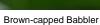
Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

With a Blue Whale Extension

Naturetrek Tour Report

3 - 12 November 2018







Red-faced Malkoha



Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon



Chestnut-backed Owlet

Report & images compiled by Mukesh Hirdaramani



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Introduction

Despite the island-wide bad weather with torrential downpours, all 34 endemics were captured in our sight. An early sighting of Serendib Scops Owl in Kitulgala was a great view. Red-faced Malkoha showed well, often coming down from the canopy and feeding on caterpillars. The elusive Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush was sighted in two locations well in the open, both male and female. The Blue Magpie graced us with its presence as we entered the Sinharaja Rainforest, followed by some good sightings of Yellow-fronted Barbet. Overall, in trying weather we managed to rack up a total of 185 Bird species, 19 Mammal species and eight Reptile & other species.

Day 1

Saturday 3rd November

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

Day 2

Sunday 4th November

Kitulgala

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 12.50pm. After meeting the group, we left the airport at 1.35pm. During our journey to Kitulgala we encountered Indian Palm Squirrel, Indian Roller, Eastern Cattle Egret, Indian Pond Heron, Shikra, Black Eagle, Indian Robin, Black-headed Ibis, Intermediate Egret, Little Cormorant, Crested Honey Buzzard, Rock Dove, Spotted Dove, Asian Palm Swift, White-throated Kingfisher and Green Imperial Pigeon.

We reached Kitulgala at 4.45pm and started birding around the village where we encountered Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Brown-headed Barbet, Lesser Yellownape, Lesser Goldenback, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, White-bellied Drongo, House Crow, Large-billed Crow, Black-capped Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, Black Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Brown-capped Babbler, Oriental White-eye, Common Myna, Spot-winged Thrush, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher and Purple-rumped Sunbird.

After dinner we did our checklist and had a briefing about the next day's program before calling it a night.

Day 3

Monday 5th November

Kitulgala

Amidst a slight downpour, we started our day at 5.30am by visiting the Kitulgala village for birding. Our sightings included Dark-fronted Babbler, Sri Lanka Drongo, Malabar Trogon, Green-billed Coucal, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, White-breasted Waterhen, Emerald Dove, Greater Coucal, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Indian Swiftlet, Little Swift, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Layard's Parakeet, and the handsome Serendib Scops Owl. We returned to the hotel for breakfast and then proceeded to the Makandawa rainforest. We crossed the river on a raft and entered another village before making our way to the rainforest entrance.

Sightings for the rest of the day included Alexandrine Parakeet, Indian Pitta, Bar-winged Flycather-Shrike, Scarlet Minivet, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, White-browed Fantail, Black-naped Monarch, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Swallow, Greenish Warbler, Common Tailorbird, Orange-billed Babbler, Yellow-billed Babbler, Southern-hill Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Jerdon's Leafbird, White-rumped Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia, Grey Wagtail, Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Ruddy Mongoose, Green Garden Lizard, Oriental Garden Lizard and Common Skink.

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 6th November

Nuwara Eliya

Our pre-breakfast bird walk around Kitulgala was spoilt by the heavy rain, yet we managed to see a few of the birds seen the previous day. We returned to the hotel for breakfast and then set off to Nuwara Eliya for our next two-night stay. En route we saw some Toque Macaques and Indian Flying Foxes.

We reached our next hotel at 12.15pm and after having lunch, set out to the nearby Victoria Park. Here we saw Common Sandpiper, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Great Tit, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Sri Lanka White-eye, Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, Loten's Sunbird, House Sparrow and Forest Wagtail. We later visited a small forest patch nearby and saw the elusive Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush.

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

Day 5

Wednesday 7th November

Nuwara Eliya

At 4.45am we had tea/coffee and then left for Horton Plains. Before we entered the park, we did some birding around the entrance and came across the Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush again. Sambar Deer and Hill Swallow were also seen here. Our journey within the park yielded sightings of Black-winged Kite, Brahminy Kite, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, Green Warbler, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Indian Blackbird, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Pied Bush Chat, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple Sunbird, Tricolored Munia and Paddy-field Pipit. Mammal sightings included Sambar Deer, Muntjac and Dusky Striped Squirrel.

