

SRI LANKA – MARCH 2009

Saturday 28th March

Everyone arrived into a very relaxed Colombo airport on time where both Chris and Upali were waiting eager to start the tour. A little time was spent changing money and before even leaving the terminal building we were watching a couple of **Yellow-billed Babblers** to get the list started! A short walk from the airport to our coach also produced the first of many **Indian Palm Squirrels** and **House Crows** along with a very showy pair of **Asian Koels**. We were soon aboard our coach and everyone was introduced to our excellent drive Daranjaya and his assistant Charith. It was just a short journey to our hotel and before long we were all checked-in and most of the group took the opportunity for a much wanted post air travel sleep before lunch.

The day was pretty relaxed and birding from the comfort of the beachside restaurant produced **Great Crested Terns** and **Whiskered Terns** whilst enjoying a cool beer! After a good lunch we waited for the heat of the day to disappear and then headed off to a wetland site on the outskirts of Colombo. Our first stop was a group of four **Ashy Woodswallows** that were perched on some roadside wires before



we arrived at the wetland. Once at the wetland, we managed to notch up a good tally of birds for our first day.

Asian Openbill, Spotted Dove and White-breasted Waterfowl were the first birds to greet us and these were soon followed by **White-throated Kingfisher** and the odd **Purple Swamphen**. As we birded from the track amongst a group of slightly grumpy and domesticated **Water Buffalo**, we found **Purple-rumped Sunbird, Plain Prinia** and Upali

found some perched **Blue-tailed Bee-Eaters** on the wires, shortly followed by a **White-bellied Drongo** found by John L. The birds continued as Chris and Upali simultaneously alerted everyone to a cracking male **Black Bittern** soon to be followed by a **Yellow Bittern, Rose-ringed Parakeets** and **Lesser Whistling Duck**.

As the sun began to sink Upali found a great **Cinammon Bittern** to add to our impressive Bittern tally before it became eclipsed by an immature male **Watercock** showing very well indeed, enough to excite Upali quite considerably! An **Ashy Prinia** then showed well along with **Red-wattled Lapwings** and **Brown-headed Barbet**. The light continued to fade and **Night**



Heron was added to the tally before we returned for a good meal and early to bed!

Sunday 29th March

A very early start today as we headed north along the coast to Alankauda where we were to meet our boat and take a trip out in search of the regularly recorded **Long-snouted Spinner dolphins**. As we neared the coast and the morning light improved we saw our first **Asian Palm Swifts** and a **Stork-billed Kingfisher** with its unmistakable shape sat on the telegraph wires along with a number of **Brown-headed Barbets** and a few **Indian Rollers**. It wasn't long before we arrived at the beach and a number of **Gull-billed Terns** gave good views before we dodged the waves and boarded our boat. We



were out on the calm sea for around 1.5 hours and despite our best efforts we just could not find any dolphins but bird activity was good with a fly-by **Lesser Crested Tern** small numbers of **Great Crested Terns** a lone **Common Tern** and various groups of **Little Terns**. However, it was our journey back to shore that was the most interesting and yet

frustrating at the same time! John B picked up a bird ahead of the boat that was clearly different! A long winged, long tailed and long billed all dark tern species led Chris to call the bird as a **Noddy Tern** type, but unfortunately it would just not show itself enough to confirm identity to species and it disappeared from view! Once back on shore we walked along the **beach** and enjoyed the now very warm sunshine. Here we picked up **Whimbrel** and some nice views of more terns sitting on the beach including **Lesser Crested, Gull-billed, Common and Little Tern**. We were all pretty pleased to



return to the lovely cool of our coach and we headed slowly back south birding en route. Our second male **Black Bittern** performed well as it perched up on a roadside pool and a **Great Egret** also showed well. A little further south and we found ourselves at the Palavi Salt Pans where we spent a little time sifting through the waders and what a pleasure it was! Here, we were treated to

80+ **Lesser Sand Plovers** including a few really stunning birds in full summer plumage with their diagnostic black foreheads. Groups of **Little Stint** busily fed around the edges along with the odd **Curlew Sandpiper**, numerous **Redshank** and a few **Black-winged Stilts**. Chris then found a small group of 4 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** that gave good views and Upali added **Grey Plover** and **Caspian Tern** to the day list. **Spotted Redshank** was also a good find in amongst the **Redshank**. As we crossed the road back to the coach, both **Plain** and **Ashy Prinias** performed well in some roadside vegetation and another **Caspian Tern** and **Pied Kingfisher** were also added to our count.

We continued our journey towards Kandy and before lunch we stopped at a lily covered “tank” where we enjoyed some very good views of the locally common, but no less impressive **Pheasant-tailed**



Jacanas, a lone **Lesser Whistling Duck** and Upali did very well to pick out a **Cotton Pygmy-goose** that slowly slipped through the vegetation. A **Brown-headed Barbet** at its nest hole was a welcome distraction and a **Little Grebe** became a bit of a challenge to see with John L in particular determined not to miss an all important day tick! As we were back on the coach, Derek then coolly plucked a **Black-rumped Flameback** from a roadside tree for all to enjoy from the pleasant air-conditioned climate! We continued our journey to a well-earned lunch adding a few

Asian Openbills to the list and our first views of **Black-faced Ibis**. We enjoyed the first of many buffet style curry lunches and a very nice curd and treacle for desert and a **Common Garden Lizard** for company! With bellies full, we took a quick look behind the restaurant and enjoyed a better view of a **Stork-billed Kingfisher** and then Chris added a new mammal to the list in the form of a **Giant Squirrel**.

