We reached our next hotel at 12.15pm and after having lunch, set out to the nearby Victoria Park. Here we saw Sri Lanka White-Eye, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Great Tit, House Sparrow and Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher.

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

Day 5

Wednesday 15th August

Nuwara Eliya

At 4.45am we had tea/coffee and then left for Horton Plains. We arrived amidst heavy rain and as there didn't seem to be any chance of the rain stopping, we returned to the hotel. We did manage to see Pied Bush Chat, Indian Blackbird, Paddyfield Pipit, Sri Lanka Junglefowl and Sambar.

Later we visited Victoria Park and Seetha Eliya forest where we encountered Velvet-fronted Nuthatch. We came back to the hotel at 5pm. After the checklist, we had our dinner and then went to bed.

Day 6

Thursday 16th August

Embilipitiya

After breakfast, we checked out and proceeded to Embilipitiya. En route, at Surrey Bird Sanctuary, we saw Brown Wood Owl and Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler. We had lunch at Ella and continued our journey, birding on the way. During our drive to the next hotel we saw Woolly-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Black-winged Stilt, Gull-billed Tern, Whiskered Tern, Indian Peafowl, Oriental Darter, Common Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Black-winged Kite, Brahminy kite, Green Bee-eater, Coppersmith Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Zitting Cisticola, Grey-breasted Prinia, Jungle Prinia, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Jerdon's Leafbird, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple Sunbird, Crested Treeswift, Alpine Swift, Little Swift, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Asian Koel, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Blue-faced Malkoha, Barred Buttonquail, Collared Scops Owl and Malabar Pied Hornbill.

The evening followed our usual routine of dinner, checklist and briefing before calling it a night.

Day 7

Thursday 17th August

Udawalawe National Park & Sinharaja

With a packed breakfast, we left the hotel and proceeded to Udawalawe National Park for a jeep safari. During the safari we encountered Marshall's Iora, Sirkeer Malkoha, Blue-faced Malkoha, Great Cormorant, Indian Cormorant, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Changeable Hawk- Eagle, Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Little Tern, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Oriental Skylark, Ashy Prinia, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Black-winged Kite, Eurasian Spoonbill, Spot-billed Pelican, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Plum-headed Parakeet, Painted Stork, Lesser Adjutant and Yellow-wattled Lapwing. Other wildlife seen in the park included Asian Elephant, Water Buffalo, Golden Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose, Bengal (Land) Monitor, Mugger Crocodile and Spotted Deer.

After lunch at the Nivahana restaurant, we proceeded to Sinharaja. We checked in to the Blue Magpie Lodge at 4.30pm and then did a bird walk in the village, spotting Legge's Flowerpecker and Sri Lanka Myna.

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

Day 8

Saturday 18th August

Sinharaja Rainforest

We started the day at 5am with tea/coffee and then proceeded to the Sinharaja rainforest in jeeps. Inside the rainforest we saw Besra, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Sri Lanka Myna, Sri Lanka Crested Drongo, Red-faced Malkoha, White-faced Starling, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Malabar Trogon, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Crimson-backed Flameback, Black-naped Monarch, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, along with Sri Lanka Birdwing and Sri Lanka Tree-Nymph butterflies.

We returned to the hotel at 5pm and had dinner at 7.30pm.

Day 9

Sunday 19th August

Katunayake

We started the day at 4.45am after a cup of tea and then left for the Ketalapatala area, where we found Sri Lanka Spurfowl and had a very good sighting of Slaty-legged Crane.

We returned to the hotel at 10.30am and after lunch, checked out and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night's stay. En route we saw Eastern Cattle Egret, Lesser Whistling Duck, Baya weaver, and Crested Honey Buzzard.

At 7pm we did a bird walk in the hotel garden and encountered a Brown Hawk-Owl. At 8pm we did the checklist which was followed by dinner.

