



Myanmar Tour Report

23rd January - 6th February 2018

Tour Highlights

Because of rarity, excellent views or simply a group favourite; E = Endemic to Myanmar

- Rufous-bellied Woodpecker
- Darjeeling Woodpecker
- Streak-throated Woodpecker
- Black-tailed Crake
- Black Baza
- White-eyed Buzzard
- Himalayan Griffon
- (Burmese) Collared Dove (E)
- Silver-breasted Broadbill
- Hooded Treepie (E)
- Jerdon's Minivet (E)
- Grey-sided Thrush
- Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher
- Large Niltava
- White-tailed Stonechat
- Jerdon's Bushchat
- Collared Myna
- (Burmese) Vinous-breasted Starling (E)
- White-browed Nuthatch (E)
- Black-bibbed Tit
- Burmese Tit (E)
- Davison's (Stripe-throated) Bulbul (E)
- Ayeyarwady Bulbul (E)
- White-throated Bulbul
- Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler
- Aberrant Bush Warbler
- Chestnut-headed Tesia
- Tickell's Leaf Warbler
- Striped Laughingthrush
- Brown-capped Laughingthrush
- Assam Laughingthrush
- Crimson-faced Liocichla
- Mount Victoria Babax (E)
- Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler
- Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler
- Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler
- Chin Hills Wren Babbler
- Green Shrike Babbler
- Black-eared Shrike Babbler
- Rusty-fronted Barwing
- Streak-throated Barwing
- Rusty-capped Fulvetta
- Striated Babbler
- White-throated Babbler (E)
- Spot-breasted Parrotbill
- Burmese Bushlark (E)
- Long-billed Pipit
- Yellow-breasted Greenfinch
- Black-headed Greenfinch
- Spot-winged Grosbeak

LEADERS: Nick Upton & Htay Ngwe

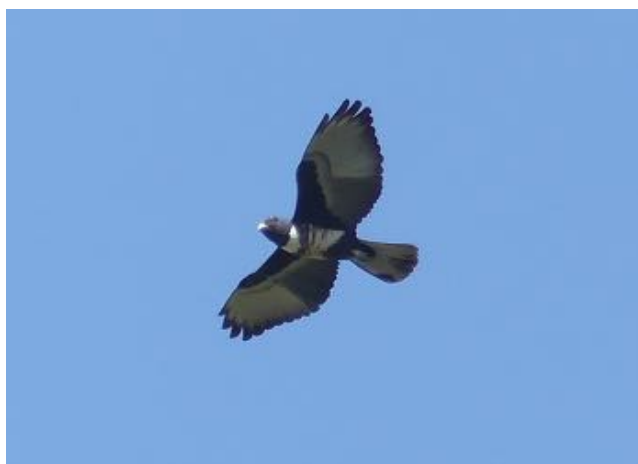
SUMMARY:

This list of highlight species above only tells a small part of how enjoyable the birding on our tour to Myanmar was. Not only was there quality of birds but also a good abundance, although birds were quite shy, allowing us to see most species more than once. We found all of the endemics that we targeted which is now up to a total of 11, depending on which taxonomy you use, and a very high proportion of our other target species which included many regional endemics. Beginning in Yangon we visited nearby Hlawga National Park where we found Davison's and Ayeyarwady Bulbuls before taking a short flight to the proposed UNESCO world heritage site of Bagan. Birding in the dry habitats in the plains scattered with ancient temples we were delighted with excellent views of Jerdon's Minivet, Burmese Bushlark and Hooded Treepie, also taking a boat trip along the Ayeyarwady river to see White-tailed Stonechat, Sand Lark and Striated Babbler. Moving on from Bagan, by car, we spent four and a half days at Mount Victoria, where beautiful forest and scenery at a variety of altitudes allowed us to find Mount Victoria Babax, White-browed Nuthatch and Burmese Bushtit along with many other exciting Asian species and regional endemics. Transferring to Kalaw we took advantage in the change of geography to add Black-tailed Crake, Streak-throated Woodpecker and Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler to our list birding within some very pleasant scenery. Our final destination was Inle Lake where nearby we found Collared Myna and then Jerdon's Bushchat at the lake itself, enjoying our very pleasant accommodation and finding new birds right up to our departure. Myanmar provides some of the most pleasant and productive birding in Southeast Asia along with an ever-growing number of endemics due to taxonomic changes. Myanmar is one of the most under-visited birding destinations in Southeast Asia but one that deserves far more attention as it gives birders an excellent chance to see many species that are either absent or hard to find elsewhere.

Days 1-2; 22-23rd January

With flights arriving from various places our meet-up in Yangon was well-coordinated by our local agent, Saw, who met us all at the airport, from our variously timed flights, and got us to our comfortable hotel in town. Those of us who arrived in time enjoyed meeting over dinner and being introduced to our local guide, Htay Ngwe, while the final two additions to our group arrived late and would join us at breakfast the next morning to make up the full group of eight.

Day 3; 24th January



Our first day of birding in Myanmar was to be a gentle introduction to the birds of the region as well as looking for the first of the country's endemic taxons at Hlawga National Park a little to the north of Yangon. An early start and breakfast along the way ensured we did not get caught up in Yangon's traffic and we were birding just outside the park gates before opening time in open country with scattered trees and copses. On arrival I heard the call of a **Sakhalin Leaf Warbler** from the densest nearby copse of trees and after a little call playing we all got good views of this bird. Separating this

species from Pale-legged Leaf warbler on call is not easy but I get plenty of practice where I live in Thailand,

so was confident of this bird's identification. After this it was time to see some of the commoner birds of the area including a nice **Common Iora, Red-vented Bulbuls, Black Drongo, Ashy Woodswallow, Jungle Myna, Red Collared Dove** and a **Shikra** all sitting out in the morning sun; all common birds, but nice for everyone to get familiar with them straight away. However, our first Myanmar specialities were not far away and the first to appear was **Ayeyarwady Bulbul** which is actually a common bird throughout much of the country, but our first of the trip was obviously nice to see. This split from Streak-eared Bulbul is rather a dull bird in fact and only really differs from this species by its red eye, rather than bluish, although there are some other very minor plumage differences. However, its elevation to a Myanmar endemic made it the first of our major targets to be seen; a nice feeling. Nearby we also added **Yellow-browed Warbler, Two-barred Warbler, White-rumped Munia, Ashy Drongo, Black-crested Bulbul** and **Oriental Honey-buzzard** but our second target species gave us quite some trouble but eventually everyone got good views of the pale-eyed **Davison's Bulbul**, a split from Stripe-throated Bulbul. While trying to get good views of this we also found a nice **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** before starting a walk into the park, through some nice open woodland and grassland areas.

With a slight change of habitat came a change of birds and a couple of lovely **Black-naped Orioles** welcomed us to the woodland from the canopy before revealing themselves. **Asian Brown Flycatcher** then **Verditer Flycatcher** were next and a **Thick-billed Warbler** gave itself up in the undergrowth although it took until the third bird before everyone got a good view of this species. A few raptors were up and soaring by now with a **Western Osprey, Black Kite**, a few **Oriental Honey-buzzards** and one of my favourite raptors – **Black Baza**. The Baza was kind enough to perch in a tree for 'scope views as well as circling close by; fantastic. As we continued our walk things began to get much hotter but birds were still active with a **Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Black-headed Bulbul, Bronzed Drongo** and a small party of **Rufescent Prinias** all showing themselves. Plenty of **Green Bee-eaters** and a few **Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters** added colour to the morning as did an **Indian Roller** before we heard the call of **Plaintive Cuckoo** which was followed quickly by sighting this attractive bird. A little further on we reached a small lake with emergent vegetation which held a few waterbirds including **Asian Openbill, Little Grebe, Purple Heron, White-throated Kingfisher, Common Moorhen** and **Bronze-winged Jacana** but by this time it was getting too hot to be out in open areas so we retraced our steps back to the van and headed into the most wooded part of the park taking a short walk past a lake with wooded fringes to our lunch venue at the lakeside. Here we found **Oriental Darter, Black-crowned Night Heron** and a pair of **Spot-billed Pelicans** of extremely dubious provenance although a **Coppersmith Barbet** at point-blank range was a nice sighting.

After a very pleasant al fresco lunch we made a couple more stops in the park, finding more birds in spite of the afternoon heat. **Green Sandpiper, Red-wattled Lapwing**, large numbers of **Lesser Whistling Duck** and some reintroduced **Green Peafowl** were found at a wet area along with Sambar deer and lots of Long-tailed Macaques but a bit our last stop took us to some secondary woodland where we found a few species forming mixed flocks. Several **Rosy Minivets** were the highlight of these flocks but we also saw **Black-naped Monarch, White-rumped Shama, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** and a very bright male **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher**.