As we continued our journey onto Kandy the sky darkened and it seemed as if rain was imminent and we soon arrived at our very luxurious hotel set on the banks of the **Mahaweli River**. Here we spent the last of the daylight birding from within the hotel gardens adding some good species.

Highlights included small groups of noisy **Alexandrine Parakeets** flying over showing their much stronger flight and larger size compared to the similar **Rose-ringed Parakeet**. The first endemic, **Ceylon Hanging Parrot** somewhat frustratingly whizzed overhead and



Common Tailorbird flitted about in the bushes. However, it was the **White-bellied Sea Eagle** that

stole the show as it sat rather regally in a tree on the opposite side of the river. It was then time for a shower and a great meal and all to the background of some much appreciated live piano music.

Monday 30th March

After a relative lie in (!) compared to previous mornings, we had breakfast at a very civilised 06.15hrs but a few of the group were already out beforehand and enjoyed views of what was to be our only **Striated Herons** of the tour and a rather frustrating **Common Hawk-Cuckoo** that persistently called but gave flight views only. Birding from the breakfast table was pretty good too as we enjoyed more views of **Stork-billed Kingfisher** and **Black-headed Oriole** and Chris found our second endemic in the form of three **Ceylon Small Barbets** perched at the top of a nearby tree.

The forest of Udawattakele was to be our first stop and no sooner were we out of the coach and another new bird was there to greet us, a rather wet looking **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**. We took a slow walk along the wide forest trails and began to get our ears in tune with the bird calls. A **Tickell's Blue-flycatcher** was singing nearby and **Yellow-fronted Barbets** (our 3rd endemic) sang continuously all around. It took a little time to get satisfactory views of the endemic barbet but with



patience everyone had good views in the end, whereas the **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** behaved rather better and sat motionless in the scope for everyone to enjoy. Next on the list was the very striking **White-rumped Shama**, or a pair to be more precise, as the incredibly gifted Upali whistled them into view. An **Orange Minivet** then grabbed everyone's attention as it lit up the tree! We continued on the forest trail and came across a pair of very obliging **Southern Hill-Mynas** that gave quite a show. As we carried on up the hill we could hear **Ceylon Hanging Parrots** and we soon found a bird in a tree that showed well in the scope. We loitered at this viewpoint for some

time and enjoyed some good views of more **Yellow-fronted Barbets**, a **Black-rumped Flameback** tapping away continuously at a dead tree and a **Ceylon Small barbet** visiting its nest hole. An **Indian Pitta** showed briefly to Upali and Chris only but we were soon distracted by our next endemic, a **Brown-capped Babbler** that was joined by a **Dark-fronted Babbler** in the same bush! A **Square-tailed Black Bulbul** showed briefly that Derek managed to get onto before it disappeared and we headed back to the vehicle. En route we had some good views of **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** and a **Forest Wagtail** that appeared and disappeared against the dappled light on the forest floor. Finally, Deirdre did very well to pick



up the movement of an **Oriental White-eye** that showed well as it searched the nearby vines for insects.



Once back inside our coach, we carried our journey south passing the **Temple of the Tooth**. A brief stop beside the “tank” gave us our first **Indian Cormorants** of the trip and a very good view of a **Brahminy Kite**. We then headed up above the town to a viewpoint where we were able to look down

onto the town of **Kandy** and the **Temple of the Tooth**. John L also did well to get a brief view of an **Oriental Honey Buzzard** from the coach.

We headed onto the **Ramboda Falls** where we enjoyed a good lunch in the company of **Crested Hawk Eagles** and then a **Crested Serpent Eagle** increased our raptor tally as a noisy bird circled above us just as we were leaving. We then headed up through the ever winding roads with tea plantations either side of us and we spent an hour visiting a Tea Factory. Here we learnt all about the different blends of tea and enjoyed a very civilised **cup of tea and cake!** We even managed to add some birds to the list – well it was a birding trip after all!! We had good views and heard the call of the very different form of **Great Tit** and a **Hill Swallow** zoomed past the car park for some of the group just as we boarded the coach.



It wasn't long before we arrived at the infamous Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya and for many; this was one of the highlights of the trip and the birds performed fantastically! First up was a great view of an **Indian Pitta**. Not a rare bird in Sri Lanka, but always a real treat to see as it sat motionless looking



at us sometimes bouncing along in typical Pitta fashion! We then strolled over to a small stream where we were treated to more views of the elegant **Forest Wagtail**, but more importantly, fantastic views of the awesome **Pied Thrush**. This truly stunning *Zoothera* is a winter visitor to Sri Lanka and a species much sought after by birders and our group! We then had some rather frustrating views of



another endemic, the beautiful **Yellow-eared Bulbul**. A small group of the attractive **Scaly-breasted Munia** showed well whilst Chris went on a mission in search of our third target species before the light faded!

It wasn't long before Chris was running back down the path and waving the group over. Having found a female **Indian Blue Robin**, he dashed back to tell the group, only to find a much more stunning male **Indian Blue Robin** on his return! With a little patience, most of the group had some good views of the male as this shy eastern gem hopped into view now and again. With the light fading fast we left the park and John L was delirious with delight! We then checked into our very pleasant hotel and enjoyed a great meal and some more live music and John B recalled a tale or two. "Stand your ground, remember you are British!"