Day 10

Monday 20th August

After breakfast we checked out of the hotel 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/alternative names in brackets)

Birds:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
2	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
3	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
4	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
5	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
6	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
7	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
8	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
9	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
10	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
11	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
12	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
13	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
14	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
15	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
16	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
17	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
18	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
19	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
20	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
21	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
22	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
23	Oriental Darter (Darter)	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
24	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
25	Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental Honey Buzzard)	<i>Pemis pitlorhynchus</i>
26	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
27	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
28	Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle	<i>Lophotriorchis kienerii</i>
29	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
30	Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>
31	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
32	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
33	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyaetus</i>
34	Slaty-legged Crake	<i>Rallina eurizonoides</i>
35	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>
36	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Tumix suscitator</i>
37	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
38	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
39	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
40	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
41	Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>
42	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
43	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
44	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
45	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
46	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrid</i>
47	Rock Dove (Common Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>
48	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
49 Common Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove)	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
50 Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
51 Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
52 Green-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus chlororhynchus</i>
53 Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
54 Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leshenaultii</i>
55 Red-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
56 Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
57 Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
58 Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>
59 Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
60 Chestnut backed Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>
61 Brown Hawk Owl	<i>Nino scutulata</i>
62 Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
63 Crested Treeswift (Gray-rumped Treeswift)	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
64 Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>
65 Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
66 Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
67 Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
68 Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
69 Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
70 Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
71 White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
72 Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
73 Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
74 Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater)	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
75 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
76 Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
77 Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>
78 Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
79 Yellow-fronted Barbet	<i>Psilopogon flavifrons</i>
80 Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Psilopogon rubricapillus</i>
81 Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
82 Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
83 Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chorolophus</i>
84 Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
85 Crimson-backed Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>
86 Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
87 Layard's Parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthrapae</i>
88 Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
89 Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
90 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
91 Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>
92 Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
93 Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
94 Marshall's Iora	<i>Aegithina nigroluteo</i>
95 Black-headed Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>
96 Orange Minivet (Scarlet / Flame Minivet)	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
97 Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
98 White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caeruleascens</i>
99 Sri Lanka Drongo	<i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i>
100 White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
101 Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>

Common name	Scientific name
102 Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa ornate</i>
103 House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
104 Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed Crow)	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>
105 Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
106 Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
107 Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
108 Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
109 Black-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
110 Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
111 Yellow-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
112 White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
113 Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
114 Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
115 Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis hyperythra</i>
116 Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
117 Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
118 Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
119 Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
120 Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
121 Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
122 Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
123 Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hypopythra</i>
124 Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
125 Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
126 Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
127 Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
128 Ashy-headed Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
129 Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
130 Oriental White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
131 Sri Lanka White-Eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
132 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
133 Sri Lanka Myna	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
134 Southern Hill Myna (Lesser Hill Myna)	<i>Gracula indica</i>
135 Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
135 White-faced Starling	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
136 Spot-winged Thrush	<i>Geokichla spiloptera</i>
138 Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush	<i>Zoothera imbricate</i>
139 Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>
140 Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
141 Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
142 Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
143 Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>
144 Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
145 Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
146 Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
147 Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
148 Legge's Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
149 Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
150 Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
151 Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
152 Loten's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>
153 House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
154 Baya weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>

	Common name	Scientific name
155	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
156	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
157	Tricolored Munia (Black-headed Munia)	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>
158	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>

Mammals:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
2	Grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus priam</i>
3	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Trachypithecus vetulus</i>
4	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
5	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
6	Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
7	Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjac</i>
8	Spotted Deer	<i>Cervus axis</i>
9	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
10	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus Bubalis</i>
11	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
12	Grizzled Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>
13	Layard's Striped Squirrel	<i>Funambulus layardi</i>
14	Dusky Striped Squirrel	<i>Funambulus sublineatus</i>
15	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>

Reptiles & Amphibians:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Green Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla nasuta</i>
2	Indian Cobra	<i>Naja naja</i>
3	Bengal (Land) Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
4	Asian Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>
5	Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
6	Green Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes caioles</i>
7	Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard	<i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i>
8	Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
9	Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
10	Common Skink	<i>Eutropis carinata</i>
11	Sri Lanka Whipping Frog	<i>Polypedates cruciger</i>