With our main targets seen well we began our short journey back to Yangon where most of us paid a late afternoon visit to the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, the most sacred Buddhist site in Myanmar (Keith successfully revisited the airport to be reunited with his luggage). Although there were some misgivings about not birding in the afternoon in reality this is a sight that would have been foolish to miss. The sheer size of the monument alone impressed us all and the amazing amount of gold alongside hundreds of locals paying their respects left us not really knowing which way to look. Fortunately Saw came along with us to

explain anything that needed explaining for those who had questions while others of us just admired the visual impact. Having enjoyed this we took a short drive back to our hotel for a shower before taking dinner in a restaurant that gave us a superb view of the city at night as well as some great food to end a good first day.

Day 4; 25th January

We were up fairly early to catch a flight to Bagan. This all went according to plan and after a pleasant flight we were straight into our bus and off birding around the temples before it became hot. The habitat was rather strange, weedy fields with areas of scrub and succulent plants, best described as semi-savanna; very dry and arid although covered in thin vegetation, much of it seeming like abandoned farmland. All of this surrounded huge, ancient temples over a wide area but we concentrated on an area centred on three large temples and over the course of the morning we were to see a good number of species including excellent



views of many **Burmese Bushlarks**; no problems with that one, another common endemic. This was shortly followed by **Burmese Collared Dove** (split from Eurasian Collared Dove by some, not by others) perched on top of a small bush and **Ayeyarwady Bulbuls** everywhere we looked. These endemic birds are easy! Well, actually not so easy as all that as our most anticipated targets were the lovely little Jerdon's Minivet and Hooded Treepie and despite searching some regular areas for them we did not have any luck. Oh well, we needed something to look at tomorrow! In the meantime our walk turned up

lots of **Yellow-streaked Warblers**, **Green Bee-eaters** in abundance, several beautiful **Burmese Shrikes**, some handsome **Plain-backed Sparrows**, **Indian Roller**, **Eurasian Hoopoe** and a fly-past **Large Hawk Cuckoo**. Things started to heat up but the birds kept coming and it was a pleasant walk as we kept adding more species to our list with a very close **Black-winged Kite** in flight, more **Grey-breasted Prinias** than we knew what to do with, an initially skulky **Dusky Warbler** which gave itself away surprisingly easily and eventually a party of endemic **White-throated Babblers** that we all got good enough views of but were to see at much closer quarters tomorrow. The heat was building, the sweat was running and Kevin was covered up like a desert nomad so it was received well when Htay announced that we were heading for lunch at a nice restaurant alongside the Ayeyarwaddy river. However, on the walk back to the van we came across a large group of **Vinous-breasted Starlings** feeding at a rubbish dump. Being very familiar with this species in Thailand I was surprised that I barely recognized this bird at first with the subspecies in Myanmar being noticeably smaller, obviously different in plumage and having a different bill structure/colour. I noticed that Handbook of the Birds of the World have already split this taxon as **Burmese Myna**; come on IOC, catch up, we want another endemic species!

Lunch was delicious and cooling, with a wonderful view along the Ayeyarwaddy river which, with its numerous sand bars, was begging to be scanned with a telescope. This we before and after eating finding some nice new birds for the day including good numbers of colourful **Ruddy Shelduck**, a few **Indian Spot-billed Ducks** and, best of all, a pair of smart **River Lapwings** on the near shore. We were not expecting to see many waders on this trip so it was a pleasant bit of variety to be able to pick out a few species here including a **Common Greenshank**, several **Common Sandpipers**, 2 **Green Sandpipers** feeding alongside a few **Temminck's Stints**, which was nice for size comparison, and a good number of **Little Ringed Plovers**.

With our first encounter with the river over, giving us a glimpse of what we could expect on our boat trip scheduled for later in the day, we went to check into our hotel for a welcome afternoon break, but not before it was mentioned that a puppet show was scheduled for later in the day. Surely we were not going to waste good birding time on a Burmese version of Punch and Judy? Contumacious birders were placated by the promise that it was just dinner-time entertainment and no birding time would be lost – phew! The afternoon rest and the puppet show controversy re-invigorated us to the point that there was a positive charge as we boarded a pleasant river boat, at about 3pm, with a rejuvenated Bob leading the scrum while an amusing young lady did her best to charm us into buying some of her bracelets, although a certain Mr No-name left her assured that he was not interested! Well, boat trips are usually relaxed affairs and this was one of the most relaxing ones and as we chugged along the river we were able to spot species such as **(Eastern) Great Egret**, **Common Kingfisher**, both *govinda* and *lineatus* subspecies of **Black Kite**, a lovely hovering **Pied Kingfisher**, more **Little Ringed Plovers** as well as a few **Kentish Plovers** and a whole load of very pale passerines running around on the sand???. As we got closer to some of the sandy banks we could see clearly that these little ghostly shapes were in fact **Sand Larks** and they were surprisingly abundant although we were to get much better views later.



Although the boat trip was nice we were all pleased to be able to disembark as we moored at a steep, sandy bank where we immediately came across one of our target birds – **White-tailed Stonechat** taking a bath. Very nice views indeed which were followed up with both male and female at close range once we had got to the top of the bank but our attention was immediately grabbed by small flocks of **Plain-throated Martins** buzzing around us as well as a few **Red-rumped Swallows** in the mix. The late afternoon light was good and the temperature cooling down which prompted the birds to start appearing thick and fast. Several male **Red Avadavats** down to a few feet away were real jewels while **Zitting Cisticola**, **Oriental Skylark**, **Plain Prinia**, **Baya Weaver**, **Greater Coucal**, **Green Bee-eaters**, **Brown Shrike** and **Pied Bushchat** all kept us amused while we searched for our main target in this patchy, riverine farmland: **Striated Babbler**. Htay took us to every spot he would normally see them but they were not there. More worryingly the habitat was not there either, with all long grasses/reeds cleared and nothing but freshly-planted crops to be seen. An **Eastern Marsh**



Harrier was a nice distraction but time was starting to run low and with still no sign of the babbler we needed a plan and one was soon decided upon. We would walk to a distant patch of likely-looking habitat, walking along the sandy areas close to the river so that we could get everybody good views of **Sand Lark** along the way. Although the pace was a little fast for some we got close to the patch of long grasses that we had focused on and, as a group, more slowly walked close to it. As we approached the call of **Striated Babbler** was heard and a bit of a panic ensued as we tried to spot the birds before they eluded us. David, Kevin and Keith were the first to get on to the birds, having climbed to the top of the bank, only to tell the rest of us that the **Striated Babbler** had flown some distance across a field. Quickly up the slope, ‘scope

out, the babblers were quickly re-found perched out in the open on a small bush for everyone to admire. I love it when a plan comes together. With this success and the day drawing to a close we began a slow walk back to the boat taking time out to get superb views of **Sand Lark** down to a range of just a few metres, quite a wonderful experience and one which pushed this species into contention for bird of the trip in some people's eyes. There were also *leucopsis* and *ocularis* subspecies of **White Wagtail** to conclude the birding.

The slow boat back with a nice sunset as a backdrop concluded with a shout from someone who knew us by name, welcoming us as a long lost friend. It was the girl selling bracelets and I decided to buy a few for her sheer persistence and amusing conversation. By now our appetites were up and an excellent dinner was very welcome but of course there was also the not so small matter of the puppet show. With visions of sock puppets, Bill 'n' Ben, Punch & Judy or, at best, the Muppets we were all in fact mesmerized by the show that accompanied our meal. In fact so distracted were some people that gustatory activities ceased mid-chew. What we saw was a traditional marionette show with a whole host of characters doing all sorts of stuff that we mostly did not understand but the control of the puppets was incredible in its speed and dexterity. When one puppet threw a ball which was caught by another we were all left reviewing our opinions on puppetry. This proved that there was no shame in enjoying a bit of dinner time entertainment but we were all looking forward to some more good birds and a full day birding around the temples of Bagan tomorrow.

Day 5; 26th January

It was surprisingly chilly as we enjoyed breakfast in the garden of our hotel and we were soon heading back to the temple we birded around yesterday morning as Htay was convinced we could find our target birds there. It was very nice to be able to overlook the temple-strewn landscape as it became light and Htay was proven correct quite quickly with a **Hooded Treepie** spotted perched out in the morning sun for a great start to the day. We were able to watch this bird for quite some time as it foraged very low in the bushes, a real treat as this one was by no means guaranteed. As we looked for our next target we saw many of the same species as the previous day including **Burmese Bushlark**, **Burmese Collared Dove**, **Vinous-breasted Starling**, **Burmese Shrike** and plenty of **White-throated Babblers** as well as a surprising number of **Oriental Honey-buzzards**. However, it was Jerdon's Minivet that we were really after and we split up to comb the area for them without success although we did find a calling **Tickell's Leaf Warbler** in the canopy of the low trees to compare to the many **Yellow-streaked Warblers** which were mostly at ground level.



Having exhausted this area Htay took us to another likely spot, about a 20 minute drive away and set among even more beautiful temples scattered across the dry plains. A new spot but mostly the same birds at first with an exceptional view of **Tickell's Leaf Warbler** the best of the early sightings but it was not too long later that some of us got a flash of color that got us excited. As it quickly moved from one tree to another some of us saw enough of it to be able to know that it was exactly what we were after: **Jerdon's Minivet**.

