INTRODUCTION

Bhutan is one of those places that stirs the imagination—with its isolation, its high mountains, its culture of environmental protection, love of its monarchy, and—of course—its extensive intact forest with numerous rare Himalayan birds. Our tour goes clear across the country, from the seldom-visited east, through the magnificent forests of the center, to the beautiful temples of the west.

This year’s trip was far and away our most successful to date. The highlights reads like a litany of Bhutan’s top birds: Ward’s Trogon and Beautiful Nuthatch, Himalayan Monal, Satyr

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Tragopan, and Blood Pheasant, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Gould’s Shortwing, Blackish-breasted Babbler and Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Rufous-throated and Spotted Wren-Babbler, numerous Rufous-necked Hornbills, 11 species of woodpeckers, 15 species of laughingthrush, and 5 species of rosefinch, including the little known Blanford’s. Although Bhutan isn’t known for its waterbirds, we saw the best of them this year: Black-tailed Crake, Ibisbill, Solitary Snipe, a late Black-necked Crane and the critically endangered White-bellied Heron. And we still found time for many wonderful cultural visits.

TOUR REPORT

We had planned on sitting in Guwahati all day, birding the fields around the hotel and watching the cricket finals, waiting for the bandh to end. But when our drivers showed up early in the morning, they told us that if we hurried we could leave right away. So we did. We found Green and Wood Sandpipers and a few other roadside birds on the way, crossing into Bhutan with no hassle, ate lunch, and set out again for our first outing in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

It turned out to be an extremely productive afternoon. We started out with a few common birds—Blue Whistling Thrush, White-capped Water Redstart, Black-crested Bulbul—but things soon got more interesting. An Oriental Honey-Buzzard flew over a distant ridge, then Lindsay spotted a much closer raptor which turned out to be the uncommon Rufous-bellied Eagle. Flocks of swifts were swirling about with the low cloud cover, and soon enough we had great views of the rare Dark-rumped Swift. A brilliant male Asian Fairy Bluebird sat up perfectly, the first of many sightings this afternoon. Some fruiting and flowering trees were very active with a flock of Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons, Eastern Crimson Sunbird, Streaked Spiderhunter, and Golden-fronted Leafbird. All afternoon, flocks of Mountain Imperial Pigeons were streaming overhead, heading for higher altitudes.

Characteristic birds of mid-altitude forests, Orange-bellied Leafbird (left) and Yellow-cheeked Tit.

As we returned downhill, we walked a short stretch of road. A pair of Eastern Crimson Sunbirds posed for photos, while a flock that included four species of swifts (including some close Dark-
rumpeds) and Nepal House Martin swirled around us. We watched a pair of Wreathed Hornbills fly clear across the valley. A pair of Great Hornbills then did the same before returning to our side and perching upslope for great scope views. Some happened to be in the right place when a female Red-headed Trogon sat momentarily right in the open before disappearing into the hillside scrub.

The next day we started making our way into the mountains. We added a number of low-elevation species early on, including Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, White-rumped Shama, Black-naped Monarch, and White-throated Bulbul. A singing Yellow-vented Warbler was incredibly responsive, practically flying into me as I played the tape; a much more confusing *Phylloscopus* was a Large-billed Leaf-warbler. A calling group of Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes was mostly uncooperative—only a couple of people had decent looks. A little higher up we started getting into a new avifauna, including Striated Yuhina, wonderful, close looks at the stunning Orange-bellied Leafbird, and Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker. We were very pleased with outstanding views of a beautiful little Slaty-bellied Tesia on our first attempt at this skulker. This same stretch of forest yielded a White-tailed Robin as well, uncharacteristically hopping around on rocks at the bottom of a gully.

The hornbill show was again impressive. We had great looks at perched Wreathed Hornbills, flyby Great Hornbills, and—higher up—unbelievably cooperative Rufous-necked Hornbill. A pair of this Bhutan specialty called back-and-forth, the male regurgitated food for the female, and they posed brilliantly for photos. Just around the bend from the Rufous-necked show, a pair of Sultan Tits popped up. They flew across the road followed by a...BEAUTIFUL NUTHATCH!! The nuthatch landed right in the open, blue highlights gleaming in the evening sun. What a relief to have such incredible views of the eastern Himalayan mega so early in the trip! After a truly exceptional first full day in Bhutan, we made our way to our first night of camping just as the sun was setting behind the hills.

Hornbills in flight: Great Hornbill (left) and Rufous-necked Hornbill.

With our perfectly placed camp, we began the morning walking up the road. New birds came
quick, including Bhutan Laughingthrush and Streak-breasted and Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler. After a bit of effort, we had absolutely superb views of two super-skulking
laughintruthes—Gray-sided and Blue-winged. The latter even posed for photos while singing
from the understory. Finches were good this morning, too, with a group to three Common
Rosefinches showing in the scope, and—even better—a pair of the unbelievable Scarlet Finches
feeding on roadside seeds.

It was finally time to start off on the long road to Trashigang. We soon stopped when Norbu
heard Himalayan Cutia out the window—we soon had great views of this gem probing in the
moss. We continued to stop regularly, adding many more new birds, including Fire-tailed, Mrs.
Gould’s, and Green-tailed Sunbirds, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Blue-fronted Redstart, Dark-sided
Flycatcher, Himalayan Griffon, and, close to Trashigang, Himlayan Bulbul. Unfortunately, a
Fire-tailed Myzornis along the way that I briefly glimpsed was terrifically uncooperative, flying
off to parts unknown as soon as I called it out.

We left Trashigang in order to beat a construction-caused road closure on our way to the famed
birding road of Lingmethang, in Thrumsingla National Park, where we would spend the next
four nights. A checkpoint stop conveniently yielded Striated Prinia, but our birding started in
earnest as we neared Korila. Here we quickly added Black-winged Cuckooshrike, White-browed
Shrike-Babbler, Gray-winged Blackbird, Hoary-throated Barwing, and an extremely showy
Gold-billed Magpie. A bit of owlet tape brought in a mixed flock at our tea break which besides
two new warblers helped us get great photos of Green-tailed Sunbird.

Again we had to hustle to beat a road closure. It turned out not to matter, after a five-minute
delay they opened the road for the queen mother and we were able to follow her entourage
through. We picked up the birding again on the lower Lingmethang Road, immediately finding a
great mixed flock that contained Striated and Black-chinned Yuhinas, a male Blue-throated
Flycatcher, and a pair of Sultan Tit. Higher up we came across several flocks of Rufous-necked
Laughingthrush, a single Lesser Yellownape, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, and finally got
good views of Gray Treepie. Closer to camp we stopped again. Upon hearing a close Collared Owlet (a real one this time!), some careful playback had the bird fly into view. What an incredible bird! We watched it first singing while sitting on the edge of a tree cavity, then it hopped into the cavity and we watched it singing with just its head in the opening. It was quite a show to end the day (not to mention the flycatchers, partridges, cuckoos, and others singing from camp as the sky darkened).