We returned to the hotel for lunch and subsequently left for the Bomuruella forest patch, but due to the inclement weather, we didn't have any bird sightings here.

We returned to the hotel and followed our evening routine of checklist followed by dinner.

Day 6

Thursday 8th November

Embilipitiya

After breakfast, we checked out and proceeded to Embilipitiya. En route, at Surrey Bird Sanctuary, we saw Brown Wood Owl, White-browed Bulbul, Yellow-browed Bulbul and Golden-fronted Leafbird. We had lunch at Ella and continued our journey, birding on the way. During our drive to the next hotel we saw Lesser Whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Indian Peafowl, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black-crowned Night Heron, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Great Egret, Little Egret, Spot-billed Pelican, Oriental Darter, Red-wattled Lapwing, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Whiskered Tern, Asian Koel, Green Bee-eater, Common Iora, Giant Squirrel, Grey Langur and Spotted Deer.

After reaching our hotel in Embilipitiya we were just in time to see the Collared Scops Owls leaving their day roost.

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

Day 7

Friday 9th November

Udawalawe National Park & Sinharaja

With a packed breakfast, we left the hotel and proceeded to Udawalawe National Park for a jeep safari. The first bit of the morning was perfect, but closer to the end of the safari we once again had bad weather due to a depression in the Bay of Bengal which was affecting the whole island. Nevertheless, we racked up a large number of birds including Woolly-necked Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Indian Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Pallid Harrier, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Indian Stone-curl;ew (Thick-knee), Great Stone-curlew (Thick-knee), Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Greater Painted Snipe, Wood Sandpiper, Gull-billed tern, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Sirkeer Malkoha, Pied Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, Coppersmith Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Plum-headed Parakeet, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Grey-breasted Prinia, Jungle Prinia, Ashy Prinia, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Hume's Whitethroat, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Rosy Starling, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Western Yellow Wagtail and Blyth's Pipit. Mammal sightings included Asian Elephant, Wild Boar and Indian Black-naped Hare

We had our lunch at Nivahana restaurant in Udawalawe and proceeded to Sinharaja. En route we saw Common Palm Civet and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, amongst many birds seen before. We checked in to the Blue Magpie Lodge at 6.30pm and enjoyed a hot cup of tea.

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

Day 8

Saturday 10th November

Sinharaja Rainforest

We started the day at 5am with tea/coffee and then proceeded to the Sinharaja rainforest in jeeps. We had clear blue skies and a good start with Sri Lanka Blue Magpie which we saw at the ticket counter. On our way to the rainforest entrance we saw Legge's Flowerpecker, Sri Lanka Myna and Brown-backed Needletail. Inside the

forest we had sightings of Chestnut-backed Owlet, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Sri Lanka Thrush and Crimson-fronted Barbet. We also saw Green Vine Snake and Green Pit Viper.

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

Day 9

Sunday 11th November

Katunayake

We started the day at 4.30am 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 Crake. We had a very rare sighting of the Stripe-necked Mongoose as well.

Once again, we went in to the rainforest and had very good sightings of Red-faced Malkoha, Crimson-backed Flameback, White-faced Starling, Asian Brown Flycatcher and Crested Tree Swift.

We returned to the hotel and after having lunch the group spilt in to two for their last night stay in Katunayake and for the Blue Whales extension.

On our way we managed to see the last endemic bird the Sri Lanka Green Pigeon which was a delight for everyone.

We reached the Airport Garden hotel at 6.30pm and had our dinner before calling it a night.

Day 10

Monday 12th November

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.

Blue Whales Extension

Day 10

Monday 12th November

We started the day at 6am and after a cup of tea we set out to Mirissa with our packed breakfast in search of Blue Whales. We had very good sightings of the Blue Whale and Greater Crested Tern was also sighted on our way back to the pier.

We visited Kirala Kele Wetland Sanctuary and we saw Blyth's Reed warbler, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Baya Weaver, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Striated Heron and Chestnut-headed Bee-eater.