Tuesday 31st March

An 04.30hrs start was required this morning as we needed to get to the Horton Plains at first light. We headed off in two vans and our drivers negotiated the windy trails up to the Highlands. A **Black-necked Hare** was a good mammal addition in the headlights and then we encountered a bit of a hold



up as a train blocked our path! Though it wasn't long before the train passed and we continued our journey higher and higher towards the Plains. A few **Indian Blackbirds** were seen in the first glimmers of light by the first van as they flew from the side of the road and we all soon arrived at the entrance gate. A very short drive from the gate and we were soon out of the vans

and focussed on our hoped for target. Within a couple of minutes, Chris had picked up the **Ceylon Whistling Thrush**, it was a calling male, but before anyone else could get onto the bird it dived back into cover! Luckily, Upali re-found it despite it trying its best to remain concealed in the thick vegetation and most of the group managed to get a view. Everyone seemed pretty pleased to get any



sort of view at all, as this Sri Lankan endemic is a highly crepuscular and very unpredictable! With the sun rising and warming up an otherwise chilly start we wandered up the track as an **Alpine Swift** glided over in the bright blue sky. A couple of **Crimson-backed Flamebacks** flew over calling noisily and remaining tantalisingly close but just would not reveal themselves! **Yellow-eared Bulbuls** performed fantastically in the morning sunshine along with **Ceylon White-eyes** and the fantastic endemic **Dusky-blue Flycatcher** with its distinctive whistling song.

We had a few near misses with our next two endemics as both were heard but we just could not locate them! The **Sri Lanka Bush Warbler** called and two different **Spot-winged Thrushes** sang their hearts out but just would not show themselves! Stomachs began to rumble (always a sign that bird activity was beginning to become less!) so we headed back to our huge packed breakfasts but not before some great views of our next endemic, the cracking **Ceylon Scimitar-babbler** as it gleaned insects along the branches opposite a pool. Whilst tucking into our breakfast, Chris finally tracked down a skulking endemic that had so far eluded us and he called everyone over to enjoy a lovely male **Sri Lanka Bush-warbler** creeping around like a mouse just feet away from us!

With stomachs full, we headed into the Plains picking up our first Ceylon **Junglefowl** of the trip and taking our endemics tally to ten. A new mammal also showed itself, a rather friendly **Sambar Deer**!



As we arrived on the Plains, the distinctive and picturesque **Adam's Peak** could be seen clearly in the distance as we enjoyed views of **Pied Bushchat**, **Zitting Cisticola** and **Paddyfield Pipt.** John L found a **Brown Shrike** and we continued to the end of the road where three **Hill Swallows** performed very well as they hawked for insects low over the grassland along with the odd **Indian Swiftlet**.

It was soon time to head back down to the hotel but we took it slowly, making various stops en route. The Highland form of **Purple-faced Leaf Monkey**, known as **Bear Monkey** performed very well by



the side of the road and one of the buses had a male **Ceylon Junglefowl**. We then made a stop at the highest railway station in Sri Lanka and picked up a fine dark morph **Oriental Honey Buzzard** (the most common phase in Sri Lanka) as it flew directly overhead. A few **White-rumped Munias** zipped around us and we were entertained by both **Plain Prinia** and **Ashy Prinia**. We continued stopping at

various sites where a brief **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** was one highlight soon followed by the endemic **Black-lipped Lizard**.

Once at our comfortable hotel, we took time to relax and have lunch and we met again at 3.30pm. It was a quiet start to the birding but a **Bright-green Warbler** was a welcome addition to the trip list, as were a small party of **Pied Flycatcher-shrikes** and some entertaining **Toque Macaques** with great



hair styles! A trip to the lower road then produced a flurry of activity with **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**, **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** and another **Pied Flycatcher-shrike**. A walk back to the coach produced a species that we had almost given up on, as a **Kashmir Flycatcher** flew up literally from Chris and Upali's feet! It sat up on a brash pile for just a minute or two allowing excellent views to be had of this truly "BEAUTIFUL MALE"

that only Upali could state in such a passionate way! A **Horned Lizard** (endemic) was another addition to our reptile list thanks to a local lady pointing it out to us. Our final stop for the evening was at the fruit and vegetable stall where we waited in the hope of seeing another glimpse of the **Ceylon Whistling Thrush**, but we had to suffice with another male **Indian Blue Robin**, much to the delight of Deirdre who missed the bird in Victoria Park.

Another enjoyable dinner was had back at the hotel and John B entertained us at the bar with his infectious sense of humour!

Wednesday 1st April



Today was mostly a day of travel as we headed towards the famous Sinharaja Forest. However, en route we still managed to get some birding done. Our first **Black-backed Robin** of the trip was seen from the coach and a couple of photographic opportunities presented themselves at both **St. Clair's** and **Devon Waterfalls** where we also enjoyed views of more **Brown Shrikes** and **Brahminy Kites** against the backdrop of Sri Lankan women working in the vast tea plantations. It was then onto an excellent forest at Kitulgala, famous for the filming of the Bridge over the river Kwai. Here we were treated to views of **Square-tailed black Bulbul**, **Yellow-browed Bulbul** and the endemic **Black-capped Bulbul** whilst a pair of **Shikra** circled above us. **Orange Minivets** gave some nice views as did a **White-bellied Drongo** as **Ceylon Hanging Parrots** whizzed overhead. We continued along the forest trail to a small bridge over a stream taking in the fantastically colourful **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** before

stopping at a small bridge over a stream where Upali heard a **Dwarf Pygmy Kingfisher** but unfortunately it did not show. After a little loitering at the bridge we were rewarded with a buzz of activity and our next endemic, as a small party of noisy **Ceylon Rufous Babblers** came into view along with a **Lesser Yellownape**, **Black-naped Monarch** and a **Golden-fronted Leafbird**. Then Upali called us up a nearby track where a fantastic **Spot-winged Thrush** sat still just long enough for the whole group to enjoy their now 14th endemic and one that was certainly well-earned after being tantalisingly close in the Horton Plains! An **Emerald Dove** showed very well in the scope as we headed back to the coach and a then Chris pointed out a fine male **Legge's Flowerpecker** sat at the top of a dead tree for some of the group, taking the endemic tally to fifteen. It was now getting very hot and just before crossing the bridge, Upali pointed out a rather vibrantly coloured **Green Garden Lizard** yet another endemic! Once back in the coach we headed for our lunch stop enjoying an **Oriental Honey Buzzard** from the coach window on the way.