For our first morning in Thrumsingla, we had one priority: what was formerly known as Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler, now called Blackish-breasted Babbler. Incredibly, Norbu had gone scouting just after we arrived at camp and had found two singing birds, so we knew exactly where to start. Before we had gotten there, though, we found a single Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler, a rarity in its own right, whose bill shined in the bamboo despite the still-low light. Indeed, as soon as we arrived we heard one singing, and after a bit of effort everyone had great views of this mega-rarity and mega-skulker. A Red-headed Trogon singing in the same area wasn’t as cooperative, just seen flying across the road, but another mega-skulker, Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, showed even better, sitting on an exposed bamboo singing its heart out! Not finished yet with extremely difficult-to-see birds, Norbu spotted a Scaly Laughingthrush feeding in the roadside grass! And all of this was before breakfast…Lingmethang living up to its reputation.

Things slowed after breakfast as the temperature climbed, but we still found good activity. New birds included Red-tailed Minla, Large and Rufous-bellied Niltava, and improved looks at a few other species. We also heard two different Black-headed Shrike-Babblers, but both were far up the hillside (as is often the case with them) and remained unseen.

We walked the area below camp in the afternoon. Before the rain sent us back to camp, our first seen Himalayan Cuckoo came out of its canopy hiding place for nice views of its falconesque shape. Back at camp we were able to pull a Pygmy Wren-Babbler in close, but seeing it would have to wait for another day.

We began the following day with a search for Ward’s Trogon in the forests above camp. While the group was off looking at other birds, Norbu heard a distant response. But unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we never even heard it again. We did, however, have incredible looks at Fire-tailed Myzornis, another key Bhutan specialty, that Tom spotted and this time stuck around for everyone to see. A Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, another bird easier to find in Bhutan than elsewhere, was in its usual spot adjacent to the impressive rock bee hives. In the bamboo–clad scopes, a Gray-sided Bush-Warbler was seen by most, some beautiful Golden-breasted Fulvettas came out of the understory for nice looks, and a Broad-billed Warbler responded nicely to tape and was seen well by all.

We spent the afternoon downhill from camp birding in the forest and scrub mosaic of the lower Lingmethang Road. On the way down we screeched to a halt for a flock of mid-sized fruit-
eating passerines, getting great views of Striated and Mountain Bulbul…Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch and Greater Yellownape were new, but the real highlights came as we turned around when Norbu spotted an Orange-headed Thrush hopping around a bare streamside. As we were watching that stunning thrush, a Spotted Forktail flew in and landed in vines in front of us. We were able to share scope views with a few lingering children who had just finished their school day. On our way back to camp it became apparent that Blue-capped Rock-Thrush had just arrived from its wintering grounds; we saw five or more males in a short stretch of road. We ended the day with a night drive from camp. Just after leaving we spotted a civet in a tree top, probably a Himalayan Palm Civet. Later we found a flying squirrel high in an upslope tree that Peter and I were lucky enough to watch “fly” a great distance, conveniently landing right in front of us so that everyone got scope views.

Raptors: Crested Serpent Eagle (left) and Mountain Hawk Eagle.

Again we started the day with a Ward’s Trogon search, but today we didn’t even hear it. Perhaps they were late setting up territories this year? We spent the remainder of the day walking and driving to our camp at Sengor. Early on we finally saw Bay Woosecker after hearing many, and while trying to get good views we watched a pair of gorgeous yellow-throated martens run along a hillside and finally cross the road. A female Gold-naped Finch put in a brief appearance, and Fire-tailed Myzornis again showed nicely. We enjoyed watching Nepal House Martins building their mud nests along the road cut. Most people had very good looks at Pygmy Wren-Babbler, but at Gray-bellied and Chestnut-headed Tesias again yielded no seen birds. These we would have more chances for, but when our local guide shouted “Gould’s Shortwing!” we knew this would be it. Norbu had originally found this mega-rarity in this area last year, and amazingly he pulled one out just down the road from there. Mixed flocks contained Buff-barred and Whistler’s Warbler, Green Shrike-Babbler, and White-browed Fulvetta. The latter showed beautifully, and having just come from Eaglenest I was struck by how similar in both appearance and vocalizations this bird is to Ludlow’s Fulvetta, its easterly replacement.

We took a rest at camp before starting off on our search for Bhutan’s most spectacular bird, the mysterious Satyr Tragopan. Road works and other activity along the road were discouraging, but
when our driver Kunzang spotted a female that everyone saw well, hope was renewed. We were finally on our last attempt, on our way back to camp, when Norbu and simultaneously spotted one on a distant roadside. We carefully approached in the vehicle, even watching it sing from a roadside barrier. We then got out of the car and approached on foot. Unbelievable! This normally incredibly reclusive bird was not bothered by our careful approach, and we got the best photos we could, given the semi-dark conditions. It would be impossible to imagine better views of a bird that deserves such good looks.

After our great success with tragopan, it was an early morning wakeup (with Himalayan Wood Owl calling) to look for another extreme Himalayan pheasant—Himalayan Monal. We arrived early to Thrumsingla, finding the slopes awash in finches. After seeing Plain Mountain-Finch and Dark-breasted Rosefinch, as well as a teed-up singing Plain-backed Thrush, we started hunting in earnest. Unfortunately, it wasn’t to be, but spectacular views of many Blood Pheasants helped ease the pain (as did the spectacularly beautiful morning). We then descended to lower elevations to try to Great Parrotbill. One responded while we ate breakfast, but only Peter managed good views. A Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler was more responsive. We also saw the first of many of the rare Blanford’s Rosefinch here—later in the morning we even managed excellent sound recordings and photos. As we re-crossed the pass, pausing to hang prayer flags, the forest quieted. We added the recently split Eurasian Wren, as well as a trio of new tits. A few late migrating redstarts were a surprise and we found females of both White-throated and the rare-in-Bhutan Daurian. Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail was also here, and as we continued on we added Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Spotted Nutcracker, and a spectacular group of cliff-roosting Snow Pigeons that Glenn spotted from the van. As we entered the Ura Valley, the usual Red-billed Choughs and Eurasian Magpies presented themselves to our cameras and we were surprised by a duo of juvenile Red crossbills. We finished up the day with a visit to the fantastic monastery in Jakar, a very important site in Bhutanese Bhuddism.
day with some pre-breakfast birding there. Walking along the edge of some wet pasture, we flushed nearly a dozen (so-called) Solitary Snipe, a rather large concentration of this rare shorebird. The strange pipits that were present last evening were still there, and they still appeared to be Water Pipits, making it Bhutan’s first record of this widespread species. Of more interest to visiting birders were the dozens of pink-tinged Rosy Pipits, numerous Oriental Skylarks, and another Bhutan rarity in the form of a red-throated Red-throated Pipit. Better still, an Ibisbill flew in and landed right next to us. It was rather busy for a spot of pre-breakfast birding walking through cow pasture across the street from our hotel!

