

TROPICAL BIRDING



Sri Lanka: Ceylon sojourn

21 February – 5 March 2012



INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka presents those who have never visited the culturally rich Indian subcontinent with a wonderful introduction to the region, while also offering “Indiaphiles” a host of new southern specialties and nearly 30 endemic species. With many local races and new species being elevated this list is sure to swell further in the near future. We visited a range of parks and reserves, from lowland tropical forests to highland cloud forests that brought us almost **all of the possible Ceylon endemics**, including the recently discovered **Serendib Scops-Owl**. This tour was a great success with every single widely-recognized endemic as well as all the potential endemic splits seen well by the participants.



We left with great looks at the gamebirds, the **Sri Lanka Spurfowl** and **Sri Lanka Junglefowl**, while the trees proved home to two colorful pigeons in the form of **Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon** and **Sri Lanka Green-Pigeon**. Noisy and active **Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot** and **Layard's Parakeets** gave themselves up eventually while skulking in the undergrowth and canopy were the two local 'cuckoos', the **Green-billed Coucal** and **Red-faced Malkoha**. Daytime views were had of the sweet **Chestnut-backed Owlet**, while we had to work a little for the **Serendib Scops-Owl**. Fruit-eaters also obliged with **Sri Lankan Grey Hornbill**, **Crimson-fronted Barbet** and **Yellow-fronted Barbet** all seen well, while the flocks were worked for good looks at **Crimson-backed Flameback**, **Sri Lanka Woodshrike**, **Sri Lankan (Greater Racket-tailed) Drongo**, **Black-capped (Black-crested) Bulbul**, **Yellow-eared**

Bulbul, Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler, Sri Lanka White-eye, Brown-capped Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Orange-billed Babbler, Sri Lanka Scimitar-Babbler, and Sri Lanka Blue Magpie. Overhead we found **Sri Lanka (Red-rumped) Swallow** to be common and had to work harder for some of the skulkers including **Spot-winged Thrush, Dull-blue Flycatcher** and **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush.** The **Sri Lanka Myna, White-faced Starling** and **Legge's Flowerpecker** all perched up in the open which made finding them a lot easier. It was great to get every single endemic species and potential split under the belt, but we also racked up a bunch of great birds that are localized to the southern subcontinent, including the always welcome **Indian Pitta.**



Other local specialties that were seen well on our trip included **Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Swiftlet, Malabar Trogon, Malabar Pied-Hornbill, Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Flame Minivet, Jerdon's Bushlark, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Yellow-billed Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler, Indian Blackbird, Jerdon's Leafbird, Pale-billed Flowerpecker Purple-rumped Sunbird, Long-billed Sunbird and Black-throated Munia.**

We also managed well with nightbirds, getting good looks at **Indian and Jerdon's Nightjar** and the inimitable **Sri Lanka Frogmouth.** We also saw several species that are local and uncommon anywhere in India and are always to be enjoyed no matter where you are on tour, such as **Spot-billed Pelican, Black Bittern, Lesser Adjutant, Black Eagle, Changeable**

Hawk Eagle, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Barred Buttonquail, Indian and Great Thick-knee, Small Pratincole, Sirkeer Malkoha, Brown Fish-Owl, Indian Pitta, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Indian Robin, Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, Indian Blue Robin, Forest Wagtail.

Most importantly, a very successful trip to Ceylon was enjoyed by all the participants.



Itinerary:

February 21	Arrival Columbo
February 22	Kitulgala Forest Reserve
February 23	Kitulgala Forest Reserve
February 24	Kitulgala to Sinharaja
February 25	Sinharaja
February 26	Sinharaja
February 27	Sinharaja to Embilipitiya
February 28	Uda Walawe NP to Tissamaharama
February 29	Yala NP
March 1	Bundala NP and Tissamaharama
March 2	Tissamaharama to Nuwara Eliya
March 3	Horton Plains NP
March 4	Nuwara Eliya to Kandy
March 5	Udawattakele Sanctuary and departure