An excellent curry lunch stop gave us renewed energy and some new birds with **Black-headed Cuckooshrike**, a pair of **Small Minivet** and a **Blyth's Reed Warbler** being the highlights. We still had a fair distance to travel and people took the opportunity for a post-lunch power nap! However, it wasn't long before the ever watchful Upali broke the slumber with our first and much appreciated **Green Imperial Pigeon** as it sat perched beside the coach. We were soon entering the famous Sinharaja World Heritage Centre Forest Reserve and it was already raining! As is so often the case when a bird eludes you for so long, they then come along like buses (!) Our second **Spot-winged Thrush** of the day hopped along the road in front of us as our driver slowly crept towards it in the headlights as the light began to fade. We then arrived at our base for the next two nights and after a very much appreciated cup of tea we were soon off in two Land Rovers in search of some night birds! This was quite an experience as our drivers negotiated some quite impressive bumpy forest trails and we hoped for an endemic that many birders hope to see but not all succeed, the **Serendip Scops Owl**. First seen in 2001 and confirmed as a new species, this tiny ginger owl had actually been first heard in 1995 but did not reveal itself for another six years!

We waited in the pitch black forest with an impressive spectacle of Fireflies for company but despite our best efforts we had no response. However, a **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** did decide to give its presence away by its diagnostic and rather strange call but it just would not show itself! So we headed back to our lodge where we enjoyed some good home cooking and a good sleep.

Thursday 2nd April

Everyone was up early today as this was the day that many had been waiting for, hopeful for some of the true forest endemics. We had a good breakfast overlooking the paddy fields and forest and then headed out in search of our next endemic, the **Green-billed Coucal** that was calling close by. After a little patience, we finally enjoyed some great views with a **Greater Coucal** even putting in an appearance too, allowing us to compare these two ginger-backed beauties.



A couple of **Crested Treeswifts** circled overhead and gave some good scope views perched and then we headed off to obtain our permits and meet our local guide for the day, as well as enjoying more views of a pair of nesting **Ceylon Swallows**. We headed up the bumpy forest trail in our trusty Land Rovers. It was only a distance of around 3 Km, but it seemed like 10km! Once at the top we spent the



day walking along the flat forest trail where our first species were a rather distant **Ceylon Grey Hornbill** to add to the endemics, a few of the now very common **Green Imperial Pigeons** and an extremely confiding female **Ceylon Junglefowl**! We then took a slight detour down a nearby trail as Upali could hear a **Chestnut-backed Owlet**, but despite his best whistling efforts, he could not coax it into view. We carried along the main trail where we enjoyed some great views of a **Yellow-fronted Barbet** bashing a Lizard and then a good view of a **Large-billed Leaf Warbler** (a better specimen than the bedraggled one from earlier in the week!).

The endemic **Ceylon Crested Drongo** then put in an appearance and despite being a little frustrating to see, it was welcomed all the same. A **Sri Lanka Earless** (or Kangaroo) **Lizard** then grabbed our attention as it sat motionless on a nearby log before our attention was diverted to our next new endemic, the very shy **Ceylon Woodpigeon**. It was a real game of hide and seek with this bird as it



showed various bits of the bird but everyone managed to get some sort of scope views before it showed exceedingly well on our return! A little further along trail and we had some good views of a female **Malabar Trogon** and then our guide found a very close **Spot-winged Thrush** that appeared to be feeding young. Next we were treated to another couple of new endemics; firstly a small party of very noisy **Layard's Parakeets** showed well in the top of a close tree and was soon to be joined by

the endemic **White-faced Starling**! Before we had time to catch our breath we were then watching another endemic, this time, our third and final Myna species, the **Ceylon Hill-Myna** allowing its diagnostic single yellow wattle on the nape to be seen. Feeling quite happy with ourselves we continued along the trail a little further where we were then greeted by a very obliging **Ceylon Blue Magpie**, yet another endemic!



group of **Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes** in with the flock and soon we were getting some excellent views as they sneaked through the vegetation at almost ground level. A fine male **Legge's Flowerpecker** was another welcome addition to the rush of activity as everyone enjoyed eye-level views as it fed on some purple flowers. So with another two endemics in the bag, despite poor views of the Malkoha, we were pretty happy and took some time to relax and find some shade.