Soon after leaving the hotel, we found other Ibisbills for those who chose to sleep in, while also new for the trip were Asian House Martins flying overhead. Our first stop was at a weaving factory, where besides the beautiful textiles we had superb views of Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, a pika, and many Tickell’s Leaf-Warblers. Climbing Yotongla, we rather easily found Brown Parrotbills which obliged us for photos, but overall bird activity was quite slow. As we descended the other side of the pass we stopped a few more times filling a few holes in peoples’ lists. Our day’s last stop was to visit the Trongsa Dzong, eerily quiet on this Sunday, before finally winding up at our hotel, looking across the valley at the impressive fortress-monastery.

We departed early for the long drive south. Still close to Trongsa, we screeched to a halt when a Large Hawk Cuckoo was spotted next to the road; it was incredibly obliging as we got out and had great views after hearing many throughout the trip. A few moments later we crossed a river that contained Spotted Forktail and a juvenile Brown Dipper. Stopping for scenery photos a short while later was prescient, we heard and called in a European Cuckoo and watched it displaying and singing in a small bare tree. We stopped at a location where we have seen Blue-throated Bee-eater in the past, and sure enough they were still there. We also added Large Woodshrike and a singing Hume’s Warbler here and had views of a cracking male Ultramarine Flycatcher. A bend in the Mangdechhu that often contains ducks was void of waterfall, but did contain a surprise Great Crested Grebe, as well as both Common and Crested Kingfishers.

After lunch at a typically scenic spot, we made our way towards Shemgang, stopping in a nice patch of forest before town. As usual, Pale Blue Flycatcher was here. This time a pair was with a large mixed flock that contained some very impressive Long-tailed Broadbills, conspicuously singing and displaying, as well as a Greater Yellownape. We stopped one last time to photograph roadside Golden Langurs, and given the beautiful weather we took a short walk down the road. The forests had grown quiet, however, we so made our way to another stunning campsite.

Our stay at Tingtibi Camp gave us our best opportunity to see birds of lower elevations, so we spent the morning birding the forests below camp. New birds were hard to come by, nonetheless a group of about 30 Great Hornbills was, to say the least, spectacular, and we had repeated opportunities for flight photos as one after another they flew along the valley. New
birds were hard to come by—Rufous-chinned and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes were heard but remained elusive, though the mimicry in the song of the latter was impressive. We did have excellent views of White-throated Bulbul several Rufous-faced Warblers and, after a several attempts, close views of Gray-throated Babbler. As we ascended on our return to camp, a wild sound for a scrubby hillside had us quickly brake. We got out of the car and briefly saw a young barking deer emerge from the scrub with a yellow-throated marten attached to its leg! It was indeed brief because our driver unhesitatingly broke up the battle and had the marten scrambling back into the forest. We stopped once more before arriving back at camp, to watch and photograph and very close range a troop of golden langurs eating soil along the roadside. They seemed as interested in us as we were in them, but eventually they got bored with us and sauntered off.

We returned down-slope after our afternoon siesta. It was generally fairly slow going, but we did have very nice views of our first Brown-throated Treecreeper. Our first seen White-browed Scimitar-Babbler scoped high in a tree was also a treat, and most people saw a pair of Slaty-backed Forktails before they disappeared around a bend in the stream. After an early dinner we tried our luck on a night outing, but we found no birds or mammals apart from hearing Mountain Scops-Owl.

We spent the early morning again below camp. This time a Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush actually showed itself, albeit one body part at a time. After breakfast we started uphill walking from camp. We soon found our first Barred Cuckoo-Dove and had much better views of Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo. Soon an understory flock materialized, but as often happens it moved off very quickly, so only a few people got on Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill (now split as White-breasted Parrotbill) and only the guide saw one of the calling Indian White-hooded Babblers. We also re-found a flock of Spot-winged Grosbeaks that had flown over during breakfast, but we got even better looks from the vehicle later in the morning.
We took a short walk—new birds were Kalij Pheasant and Himalayan Greenbul—before the intermittent rainfall gained strength, sending us back to camp. Fortunately the recently cleared field directly above camp was alive with birds, and besides our first Little Bunting for the trip we saw Common Rosefinch, Rufous-necked and Bhutan Laughingthrushes, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, Common Stonechat and Gray Bushchat, Long-tailed Shrike, and Russet Sparrows all enjoying the recently tilled soil’s bounty. We took a short walk after the rain stopped as the sun was setting behind the hills, enjoying the beautiful combination of sun, fog, hills, forest and fields that is so representative of Bhutan.

We left camp early and spent the first few hours of the day walking the road through the forest and countryside near camp. We encountered a few mixed flocks in the first forest patch which included White-bellied Erpornis (Yuhina), but Greater Yellownapes in the same area were more elusive. A pair of Plaintive Cuckoos posed for photos in a field, but better cuckoos were still to come. As we approached the next forest patch we were surprised by a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo flying across the road which returned several time for great views of this uncommon and very striking cuckoo. Norbu spotted a most obliging Ferruginous Flycatcher as well, but another calling Red-headed Trogon wouldn’t come into view. We continued making our way north, but came grinding to a halt when Green Magpie was heard out the window. After hearing them several times, it was a relief to get superb views of this magnificent bird, perched out in full sunlight. We braked suddenly one more time before lunch, this time for our first Rufous-bellied Woodpecker.

After lunch we made our way to Trongsa. A forced stop for road construction turned out to be productive, with an out-of-place White-breasted Waterhen, a couple of swimming Brown Dippers and a pair of dipping Slaty-backed Fortails in the Mangdechhu.

Two of the fifteen species of laughingthrushes seen: Black-faced (left) and the skulking Blue-winged Laughingthrush, showing off its blue wing edgings and its white eye.

We took a short pre-breakfast walk around the hotel, finding our first Eurasian Jay and enjoying the beautiful views of the dzong across the valley with clear skies above. After breakfast we continued our journey west, stopping lower down for a flock mobbing an Asian Barred Owlet.
that included three gorgeous Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers. Nearby, we finally found a Lesser Shortwing, which taunted us by flying across the road several times. Higher up, we stopped at a pond that held Common Teal and Eurasian Wigeon, where several Himalayan Griffons were flying overhead. A walk at Pelela after our picnic was very quiet, so we headed into the Probjikha Valley, stopping on the way in at the beautiful monastery Gangtey Gompa. We headed straight for the Black-necked Crane information center, where we were pleasantly shocked to learn that there was a Black-necked Crane still present in the valley! Sure enough, we were able to scope the injured bird from the center while learning about the cranes of the valley. Afterwards we made a quick stop for Oriental Skylark and Rosy Pipits with their pink flush before we settled in for the night.