TRIP CHECKLIST

Little Grebe [*Tachybaptus ruficollis*]
Darter [*Anhinga melanogaster*]
Spot-billed Pelican [*Pelecanus philippensis*]
Indian Cormorant [*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*]
Little Cormorant [*Phalacrocorax niger*]
Grey Heron [*Ardea cinerea*]
Purple Heron [*Ardea purpurea*]
Indian Pond Heron [*Ardeola grayii*]
Cattle Egret [*Bubulcus ibis*]
Great Egret [*Egretta alba*]
Intermediate Egret [*Egretta intermedia*]
Little Egret [*Egretta garzetta*]
Black Bittern [*Ixobrychus flavicollis*]
Yellow Bittern [*Ixobrychus sinensis*]
Striated Heron [*Butorides striata chloriceps*]
Black-crowned Night-Heron [*Nycticorax nycticorax*]
Asian Openbill [*Anastomus oscitans*]
Woolly-necked Stork [*Ciconia episcopus*]
Lesser Adjutant [*Leptoptilos javanicus*]
Painted Stork [*Mycteria leucocephala*]
Black-headed Ibis [*Treskiornis melanocephalus*]
Eurasian Spoonbill [*Platalea leucorodia*]
Garganey [*Anas querquedula*]
Lesser Whistling-Duck [*Dendrocygna javanica*]
Cotton Pygmy-Goose [*Nettapus coromandelianus*]
Besra [*Accipiter virgatus*]
Shikra [*Accipiter badius*]
Black-shouldered Kite [*Elanus caeruleus*]
White-bellied Sea-Eagle [*Haliaeetus leucogaster*]
Brahminy Kite [*Haliastur indus*]
Black Eagle [*Ictinaetus malayensis*]
Rufous-bellied Eagle [*Lophotriorchis kienerii*]
Oriental Honey-Buzzard [*Pernis ptilorhynchus*]
Crested Serpent-Eagle [*Spilornis cheela*]
Changeable Hawk Eagle [*Spizaetus cirrhatus*]
Mountain Hawk Eagle [*Spizaetus nipalensis*]

Eurasian Kestrel [*Falco tinnunculus*]
Sri Lanka Spurfowl [*Galloperdix bicalcarata*] - Endemic
Sri Lanka Junglefowl [*Gallus lafayettii*] - Endemic
Indian Peafowl [*Pavo cristatus*]
Barred Buttonquail [*Turnix suscitator*]
White-breasted Water-hen [*Amaurornis phoenicurus*]
Common Moorhen [*Gallinula chloropus*] (Eurasian)
Purple Swamphen [*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*]
Indian Thick-knee [*Burhicus indicus*]
Great Thick-knee [*Esacus recurvirostris*]
Greater Sand Plover [*Charadrius leschenaultii*]
Kentish Plover [*Charadrius alexandrinus*]
Lesser Sandplover [*Charadrius mongolus*]
Little Ringed Plover [*Charadrius dubius*]
Black-bellied Plover [*Pluvialis squatarola*]
Pacific Golden-Plover [*Pluvialis fulva*]
Red-wattled Lapwing [*Vanellus indicus*]
Yellow-wattled Lapwing [*Vanellus malarbaricus*]
Small Pratincole [*Glareola lactea*]
Pheasant-tailed Jacana [*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*]
Black-headed Gull [*Larus ridibundus*]
Brown-headed Gull [*Larus brunnicephalus*]
Black-winged Stilt [*Himantopus himantopus*]
Pied Stilt [*Himantopus leucocephalus*]
Common Sandpiper [*Actitis hypoleucos*]
Ruddy Turnstone [*Arenaria interpres*]
Curlew Sandpiper [*Calidris ferruginea*]
Little Stint [*Calidris minuta*]
Long-toed Stint [*Calidris subminuta*]
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [*Calidris acuminata*]
Temminck's Stint [*Calidris temminckii*]
Common Snipe [*Gallinago gallinago*]
Pintail Snipe [*Gallinago stenura*]
Black-tailed Godwit [*Limosa limosa*]
Bar-tailed Godwit [*Limosa lapponica*]
Eurasian Curlew [*Numenius arquata*]
Far Eastern Curlew [*Numenius madagascariensis*]

Whimbrel [*Numenius phaeopus*]
Red-necked Phalarope [*Phalaropus lobatus*]
Common Greenshank [*Tringa nebularia*]
Common Redshank [*Tringa totanus*]
Marsh Sandpiper [*Tringa stagnatilis*]
Wood Sandpiper [*Tringa glareola*]
White-winged Black Tern [*Chlidonias leucopterus*]
Whiskered Tern [*Chlidonias hybridus*]
Caspian Tern [*Sterna caspia*]
Great Crested Tern [*Sterna bergii*]
Gull-billed Tern [*Sterna nilotica*]
Lesser Crested Tern [*Sterna bengalensis*]
Little Tern [*Sterna albifrons*]
Emerald Dove [*Chalcophaps indica*]
Rock Pigeon [*Columba livia*]
Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon [*Columba torringtoni*] - Endemic
Green Imperial-Pigeon [*Ducula aenea*]
Spotted Dove [*Streptopelia chinensis*]
Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon [*Treron bicincta*]
Sri Lanka (Pompadour) Green-Pigeon [*Treron pompadora*] - Endemic
Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot [*Loriculus beryllinus*] - Endemic
Alexandrine Parakeet [*Psittacula eupatria*]
Layard's Parakeet [*Psittacula calthropae*] - Endemic
Rose-ringed Parakeet [*Psittacula krameri*]
Grey-bellied Cuckoo [*Cacomantis passerinus*]
Plaintive Cuckoo [*Cacomantis merulinus*]
Jacobin Cuckoo [*Clamator jacobinus*] (Pied Cuckoo)
Greater Coucal [*Centropus sinensis*]
Green-billed Coucal [*Centropus chlororhynchus*] - Endemic
Common Hawk-Cuckoo [*Cuculus varius ciceliae*]
Asian Koel [*Eudynamys scolopacea*] (Common)
Blue-faced Malkoha [*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*]
Red-faced Malkoha [*Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*] - Endemic
Sirkeer Malkoha [*Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii*]
Chestnut-backed Owlet [*Glaucidium castanonotum*] - Endemic
Brown Fish-Owl [*Ketupa zeylonensis*]
Indian Scops-Owl [*Otus bakkamoena*]