Unfortunately not good enough for anyone to tick but we staked the area out expecting it to re-emerge, but it did not! Where did it go? Once again we split up to cover more area, worried that we would lose the birds but some good spotting by David gave us

another chance to get everyone on to this stunning little bird. Over the course of the next half an hour or so we got ever-increasingly good views of at least 3 **Jerdon's Minivets**, watching them spend much of their time in the ground-level vegetation which is very curious for a Minivet but typical of this species. This was very satisfying and we spent the rest of the morning birding without pressure adding a female **Siberian Rubythroat** to our list, finding a couple of **Spotted Owlets** being mobbed by a number of species including another **Hooded Treepie**, **Grey-breasted Prinias**, **Common Iora** and a **Freckle-breasted Woodpecker**. One of the nice things here was that many of the birds we were seeing were common, so that we had the opportunity to see them well but as we walked back to the bus we saw the only **Himalayan Buzzard** of the day and a party of **Yellow-eyed Babblers**, a surprisingly attractive bird.

Lunch was taken at another nice restaurant where we had some more great food and settled down for an afternoon break. Some of us went to look at a very impressive nearby temple while others took the opportunity to sit in the shade. All of us, however, got defining views of the many tame **White-throated Babblers** here.

The afternoon session began with a very hot walk around another large temple in search of Lagger Falcon. Earthquakes within the previous few years had seriously damaged most temples and the human activity in repairing them had resulted in the previously dependable falcons abandoning their post so this species managed to confound us. **Purple Sunbird** gave us a bit of colour and as we were looking at a group of small birds I noticed something unusual ; was that a Booted Warbler? Or perhaps Syke's Warbler? Surely not, neither bird was in Robson's Birds of Southeast Asia, although I knew that a Booted Warbler had been found in Thailand quite recently. The bird showed very well and a few of us were able to get good photos which later confirmed that it was indeed a **Booted Warbler** a potential first for Myanmar although I was informed later that one had perhaps been found previously, so we have to be happy with a second record for the country. Other than more **Burmese Shrikes**, **Plain-backed Sparrows**, **Burmese Bushlarks** and our first **Chinese Pond Heron** (lots more of those later in the trip though) things were a bit quiet. We tried a few other places for Lagger Falcon but all with no success but we visited one particular field where we managed to find and get very good views of our only **Long-billed Pipit** of the trip.

With this success we finished a little early to enjoy a shower before another really good dinner washed down with generous helpings of Myanmar Beer and to the accompaniment of another show. This time it was a cultural dancing show which was enjoyed by all although not quite up to the standards of the, by now, legendary puppet show.

Day 6; 27th January

After another nice breakfast in the garden, while watching White-throated Babblers stealing from the cereal bowl, we began our drive towards Mount Victoria. The journey was to be a long one, mostly due to the large number of birding stops on very hot and dry locations along a dusty road. Each stop only turned up a few birds but by the time we had reached our destination we had racked up quite a number of species, many of which were not seen again on the trip. Pride of place went to the first stop with a splendid view of a perched **White-eyed Buzzard**, that allowed the photographers among us to get some nice shots, but also included throughout the day **Eurasian Wryneck**, **Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Lineated Barbet**, **Alexandrine Parakeet**, **Blossom-headed Parakeet**, **Crested Treeswift**, **White-browed Fantail**, **Asian Barred Owlet**, **Crested Serpent Eagle**, **Crested Goshawk**, **Small Minivet**, **Golden-fronted Leafbird** and **Thick-billed Warbler**, so lots of good stuff even though it had felt like a very "bitty" day and getting quite dusty.

The drive had given us a good overview of rural Myanmar in which we had enjoyed some great local food at lunch time, but we were happy to get to our comfortable accommodation, eat dinner and enjoy the evening's entertainment of Bob telling us stories from the underworld of Bedford; not quite marionette-twirling or cultural dancing but sometimes you have to put up with less to feel like you have earned the birds.

Day 7; 28th January

We were all very keen this morning, looking forward to four full days of birding at this much-anticipated location. A good breakfast was had by all before making the drive up to some of the highest areas of the forest for dawn. On arrival there was a dreadful wind blowing which made things look less than positive; there is usually one thing guaranteed to kill forest birding stone dead, and that thing is wind. Although the wind kept up all day we managed to find some areas a little protected and it did not stop us from having an excellent day of birding at all, which was very surprising. Things started slowly with the first bird being one that would prove to be one of the most abundant: **Grey Sibia**. Although it is not a colourful bird it is one with a lot of character although we would find over the next few days that it is remarkably good at making birders think that it is something else! Our first flock of small birds contained **White-browed Fulvetta**, a **Blyth's Leaf Warbler** and, briefly, a **Green Shrike-babbler** followed shortly after by a couple of **Rusty-fronted Barwings** foraging close to the road. Things were getting going! With the sun beginning to light up the forest the birds started to come quickly with a pair of **Brown-capped Laughingthrushes** by the side of the road after which our attention was drawn by the first of a number of handsome **Rufous-gorgetted Flycatchers** and then a male **Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker** on the top of a sunlit tree. Soon after a Nuthatch was spotted which created excitement but it turned out to be **Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** rather than the endemic White-browed Nuthatch that we were hoping for. **Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** proved to be another of the commonest birds on the mountain along with **Buff-barred Warbler** and the wonderful **Fire-tailed Sunbird**, both of which we saw our first of quickly after. The forest was very beautiful and the birding was starting to become excellent with hardly a moment between new species. The first of several **Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers** came along soon, a very smart bird indeed, as well as a **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker**, a nice male **Slaty-backed Flycatcher** and a magical **Yellow-bellied Fantail** flycatching in the shade of the mossy forest.



With the vehicles following us it was time for a coffee break, which was very welcome, but as we were thinking about a second cup there was a burst of bird activity with female **Blue-fronted Redstarts**, a male **Chestnut-bellied Rockthrush**, which turned out to be fairly common but no less beautiful for that, **Ashy-throated Warbler**, **Whiskered Yuhina** and, suddenly, one of the most anticipated birds of the trip; a pair of stunning **White-browed Nuthatches**. A pair of these birds, endemic to Mt. Victoria, gave us a great display, foraging along mossy branches at close range for ten minutes or more; fantastic, that's exactly

what we came for. We were going through something of a purple patch here and soon after it continued with the discovery of a pair of cute **Burmese Bushtits** which came to investigate us before moving back into the forest. So, two of our endemic target birds in quick succession, and both really great little birds; Mount Victoria was already living up to its reputation. We continued to descend along the road but covering no

great distance, finding a single **Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon** and many more of the species seen throughout the morning once again. We were ready for lunch when it was called but things were put on hold as we discovered a group of birds which included **Blue-winged Minla**, stunning **Chestnut-tailed Minla**, **Rufous-winged Fulvetta** and cute **Red-tailed Minlas**. These birds formed a very nice group and we took time to enjoy them before eventually enjoying a great packed lunch of fried rice, noodles and spicy relish.

The weather was lovely, the food was good and the birding excellent so it felt great to be on the mountain and take a little time to relax. Everyone's enthusiasm got the better of them though and it was soon after that we began again with a huge **Himalayan Griffon** swooping over us moments later – what a monster! Predictably things were a little slower but we added **Striated Bulbul**, some **Stripe-throated Yuhinas** and a nice pair of **Streak-throated Barwings**. After a slow patch we found a small fruiting bush being frequented by **Whiskered Yuhinas**, **Red-tailed Minlas** and a calling male **Green Shrike-babbler**. A flock of Black-throated Bushtits provided a burst of excitement and a brief view of **Grey-hooded Warbler** for a few of us concluded our session on the high areas of the mountain as we made the decision to drive downhill a bit to a slightly different habitat.

Entering slightly drier and more open forest with the late afternoon sunshine on us there were different species to see with **Crested Finchbill**, a perched **Mountain Hawk Eagle**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** and after some effort, **Streak-breasted Scimitar-babbler**, finally emerging from the thick foliage. The sun was dipping so we again moved downhill, finding **Blue Whistlingthrush** along the way, to the edge of the pine forest, which was still sunlit. Once again moving to a different habitat provided different species and we quickly added **Bar-tailed Treecreeper**, **Buff-throated Warbler** and **Olive-backed Pipit** and with things quickly getting cold, that was about it for the day.