We woke up the next morning knowing that it was our final chance for Ward’s Trogon, and not a very good chance at that. As we left the valley, a stunning horizon of snow-capped mountains, including the formidable Jomolhari, loomed against the blue sky. A stop to photograph the magnificent peaks yielded a smaller yet no less magnificent Darjeeling Woodpecker, and we heard the wailing of a Satyr Tragopan at close distance. We stopped a couple of more times for photos—of Gray Langur and a very close Mountain Hawk-Eagle—before arriving to the trogon forest. Our first real goodie of the day was a foraging pair of the uncommon Fire-capped Tit, followed shortly thereafter by a pair of the equally uncommon Brown Parrotbill. Then I heard Norbu behind me: “Josh! Josh! Ward’s Trogon!” Sure enough, Rie had spotted a male at eye level next the road. We watched and photographed the male and his mate for the next several minutes before they continued on their way upslope. I had all but given up hope…

We arrived to our hotel in Punakha, where Slender-billed Orioles awaited some just off their balconies. We then headed out to the Po Chhu, scanning the river’s edge for waterbirds. We got out and started walking:

Peter: There’s a heron!
Norbu: White-bellied Heron!

Another bird, like the Black-necked Crane, that should have been long gone by this time of year, but there it was. Bhutan is one of the last strongholds for this huge, beautiful, Critically Endangered heron. We photographed it as it flew occasionally upriver being harassed by Large-billed Crows. River Lapwings were also along the river there and Scaly-breasted Munias were along the road. While looking at these a Pallas’s Fish-Eagle flew over and circled several times. What a way to end an incredible day.
We had one full day based in Punakha. We spent the morning in Jigme Dorji National Park along the Mo Chhu. Before we had left the hotel, however, the people who missed Slender-billed Oriole the previous day caught up with one singing from atop a chir pine. As we arrived into the park, a rock wall from which the road had been cut had that fantastic rock-loving specialty, Wallcreeper. Raptors were common throughout the day; although none were new, we enjoyed watching a Rufous-bellied Eagle dive-bombing the larger Mountain Hawk-Eagle, and we learned why Crested Serpent Eagle is so-named as one flew into the forest carrying a snake in its talons. We came across few mixed flocks, but one did contain a male of the uncommon Slaty-backed Flycatcher. Along the river itself we found a Brown Dipper, but a river otter was seen only by me before it disappeared.

In the afternoon we visited the remarkable Punakha Dzong. The visit was no without birds—we watched a kestrel try and fail to catch a Common Myna; a Blue Rock Thrush was sitting on the dzong near some impressive rock bee hives; and an adult and juvenile White-browed Wagtail were in the Mo Chhu adjacent to the dzong.

It was finally time to head for the big city, Bhutan’s capital and largest city, Thimphu. We birded our way upslope to Dochula, but generally birding was slow and traffic was constant. We did have great looks at Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Great and Golden-throated Barbets, Gold-billed Magpie, and others that had become familiar. After lunch at the impressive war memorial at Dochula (and a flyover Eurasian Hobby), we bade farewell to our camping crew, stopped in at our opulent hotel overlooking the city, and spent the afternoon shopping and exploring the town.

We spent the morning back in Jigme Dorji National Park, albeit far from our last visit. We hiked up to Cheri Monastery where we enjoyed watching the tame goral that live around the monastery. The main bird highlight was great looks at Speckled Wood-Pigeon, and it was nice to have further good looks at Buff-barred Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, Ultramarine Flycatcher, and others. An afternoon visit to the Thimphu sewage ponds was mostly windy.
Bhutan is excellent for mammals: A rather fearless barking deer (left) and large-eared pika.

We started the morning back at the sewage ponds, where we enjoyed the much calmer morning conditions. Before we even got out of the car we had found our number one target, Black-tailed Crakes. Three of them were foraging in a small wetland with a White-breasted Waterhen. We also flushed a Common Snipe. Along the river were a trio of migrant *leucopsis* White Wagtails among the more numerous Himalayan-breeding *alboides*. Among the many Rosy Pipits was our second Red-throated Pipit of the trip, a surprise given that only one previous record is listed in Spierenberg’s *Birds in Bhutan* (2005).

After lunch and a walk around downtown Paro, we went to our spectacular hotel with views of Jomolhari.

For our last full day of birding, we headed up the hill above Paro to an altitude of 3,900m, the highest road pass in Bhutan, Chelela. An early start was essential, because before we could do anything else, however, we had to find Himalayan Monal. We made it all the way to the pass without seeing one, so after a brief stop at the pass, we started our way down again. Just as I was getting nervous, a pair appeared on the roadside. The sun had just risen above the mountains, causing the male’s plumage to positively shine in a way that only a monal’s can. The female strutted across the road into the scrub, but the male stayed for an extra minute before scrambling away. We continued down the road another kilometer to an area where we’ve seen them in the pass to try for more views. Sure enough, another male was there, then another when the first one left!

Elated with our success, it was time to start birding. We quickly chalked up Collared Grosbeak, followed by Spotted Laughingthrush, though even better views of both would come later. Arriving at the pass itself, our first find were two Dark-rumped Rosefinches, followed by a very vocal female White-browed Bush Robin. After the last couple of days with few new birds, it was almost overwhelming to have a lifer pop into view at every bend in the road! Small flocks of Plain Mountain-Finches were swirling about as we started walking down from the pass.
Calling White-browed Rosefinches posed no problem, a male popped into view just seconds after we started playing the tape. We enjoyed watching Blue-fronted Redstarts building a nest on the roadside just before breakfast showed up. The excitement was far from over, however—just as we were finishing up our meal, Norbu spotted a raptor overhead. A Lammergeier! A real high mountain specialist, this bird is seldom seen on birding tours in the Himalayas because it tends to keep to even higher elevations.

Very cool brown birds: Brown Parrotbill (left) and Rufous-breasted Accentor.

After breakfast we drove a little further down the mountain to where the fir forests start. Here we found Scaly Thrush in the same spot for the second consecutive year. Himalayan (Red-flanked) Bluetails were common, and we started bumping into various tits and warblers typical of this elevation. We called out a pair of my personal favorite laughingthrush—Spotted—and we were able to watch them in the sun and hear them sing their fantastic song. Something running on the ground caught our attention, but it was neither mammal nor pheasant—it was a woodcock! After our last picnic lunch in the forest, we returned to our hotel where we took a well-deserved rest for the remainder of the afternoon.

CULTURAL EXTENSION

We started the cultural extension with, what else, birding. After a late breakfast, we took a walk in the forest behind the hotel. The first highlight was photographing a cooperative pair of White-browed Fulvettas. Better yet was an unexpected new bird for the trip, a responsive Indian Blue Robin.

After our walk, we continued on to the real cultural part of the extension. We started out with a visit to the national museum, followed by the Paro Dzong, then watching the modern version of the national sport, archery played with $1000 imported compound bows. We ended the day drinking butter tea in a local farmhouse.
The big day of the cultural extension is the hike to Tiger’s Nest monastery. We started while it was still cool and birds were still singing. Everyone made it to the top viewpoint, from which the best views of the spectacular temple are found. Black-faced Laughingthrushes were very tame there, feeding on rhododendron nectar at close range. In the afternoon, some opted for a traditional, relaxing hot stone bath, while others took a walk in the forest behind the hotel.

Birding highlights of the cultural extension: Indian Blue Robin (left) and a photogenic White-browed Fulvetta.

