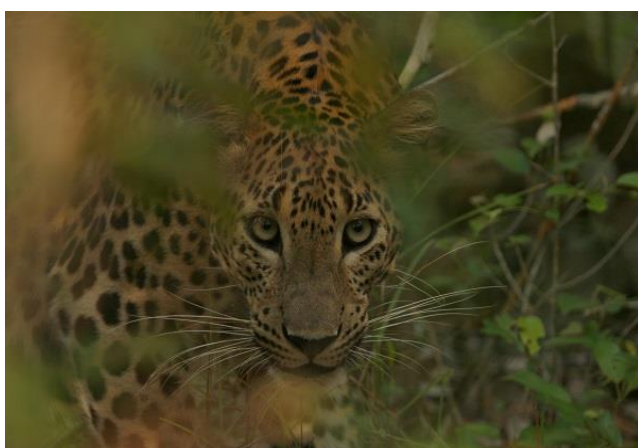


Sri Lanka – Wilpattu National Park & Kalpitiya

Naturetrek Tour Report

7 – 17th March 2020



Leopard



Black-naped Hare



Spinner Dolphins



Sloth Bear



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

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Tour participants: Jay Jinasena (Tour-leader) together with four Naturetrek clients

Highlights

Our sightings of Spinner Dolphins and many rare birds at Kalpitiya, including Terek Sandpiper, made the first part of the trip very successful and enjoyable, with the secluded beach hotel all to ourselves. Our time at Wilpattu National Park was also very successful with many bird and impressive mammal sightings, including five Leopards & four Sloth Bears. Overall an impressive 20 species of mammals, 135 bird species and 10 reptile and other species were recorded on the tour.

Day 1

Saturday 7th March

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

Day 2

Sunday 8th March

Kalpitiya

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 12.25pm. After meeting the leaders, we left the airport at 1.35pm. En route to Kalpitiya we visited the Anawilundawa RAMSAR Sanctuary where sightings included Lesser Whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Little Grebe, Asian Openbill, Black-Headed Ibis, Eastern Cattle Egret, Indian Pond Heron, Little Egret, Spot-billed Pelican, Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Crested Serpent Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Purple Swamphen, Common Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Whiskered Tern, Rock Dove, Spotted Dove, Asian Koel, Asian Palm Swift, Indian Roller, White-throated Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Black-hooded Oriole, House Crow and Common Tailor bird.

We arrived at the Blue Whale Boutique Beach Resort and met for the checklist at 7.30pm, which was followed by the next day's briefing and dinner

Day 3

Monday 9th March

Kalpitiya

We boarded our boats with our packed breakfasts and set off to sea on our first day of dolphin watching. An hour into our journey we spotted our first pod of dolphins. There were fewer numbers and it was hard to get a good view. Before long we came upon another pod of dolphins which comprised of Spinner Dolphins and had more than 1000 individuals! We enjoyed some very good views of them and enjoyed our packed breakfast whilst observing them blissfully from our boat.

We returned to the hotel and had our lunch and relaxed until 4pm.

Our afternoon birding session was near a small salt pan where we saw Striated Heron, Great Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Pacific Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel, Common Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Knot, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian tern,

Lesser-crested Tern, White-winged Tern, Common Kingfisher, Green Bee-eater, Alexandrine Parakeet, Yellow-billed Babbler and Paddyfield Pipit. We also saw Indian Palm Squirrel, Oriental Garden Lizard and Green Garden lizard

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

Day 4

Tuesday 10th March

Kalpitiya

We had nice warm and sunny weather as we set off to sea on our second day of Dolphin watching, it took more than one hour to find a pod of Dolphins, but when we found it there were some good numbers of Spinner Dolphins. We spent the rest of our time sticking with that pod, observing there many acrobatic skills including their signature spinning out of water move. We returned to the hotel and had a late breakfast and lunch.

We relaxed until 4pm before setting out again for birding.

Our new sightings for the day included Kentish Plover, Little Tern, Bridled Tern, Greater Coucal, Blue-faced Malkoha, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Ashy Woodswallow, Red-vented Bulbul, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Purple Sunbird and many other birds previously seen.