We returned to the hotel at 7pm and did the checklist which was followed by dinner.

Day 11

Tuesday 13th November

Once again, we started the day at 6am and left for Mirrissa for our whale watching excursion. We saw Blue Whales again and had good sightings of Spinner Dolphins also. Pomarine Skua was also sighted.

We returned to the hotel at 2pm, and after lunch we visited Galle fort and walked along the ramparts and old streets of the city and returned to the hotel at 7pm. We did the checklist at 8pm and had our dinner.

Day 12

Wednesday 14th November

We started the day at 7.30am after a breakfast and left for the Turtle hatchery. We returned to the hotel at 10.30am and after lunch we checked out and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night's stay. At 7pm we did a bird walk in the garden and encountered five Brown Hawk-Owls and Collared Scops Owls. At 8pm we did the checklist, followed by dinner.

Day 13

Thursday 15th November

After breakfast we checked out and proceeded to the Airport in time for our departure flight.

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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	Dendrocygna javanica
2	Cotton Pygmy Goose	Nettapus coromandelianus
3	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	Galloperdix bicalcarata
4	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	Gallus lafayettii
5	Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus
6	Painted Stork	Mycteria leucocephala
7	Asian Openbill	Anastomus oscitans
8	Woolly-necked Stork	Ciconia episcopus
9	Black-headed Ibis	Threskiornis melanocephalus
10	Eurasian Spoonbill	Platalea leucorodia
11	Black-crowned Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax
12	Striated Heron	Butorides striata
13	Indian Pond Heron	Ardeola grayii
14	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus
15	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea
16	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea
17	Great Egret	Ardea alba
18	Intermediate Egret	Egretta intermedia
19	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta
20	Spot-billed Pelican	Pelecanus philippensis
21	Little Cormorant	Microcarbo niger
22	Indian Cormorant	Phalacrocorax fuscicollis
23	Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo
24	Oriental Darter (Darter)	Anhinga melanogaster
25	Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus
26	Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard	Pernis ptilorhynchus
27	Crested Serpent Eagle	Spilornis cheela
28	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	Nisaetus cirrhatus
29	Shikra	Accipiter badius
30	Pallid Harrier	Circus macrourus
31	Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus
32	White-bellied Sea Eagle	Haliaeetus leucogaster
33	Slaty-legged Crake	Rallina eurizonoides
34	White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus
35	Indian Stone-curlew (Indian Thick-knee)	Burhinus indicus
36	Great Stone-curlew (Great Thick-knee)	Esacus recurvirostris
37	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus malabaricus
38	Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus
39	Greater Painted-snipe	Rostratula benghalensis
40	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	Hydrophasianus chirurgus
41	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola
42	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos
43	Gull-billed Tern	Gelochelidon nilotica
44	Greater Crested Tern	Thalasseus bergii
45	Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybrida
46	Rock Dove (Common Pigeon)	Columba livia
47	Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	Columba torringtoniae
48	Spotted Dove	Spilopelia chinensis