With a few moments before breakfast and our subsequent departure for the airport, Peter and I opted for a short walk to see if the Indian Blue Robin was still around. Sure enough, he was fervently defending the same patch of scrub where we found him the other day. Rufous-breasted Accentors were likewise in the same pile of sticks where we had seen them several times, but a pair of Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babblers was a new find around the hotel.

Finally it was time to bid farewell to the mountain kingdom that we had grown so fond of. We bid farewell to each other as we parted ways in the Delhi airport, each to continue on his way home.
TRIP LIST

317 species seen plus 15 heard only in Bhutan. As additional 12 species were seen on the drive from Guwahati to the Indian border (noted with an “I”). Taxonomy follows the latest update of The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World (2007), available [here](#). Alternate names, mostly from Rasmussen and Anderton (2005; *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*) are in parentheses. Conservation status follows Birdlife International: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened. H=Heard only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anas penelope</td>
<td>Eurasian Wigeon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anas (crecca) crecca</td>
<td>Green-winged (Common/Eurasian) Teal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arborophila torqueola</td>
<td>Hill Partridge (H)</td>
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<td>Arborophila mandellii</td>
<td>Chestnut-breasted Partridge (VU) (H)</td>
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<td>Arborophila rufogularis</td>
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<td>Ithaginis cruentus</td>
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<td>Lophophorus impejanus</td>
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<td>Gallus gallus</td>
<td>Red Junglefowl (H)</td>
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<td>Lophura leucomelanos</td>
<td>Kalij Pheasant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podiceps cristatus</td>
<td>Great Crested Grebe</td>
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<td>Phalacrocorax carbo</td>
<td>Great Cormorant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phalacrocorax niger</td>
<td>Little Cormorant (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardea insignis</td>
<td>White-bellied Heron (CR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anastomus oscitans</td>
<td>Asian Openbill (I)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.tropicalbirding.com
Oriental Honey-buzzard  
Black Kite  
Pallas's Fish-Eagle (VU)  
One along the Po Chhu River just after leaving the White-bellied Heron.

Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture)  
Another surprise was having a Lammergeier fly over us while we were eating breakfast just below Chelela. Usually at higher elevations by this time of year.

Himalayan Griffon  
Seen several times, best was in a farmyard in the Probjikha Valley where they were eating scraps. We carefully followed some children through their potato fields towards their house for closer views.

Crested Serpent-Eagle  
Crested Goshawk  
Shikra  
Eurasian Sparrowhawk  
Eurasian (Himalayan) Buzzard  
Seen as low as 250m above Samdrup Jonkhar and as high as 3900m (a particularly dark individual) at Chelela.

Black Eagle  
Rufous-bellied Eagle  
Mountain Hawk-Eagle  
Eurasian Kestrel  
Eurasian Hobby  
One flew over us at Dochula.

Peregrine Falcon  
White-breasted Waterhen  
Generally rather uncommon in Bhutan, we saw it twice, first just south of Trongsa then again at the Thimphu sewage ponds.

Black-tailed Crake  
Despite the paucity of habitat, we saw three birds in a small wetlands near the Thimphu sewage ponds.

Black-necked Crane (VU)  
Yet another surprise, for the second consecutive year an injured bird was lingering in the Probjikha Valley after the rest of the flock had departed for their Tibetan breeding grounds.

River Lapwing  
Pacific Golden-Plover (I)  
Ibiser  
An iconic bird of Himalayan rivers, we saw it first and best near Jakar.

Bronze-winged Jacana (I)  
Common Sandpiper  
Green Sandpiper (I)  
Wood Sandpiper (I)  
Solitary Snipe  
We randomly found a wet field near Jakar that had a number of these rare, high-altitude snipes.

Common Snipe
We flushed one at the Thimphu sewage ponds.

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*
Some people were lucky enough to see one scuttling on the ground in the forests below Chelala.

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*

**Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*
Our best views were of a flock that Glenn spotted of over 200 on a cliff near Thrumshingla.

**Speckled Wood-Pigeon** *Columba hodgsonii*
Our best views were on our walk to Cheri Monastery near Thimphu.

**Oriental Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

**Barred Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia unchall*

**Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps inda*

**Wedge-tailed Pigeon** *Treron sphenurus*

We saw just once, a flock on our very first afternoon in Bhutan above Samdrup Jonkhar.

**Mountain Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula badia*
On our first afternoon above Samdrup Jonkhar there was a near-constant stream of small flocks flying upslope. We would get better views, though, near our Tingtibi camp.

**Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** *Clamator coromandus*
A beautiful and very responsive male was seen above Shemgang.

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Cuculus sparverioides*

**Hodgson’s Hawk-Cuckoo (H)** *Cuculus nisicolor*

**Common (European) Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*
We watched a very responsive individual displaying in the countryside south of Trongsa.

**Himalayan (Oriental) Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*

**Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus*

A single bird seen near Tingtibi.

**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*

**Asian Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx maculatus*

**Asian Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*

**Asian Koel (I)** *Eudynamys scolopaceus*

**Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis*

**Mountain Scops-Owl (H)** *Otus spilocepalus*

**Collared Scops-Owl (H)** *Otus lettia*

**Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei*

Great views of one near our camp on the Lingmethang Road. We even watched it sing while sticking its head out of a tree cavity.

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*

**Tawny (Himalayan Wood) Owl (H)** *Strix aluco*

**Gray Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*

**White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris*

**Fork-tailed (Pacific) Swift** *Apus pacificus*

**Dark-rumped Swift (VU)** *Apus acuticauda*

We had good views of this rare swift several times above Samdrup Jonkhar.
House Swift  
Asian Palm-Swift  
Red-headed Trogon

Seen very well by just a couple people near Samdrup Jonkhar. Heard several other times, but they would never come out.

Ward's Trogon (NT)

Another highlight of the trip. After not seeing it in the usual areas on the Upper Lingmethang Road, we considered ourselves extremely fortunate to have amazing views of a pair between Pelela and Wangdue.

Common Kingfisher

White-throated Kingfisher

Crested (Himalayan Pied) Kingfisher

Blue-bearded Bee-eater

Some nice views on the road to Shemgang.

Dollarbird

Eurasian Hoopoe

Great Hornbill (NT)

Good views near Samdrup Jonkhar, but great views near Tingtibi where we encountered a flock of about 30 individuals.

Rufous-necked Hornbill (VU)

A rare bird throughout much of its range, it is still relatively common in Bhutan. We had great views many times, first (and probably best) above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Wreathed Hornbill

Another beautiful, large hornbill, we saw them nicely above Samdrup Jonkhar.

Great Barbet

Golden-throated Barbet

Blue-throated Barbet

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide (NT)

A bird that is much easier to find in Bhutan than anywhere else, we found it easily at one of its usually bee-infested cliff-side haunts thanks to our driver’s keen spotting.

Speckled Piculet

Gray-capped Woodpecker

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker

Darjeeling Woodpecker

Rufous Woodpecker

Lesser Yellownape

Greater Yellownape

Greater Flameback

Bay Woodpecker

Long-tailed Broadbill

We saw this strikingly beautiful passerine several times. It was particularly common this year around Shemgang.