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

Day 5

Wednesday 11th March

Kalpitiya

The weather was a bit chilly this morning with some heavy clouds as we proceeded to the boat making acquaintance with a rare Terek Sandpiper.

Once again we enjoyed the shows of the Spinner Dolphins which numbered over hundred in three or more pods. We spent a good time with the dolphins before heading back to hotel and had our late Breakfast.

The rest of the day was at leisure until 4pm when we went out birding again. Our new bird sightings for the day included Indian Peafowl, Common Tern, Greater Crested Tern, Oriental Skylark and Plain Prinia.

We came back to the hotel at 6pm and after the checklist we had dinner and called it a night.

Day 6

Thursday 12th March

Anuradhapura

After our breakfast, we checked out of the hotel at 9.00am and proceeded to Anuradhapura. We did some birding en route and had some superb views of Booted Eagle and Shikra,

We reached the Rajarata Hotel at 1.30pm and had our lunch and relaxed in the heat of the day.

At 4.30pm we did a bird walk around the tank and encountered Intermediate Egret, Indian Cormorant, White-breasted Waterhen, Eurasian Coot, Green Imperial Pigeon, Jacobin Cuckoo, House Swift, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Brown-headed Barbet, Coppersmith Barbet, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, White-browed Bulbul, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Jerdon's Leafbird and Pale-billed Flowerpecker,

We returned to the hotel and did the checklist at 7.30pm, followed by the briefing for the next day and dinner.

Day 7

Friday 13th March

Wilpattu National Park

We left the hotel at 5.00am with our packed breakfast and lunch and reached Wilpattu at 5.45 am. This was our first jeep safari for the tour and excitement was in the air. Before long we were able to spot two Sloth Bears and observe their quest for food.

We had breakfast around 9.30am and continued our safari with hopes of coming across more interesting species. We had our first Leopard sighting around 1.30pm and again at 5.30pm when we had a much better and closer views of a different animal.

Our new sightings today included Sambar, Spotted Deer, Muntjac, Golden Jackal, Water Buffalo, Wild Boar, Ruddy Mongoose, Grey Mongoose, Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, Indian Gerbil, Bengal Land Monitor, Mugger Crocodile, Hard-shelled Terrapin and Bark Gecko, along with Garganey, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Painted Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, Crested Honey Buzzard, Great Stone-curlew, Pin-tailed Snipe, Common Greenshank, Emerald Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Crested Treeswift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Ashy Drongo, White-bellied Drongo, Black-naped Monarch, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Barn Swallow, Brown-capped Babbler, Indian Robin, White-rumped Shama, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Loten's Sunbird and Grey Wagtail.

We returned to the hotel at 7.35pm, met for dinner at 8.00pm and did the checklist thereafter.

Day 8

Saturday 14th March

Wilpattu National Park

Once again we started the day at 5.00am and set off to Wilpattu National Park. In the Morning we searched for Bears and leopards but didn't have much luck. We had our Breakfast at 9.00am and continued our safari coming across many birds and mammals seen the previous day. At 1.00 pm we had another sighting of two Leopards at very close distance; one were walking along the road and suddenly another one crossed our path and disappeared into the forest.

We had our lunch and relaxed a bit in the shade of the hut built inside the park which overlooked a water hole. During our afternoon session we had good sightings of another two sloth bears in different locations, probably in search of a drink or some food.

Just as we were returning to the gates to exit the park we were met by another young Leopard stalking a Spotted Deer and Peafowls. The excitement was not over even after we came out of the park as an adult Asian Elephant was seen making its way out from a water hole and slowly disappear in to the forest.

Other new sightings for the day included, Crested-Hawk Eagle, Common Snipe, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Brown Fish owl, Indian Swiftlet, Small Minivet, Brown Shrike, Black Drongo, Large-billed Crow, Zitting Cisticola, Western Yellow Wagtail, and Black-naped Hare.

We returned to the hotel at 7.30pm, did the checklist and finished the day with dinner.