Day 8; 29th January

We started the day where we had finished the previous one among giant pine trees with the sun rising as we waited. Htay assured us that this was a proven strategy for seeing **Mount Victoria Babax** and he was absolutely correct with three of them emerging on to the road to feed alongside some **Brown-capped Laughingthrushes**. Seen in detail like this these were both very nice birds indeed and a superb start to the day. The call of **Spot-breasted Parrotbill** was the next excitement and the group quickly came down the road towards where I had found them to connect with these superb birds. The sun was up by now and it was to be a lovely day with far less wind than the day before and a short walk up the road turned up the first **Black-bibbed Tits** high up in the pine canopy. This was turning into a very good morning already and it was not long after that we had superb views of stunning **Assam Laughingthrushes** in the sunshine as the climbed along the low mossy branches in front of us only to be replaced by our second sighting of **Burmese Bushtit**. A further splash of color was supplied by **Long-tailed Minivet**, **Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher** and **Chestnut-bellied Rockthrush** while the duller **Buff-throated Warbler** was abundant in the undergrowth.

With all the major targets in this area seen well we moved uphill just a little in search of Yellow-billed Blue Magpie which we could not find but a bit of Collared Owlet call attracted a lot of small birds including a very friendly **Aberrant Bush Warbler**, **Black-bibbed Tit**, **Burmese Tit**, **Grey-chinned Minivet**, **Verditer Flycatcher**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** and **White-browed Fulvetta** for excellent views of all of them. The morning was also pretty good for those who like raptors with a great view of **Black Eagle**, a **Shikra**, a **Besra** and **Crested Goshawk** all in the space of an hour or so.

After this it was back further uphill to look for some species not seen the day before. Things were strangely slower than before although more views of **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** and several more **White-browed Nuthatches** were very welcome. We saw many of the birds from the previous day in fact but we really only

added a female **Black-headed Shrike-babbler** before lunch but it did not matter, it was all good birding and a very successful morning. We had another nice lunch in the field before continuing down the road through moist forest running into some really good birding with **Mountain Bulbul**, some **Black Bultuls** and flocks of small birds that included **Short-billed Minivet**, **Yellow-browed Tit**, **Green Shrike-babbler** and a superb **Black-eared Shrike-babbler**, a bird I never grow tired of seeing. As if this was not enough we started to hear the call of a **Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler** and even though it gave us quite the run-around eventually we all got good views of this little gem, blasting out its song from the undergrowth. In the late afternoon we found a big fruiting tree which was filled with both **Eye-browed** and **Grey-sided Thrushes** and a couple of **Great Barbets** while in the undergrowth there was **Golden Babbler** to tease out to conclude the day.

Back at our accommodation we enjoyed another good dinner and, after some partaking of Myanmar Beer, everyone was loquacious, entering into jovial conversation worthy of the best of raconteurs.

Day 9; 30th January

We started with a slightly later breakfast, enjoying the extra 37 seconds we gained by beginning the day not quite so high up the mountain. Today was to involve a long walk through a variety of forest types and so it resulted in a lot of interesting sightings. Although long, the general trend of the walk was downhill and with the vehicles following us we were able to take regular coffee/tea breaks along with accompanying biscuits, although I am still trying to track down who stole my last jammy-dodger. Beginning in the pine forest we started with many of the same birds from the day before but it is always nice to get to know the birds rather than just see them all once. We got point-blank views of **White-browed Fulvetta** and some nice photos and our second encounter with **Streak-throated Barwing** as well as more **Black-bibbed Tits**, **Buff-throated Warblers** and another look at **Mount Victoria Babax**. Birds really began to come to life as the sun hit the hillside and some woodpecker action got us all excited with **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker** quickly followed by our first and only **Darjeeling Woodpecker** of the trip, although several **Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers** were becoming quite familiar by now.

Both the colorful **Assam Laughingthrush** and **Brown-capped Laughingthrush** were nice to see again but a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** was not easy to get onto although there would be a few more throughout the day. The size of the pine trees along here was very impressive and looking up into them it was not easy to spot small birds but that is what we found ourselves doing when the faint call of **Yellow-breasted Greenfinch** was heard and eventually we got excellent views of this lovely little bird with more to follow shortly later. Here we also saw **Bar-tailed Treecreeper** and eventually got to grips with a singing **Blyth's Leaf Warbler**. It can be surprising at times how many new birds can be seen when covering old ground. We had seen plenty



Flowerpecker.

of female **Blue-fronted Redstarts** but finally high in the pines we found a nice male, with another party of **Burmese Bushtits** lower down and then a new species in the form of a couple of **Little Buntings** flushed from the undergrowth. **Fire-tailed Sunbird** was, by now, a bird we had seen lots of but **Green-tailed Sunbird** was on many people's wanted list so we paid close attention to every sunbird we heard. David, Kevin and Keith managed to find one quite early on but it took until late morning before everyone got nice views of this little beauty which was accompanied by a **Yellow-bellied**

The pine forest started to give way to a more mixed forest type with more broadleaved trees and a denser understorey, but just before we made this transition a flock of **Asian House Martins** were spotted flying overhead and a lengthy attempt at seeing **Maroon Oriole** resulted in sunlit flight views for all and brief perched views for some. By the roadside, as we entered the new forest type, there were quite large numbers of thrushes feeding which, typically, flew up into the trees at the first sight of us. Still, it was easy enough to get onto some of them and it turned out that both **Eyebrowed** and **Grey-sided Thrushes** were in the flock. But then it was time for a very welcome lunch break with what seemed like an endless supply of fried rice, noodles and spicy condiments. Well, at least we thought it was time for a break but LLLL went off down a track and found a **Chestnut-headed Tesia**! Everyone went after it but only a few of us actually saw the bird, still there would be more opportunities later.

Our post digestive walk continued downhill, passing through patches of mixed, moist and pine forest meaning that we continued to encounter a wide range of birds, including many of those we had started to become accustomed to. **Yellow-browed Tit** was a nice catch-up bird for many people and a pair of **Vivid Niltavas** in the treetops were very welcome too. We spent quite some time playing with several **Chestnut-headed Tesias** until everyone had satisfying views and it seemed quite strange that they were so very common all of a sudden. **Stripe-throated Yuhina**, **Large Cuckooshrike** and **Grey-chinned Minivet** were all nice birds to see again and as the light started to fade we added our first **Green-backed Tit** to our tally but with legs growing weary and the shadows beginning to fall we called an end to proceedings and drove back to the accommodation.

After another great day's birding dinner was once again enjoyable not least for the tall tales being told and amusing anecdotes worthy of the best of deipnosophists, reflecting the good mood of the group.

Day 10; 31st January

With much of our time having spent much higher up the mountain it was now time to target some of the birds that live in the forest patches and mixed farmland close to where we were staying. We were driven a very short distance to our starting place, a spot which overlooked some rough farmland and forest patches, which Htay told us was a good spot for Striped Laughingthrush. We waited but nothing much happened so we amused ourselves with **Flavescent Bulbul**, **Blue-throated Barbet** and a **Chinese Leaf Warbler** before the laughingthrushes were heard. It took a fair bit of time and patience before these skulkers showed themselves but when they did they were surprisingly attractive. Walking on up the road a pair of **Russet Sparrows** were the next bird of interest until we heard our main target; **Chin Hills Wren Babbler**. We had to go up a steep slope to look for the origin of the call and the bird was found quickly but only some of the group got restricted views. We tried hard to get better views but could not but along the way we saw **Blyth's Shrike Babbler** and a flock of colourful **Silver-eared Mesias**.

Back on the main (and flatter) trail another skulking species was heard, this time **Brown-flanked Bush Warbler**. Well, this is one from a group of birds that are famous for being as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel so we did not have high hopes, however, with just a short bit of call playback the bird proved itself a rather irascible character and in its agitated state gave us the type of view we could only have dreamed of. Ok, it is just a small, brown warbler but everybody in the group was experienced enough to know that we had been blessed with this one. We continued our walk along a wide but anfractuous track along the forest edge with quite a bit of bird activity including **Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher**, **Grey-hooded Warbler**, a female **Orange-bellied Leafbird**, a couple of **Claudia's Leaf Warblers** and a superb male **Mrs Gould's Sunbird**. For some reason **Nepal Fulvetta** was unusually shy but we finally got everyone excellent sightings of **Crested Finchbill**, in fact they suddenly became common at one point. A tree full of **Common Hill Mynas** was our cue to turn back but the birding wasn't done as we managed to tease a male

Large Niltava out from his shady lair along the course of a dry stream and get nice views of an **Eyebrowed Thrush** on the track.

It had been a very good morning but there was more promised in the same area after lunch. It was nice to retreat to our rooms after lunch, relax on the Chesterfield and enjoy champagne delivered by a butler summoned by the ring of a bell, which just goes to show how I dozed off and started dreaming before being ready for our afternoon session.