Long-tailed Shrike

Gray-backed Shrike
Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike       Coracina melaschistos
Long-tailed Minivet                Pericrocotus ethologus
Short-billed Minivet               Pericrocotus brevirostris
Scarlet Minivet                   Pericrocotus flammeus
Gray-chinned Minivet               Pericrocotus solaris
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike       Hemipus picatus
Golden-fronted Leafbird           Chloropsis aurifrons
Orange-bellied Leafbird           Chloropsis hardwickii
Eurasian Jay                      Garrulus glandarius
Gold-billed (Yellow-billed Blue) Magpie       Urocissa flavirostris
(Common) Green Magpie              Cissa chinensis
After repeatedly hearing it but not seeing it, we had absolutely stunning views of this most
beautiful of corvids between Shemgang and Trongsa, just before leaving its elevational
range for good.
Gray Treepie                      Dendrocitta formosae
Eurasian Magpie                   Pica pica
Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker     Nucifraga caryocatactes
Red-billed Chough                 Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax
House Crow                        Corvus splendens
Large-billed Crow                 Corvus macrorhynchos
Both lowland (Eastern Jungle Crow) and highland (Large-billed Crow) forms seen.
Oriental Skylark                  Alauda gulgula
Barn Swallow                      Hirundo rustica
Red-rumped Swallow                Cecropis daurica
Asian (House-) Martin             Delichon dasypus
Nepal (House-) Martin             Delichon nipalense
Coal Tit                          Periparus ater
Rufous-vented Tit                 Periparus rubidiventris
Gray-crested Tit                  Lophophanes dichrous
Great Tit                         Parus major
Green-backed Tit                  Parus monticolus
Yellow-checked (Black-spotted Yellow-) Tit       Parus spilonotus
Yellow-browed Tit                 Sylviparus modestus
Sultan Tit                        Melanochlora sultanea
Always a crowd-pleaser when seen well, we had great views of a pair keeping company
with Beautiful Nuthatch above Samdrup Jonkhar.
Fire-capped Tit                   Cephalopyrus flammiceps
Often a difficult bird to find, we had very good views multiple times of this colorful tit,
including a pair that may have been nesting near Dochula.
Chestnut-headed Tesia H)           Tesia castaneocoronata
Slaty-bellied Tesia                Tesia olivea
Gray-bellied Tesia (H)             Tesia cyaniventer
Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler      Cettia fortipes
Yellowish-bellied (Humes) Bush-Warbler Cettia (brunnescens) acanthizoides
Gray-sided Bush-Warbler            Cettia brunnifrons
Rufous-faced Warbler  | Abroscopus albogularis
Black-faced Warbler  | Abroscopus schisticeps

Strangely elusive this year, we finally had good views in the forests above Wangdue.

Broad-billed Warbler  | Tickellia hodgsoni
Common Tailorbird  | Orthotomus sutorius
Black-throated Tit  | Aegithalos concinnus
Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit  | Aegithalos iouschistos
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch  | Sitta castanea
White-tailed Nuthatch  | Sitta himalayensis
Beautiful Nuthatch (VU)  | Sitta formosa

Another tour highlight. We not only had great views of a pair on our first full day in Bhutan, but then we found another on the Lingmethang Road, where despite being heavily birded the bird had been previously unknown.

Wallcreeper  | Tichodroma muraria

Another tardy migrant, one of these strange and highly-sought passerines was lingering in the Mo Chhu Valley.

Eurasian (Hodgeson’s) Treecreeper  | Certhia (hodgesoni) familiaris
Brown-throated Treecreeper  | Certhia discolor
Eurasian Wren  | Troglodytes troglodytes
Brown Dipper  | Cinclus pallasii
Striated Bulbul  | Pycnonotus striatus
Black-crested Bulbul  | Pycnonotus melanicierus
White-cheeked Bulbul  | Pycnonotus leucogenys
Red-vented Bulbul  | Pycnonotus cafer
Red-whiskered Bulbul  | Pycnonotus jocosus
White-throated Bulbul  | Alophoixus flaveolus
Mountain Bulbul  | Ixos mcclellandii
Ashy Bulbul  | Hemixos flavala
Black Bulbul  | Hypsipetes leucocephalus
Tickell's Leaf-Warbler  | Phylloscopus affinis
Buff-barred (Orange-barred) Warbler  | Phylloscopus pulcher
Ashy-throated (Leaf-) Warbler  | Phylloscopus maculipennis
Pale-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Warbler  | Phylloscopus chloronotus
Hume's (Leaf-) Warbler  | Phylloscopus humei
Large-billed Leaf-Warbler  | Phylloscopus magnirostris

Somewhat unusually, we found this bird as a migrant this year just above Samdrup Jonkhar. We also heard it nearly daily over the last week of the tour.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler  | Phylloscopus reguloides
Yellow-vented Warbler  | Phylloscopus cantator
Golden-spectacled (Green-crowned) Warbler  | Seicercus burkii
Whistler's Warbler  | Seicercus whiskleri
Gray-hooded Warbler  | Seicercus xanthochistos
Gray-cheeked Warbler  | Seicercus poliogenys
Chestnut-crowned Warbler  | Seicercus castaniceps
Striated Prinia  | Prinia crinigera
Hill Prinia  
*Prinia atrogularis*

Fire-tailed Myzornis  
*Myzornis pyrrhoura*

We saw this highly-sought and uniquely green-and-red bird several times this year between Namling and Sengor.

Great Parrotbill  
*Conostoma oemodium*

One heard incessantly and seen by some below Thrumsingla.

Brown Parrotbill  
*Paradoxornis unicolor*

Great looks and photo ops at Yotongla, then a pair seen carrying nesting material near Thimphu.

Black-throated (Orange-eared) Parrotbill  
*Paradoxornis nipalensis*

Seen briefly twice, once on the Lingmethang Road then again near Dochula. Now split at Orange-eared Parrotbill.

Rufous-headed (White-breasted) Parrotbill  
*Paradoxornis ruficeps*

A group with Indian White-hooded Babblers near our Tingtibi camp. Recently split as White-breasted Parrotbill.

Asian Fairy-bluebird  
*Irena puella*

Dark-sided Flycatcher  
*Muscicapa sibirica*

Seen many times on this tour, first on our drive from Morong to Trashigang.