So far so good, so we continued our route towards the research station. As we arrived we were in luck, a flock was moving through! It was all pretty fast and furious as birds were moving through the trees but we managed to find **Ceylon Rufous Babblers**, the odd **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** and then there was a shout from Upali of **Red-faced Malkoha** as everyone focussed on the tops of the trees looking for movement. The bird then slipped through the vegetation and most people saw the distinctive long tail disappear, but unfortunately it never did re-appear! However, in the meantime it became apparent that there was also a



A quick foray into the forest with our local guide proved unsuccessful for the very shy **Ceylon Scaly Thrush** but a **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** found by Chris around the research station was an added distraction. We then slowly headed back along the trail for lunch and this time a very obliging male **Ceylon Junglefowl** crossed our path! Our trusty Land Rover were soon to meet us and we enjoyed our packed lunches sat outside before, yet again, Upali called us over to enjoy some nice views of two **Chestnut-backed Owlets** that eluded us the first time round. The

birds seemed very unbothered by the audience that they had below them until the rain started and they shuffled along the branch slightly as we retreated to the shelter of our Land Rovers! We decided to sit it out for a while, in the hope that it was just a shower. Luck was obviously on our side and within about half an hour we were back out on the trail in the hope of bumping into another flock. Despite our best efforts, we could not find any flock but we enjoyed some more views of birds seen previously including better views of the **Ceylon Crested Drongo** and it was soon time to return to our Land Rovers and the long bumpy ride back to the Lodge and finding the odd leech for company!



The day was not yet over though and after another welcome cup of tea and a short break we decided to give the owl and the Frogmouth another go! So it was back out in the Land Rovers and we tried a new site for the **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** and almost instantly had a response. A view of a silhouette, but again despite calling on a number of occasions, the bird would just not show! So we headed back to the site from the previous evening and this time we were in luck! Within five minutes, we were soon all hearing the distinctive call of the **Serendip Scops Owl!** We carefully and quietly followed a track off the main trail and before too long we were watching this tiny ginger, near mythical bird in the torch light as it continued to call – Truly fantastic!

Friday 3rd April

Today it was time to move on and visit another area of Sri Lanka, but not before a quick visit to a nearby patch of forest in the hope of seeing what is probably Sri Lanka's most elusive bird! So after a bit of birding from the breakfast table with coffees in hand we were back in the Land Rovers and heading up the bumpy trail that we had come to love so much! Some of the group had more views of **Green-billed Coucal** en-route, just a stone's throw from our lodge, before we started the bumpy climb. Once at our stop we headed a short way into the forest and before long we could hear our target, the **Ceylon Spurfowl** calling below us. We waited patiently in the hope of coaxing the bird nearer to us, but it was not interested so we headed back to the Land Rover and more importantly, back for breakfast! Birding around the lodge grounds before our departure produced some good views of **Ceylon Green-pigeon**, **Pied Flycatcher-shrike** and **White-browed Bulbul**. So we left Sinharaja and our leech socks behind us and headed for the very different habitat of Udawalawe taking in a few good birds en route including good views from the coach of **Southern Hill-Myna** and the beautiful **Chestnut-headed bee-Eater**, surprisingly our first sighting of the tour.

Our lunch spot was as good as ever and the gardens in particular were a highlight as we notched up a very showy **Coppersmith Barbet** happily pooping away along with **White-browed Fantail** found by

John L, a **Purple Sunbird**, the always stunning **Sri Lanka Paradise-flycatcher**, **Forest Wagtail** and a “beautiful male” **Common Iora**. After a great Chinese lunch we were soon nearing Udawalawe and we had time to add a few more new species to the day list with a **Black-winged Kite** perched in a dead tree, **Little Green Bee-Eater**, **Yellow-wattled Lapwing** and **Common Peafowl**. Once at the park we headed to the gate where we transferred to two jeeps with local guides. Whilst waiting for the administration to be done Chris picked up a male **Montagu’s Harrier** that unfortunately floated past a little distantly and then we set off into the heart of the park. The first new bird was a very distinctive **Pied Cuckoo**, soon followed by a couple of **Indian Silverbills** and the first of many **Jerdon’s Bushlarks** as their distinctive whistling song echoed throughout the park. **Indian Elephants** were very common in the park and we had a number of excellent sightings. Upali then alerted us to a small



group of **Plum-headed Parakeets** as they landed in a tree before we headed on passing many of the very common but no less attractive **Black-backed Robin**. Next up were two **Ceylon Green-pigeons** sat prominently in a nearby tree before our attention was diverted to the very attractive

white, black and chestnut colouration of the aptly named **Tri-coloured Munia** as a small group fed on the ground. Wherever we stopped there always seemed to be something new so we continued onwards and got some rather frustrating views of **Barred Buttonquail** as a couple of birds scuttled quickly across the track in front of us. Other highlights included the ever impressive **Black-headed Oriole**,



the first of many truly stunning **Orange-breasted Green-pigeons** showing off their fantastic pastel colours in the early evening light. As we continued deeper into the park, none of us were ready for the surprise around the next bend - A **Jungle Cat** on the track right in front of our vehicles – a real treat and a lifer for Upali! Little did we know that this was to be the first of four sightings of 3 different animals and everyone was **grinning from ear to ear!**

This is a relatively common mammal but, like most cats, always tricky to see, so we really were truly spoiled with views of this attractive feline. We continued with our journey as time was upon us and yet the birds kept performing! Two **Sirkeer Malkohas** showed very well for a potential skulker and then we were all much happier with the views of **Barred Buttonquail** as a few of these tiny but beautifully marked birds scuttled across the track, taking their time compared to the previous sighting! A **White-bellied Fish Eagle** was the next bird to grab our attention and then the real gem of hornbills,



a fantastic **Malabar Pied Hornbill** sat up in full view along some excellent views. We then arrived at a large lake where we were able to get out of our vehicles. Here, it was a case of where to look first as **Grey-headed Fishing Eagle, Painted Storks, Spot-billed Pelicans, Oriental Darters** and numerous **Whiskered Terns** all tried their best to grab for our attention. A **Blyth's Pipit** flew up from Upali's feet giving its diagnostic call and a minimum of 100 **Yellow Wagtails** produced quite a spectacle before we were forced to head back.