Common name Scientific name 49 Common Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove) Chalcophaps indica 50 Orange-breasted Green Pigeon Treron bicinctus 51 Sri Lanka Green Pigeon Treron pompadora 52 Green Imperial Pigeon Ducula aenea 53 **Green-billed Coucal** Centropus chlororhynchos 54 **Greater Coucal** Centropus sinensis 55 Sirkeer Malkoha Taccocua leschenaultii **Red-faced Malkoha** Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus 56 57 Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied Cuckoo) Clamator jacobinus 58 Asian Koel Eudynamys scolopaceus 59 Banded Bay Cuckoo Cacomantis sonneratii 60 Grey-bellied Cuckoo (Plaintive Cuckoo) Cacomantis passerinus 61 Serendib Scops Owl Otus thilohoffmanni 62 Indian Scops Owl (Collared Scops Owl) Otus bakkamoena 63 Brown Wood Owl Strix leptogrammica 64 **Chestnut backed Owlet** Glaucidium castanotum 65 **Brown Hawk-Owl** Ninox scutulata 66 Sri Lanka Frogmouth Batrachostomus moniliger 67 Crested Treeswift (Gray-rumped Treeswift) Hemiprocne coronata 68 Indian Swiftlet Aerodramus unicolor 69 Brown-backed Needletail Hirundapus giganteus 70 Asian Palm Swift Cypsiurus balasiensis 71 Little Swift (House Swift) Apus affinis 72 Malabar Trogon Harpactes fasciatus 73 Indian Roller Coracias benghalensis 74 Stork-billed Kingfisher Pelargopsis capensis 75 White-throated Kingfisher Halcyon smyrnensis 76 Common Kingfisher Alcedo atthis 77 Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater) Merops orientalis 78 Blue-tailed Bee-eater Merops philippinus 79 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater Merops leschenaulti 80 Eurasian Hoopoe (Common Hoopoe) Upupa epops 81 Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill Ocyceros gingalensis 82 **Brown-headed Barbet** Psilopogon zeylanicus 83 Yellow-fronted Barbet Psilopogon flavifrons 84 **Crimson-fronted Barbet** Psilopogon rubricapillus 85 Coppersmith Barbet Psilopogon haemacephalus 86 Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker Dendrocopos nanus 87 Yellow-crowned Woodpecker Dendrocopos mahrattensis 88 Lesser Yellownape Picus chlorolophus 89 Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback) Dinopium benghalense 90 Crimson-backed Flameback (Crimson-backed Goldenback) Chrysocolaptes stricklandi 91 Plum-headed Parakeet Psittacula cyanocephala 92 Layard's Parakeet Psittacula calthrapae 93 Alexandrine Parakeet Psittacula eupatria 94 Psittacula krameri Rose-ringed Parakeet 95 Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot Loriculus beryllinus 96 Indian Pitta Pitta brachyura 97 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike Hemipus picatus 98 Sri Lanka Woodshrike Tephrodornis affinis 99 Ashy Woodswallow Artamus fuscus

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Aegithina tiphia

Aegithina nigrolutea

100

101

Common Iora

Marshall's Iora

Common name Scientific name

102	Black-headed Cuckooshrike	Coracina melanoptera
103	Orange Minivet (Scarlet or Flame Minivet)	Pericrocotus flammeus
104	Brown Shrike	Lanius cristatus
105	Black-hooded Oriole	Oriolus xanthornus
106	White-bellied Drongo	Dicrurus caerulescens
107	Sri Lanka Drongo (Sri Lanka Crested Drongo)	Dicrurus lophorinus
108	White-browed Fantail	Rhipidura aureola
109	Black-naped Monarch	Hypothymis azurea
110	Indian Paradise Flycatcher (Asian Paradise Flycatcher)	Terpsiphone paradisi
111	Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	Urocissa ornata
112	House Crow	Corvus splendens
113	Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed Crow	Corvus culminatus
114	Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher	Culicicapa ceylonensis
115	Great Tit	Parus major
116	Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	Eremopterix griseus
117	Jerdon's Bush Lark	Mirafra affinis
118	Black-capped Bulbul	Pycnonotus melanicterus
119	Red-vented Bulbul	Pycnonotus cafer
120	Yellow-eared Bulbul	Pycnonotus penicillatus
121	White-browed Bulbul	Pycnonotus luteolus
122	Yellow-browed Bulbul	Acritillas indica
123	Black Bulbul	Hypsipetes leucocephalus
124	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica
125	Hill Swallow	Hirundo domicola
126	Sri Lanka Swallow	Cecropis hyperythra
127	Green Warbler	Phylloscopus nitidus
128	Greenish Warbler	Phylloscopus trochiloides
129	Large-billed Leaf Warbler	Phylloscopus magnirostris
130	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus dumetorum
131	Sri Lanka Bush Warbler	Elaphrornis palliseri
132	Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis
133	Grey-breasted Prinia	Prinia hodgsonii
134	Jungle Prinia	Prinia sylvatica
135	Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis
136	Plain Prinia	Prinia inornata
137	Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius
138	Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	Pomatorhinus melanurus
139	Tawny-bellied Babbler	Dumetia hyperythra
140	Dark-fronted Babbler	Rhopocichla atriceps
141	Brown-capped Babbler	Pellorneum fuscocapillus
142	Orange-billed Babbler	Turdoides rufescens
143	Yellow-billed Babbler	Turdoides affinis
144	Ashy-headed Laughingthrush	Garrulax cinereifrons
145	Hume's Whitethroat	Sylvia althaea
146	Yellow-eyed Babbler	Chrysomma sinense
147	Oriental White-Eye	Zosterops palpebrosus
148	Sri Lanka White-Eye	Zosterops ceylonensis
149	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	Sitta frontalis
150	Sri Lanka Hill Myna (Sri Lanka Myna)	Gracula ptilogenys
151	Southern Hill Myna (Lesser Hill Myna)	Gracula indica
152	Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis
153	White-faced Starling	Sturnornis albofrontatus
154	Rosy Starling	Pastor roseus