Serendib Scops-Owl [*Otus thilohoffmanni*] - Endemic
Wood-Owl [*Strix leptogrammica*]
Indian Nightjar [*Caprimulgus asiaticus*]
Jerdon's Nightjar [*Caprimulgus atripennis*]
Sri Lanka Frogmouth [*Batrachostomus moniliger*] (Ceylon Frogmouth)
Little Swift [*Apus affinis*] (House Swift)
Indian Swiftlet [*Collocalia unicolor*]
Asian Palm-Swift [*Cypsiurus balasiensis*]
Crested Treeswift [*Hemiprocne coronata*]
Malabar Trogon [*Harpactes faciatus*]
Common Kingfisher [*Alcedo Atthis*]
Pied Kingfisher [*Ceryle rudis*]
Stork-billed Kingfisher [*Halcyon capensis*]
White-throated Kingfisher [*Halcyon smymensis*] (White-breasted)
Malabar Pied-Hornbill [*Anthracoceros coronatus*]
Sri Lankan Grey Hornbill [*Ocyrceros gingalensis*] - Endemic
Indian Roller [*Coracias benghalensis*]
Blue-tailed Bee-Eater [*Merops philippinus*]
Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater [*Merops leschenaulti*]
Green Bee-Eater [*Merops orientalis*] (Little Green)
Eurasian Hoopoe [*Upupa epops*]
Brown-headed Barbet [*Megalaima zeylanica*]
Coppersmith Barbet [*Megalaima haemacephala*]
Crimson-fronted Barbet [*Megalaima rubricapilla*] - Endemic
Yellow-fronted Barbet [*Megalaima flavifrons*] - Endemic
Rufous Woodpecker [*Celeus brachyurus*]
Crimson-backed (Greater) Flameback [*Chrysocolaptes (lucidus) stricklandii*] - Endemic
Black-rumped Flameback [*Dinopium banghalense*]
Lesser Yellownape [*Picus chlorolophus*]
Common Iora [*Aegithina tiphia*]
Indian Pitta [*Pitta brachyura*]
Sri Lanka Woodshrike [*Tephrodornis affinis*] - Endemic
Ashy Woodswallow [*Artamus fuscus*]
Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike [*Coracina melanoptera*]
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike [*Hemipus picatus*]
Scarlet Minivet [*Pericrocotus flammeus*] (Flame)
Small Minivet [*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*]

Brown Shrike [*Lanius cristatus*]
Grey-backed Shrike [*Lanius tephronotus*]
Long-tailed Shrike [*Lanius schach*]
Southern Grey Shrike [*Lanius meridionalis*]
Black-hooded Oriole [*Oriolus xanthornus*]
Ashy Drongo [*Dicrurus leucophaeus*]
Black Drongo [*Dicrurus macrocercus*]
Sri Lankan (Greater Racket-tailed) Drongo [*Dicrurus (paradiseus) lophorinus*] - **Endemic**
White-bellied Drongo [*Dicrurus caerulescens*]
White-browed Fantail [*Rhipidura auerola*]
Black-naped Monarch [*Hypothymis azurea*]
Asian Paradise-Flycatcher [*Terpsiphone paradisi*]
Sri Lanka Blue Magpie [*Urocissa ornata*] - **Endemic**
House Crow [*Corvus splendens*]
Large-billed Crow [*Corvus macrorhynchos*]
Oriental Skylark [*Alauda gulgula*]
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark [*Eremopterix grisea*]
Jerdon's Bushlark [*Mirafra affinis*]
Sri Lanka (Red-rumped) Swallow [*Cercropis (daurica) hyperthra*]
Barn Swallow [*Hirundo rustica*]
Pacific Swallow [*Hirundo tahitica subfusca*]
Sri Lankan Swallow [*Cercropis hyperrrhythra*]
Bank Swallow [*Riparia riparia*] (**Common Sand Martin**)
Pale Sand Martin [*Riparia diluta*] (**Brown-Throated Martin**)
Dusky Crag Martin [*Ptyonoprogne concolor*]
Great Tit [*Parus major*]
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch [*Sitta frontalis*]
Yellow-browed Bulbul [*Acritillas indica*]
Black Bulbul [*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*]
Black-capped (Black-crested) Bulbul [*Pycnonotus m. melanicterus*] - **Endemic**
Red-vented Bulbul [*Pycnonotus cafer*]
White-browed Bulbul [*Pycnonotus luteolus*]
Yellow-eared Bulbul [*Pycnonotus penicillatus*] - **Endemic**
Greenish Warbler [*Phylloscopus trochiloides*]
Large-billed Leaf-Warbler [*Phylloscopus magnirostris*]
Blyth's Reed-Warbler [*Acrocephalus dumetorum*]
Oriental Reed-Warbler [*Acrocephalus orientalis*]

Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler [*Bradypterus palliseri*] - Endemic
Zitting Cisticola [*Cisticola juncidis*]
Common Tailorbird [*Orthotomus sutorius*]
Ashy Prinia [*Prinia socialis*]
Jungle Prinia [*Prinia sylvantica*]
Plain Prinia [*Prinia inornata*]
Rufescent Prinia [*Prinia rufescens*]
Yellow-eyed Babbler [*Chrysomma sinense*]
Oriental White-eye [*Zosterops palpebrosus*]
Sri Lanka White-eye [*Zosterops ceylonensis*] - Endemic
Brown-capped Babbler [*Pellorneum fuscicapillum*] - Endemic
Ashy-headed Laughingthrush [*Garrulax cinereifrons*] - Endemic
Tawny-bellied Babbler [*Dumetia hyperythra*]
Orange-billed Babbler [*Turdoides rufescens*] - Endemic
Yellow-billed Babbler [*Turdoides affinis*]
Sri Lanka Scimitar-Babbler [*Pomatorhinus melanurus*] - Endemic
Dark-fronted Babbler [*Rhopocichla atriceps*]
Asian Brown Flycatcher [*Muscicapa dauurica*] ([*latirostris*])
Brown-breasted Flycatcher [*Muscicapa muttui*]
Indian Robin [*Saxicoloides fulicata*]
Pied Bushchat [*Saxicola caprata*]
Common Scaly Thrush [*Zoothera dauma*]. The race *imbricate* on Sri Lanka sometimes considered an endemic.
Pied Thrush [*Zoothera wardii*]
Spot-winged Thrush [*Zoothera spiloptera*] - Endemic
Indian Blackbird [*Turdus simillinus*]
Oriental Magpie Robin [*Copsychus saularis*]
White-rumped Shama [*Copsychus malabaricus mallopercnus*]
Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher [*Cyornis tickelliae*]
Dull-blue Flycatcher [*Eumyias sordida*] - Endemic
Kashmir Flycatcher [*Ficedula subrubra*]
Indian Blue Robin [*Luscinia brunnea*]
Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush [*Myophonus blighi*] - Endemic
Sri Lanka Myna [*Gracula ptilogenys*] - Endemic
Southern Hill Myna [*Gracula indica*]
Common Myna [*Acridotheres tristis*] (Indian)
Brahminy Starling [*Sturnus pagodarum*]

White-faced Starling [*Sturnus senex*] - **Endemic**
Rosy Starling [*Pastor roseus*]
Golden-fronted Leafbird [*Chloropsis aurifrons*]
Jerdon's Leafbird [*Chloropsis jerdoni*]
Legge's Flowerpecker [*Dicaeum vincens*] (**White-throated**) - **Endemic**
Pale-billed Flowerpecker [*Dicaeum erythrorhynchus*]
Purple-rumped Sunbird [*Nectarinia zeylonica*]
Long-billed Sunbird [*Cinnyris lotenius*]
Purple Sunbird [*Cinnyris asiatica*]
Blyth's Pipit [*Anthus godlewskii*]
Paddyfield Pipit [*Anthus rufulus*] (**Oriental**)
Richard's Pipit [*Anthus richardi*]
Grey Wagtail [*Motacilla cinerea*]
Western Yellow Wagtail [*Motacilla flava*]
Forest Wagtail [*Dendronanthus indicus*]
House Sparrow [*Passer domesticus*]
Baya Weaver [*Ploceus philippinus*]
Indian Silverbill [*Euodice malabarica*]
Black-throated Munia [*Lonchura kelaarti*]
Scaly-breasted Munia [*Lonchura punctulata*]
White-rumped Munia [*Lonchura striata*]
Chestnut Mannikin [*Lonchura atricapilla*]

The following are (H) heard only:

Banded Bay Cuckoo [*Cacomantis sonneratii*]
Brown Hawk Owl [*Ninox scutulata*]