It had been another great day and our hotel was only a short drive away. We then enjoyed another excellent meal in a sadly, rather deserted hotel. Whilst enjoying our food it was not long before the live music entertainment found us, despite Upali trying his best to hide!

Saturday 4th April

It was another early start after a very full breakfast and we headed back to Udawalawe for another jeep drive. This time we took a different route and before too long we were getting some great views of **Elephants** some more **Malabar Pied Hornbills** enjoying the morning sunshine and some brief views of more **Plum-headed Parakeets**.





Then we enjoyed our first perched view of **Crested Serpent Eagle** and our first group sighting of **Grey-bellied Cuckoo**, a hepatic female. Two **Brown-capped Woodpeckers** showed well at the very top of a dead tree as we continued our route into the park seeing more of the wonderful **Orange-breasted Green-pigeons** numerous **Jerdon's Bushlarks** and **Barred Buttonquails**. New birds then came thick and fast with our final endemic of the tour, a fine **Ceylon Woodshrike** taking our final endemic tally to a very respectable 31 species seen. A **Jungle Prinia** was then soon followed by a **Grey-breasted Prinia** and we enjoyed more great views of **Grey-headed Fish Eagle** and **Painted Storks**. However, it was the **Brown Fish Owl** posing in the morning sun that really stole the show! It became a little overcast and better birding light so we stopped to stretch our legs by a river where we had **Stork-billed Kingfisher** and **Forest Wagtail** and an exceedingly tame **Giant Squirrel!** Other highlights included another **White-rumped Shama** whistled out of the thick vegetation by Upali, good views of

Grey Langurs and the odd **Ruddy Mongoose** disappearing into the undergrowth. A soaring **Lesser Adjutant** was a good find by Upali as it slowly gained height and disappeared from view and then an obliging and very close **Grey-breasted Prinia** put in an appearance. Between the two vehicles we had very good views of **Sirkeer Malkoha** and somewhat brief views of **Blue-faced Malkoha** before we began to head back. A large raptor in the sky prompted Chris to slow the vehicles down and we were soon all enjoying great views of a **Black Eagle** as it drifted overhead. Then, a final flurry of excitement before returning to the gate, were two **Golden Jackals** and a solitary **Woolly-necked Stork**.

We were soon back in our coach and heading east for lunch, but of course we had a few birding stops en route! A few choice stops at some roadside pools produced **Black-headed Ibis**, **Lesser**



Sandplover, **Greenshank**, **Yellow Wagtails** and some great views of **Brahminy Kite**. Then Upali found us a roadside **Indian Stone Curlew** that was a good addition to the list before we checked out a large wet area with "rafts" of **Little Grebe** much to delight of John L who had missed the one earlier in the week!! Further scanning of this area produced **Moorhen** and two **Cotton Pygmy-geese** trying their best to go unnoticed as they sneaked through the vegetation. So it was time to

have another relaxing lunch and a very nice one it was too, before we headed for our next stop, the famous Yala National Park.

Whilst waiting for our tickets to enter Yala NP and sitting in our Land Rovers, a quick scan of the volleyball pitch produced some nice views of three or four **Ashy-headed Sparrowlarks** and then a **Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** was a welcome addition to the trip list from Chris's Land Rover,



before we entered the official park gate. Our main focus was to try and find **Leopard**, always a difficult task, despite being in Yala where the density of these animals is very high. So we slowly drove along the various dirt tracks with thick vegetation everywhere and realising that there could literally be a leopard anywhere! Our first mammals in the park were two very confiding **Golden Jackals** that very kindly walked right out onto the road for everyone to see. Happy with this, we moved on to a fairly open area surrounded by large rocks famous for leopard sightings. Our driver alerted us to some fairly close

alarm calls of **Spotted Deer**, so we went to investigate. Despite the alarm calls we found no leopards, but the anticipation was still exciting and we had some good views of **Spotted Deer**. A couple of **Lesser Sandplovers** showed well beside the vehicles along with some cracking views of **Yellow-wattled Lapwings** showing off their fantastically bright yellow wattles! As we ventured through the park we were surrounded by some fantastic scenery with large rocks and pools and enjoyed some great birds with **White-browed Fantail**, **Painted Stork**, and many of the very common **Little Green Bee-Eater**, always a pleasure to see. Some of the group also had brief views of **Blue-faced Malkoha** and numerous **Ceylon Junglefowl** brightened up an overcast but cool evening.

As the daylight was fading it then all happened! Firstly a female **Black-necked Stork** showed very well as it dashed about in one of the pools with its wings open as it searched for prey, but next came the cherry on the top a **Leopard!** The



animal appeared on the main track in front of Upali's vehicle and then sat under some thick vegetation and proceeded to wash very unbothered by us all. After a good bit of manoeuvring by the driver in Chris's vehicle (travelling backwards at a 45 degree angle!) we were all soon watching this truly awesome beast! John B remained very calm throughout the experience and never doubted we would

not see it! Optimism to the end, that's what I like! After watching the animal for a good 10 minutes it got up and walked off out of view. So a little more exceptional manoeuvring led us to where we thought it would re-appear and indeed the animal crossed the track but unfortunately partially hidden. We decided to leave the animal in peace and feeling on a high we returned to the gate but not before one last surprise! As large numbers of **Spotted Deer** gathered at the edge of the forest we were then treated to two **Little Indian Nightjars** including one that perched on the road! – a truly fantastic day!