Common name Scientific name

155	Pied Thrush	Geokichla wardii
156	Spot-winged Thrush	Geokichla spiloptera
157	Sri Lanka Thrush (Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush)	Zoothera imbricata
158	Indian Blackbird	Turdus simillimus
159	Indian Robin	Copsychus fulicatus
160	Oriental Magpie-Robin	Copsychus saularis
161	Asian Brown Flycatcher	Muscicapa dauurica
162	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	Muscicapa muttui
163	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	Cyornis tickelliae
164	Dull-blue Flycatcher	Eumyias sordidus
165	Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	Myophonus blighi
166	Kashmir Flycatcher	Ficedula subrubra
167	Pied Bush Chat	Saxicola caprata
168	Jerdon's Leafbird	Chloropsis jerdoni
169	Golden-fronted Leafbird	Chloropsis aurifrons
170	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	Dicaeum agile
171	Legge's Flowerpecker (White-throated Flowerpecker)	Dicaeum vincens
172	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	Dicaeum erythrorhynchos
173	Purple-rumped Sunbird	Nectarinia zeylonica
174	Purple Sunbird	Cinnyris asiaticus
175	Loten's Sunbird	Cinnyris lotenius
176	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus
177	Baya Weaver	Ploceus philippinus
178	White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata
179	Scaly-breasted Munia	Lonchura punctulata
180	Tricolored Munia (Black-headed Munia)	Lonchura malacca
181	Forest Wagtail	Dendronanthus indicus
182	Western Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava
183	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea
184	Paddyfield Pipit	Anthus rufulus
185	Blyth's Pipit	Anthus godlewskii

Mammals:

Common name Scientific name

1	Toque Macaque	Macaca sinica
2	Grey Langur	Semnopithecus (Presbytis) entellus
3	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	Trachypithecus (Presbytis) vetulus
4	Common Palm Civet	Paradoxurus hermaphroitus
5	Ruddy Mongoose	Herpestes smithii
-	, ,	'
6	Stripe-necked Mongoose	Herpestes vitticollis
7	Asian Elephant	Elephas maximus
8	Wild Boar	Sus scrofa
9	Muntjac	Muntiacus muntjac
10	Spotted Deer	Cervus axis
11	Sambar	Cervus unicolor
12	Water Buffalo	Bubalus Bubalis
13	Indian Palm Squirrel	Funambulus palmarum
14	Grizzled Giant Squirrel	Ratufa macroura
15	Dusky Striped Squirrel	Funambulus sublineatus
16	Indian Hare (Black-naped Hare)	Lepus nigricollis
17	Indian Flying Fox	Pteropus gigantea
18	Blue Whale	Balaenoptera musculus

Common name

19 Spinner Dolphin

Reptiles

1 Sri Lanka Green Pit Viper

2 Green Vine Snake

3 Bengal (Land) Monitor

4 Green Garden Lizard

5 Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard

6 Mugger Crocodile

7 Common House Gecko

8 Common Skink

Scientific name

Stenella mulla

Trimeresurus trigonocephalus

Ahaetulla nasuta

Varanus bengalensis

Calotes calotes

Otocryptis wiegmanni

Crocodylus palustris

Hemidactylus frenatus

Eutropis carinata