Of course everyone was keen and we actually went out again a bit too early, but better to be early than late. Things were a bit slow to start with but we were after quality rather than quantity. Around a small pool of water on the forest edge we heard the calls of **Rusty-capped Fulvetta** and then proceeded to embark in one of those protracted hunts for a skulking bird that takes forever. Actually some of us got glimpses here and there and instead of flogging a dead horse we repeatedly looked at other things before going back to the fulvettas which eventually showed very well and provided another of those surprise moments when a small brown bird actually turned out to be rather handsome. Other species that filled in the time included **Stripe-breasted Woodpecker** and **Blyth's Shrike Babbler**. With the day starting to come to a close we still had not obtained good views of **Chin Hills Wren Babbler**, having heard only one in the morning. Well, suddenly they were calling from the undergrowth all around, not that it made them easy to see. In fact it took a long time before some of the group got good views but at least half were not in the right place at the right time. Htay told us that we should try along the road and he was right, suddenly they were in the undergrowth, on twigs, next to the road and we obtained incredible views of this tiny little bird as it popped in and out of view as if struck by St Vitus's dance making the quality of LLLL's photo of it very impressive. Walking back the few hundred metres to our accommodation everyone was in high spirits after our success and once again we enjoyed a good dinner, beer and conversation exuding good humour and bonhomie.

Day 11; 1st February



With this being the day of departure from Mount Victoria it made sense to spend our morning in the areas close to our accommodation, particularly with one much-desired species still to see. Walking uphill, along the road from our accommodation we saw many of the, by-now, familiar species but the distant sound of **Spot-winged Grosbeak** made us alert and it did not take long to find these lovely birds feeding on a bare tree on a nearby ridge. Revisiting the look-out from yesterday we saw **Striped Laughingthrush** again, a male **Russet Sparrow** and a distant pair of **Grey Treepies** but we

did not stay long, instead walking along an indistinct trail where we gained superb views of three **Streak-breasted Scimitar Bblers** that came very close to us; really beautiful. It so happened that this trail took us right under the tree in which the **Spot-winged Grosbeaks** were feeding and we were able to take some photographs. While doing so a soft noise was heard which sounded interesting; in fact it sounded like a *Liocichla* and a short wait resulted in nice views of a group of **Red-faced Liocichlas** which were, predictably, superb birds.

Finding our main target so quickly left us the remaining few hours to see what we could find without any pressure. A pair of **Black-throated Prinias** showed briefly and there were more **Black-throated Bushtits**, **Green-backed Tits** and a very good look at **Grey-hooded Warbler**. However, things were much quieter than the previous day and we walked back to our guesthouse to be ready to leave. On reaching the accommodation we noticed a thrush on the wall and we were shocked when we looked at it in detail to find a **Song Thrush**. This bird was totally unexpected and turned out to be not only the first record for Myanmar but the first record for the whole of Southeast Asia: incredible. Also around the accommodation there was a **Grey-sided Thrush**, **Chestnut-bellied Rockthrush** and a **Grey Treepie**.

After packing the vehicles we drove off and stopped for an excellent lunch in a small town along the way. We also made a late stop to break the journey and to look for White-rumped Falcon, unfortunately to no reward and then back to Bagan where we reacquainted ourselves with **White-throated Babbler**, **Burmese Bushlark** and **Ayeyarwaddy Bulbul** before checking into our comfortable hotel and then dinner.

Day 12, 2nd February



Our morning flight to Heho was on time and we were reunited with our luggage and onto the bus very quickly. Shortly after pulling out of the airport we were traveling through dry farmland with scattered trees when a large flowering tree caught my attention. A quick word with Htay, who agreed that it would be a good place to look for Mynas, and we stopped and crossed the road to get a better look. Large numbers of White-vented Mynas were obvious but it was a bit far away to pick out anything else. Kevin scouted out a way to get closer to the tree in question and it was not long afterwards that we were all

watching a couple of **Collared Mynas** while a few **Cook's Swifts** cruised by. Further up the road we made another stop next to large numbers of flowering trees where we were able to enjoy prolonged views of many **Collared Mynas** feeding on the nectar of the flowers. This species is by no means guaranteed and Htay told us he had never seen them in such numbers before so we spent some time here to enjoy them and also observe **Black-collared Starling**, **Vinous-breasted Starling** and a single **Chestnut-tailed Starling**.

The journey to the small town of Kalaw was a short one, broken by another excellent lunch stop, after which we checked into our rooms to rest through the midday heat.

Our afternoon session took us into the pine woodland on the hills surrounding the town. Predictably with a change of geography came plenty of new birds with one of my personal favourites being the **Black-headed Greenfinches** that we saw here and there perched on tops of trees. At first they were hard to get onto as they flew overhead but everyone got plenty of good views of these little beauties after a while. The birding up here was very nice with **Eastern Buzzard** overhead, a **Brown Prinia** in the undergrowth, plenty of **Red-whiskered Bulbuls**, a single **Brown-breasted Bulbul**, an **Indochinese Cuckooshrike**, some beautiful white-faced **Eurasian Jays**, a party of **Red-billed Blue Magpies**, **White-browed Scimitar-babblers**, numerous **Japanese Tits** and a flock of very obliging **White-browed Laughingthrushes** that came to sit on fence posts along the trail we were on. As the sun began to set we walked along a ridge catching the last of the light and after hearing a distant call we spent the last 20 minutes luring a **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler** into

view for everyone. Feeling like it was a good ending to a day with some quality birds we went back to our hotel for dinner and, for those who were up to the challenge, a bottle of Black Shield Stout.

Day 13, 3rd February

After enjoying a very comfortable night and a good breakfast we took a short drive to the start of a trail starting in the pine-covered hills near town. This was to be the day on which we expended the most energy, taking a good, long walk through some very attractive countryside but with the vehicle unable to follow us down narrow tracks we had to take food and water for the day in our backpacks. It was chilly in the shade to start with but a smart male **Russet Sparrow** gave us point blank views next to the van as we began our walk. With much of the hillside in shade very few birds were active at first with a couple of **Black-headed Greenfinches** seen taking in the early sunshine on top of pines on the next ridge and plenty of Bulbuls which looked very much like they were **hybrids of Sooty-headed and Red-vented Bulbuls**, in fact all day we did not see a single bird that looked like a pure-bred of either species. Our early morning efforts took us through an attractive area of pine ridges with rice fields in the narrow valleys between them and we recorded many species seen previously such as **Eurasian Jay, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Verditer Flycatcher, Japanese Tit and Flavescent Bulbul** to mention a few but a few **Striated Swallows** were new. As the sun began to illuminate proceedings more and more so bird activity increased. Descending into the rice fields a few people glimpsed a **Black-tailed Crake** but while attempting in vain to refind it our attention was drawn to a large woodpecker. This bird landed on a dead tree allowing us all to get very nice 'scope views of **Streak-throated Woodpecker**, a rare species not often seen but we also had some record shots to confirm the identification. Another woodpecker was seen shortly after which nobody got a very good look at but it seemed like **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and half an hour later we got another one, seen well, to confirm our initial thoughts.

Things really began to warm up and we headed for some shadier forest seeing a juvenile **Crested Serpent Eagle, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** and **Eastern Buzzard** along the way. Things were much more quiet than any of us, including Htay, had expected but with effort we pulled out a few birds such as **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Puff-throated Bulbul**, a couple of singing **Davison's Leaf Warblers**, 3 **Marten's Warblers** and a pair of **White-throated Bulbuls** which was quite a welcome surprise as it has a very restricted world range. However, there were two outstanding birds that we found in this area beginning with a small party of **Silver-breasted Broadbills** which was a much-desired bird for many of our group. This is always a lovely bird to see but certainly not one that can be counted upon so we enjoyed these birds at length as they were busy feeding in front of us. The second standout species here was **(Northern) White-crowned Forktail** which was much harder to spot and was only found through picking up the call and some excellent spotting by Htay and David; this one lived up to its shy reputation. We emerged from the forest at a clearing next to a dam and small lake where we had our packed lunch during which we could constantly hear **Greater Flameback** in the distance. On completion of lunch I had a cursory look for it, not expecting to spot the bird at long range but had a bit of luck when one and then a second flew from one tree to another allowing everyone to get great views of this striking-looking woodpecker through the 'scope.

After this it was time for the long walk back, retracing our steps and adding a few new birds in the shady areas including the only **Dark-backed Sibilias** of the trip. It was about 3pm, very hot and exposed when Htay told us that we were overlooking a good site for Black-tailed Crake. It seemed ridiculous that we could see this secretive bird at this time of day but with this being the last hope for this bird we waited for a while and suddenly, as we were all leaving, Doug spotted it! Of course, although a few of us saw it after he did, it then disappeared before we all got a view. Never mind, we staked out the little patch of mud and water and it did not take long before two **Black-tailed Crakes** showed well, performing their strange spasmodic,

head-bobbing nervous behavior. Now it really was time to walk back and towards the end it became fairly tiring but we were still adding species to the list; **Grey-backed Shrike** and **Striated Grassbird**. We got back to our accommodation with plenty of time to take a well-earned rest, some people enjoying the comfort of their room while a few of us had tea on the balcony where we saw a lovely male **Daurian Redstart** and a few **Black Bulbuls** of the white-headed *leucocephalus* subspecies.

Although it had been one of our more tiring days it had provided us with some really good birds and great scenery; dinner was much appreciated and there were a few converts to the cause of Black Shield stout!