Ferruginous Flycatcher  
*Muscicapa ferruginea*

Great looks at one near Shemgang that remained very faithful to a particular dead snag.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher  
*Ficedula Hodgsonii*

Nice looks at a singing male with a mixed flock in the Mo Chhu Valley.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher  
*Ficedula strophiata*

Taiga (Red-throated) Flycatcher  
*Ficedula albicilla*

Little Pied Flycatcher  
*Ficedula westermanni*

Ultramarine Flycatcher  
*Ficedula Superbiliaris*

Verditer Flycatcher  
*Eumyias thalassinus*

Large Niltava  
*Niltava grandis*

Small Niltava  
*Niltava Macgrigoriae*

Rufous-bellied Niltava  
*Niltava Sundara*

Pale Blue-Flycatcher  
*Cyornis unicolor*

Blue-throated Flycatcher  
*Cyornis rubeculoides*

Pygmy Blue-Flycatcher  
*Muscicapella Hodgsoni*

Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher  
*Culicicapa Ceylonensis*

Indian Blue Robin  
*Luscinia Brunnea*

A beautiful male was on territory in the forest behind our hotel in Paro, seen on the cultural extension.

Himalayan (Red-flanked) Bluetail  
*Tarsiger Rufilatus*

Golden Bush-Robin  
*Tarsiger Chrysaeus*

A brilliant yellow male was seen on the Upper Lingmethang Road.

White-browed Bush-Robin  
*Tarsiger Indicus*

A singing female-plumaged bird, possibly an immature male, showed very well just below Chelela.

Oriental Magpie-Robin  
*Copsychus Sauraris*

White-rumped Shama  
*Copsychus Malabaricus*

Black Redstart  
*Phoenicurus Ochrurus*
Hodgson's Redstart  \textit{Phoenicurus hodgsoni}
White-throated Redstart  \textit{Phoenicurus schisticeps}
A couple females were seen below Thrumsingla.

Daurian Redstart  \textit{Phoenicurus auroreus}
One female was with the White-throated Redstarts below Thrumsingla.

Blue-fronted Redstart  \textit{Phoenicurus frontalis}
White-capped Redstart  \textit{Chaimarrornis leucocephalus}
Plumbeous Redstart  \textit{Rhyacornis fuliginosa}
White-tailed Robin  \textit{Cinclidium leucurum}
Great looks at a male in the forest near our Morong camp.

Little Forktail  \textit{Enicurus scouleri}
Slaty-backed Forktail  \textit{Enicurus schistaceus}
Spotted Forktail  \textit{Enicurus maculatus}
Common Stonechat  \textit{Saxicola torquatus}
Gray Bushchat  \textit{Saxicola ferreus}
Blue-capped Rock-Thrush  \textit{Monticola cinclorhynchus}
Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush  \textit{Monticola rufiventris}
Blue Rock-Thrush  \textit{Monticola solitarius}
Blue Whistling-Thrush  \textit{Myophonus caeruleus}
The only species we saw every day of the tour.

Orange-headed Thrush  \textit{Zoothera citrina}
Frantastic looks at this lovely thrush on the lower Lingmethang Road.

Plain-backed Thrush  \textit{Zoothera mollissima}
Usually shy and secretive, we watched on singing from a top a tall fir very early in the morning at Thrumsingla.

Scaly Thrush  \textit{Zoothera dauma}
We found a pair below Chelela in the same spot as we found them last year.

White-collared Blackbird  \textit{Turdus albocinctus}
Gray-winged Blackbird  \textit{Turdus boulboul}
Dark-throated Thrush  \textit{Turdus ruficollis}
Gould's Shortwing  \textit{Brachypteryx stellata}
Norbu discovered a location in Thrumsingla National Park for this rarity last year while guiding a cultural tour. We didn’t find it in the same spot, but Norbu persisted and we found it just up the road!

Lesser Shortwing  \textit{Brachypteryx leucophrys}
Yellow-bellied Fantail  \textit{Rhipidura hypoxantha}
White-throated Fantail  \textit{Rhipidura albicollis}
White-throated Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax albogularis}
White-crested Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax leucolophus}
Lesser Necklacied Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax monileger}
We heard several and finally had good views of one near Tingtibi. More impressive was one singing incessantly south of the Mangdechhu Bridge, including mimicry of Maroon Oriole, Red-headed Trogon, and others.

Greater Necklacied Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax pectoralis}
A few people saw some above Samdrup Jonkhar.
Striated Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax striatus}
Rufous-necked Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax ruficollis}
Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush (H)  \textit{Garrulax rufogularis}
Spotted Laughingthrush  \textit{Garrulax ocellatus}
Great looks at the most beautiful of laughingthrushes at Chelela.

**Gray-sided Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax caerulatus}
We had wonderful looks at this skulking laughingthrush near our Morong camp.

**Streaked Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax lineatus}

**Scaly Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax subunicolor}
Another extremely skulking laughingthrush, we saw one feeding in the open on the roadside on the Lingmethang Road.

**Blue-winged Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax squamatus}
Yet another tough-to-see laughinthrush that came easily for us right near our Morong camp.

**Black-faced Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax affinis}
Our first encounter with this species was with an unusually cooperative group feeding in a field near Sengor, where they posed very nicely for photos.

**Chestnut- (Red-)crowned Laughingthrush**  \textit{Garrulax erythrocephalus}
**Red- (Crimson-) faced Liocichla**  \textit{Liocichla phoenicea}
Another skulking laughingthrush that we saw very well, right near Morong camp alongside Blue-winged and Gray-sided Laughinterushes.

**Puff-throated Babbler**  \textit{Pellorneum ruficeps}
**Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler**  \textit{Pomatorhinus erythrogenys}
**White-browed Scimitar-Babbler**  \textit{Pomatorhinus schisticeps}
**Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler**  \textit{Pomatorhinus ruficollis}
**Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler**  \textit{Pomatorhinus ferruginosus}
We saw one individual of this rare scimitar-babbler on the Lingmethang Road in the semi-dark as we headed from camp to the Blackish-breasted Babbler location.

**Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler (H)**  \textit{Xiphirhynchus superciliaris}
**Pygmy Wren-Babbler**  \textit{Pnoepyga pusilla}
**Rufous-throat. W-Babbler (NT)**  \textit{Spelaeornis caudatus}
This skulker is fairly common within its limited range. We saw it unusually well singing from an exposed bamboo branch on the Lingmethang Road.

**Bar-winged Wren-Babbler (H)**  \textit{Spelaeornis troglodytoides}
**Spotted Wren-Babbler**  \textit{Spelaeornis formosus}
**Blackish-breasted (Sikkim Wedge-billed) Babbler**  \textit{Sphenocichla humei}
Thank’s to Norbu’s advance scouting, we had no problem finding this mega-rarity on the Lingmethang Road. Seeing it was another matter, but eventually we all had great views. Formerly known as Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler or Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler.

**Rufous-capped Babbler**  \textit{Stachyris ruficeps}
**Golden Babbler**  \textit{Stachyris chrysaea}
**Gray-throated Babbler**  \textit{Stachyris nigriceps}
**Striped (Pin-striped) Tit-Babbler**  \textit{Macronous gularis}
**Silver-eared Mesia**  \textit{Leiothrix argentauris}
**Red-billed Leiothrix**  \textit{Leiothrix lutea}
**Himalayan Cutia**  \textit{Cutia nipalensis}
Black-headed Shrike-Babbler (H)  Pteruthius rufiventer
White-browed Shrike-Babbler  Pteruthius flaviscapis
Green Shrike-Babbler  Pteruthius xanthochlorus
Black-eared Shrike-Babbler  Pteruthius melanotis
Indian White-hooded Babbler (H)  Gampsorhynchus rufulus

A group of these unusual babblers was in a flock with Rufous-headed Parrotbills near our Tingtibi camp, but were seen only by the guide.