As if things could not get any better, we all enjoyed a great selection of food and more importantly curd and treacle again so Chris and Upali were very happy!!

Sunday 5th April

It was an early start today as we collected our packed breakfasts from reception and loaded our day



sacks into our Land Rovers and off we went! It wasn't long before we the usual **Little Green Bee-Eaters** were posing very close to our vehicles and we took time to savour some more views of a very close **Yellow-wattled Lapwing**. A little further along our track a **Ceylon Woodshrike** finally gave itself up and showed very well along with a couple of **Malabar Pied Hornbills** flying over. We then continued to check the wetter areas and were rewarded with our second **Black-necked Stork**, this time a male, the dark iris, as opposed to a bright yellow one being the distinguishing feature. As we drove around we were seeing the odd **Ceylon Junglefowl** dash from the undergrowth along with the common but very elegant **Black-backed**

Robins. Then a couple of **Woolly-necked Stork** showed well along with a young **White-bellied Sea Eagle** perched up on a dead tree. A pair of posing **Orange-breasted Green-pigeons** was very much welcomed and we headed out nearer the sea where we enjoyed great views of **Elephant Rock** where we checked an area of grass flats and a river. Here we had our



second **Black-necked Stork** of the day, this time a female with yellow iris.

Then our second sighting of **Indian Stone Curlew** as Upali picked out two birds alongside a **Great Thick-knee**. Chris's vehicle were treated to some very close views of a **Yellow-eyed Babbler** and we then headed down a track with thick vegetation on either side. Suddenly, our drivers made a quick



lunge forward to the vehicle ahead of us and there was a shout of "Bear!" Just a few metres from our vehicle we could see some dark hairy shapes slowly working their way through the vegetation and then within a few minutes we really were treated to fantastic views of two **Sloth Bear** cubs that walked right out onto the track just feet from us – Wow! After such a fantastic sight, it really did not matter what we saw next, but we still were treated to more great birds. We proceeded to a great view of a pool with dead trees and Elephant Rock

looming in the background and here we found two **Lesser Adutants** with their old man's wispy hair! Then another **Brown Fish Owl** showed very well as it sat in the hole of tree before we headed to



our official Breakfast spot. Here we enjoyed the fantastic view and visited the memorial stone for the Tsunami disaster in 2004 - a sobering thought.

During our breakfast stop we added **Whimbrel**, **Paddyfield Pipit** and **Great Thick-knee** to the list of birds and then headed slowly back towards the gate but not before having another purple patch! This time it was good views of **Sambar Deer**, a group of **White-winged Terns** and the odd **Whiskered tern** and then a very obliging **Pacific Golden Plover** by the road. We also enjoyed a good spectacle as a large group of **Spot-billed Pelicans** grouped

together on the water and **Painted Storks** and **Spoonbills** fed side by side and nearby **Spotted Deer** made the best of the available shade– a really great scene.

Almost at hotel and we enjoyed some much closer views of **Spot-billed Pelicans** and Chris found a **Little Pratincole**. Unfortunately the bird flew off and Upali's vehicle did not get onto the bird, but after a little wait the bird returned and perched on the poolside for all to see this real gem of a bird!

The afternoon was spent taking time to relax and enjoy a siesta!



We were back out at 15.15hrs for a second game drive and just beyond the gate we were treated to an elephant showing well in a pool by the reception area and then a huge male “**Tusker**” showing just its tusks in some thick roadside vegetation. It was still very hot and birding was a little slow but we still



managed to pick up some great views of the commoner species, a male **Common Peafowl** showed well, and the usual **Little Green Bee-Eaters**. A stop at one of the many pools revealed an **Indian Pond Heron** and a

Sambar deer sitting in the shade but then “hot news” arrived that a **leopard** had been sighted so a little rally driving was in order! We set off in hot pursuit but after arriving at the location, it soon became apparent that the animal had passed and we spent a little time trying to pick it up again but had no joy. A **Golden Jackal** showed very well along the edge of a small wet area.

Other bird highlights were rather frustrating with a **Blue-faced Malkoha** being typically elusive and showing briefly only to the first Land Rover and then Upali picked a small group of **Tawny-bellied Babblers** that were not the most obliging! We continued our quest for **leopard** but without success, just re-enforcing the fact just how elusive these cats can be and always leaving you with a feeling of wanting more! We took in the sights and sounds of this wonderful park as the light faded and troops of **Grey Langurs** and herds of **Spotted Deer** became more visible and another **Malabar Pied**



Hornbill flew across in front of us. Then just in the last glimmers of light we were rewarded with the big male **“Tusker”** right out in the open just metres from our Land Rovers and all to the sound of a calling **Indian Little Nightjar** – A fitting end to a great two days.

Yala National Park is truly a fantastic place and one that sadly appears to be suffering from Tourism due to the troubles in the North – It is a great place and one you really should not be afraid to visit as it is a very safe place!

Monday 6th April

After a great night's sleep and a lie in (!), we all assembled at the viewing tower above the restaurant before breakfast and we enjoyed our last views of some of the great birds that we had enjoyed over the last couple of days and in fantastic light! **Painted Storks**, **Spot-billed Pelicans**, **Great Thick-knees** and a fantastic **White-bellied Sea Eagle** performing almost at eye level before perching and



being harassed by the local **House Crows**. A **Braminy Kite** perched up in great light and a pair of **Loten's Sunbirds** flitted around some of the flowering bushes. It was then time for Breakfast!