Day 14, 4th February



We enjoyed a good breakfast before packing everything onto the bus and heading off towards our last birding destination: Inle Lake. The journey took an hour or so but by the time we had boarded our motorized wooden canoes it was already getting warm. Motoring through a series of canals we ended up going slowly through a quiet, reedy area which quickly revealed the first male **Jerdon's Bushchat**, a bird everyone was anxious to see. We all got a good view but better was to come as we landed and did our birding on foot next to the canal. It was

surprising to me how many **Jerdon's Bushchats** we saw, they seemed to be everywhere we looked along with a few **Stejneger's Stonechats**, a **Striated Grassbird**, **Yellow-bellied Prinia**, large numbers of **Eastern Yellow Wagtails**, a few Citrine Wagtails and a **Bluethroat**.

After this good start we proceeded onto the main lake and traveled along the edges where there are lots of cultivated wetland areas absolutely covered in birds. Although there was a good abundance of species they were mostly widespread birds that everyone had seen elsewhere but as we traveled there were huge numbers of **Sand Martins** and **Barn Swallows**, including several individuals of the rufous *tytleri* subspecies, **Little Egrets**, **Brown-headed Gull**, **Great Egret**, **Asian Openbill**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Little Cormorant**, **Chinese Pond Heron**, **Common Coot**, **White Wagtail** as well as numerous **Black-winged Kites** sitting on posts. As lunch time approached we headed down a canal and stopped for a very nice lunch on a waterside village before boating across the lake and checking into our very nice accommodation on the lake which came complete with waterbird colony in the trees at the back; here the photographers among us were able to get great shots of **Asian Openbill**, **Little Cormorant** and **Glossy Ibis**.

The heat of the day required that we had a bit of a break, not that anyone was complaining, before we went back out on the lake later in the afternoon. Although none had been recorded recently we hoped that luck would be with us and we had a chance to find the critically endangered Baer's Pochard. Well, we not lucky with this but did find some nice birds in the form of **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, **Cotton Pygmy Goose**, large numbers of **Lesser Whistling Duck**, more **Citrine Wagtails**, another **Striated Grassbird** and a nice **Clamorous Reed Warbler** out in the open, singing from a bamboo pole. The late afternoon light was very nice and the scenery interesting but we did not add much more to our list of sightings, just **Lesser Coucal** as the sun was setting alongside many of the species we had been seeing all day long.

Dinner was another delicious affair and we began to reflect on what had been the best birds of the trip as we did not anticipate any contenders on the last day.

Day 15, 5th February

Waking up on the lake was a very pleasant way to start our final day and after our early breakfast we sped across the lake towards an area with a lot of emergent vegetation and “bird watching tower”. Along the way we came across a large flock of **Eurasian Coot** and as we neared the area we were to concentrate on small groups of **Garganey** began to appear. Slowing the boats down so that we could scan for wildfowl we spotted a group of *Aythya* ducks which we hoped could contain something rare but turned out to be **Ferruginous Ducks** only with plenty of **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas** and **Grey-headed Swampheens** for company. Birding from a moving boat is not easy so we manoeuvred to the bird watching tower for a more stable platform, although the dilapidated state of this house on stilts was not very comforting and it was with caution that we moved around on it. However, we were able to get good views over the reedy areas of the lake with loads of **Purple Herons, Chinese Pond Herons, Little Cormorants** and other common wetland species. **Black-browed Reed Warbler** is a bird which can be hard to get on to but we had one very obliging individual here that entertained the crowd with several **Dusky Warblers** close by for comparison, while **Striated Grassbirds** put on a good performance, singing from the reeds. Despite the creaking platform everyone managed to watch an **Eastern Marsh Harrier** hunting over the marsh but it was with some difficulty that we kept the ‘scopes still enough to check out all the ducks, finding a **Ruddy Shelduck**, 3 **Gadwall**, more **Garganey** and **Ferruginous Ducks**, a male **Northern Pintail** and plenty of **Indian Spot-billed Ducks**. Ok, so they might not have been the rarest birds but it was fun to be adding to our trip list at this late stage. Spending a couple of hours in this area turned up a lot of the commoner birds of the lake such as **Sand Martin, Long-tailed Shrike** and **Stejneger’s Stonechat**, along with a few *tytleri* race **Barn Swallows**.

Heading back to our accommodation we had time to walk around the back for a short walk into some rice fields where we were still able to find new birds including two beautiful **Wire-tailed Swallows** sitting on nearby wires and drinking from a puddle. **Black-winged Stilts** were seen across the fields as were a couple of **Common Snipe** and then a male **Greater Painted Snipe** in flight before hearing the call of **Baikal Bush Warbler**. We spent time trying to lure a couple of these birds out into the open, but in the increasing heat of the day it was not easy, however, most people got tickable views of this skulker in the end. That just about concluded things but no, there was time for one more addition; **Streaked Weaver**; a pair perched on the top of some *Typha*. This was a nice little session of birding to end with before packing up and taking the boats back to the bus for our journey back to Heho airport. From there our flight back to Yangon, via Bagan, was slightly ahead of schedule and we were all able to have a final dinner together and reflect on what had been a very enjoyable trip with lots of great birds, good food and excellent company.

Conclusion

With all the endemic species (under current taxonomy) and a total of 314 species seen on the trip it was not only a successful tour but a very enjoyable one which was well-organized, relaxed and allowed us to see a lot of Myanmar. Birding was good more or less everywhere we went, food was excellent, accommodation was comfortable and the group was good fun. Voting for the bird of the trip was interesting because the group was quite varied in terms of their experience in Asia so that there were votes for a very wide range of species. Our votes did not only reflect the quality of the birds but also the quality of the observations and how we experienced those birds.

1. **Jerdon’s Minivet** – sheer beauty combined with its endemic status along with fantastic views after struggling to find it made this an easy winner of the vote.

2. **Chin Hills Wren Babbler** – a wonderful, tiny thing with a big voice that, after making us work so hard to start with, showed incredibly well in numbers.
3. **Sand Lark** – just an unbeatable view in a great setting.
4. **Silver-breasted Broadbill** – a stunning bird.
5. **Jerdon's Bushchat** – extremely hard to find and in terminal decline through much of its range, they were just abundant in the right habitat an Inle Lake.

I would also like to add a big thanks to everyone on this trip for their good humour and easy-going natures that made birding and meal times together a real pleasure. I hope to see you all again.

Nick Upton.

SYSTEMATIC LIST – MYANMAR JANUARY 2018

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus c. coromandelianus</i>
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera strepera</i>
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha haringtoni</i>
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

(Introduced) Green Peafowl	<i>Pavo muticus imperator</i>
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PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis albescens</i>
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CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae

Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
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PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
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PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Chinese Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>

Eastern Cattle Egret
Purple Heron
(Eastern) Great Egret
Intermediate Egret
Little Egret

Bubulcus coromandus
Ardea purpurea manilensis
Ardea alba (modesta)
Egretta intermedia
Egretta garzetta garzetta

PELECANIFORMES: Pelecanidae

(Feral) Spot-billed Pelican

Pelecanus philippensis

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

Little Cormorant

Phalacrocorax niger

SULIFORMES: Anhingidae

Oriental Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae

Western Osprey

Pandion haliaetus haliaetus

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

Black-winged Kite
Oriental Honey-buzzard
Black Baza
Himalayan Griffon
Crested Serpent Eagle
Mountain Hawk Eagle
Black Eagle
Crested Goshawk
Shikra
Besra
Eastern Marsh Harrier
Pied Harrier
Black Kite
Black-eared Kite
White-eyed Buzzard
Eastern Buzzard
Himalayan Buzzard

Elanus caeruleus vociferus
Pernis ptilorhynchus orientalis
Aviceda leuphotes syama
Gyps himalayensis
Spilornis cheela burmanicus
Nisaetus nipalensis nipalensis
Ictinaetus malaiensis malaiensis
Accipiter trivirgatus indicus
Accipiter badius poliopsis
Accipiter vigatus affinis
Circus spilonotus
Circus melanoleucos
Milvus migrans govinda
Milvus migrans lineatus
Butastur teesa
Buteo japonicus japonicus
Buteo burmanicus

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

White-breasted Waterhen
Black-tailed Crake
Grey-headed Swamphen

Amaurornis phoenicurus phoenicurus
Porzana bicolor
Porphyrio poliocephalus poliocephalus

Common Moorhen
Eurasian Coot

Gallinula chloropus chloropus
Fulica atra atra

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvisrostridae

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

River Lapwing
Red-wattled Lapwing
Little Ringed Plover
Kentish Plover

Vanellus duvaucelii
Vanellus indicus atronuchalis
Charadrius dubius jerdoni
Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Rostratulidae

Greater Painted Snipe

Rostratula benghalensis

CHARADRIIFORMES: Jacanidae

Pheasant-tailed Jacana
Bronze-winged Jacana

Hydrophasianus chirurgus
Metopidius indicus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