Rusty-fronted Barwing  Actinodura egertoni
Hoary-throated Barwing  Actinodura nipalensis
Blue-winged Minla  Minla cyanouroptera
Chestnut-tailed Minla  Minla strigula
Red-tailed Minla  Minla ignitincta
Golden-breasted Fulvetta  Alcippe chrysotis
Yellow-throated Fulvetta  Alcippe cinerea
Rufous-winged Fulvetta  Alcippe castaneiceps
White-browed Fulvetta  Alcippe nipalensis
Nepal Fulvetta  Alcippe nipalensis
Rufous Sibia  Heterophasia capistrata
Long-tailed Sibia  Heterophasia picaoides
Striated Yuhina  Yuhina castaniceps
White-naped Yuhina  Yuhina bakeri
Whiskered Yuhina  Yuhina flavicollis
Stripe-throated Yuhina  Yuhina gularis
Rufous-vented Yuhina  Yuhina occipitalis
Black-chinned Yuhina  Yuhina nigrimenta
White-bellied Yuhina (Erpornis)  Yuhina (Erpornis) zantholeuca
Oriental White-eye  Zosterops palpebrosus
(Mrs.) Gould’s Sunbird  Aethopyga gouldiae
Green-tailed Sunbird  Aethopyga nipalensis
Black-throated Sunbird  Aethopyga saturata
Eastern Crimson Sunbird  Aethopyga siparaja
Fire-tailed Sunbird  Aethopyga ignicauda
Streaked Spiderhunter  Arachnothera magna
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker  Dicaeum ignipectum
Slender-billed Oriole  Oriolus tenuirostris

Very locally common on this tour—fortunately the one locality is around our hotel in Punakha.

Maroon Oriole  Oriolus traillii
Large Woodshrike  Tephrodornis gularis
Ashy Drongo  Dicrurus leucophaeus
Bronzed Drongo  Dicrurus aeneus
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo  Dicrurus remifer
Hair-crested (Spangled) Drongo  Dicrurus hottentottus
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo  Dicrurus paradiseus
Ashy Woodswallow (I)  Artamus fuscus
Common Hill Myna  
*Gracula religiosa*

Jungle Myna (I)  
*Acridotheres fuscus*

Common Myna  
*Acridotheres tristis*

Asian Pied Starling  
*Gracupica contra*

Chestnut-tailed (Ashy-headed) Starling  
*Sturnia malabarica*

Rufous-breasted Accentor  
*Prunella strophiata*

Gray Wagtail  
*Motacilla cinerea*

White Wagtail  
*Motacilla alba*

Both Himalayan-breeding *alboides* and migrant *leucopsis* were seen, the latter at the Thimphu sewage ponds.

White-browed Wagtail  
*Motacilla madaraspatensis*

An adult was with a juvenile next to the footbridge to Punakha Dzong.

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit (I)  
*Anthus rufulus*

Rosy Pipit  
*Anthus roseatus*

Many were seen this year, including large numbers in a field near Jakar and in the Probjikha Valley.

Olive-backed Pipit  
*Anthus hodgsoni*

Red-throated Pipit  
*Anthus cervinus*

With only one record listed in Spirenberger’s *Birds in Bhutan*, we were surprised to find this species twice, once near Jakar and again at the Thimphu sewage ponds. Both were in breeding plumage and were photographed.

Water Pipit  
*Anthus spinoletta*

We found what may be the first documented record for Bhutan, no fewer than four birds in a wet field near Jakar. This follows on the heels of our finding Bhutan’s first record of Red-necked Phalarope in 2010.

Crested Bunting  
*Melophus lathami*

Little Bunting  
*Emberiza pusilla*

Plain Mountain-Finch  
*Leucosticte nemoricola*

Good numbers seen at the high passes. Particularly impressive was a flock of many hundreds with a Eurasian Sparrowhawk in their midst below Thrumsingla.

Blanford's Rosefinch  
*Carpodacus rubescens*

A rare, unpredictable, and poorly-known rosefinch, we found males at four different locations this year: both sides of Thrumsingla, Chelela, and even on the trail to Tiger’s Nest monastery on the cultural extension.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch  
*Carpodacus nipalensis*

Common at Thrumsingla.

Common Rosefinch  
*Carpodacus erythrinus*

This migrant rosefinch was seen best in the fields behind our camp north of Shemgang.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch  
*Carpodacus edwardsii*

We lucked into two males right at Chelela, the highest point on the tour (and the highest drivable pass in Bhutan).

(Himalayan) White-browed Rosefinch  
*Carpodacus thura*

We had great looks and photo-ops at a small group below Chelela.

Red Crossbill  
*Loxia curvirostra*

Another unpredictable species, we saw them several times including many juveniles. We saw them first near Ura, then again between Jakar and Trongsa, and lastly at Chelela.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch  
*Chloris spinoides*
**Brown Bullfinch**  *Pyrrhula nipalensis*
We saw a pair of this uncommon finch between Pelela and Wangdue just before we finally found Ward’s Trogon.

**Red-headed Bullfinch**  *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*
A single beautiful male was at Chelela on our final morning of the main tour.

**Collared Grosbeak**  *Mycerobas affinis*
**Spot-winged Grosbeak**  *Mycerobas melanozanthos*
**White-winged Grosbeak**  *Mycerobas carinipes*
**Gold-naped Finch**  *Pyrrhoplectes epauletta*
A female was seen disappointingly briefly near Namling.

**Scarlet Finch**  *Haematospiza sipahi*
Seen many times this year, first near our Morong camp.

**House Sparrow**  *Passer domesticus*
**Russet Sparrow**  *Passer rutilans*
**Eurasian Tree Sparrow**  *Passer montanus*
**White-rumped Munia**  *Lonchura striata*
**Nutmeg Mannikin**  *Lonchura punctulata*

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**MAMMAL LIST**

**Golden Langur**  *Presbytis geei*
**Capped Langur**  *Trachypithecus pileatus*
**Gray Langur**  *Semnopithecus schistaceus*
**Assam Macaque**  *Macaca assamensis*
**Golden Jackal (H)**  *Canus aureus*
**Yellow-throated Marten**  *Martes flavigula*
**Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)**  *Muntiacus muntjak*
**Moupin Pika**  *Ochotona thibetana*
**Large-eared Pika**  *Ochotona macrotis*
**Black Giant Squirrel**  *Ratufa bicolor*
**Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel**  *Dremormys lokriah*
**Hoary-bellied Squirrel**  *Callosciurus pygerythrus*
**Himalayan Striped Squirrel**  *Tamiops mcclellandii*
**Flying squirrel sp.**
**Common Goral**  *Nemorhaedus goral*