Day 9

Sunday 15th March

Wilpattu Bufferzone & Village

Unfortunately we had to cancel our 3rd full day safari due to the closure of all the national parks and reserves in the Island as the Government was taking precautions stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus. However we went on a morning bird walk which yielded us a very uncommon sighting of a Brown Hawk Owl amongst the many other birds that we had seen before.

We spent rest of the day at leisure and met at 7.45pm where we had an early dinner as we decided to do a night drive along the Wilpattu national park buffer zone. We started the night drive at 8.45pm, and during our drive we encountered a Jungle Cat on a hunt, Common Palm Civet, Jerdon's Nightjar, a rare Slaty-legged Crake & a wonderful sighting of Brown Fish Owl preying on a Green Pond Frog. We had an amazing time and returned to the hotel at 1.00am with wonderful new species which we usually wouldn't have normally seen during the day time.

Day 10

Monday 16th March

Anuradhapura / Katunayake

Since the Anuradhapura Ancient City was also closed for visitors we had a relaxed morning and had our breakfast at 8.30am. After lunch at 1.00pm we checked out of the hotel and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night stay at the Airport Garden Hotel. On the way we encountered four Pied Kingfishers hunting together in a stream.

We reach the hotel by 6.30 pm and at 7.00 pm we met for checklist before proceeding for dinner.

Day 11

Tuesday 17th March

Departure

After breakfast we proceeded to the Airport in time for the departure flight to the UK.

Species Lists

Mammals

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
2	Grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus (Presbytis) entellus</i>
3	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
4	Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>
5	Common Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroitus</i>
6	Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
7	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
8	Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>
9	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus kotiya</i>
10	Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
11	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
12	Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjac</i>
13	Spotted Deer	<i>Cervus axis</i>
14	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
15	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus Bubalis</i>
16	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
17	Indian Hare- Black-naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
18	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
19	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella mulla</i>
20	Greater Bandicoot Rat	<i>Bandicota indica</i>

Birds (Bold = endemic)

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
2	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
3	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
4	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayettii</i>
5	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
6	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
7	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
8	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
9	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>

10	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
11	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</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	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
19	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
20	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
21	Oriental Darter - Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
22	Crested Honey Buzzard, Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
23	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
24	Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>
25	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
26	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
27	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
28	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
29	Slaty-legged Crane	<i>Rallina eurizonoides</i>
30	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
31	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
32	Eurasian Coot - Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
33	Great Stone-Curlew - Great Thick Knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
34	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
35	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
36	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
37	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
38	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
39	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
40	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
41	Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>
42	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
43	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
44	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>

45	Whimbrel	<i>numenius phaeopus</i>
46	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
47	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
48	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
49	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
50	Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
51	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
52	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
53	Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>
54	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
55	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
56	Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
57	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
58	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
59	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
60	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>
61	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
62	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>
63	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
64	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
65	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
66	Rock Dove - Common Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
67	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
68	Common Emerald Dove - Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
69	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
70	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
71	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
72	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
73	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>
74	Jacobin Cuckoo, Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
75	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
76	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
77	Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
78	Crested Treeswift , Gray-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
79	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>

80	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
81	Little Swift - House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
82	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
83	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
84	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
85	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
86	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
87	Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
88	Blue-tailed Bee-Eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
89	Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
90	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
91	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>
92	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
93	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
94	Black-rumped Flameback, Lesser Goldenback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
95	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
96	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
97	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>
98	Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
99	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
100	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
101	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
102	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
103	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
104	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
105	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
106	Indian Paradise Flycatcher - Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
107	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
108	Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed)- Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>
109	Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafraga affinis</i>
110	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
111	Black-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
112	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
113	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
114	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>

115	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
116	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
117	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
118	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
119	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
120	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
121	Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
122	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
123	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
124	Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
125	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
126	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
127	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
128	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
129	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
130	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
131	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
132	Loten's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>
133	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
134	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
135	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>

Reptiles & Other

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Bengal (Land) Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
2	Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
3	Green Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes calotes</i>
4	Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
5	Soft shelled Terapin	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>
6	Hard Shelled Terapin	<i>Melanochelys trijuga parkeri</i>
7	Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
8	Bark Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus leschenaultii</i>
9	Indian Star Tortoise	<i>Geochelone elegans</i>
10	Green Pond Frog	<i>Euphlyctis hexadactylus</i>