Temminck's Stint
Common Snipe
Common Sandpiper
Green Sandpiper
Common Greenshank

Calidris temminckii
Gallinago gallinago gallinago
Actitis hypoleucos
Tringa ochropus
Tringa nebularia

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

Brown-headed Gull
Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus
Chroicocephalus ridibundus

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Feral Pigeon
Oriental Turtle Dove
(Burmese) Collared Dove
Red Turtle Dove
Spotted Dove
Barred Cuckoo-dove
Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon

Columba livia
Streptopelia orientalis agricola
Streptopelia decaocto xanthocyclus
Streptopelia tranquebarica humilis
Spilopelia chinensis tigrina
Macropygia unchall minor
Treron sphenurus sphenurus

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae

Greater Coucal

Centropus sinensis intermedius

Lesser Coucal
Green-billed Malkoha
Asian Koel
Plaintive Cuckoo
Large Hawk Cuckoo

Centropus bengalensis bengalensis
Phaenicophaeus tristis tristis
Eudynamys scolopaceus malayanus
Cacomantis merulinus querulous
Hierococcyx sparverioides

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Asian Barred Owlet
Spotted Owlet

Glaucidium cuculoides rufescens
Athene brama pulchra

APODIFORMES: Hemiprocnidae

Crested Treeswift

Hemiprocne coronate

APODIFORMES: Apodidae

Asian Palm Swift
Cook's Swift
House Swift

Cypsiurus balasiensis infumatus
Apus cooki
Apus nipalensis nipalensis

CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae

Indian Roller

Coracias benghalensis affinis

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

White-throated Kingfisher
Common Kingfisher
Pied Kingfisher

Halcyon smyrnensis perpulchra
Alcedo atthis bengalensis
Ceryle rudis leucomelanurus

CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae

Green Bee-eater
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater

Merops orientalis ferrugeiceps
Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti

BUCERITIFORMES: Bucerotidae

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops longirostris

PICIFORMES: Megalaimidae

Great Barbet
Lineated Barbet
Golden-throated Barbet
Blue-throated Barbet
Coppersmith Barbet

Psilopogon virens virens
Psilopogon lineata hodgsoni
Psilopogon franklinii franklinii
Psilopogon asiaticus asiaticus
Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus

PICIFORMES: Picidae

Eurasian Wryneck

Jynx torquilla chinensis

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

Dendrocopos canicapillus canicapillus

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker

Dendrocopos hyperythrus hyperythrus

Freckle-breasted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos analis longipennis

Stripe-breasted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos atratus atratus

Darjeeling Woodpecker

Dendrocopos darjellensis darjellensis

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major mandarinus

Streak-throated Woodpecker

Picus xanthopygaeus

Greater Flameback

Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus guttacristatus

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

Common Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus interstinctus

PSITTACIFORMES: Psittaculidae

Grey-headed Parakeet

Psittacula finschii

Blossom-headed Parakeet

Psittacula roseate juneae

Alexandrine Parakeet

Psittacula eupatria nipalensis

PASSERIFORMES: Eurylaimidae

Silver-breasted Broadbill

Serilophus lunatus elisabethae

PASSERIFORMES: Tephrodornithidae

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike

Hemipus picatus capitalis

PASSERIFORMES: Artamidae

Ashy Woodswallow

Artamus fuscus

PASSERIFORMES: Aegithinidae

Common Iora

Aegithinia tiphia deignani

PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae

Large Cuckooshrike

Coracina macei siamensis

Indochinese Cuckooshrike

Coracina polioptera indochinensis

Black-winged Cuckooshrike

Coracina melaschistos avensis

Rosy Minivet

Pericrocotus roseus

Ashy Minivet

Pericrocotus divaricatus

Small Minivet

Pericrocotus cinnamomeus vividus

Jerdon's Minivet

Pericrocotus albifrons

Grey-chinned Minivet

Pericrocotus solaris solaris

Long-tailed Minivet

Pericrocotus ethologus mariae

Long-tailed Minivet
Short-billed Minivet
Short-billed Minivet
Scarlet Minivet

Pericrocotus ethologus ripponi
Pericrocotus brevirostris affinis
Pericrocotus brevirostris neglectus
Pericrocotus speciosus semiruber

PASSERIFORMES: Lanidae

Brown Shrike
Burmese Shrike
Long-tailed Shrike
Grey-backed Shrike

Lanius cristatus cristatus
Lanius collurioides collurioides
Lanius schach tricolor
Lanius tephronotus tephronotus

PASSERIFORMES: Vireonidae

Black-headed Shrike-babbler
Blyth's Shrike-babbler
Blyth's Shrike-babbler
Green Shrike-babbler
Black-eared Shrike-babbler

Pteruthius rufiventer
Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris
Pteruthius aeralatus aeralatus
Pteruthius xanthochlorus hybrida
Pteruthius melanotis melanotis

PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae

Slender-billed Oriole
Black-naped Oriole
Maroon Oriole

Oriolus tenuirostris tenuirostris
Oriolus chinensis diffusus
Oriolus traillii traillii

PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae

Black Drongo
Ashy Drongo
Bronzed Drongo
Hair-crested Drongo

Dicrurus macrocercus cathoecus
Dicrurus leucophaeus mouhoti
Dicrurus aeneus aeneus
Dicrurus hottentottus hottentottus

PASSERIFORMES: Rhipiduridae

White-throated Fantail
White-throated Fantail
White-browed Fantail

Rhipidura albicollis stanleyi
Rhipidura albicollis celsa
Rhipidura aureola burmanica

PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae

Black-naped Monarch

Hypothymis azurea styani

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay
Red-billed Blue Magpie
Rufous Treepie

Garrulus glandarius leucotis
Urocissa erythroryncha magnirostris
Dendrocitta vagabunda kinneari

Grey Treepie
Hooded Treepie
House Crow
Large-billed Crow

Dendrocitta formosae assimilis
Crypsirina cucullata
Corvus splendens insolens
Corvus macrorhynchos macrorhynchos

PASSERIFORMES: Stenostiridae

Yellow-bellied Fantail
Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher

Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus
Culicicapa ceylonensis calochrysea

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae

Yellow-browed Tit
Black-bibbed Tit
Japanese Tit
Green-backed Tit

Sylviparus modestus modestus
Poecile hypermelaenus
Parus minor nubicolus
Parus monticolus yunnanensis

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

Burmese Bushlark
Oriental Skylark
Sand Lark

Mirafra microptera
Alauda gulgula gulgula
Alaudala raytal raytal

PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae

Crested Finchbill
Crested Finchbill
Striated Bulbul
Black-headed Bulbul
Black-crested Bulbul
Black-crested Bulbul
Red-whiskered Bulbul
Brown-breasted Bulbul
Red-vented Bulbul
Davison's (Stripe-throated) Bulbul
Flavescent Bulbul
Flavescent Bulbul
Ayeyarwady Bulbul
White-throated Bulbul
Mountain Bulbul
Mountain Bulbul
Ashy Bulbul
Black Bulbul
Black Bulbul

Spizixos canifrons canifrons
Spizixos canifrons ingrami
Pycnonotus striatus striatus
Pycnonotus atriceps atriceps
Pycnonotus flaviventris flaviventris
Pycnonotus flaviventris vantynei
Pycnonotus jocosus emeria
Pycnonotus xanthorrhous
Pycnonotus cafer melanchimus
Pycnonotus (finlaysoni) davisoni
Pycnonotus flavescens flavescens
Pycnonotus flavescens vividus
Pycnonotus blanfordi
Alophoixus flaveolus burmanicus
Ixos maclellandii ventralis
Ixos maclellandii tickelli
Hemixos flavala hildebrandi
Hypsipetes leucocephalus nigriscens
Hypsipetes leucocephalus leucocephalus

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae

Grey-throated Martin
Sand Martin
Barn Swallow
Barn Swallow
Wire-tailed Swallow
Asian House Martin
Red-rumped Swallow
Striated Swallow

Riparia chinensis chinensis
Riparia riparia innominata
Hirundo rustica guttaralis
Hirundo rustica tytleri
Hirundo smithii filifera
Delichon dasypus cashmeriense
Cecropis daurica daurica
Cecropis striolata stanfordi

PASSERIFORMES: Pnoepyidae

Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler

Pnoepyga albiventer albiventer

PASSERIFORMES: Cettidae

Brown-flanked Bush Warbler
Aberrant Bush Warbler
Chestnut-headed Tesia

Horornis fortipes fortipes
Horornis flavolivaceus weberi
Cettia castaneocoronata castaneocoronata

PASSERIFORMES: Aegithaliidae

Black-throated Bushtit
Burmese Bushtit

Aegithalos concinnus manipurensis
Aegithalos sharpei

PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae

Dusky Warbler
Tickell's Leaf Warbler
Buff-throated Warbler
Yellow-streaked Warbler
Buff-barred Warbler
Ashy-throated Warbler
Chinese Leaf Warbler
Yellow-browed Warbler
Hume's Leaf Warbler
Two-barred Warbler
Sakhalin Leaf Warbler
Blyth's Leaf Warbler
Claudia's Leaf Warbler
Davison's Leaf Warbler
Grey-hooded Warbler
Marten's Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus fuscatus
Phylloscopus affinis affinis
Phylloscopus subaffinis
Phylloscopus armandi perplexus
Phylloscopus pulcher pulcher
Phylloscopus maculipennis maculipennis
Phylloscopus yunnanensis
Phylloscopus inornatus
Phylloscopus humei humei
Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus
Phylloscopus borealoides
Phylloscopus reguloides assamensis
Phylloscopus claudiae
Phylloscopus davisoni
Phylloscopus xanthoschistos tephrodiras
Seicercus omeiensis

PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae

Clamorous Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus stentoreus amyae

Black-browed Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus bistrigiceps

Thick-billed Warbler

Iduna aedon aedon

Booted Warbler

*Iduna caligata***PASSERIFORMES: Locustellidae**

Baikal Bush Warbler

Locustella davidi suschkini?

Striated Grassbird

*Megalurus palustris toklao***PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae**

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis cursitans

Brown Prinia

Prinia polychroa cooki

Black-throated Prinia

Prinia atrogularis khasiana

Rufescent Prinia

Prinia rufescens rufescens

Grey-breasted Prinia

Prinia hodgsonii erro

Yellow-bellied Prinia

Prinia flaviventris delacouri

Plain Prinia

Prinia inornata blanfordi

Common Tailorbird

Orthotomus sutorius patia

Dark-necked Tailorbird

*Orthotomus atrogularis nitidus***PASSERIFORMES: Timaliidae**

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler

Pomatorhinus erythrogenys imberbis

White-browed Scimitar Babbler

Pomatorhinus schisticeps ripponi

Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler

Pomatorhinus ruficollis bakeri

Chin Hills Wren-Babbler

Spelaeorhis oatesi

Golden Babbler

Stachyridopsis chrysaea binghami

Pin-striped Tit Babbler

Macronus gularis sulphureus

Chestnut-capped Babbler

*Timalia pileata smithi***PASSERIFORMES: Pellorneidae**

Rufous-winged Fulvetta

Alcippe castaneiceps castaneiceps

Rusty-capped Fulvetta

Alcippe dubia mandellii

Yunnan Fulvetta

Alcippe fratercula fratercula

Nepal Fulvetta

Alcippe nipalensis stanfordi

Puff-throated Babbler

*Pellornium ruficeps shanensi***PASSERIFORMES: Pellorneidae**

Striated Babbler

Turdoides earlei earlei

White-throated Babbler

Turdoides gularis

Mount Victoria Babax

Babax woodi

White-browed Laughingthrush

Striped Laughingthrush

Brown-capped Laughingthrush

Assam Laughingthrush

Blue-winged Minla

Bar-throated (Chestnut-tailed) Minla

Red-tailed Minla

Red-faced Liocichla

Rusty-fronted Barwing

Streak-throated Barwing

Silver-eared Mesia

Silver-eared Mesia

Grey Sibia

Dark-backed Sibia

Garrulax sannio cornis

Trochalopteron virgatum

Trochalopteron austeni victoriae

Trochalopteron chrysopteron erythrolaemum

Minla cyanouroptera aglae

Minla strigula yunnanensis

Minla ignotincta ignotincta

Liocichla phoenicea bakeri

Actinodura egertoni ripponi

Actinodura waldeni poliotis

Leiothrix argentauris aureigularis

Leiothrix argentauris galbana

Heterophasia gracilis

Heterophasia melanoleuca radcliffei

PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae

White-browed Fulvetta

Yellow-eyed Babbler

Spot-breasted Parrotbill

Fulvetta vinipectus ripponi

Chrysomma sinense sinense

Paradoxornis guttaticollis

PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae

Whiskered Yuhina

Stripe-throated Yuhina

Oriental White-eye

Yuhina flavicollis rouxi

Yuhina gularis gularis

Zosterops palpebrosus palpebrosus

PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae

Chestnut-vented Nuthatch

White-browed Nuthatch

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch

Sitta nagaensis grisiventris

Sitta victoriae

Sitta frontalis frontalis

PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae

Bar-tailed Treecreeper

Hume's Treecreeper

Certhia himalayana ripponi

Certhia manipurensis manipurensis

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

Common Hill Myna

Great (White-vented) Myna

Jungle Myna

Collared Myna

Common Myna

(Burmese) Vinous-breasted Starling

Gracula religiosa intermedia

Acridotheres grandis

Acridotheres fuscus fuscus

Acridotheres albocinctus

Acridotheres tristis tristis

Acridotheres burmannicus burmannicus

Black-collared Starling
Asian Pied Myna
Chestnut-tailed Starling

Gracupica nigricollis
Gracupica contra floweri
Sturnia malabarica nemoricola

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

Grey-sided Thrush
Eyebrowed Thrush
Song Thrush

Turdus feae
Turdus obscurus
Turdus philomelos nataliae?

PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

Oriental Magpie-Robin
White-rumped Shama
Asian Brown Flycatcher
Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher
Vivid Niltava
Large Niltava
Verditer Flycatcher
Bluethroat
Siberian Rubythroat
Himalayan Bluetail
White-crowned Forktail
Blue Whistlingthrush
Slaty-backed Flycatcher
Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher
Taiga Flycatcher
Little Pied Flycatcher
Daurian Redstart
Blue-fronted Redstart
Blue Rockthrush
Chestnut-bellied Rockthrush
Siberian Stonechat
Stejneger's Stonechat
White-tailed Stonechat
Pied Bushchat
Jerdon's Bushchat
Grey Bushchat

Copsychus saularis saularis
Copsychus malabaricus macrourus
Muscicapa dauurica dauurica
Cyornis rubeculoides rogersi
Niltava vivida oatesi
Niltava grandis grandis
Eumyias thalassinus thalassinus
Luscinia svecica saturatior?
Calliope calliope calliope
Tarsiger rufilatus rufilatus
Enicurus leschenaultia indicus
Myophonus caeruleus caeruleus
Ficedula hodgsonii
Ficedula strophinata striophata
Ficedula albicilla
Ficedula westermanni australorientis
Phoenicurus aureus leucopterus
Phoenicurus frontalis
Monticola solitarius pandoo
Monticola rufiventris
Saxicola maurus przewalskii
Saxicola stejnegeri
Saxicola leucurus
Saxicola caprata burmanicus
Saxicola jerdoni
Saxicola ferreus ferreus

PASSERIFORMES: Chloropseidae

Golden-fronted Leafbird
Orange-bellied Leafbird

Chloropsis aurifrons aurifrons
Chloropsis hardwickii hardwickii

PASSERIFORMES: Dicaeidae

Yellow-vented Flowerpecker
Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker

Dicaeum chrysorrheum chrysochlore
Dicaeum melanoxanthum
Dicaeum ignipectus ignipectus
Dicaeum cruentatum cruentatum

PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird
Purple Sunbird
Olive-backed Sunbird
Mrs Gould's Sunbird
Green-tailed Sunbird
Black-throated Sunbird
Fire-tailed Sunbird
Little Spiderhunter

Chalcoparia singalensis assamensis
Cinnyris asiaticus intermedius
Cinnyris jugularis flamaxiilaris
Aethopyga gouldiae isolata
Aethopyga nipalensis victoriae
Aethopyga saturate petersi
Aethopyga ignicauda flavescens
Arachnothera longirostra longirostra

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

House Sparrow
Russet Sparrow
Plain-backed Sparrow
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

Passer domesticus indicus
Passer rutilans intensor
Passer flaveolus
Passer montanus malaccensis

PASSERIFORMES: Ploceidae

Streaked Weaver
Baya Weaver

Ploceus manyar peguensis
Ploceus philippinus burmanicus

PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae

Red Avadavat
White-rumped Munia
Scaly-breasted Munia
Scaly-breasted Munia

Amandava amandava flaviventris
Lonchura striata acuticauda
Lonchura punctulata subundulata
Lonchura punctulata topela

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Eastern Yellow Wagtail
Citrine Wagtail
Grey Wagtail
White Wagtail
White Wagtail
Paddyfield Pipit
Long-billed Pipit
Olive-backed Pipit

Motacilla tschutschensis macronyx
Motacilla citreola citreola
Motacilla cinerea cinerea
Motacilla alba ocularis
Motacilla alba leucopsis
Anthus rufulus rufulus
Anthus similis yamethini
Anthus hodgsoni hodgsoni

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae

Spot-winged Grosbeak

Common Rosefinch

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch

Black-headed Greenfinch

Mycerobas melanozanthos

Carpodacus erythrinus roseatus

Chloris spinoides heinrichi

Chloris ambigua ambigua

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

Little Bunting

Emberiza pusilla



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