With Yala NP behind us, we stopped at some nearby Salt Pans and searched for the **Grey-headed Lapwing** that had been in residence for a few months. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to search the area thoroughly for the “Upali Lifer” but we still managed a new bird in the form of a couple of nice breeding plumaged **Rose-coloured Starlings** as well as good views of **Lesser Crested Terns** perched on a fence and a really good view of a **Ceylon Woodshrike**. Hundreds of “**Cormorants**” flew high in the sky and we all enjoyed some great reflections in the water as a group of cattle appeared to walk on water!

It was mostly a day of travel as we headed for the coastal resort of Hikkaduwa but a few choice stops along the roadside produced more good views of **Pacific Gold Plovers**, **Lesser Sand Plover**, **Kentish Plover** and more importantly some new species, **Brown-headed Gull** and **Garganey** including many males, plus some good views of **Little Tern** and **White-winged Terns**.

A **Booted Eagle** from the coach was the only other bird of note before we arrived at our hotel in Hikkaduwa for a good night's sleep!

Tuesday 7th April

Today was the big day as we searched for the “Big One!” We had a relatively early start and collected our packed breakfasts before our short drive to meet our whale watching boat. Once at the harbour, we met our whale watching guide and boarded our boat where we had breakfast before setting off. We headed out on the ocean and incredibly within 30 minutes and with land still clearly visible we were watching our first **Blue Whale!** We spent the next hour or so watching up to six of these fantastic animals. We saw it all, tail flukes, blows and dorsal fins and even a mother and calf – truly fantastic and all on calm seas and very close to shore. We then headed out a little further in the hope of finding





the now almost mythical Spinner Dolphins! We had no joy with this species but we did see some great seabirds, firstly a small group of **Bridled Terns** that finally came in close to the boat after lots of frustrating views when Chris first picked them up. However, it was “Upali’s Lifer” that was the big news as we had no less than two **Red-billed Tropicbirds!** One bird sat on the sea very close to the boat allowing some really great views.



After a couple of hours we were back on land and reminiscing about the great trip - All in all, it is a truly great trip and with a 90% success rate for Blue Whales at this time of year and so close to shore you really cannot miss out!

We returned to our hotel for lunch and the rest of the day was spent relaxing in the grounds of the hotel and enjoying the sea view.

Wednesday 8th April

Today was always our back-up day in case we failed to see Blue Whale but due to our great success with the whale sightings everyone was keen to do some more birding today! We headed to Hiya Forest Reserve for the day, an area that was new as a birding destination to Upali but we thought we would try it and what a great day it was! The whole day was spent pretty much in one small area and before long we were racking up the species. Plenty of **Green Imperial Pigeons**, a very obliging juvenile **Brahminy Kite** and then a real highlight of the day - a fantastic pair of **Crimson-backed Flamebacks** that had given very frustrating views up until now. This time they really performed and sat in a nearby tree for a few minutes in full view. Our attention then turned to a fruiting tree that attracted numerous species throughout the day and became known as “*THE TREE*” it was so good! Highlights here included **Brown-headed Barbet**, **Yellow-fronted Barbet** and no less than six **Ceylon Small Barbets** (next page) in the tree at one time! Other highlights in “*the tree*” included Ceylon Hanging Parrot, Golden-fronted Leafbird and **Ceylon Green-pigeon** (next page).

It was just a pleasure to sit in one spot and take in all the birds that we had seen over the last few days and to get really good views. **Ceylon Spurfowl** was once again heard calling but it would just not



show itself. The odd **Ceylon Swallow** hawked for insects over the lake and the odd **Yellow-browed Bulbul** and **Brown Shrike** showed well. A short stroll along the main path produced another **White-rumped Shama**, once again thanks to the superb rendition by Upali. A **Chestnut-backed Owlet** continued to call relentlessly from the other side of the lake but like the Spurfowl, would just not show itself! The odd shower came and went and our ever thoughtful driver even went beyond the call of duty **sheltering the leader from the rain!** (next page).

As we enjoyed the pleasant temperatures of the late afternoon, the ever alert Upali then found another species that to date had only given frustrating views – a **Ceylon Grey Hornbill** and a much welcomed view as it sat very prominently on top of “*the tree*!”

As the light began to fade we waited in the hope of some nocturnal species and we were not disappointed as a **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** finally gave itself up and showed exceptionally well at eye level in the gloom, just a few metres from us. This was a real bonus as we had only seen dark shapes previously and this bird really did perform calling and allowing the plumage detail to be seen. No sooner had we enjoyed this special bird than we were alerted to the call of **Jerdon's Nightjar**. A short dash back up the hill then produced flight views of two of these fantastic birds and a great way to end a great day!



Thursday 9th April

Today was our final day and a day really of travel and relaxation. However, just before we left our hotel, we had one more surprise in store! A short walk to the beach resulted in some fantastic views and interaction with a **Green Turtle**. These wonderful creatures had obviously become all too familiar with humans and were happy to be hand fed coming to the beach of their own accord – a real treat!

We arrived at our hotel just 20 minutes from the airport where we relaxed and birded the gardens before having lunch and time to re-live the fantastic wildlife encounters we had enjoyed over the last two weeks before catching our flight home to the UK.



would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the tour for being a pleasure to guide and for making the trip really good fun. Most importantly, on behalf of myself and the whole group, I would like to thank Upali for being an excellent local guide full of knowledge and good humour, puddings(!) and for ensuring that the trip ran as smoothly as possible. My thanks also go to Charith for his help on the coach and Daranjaya - an excellent driver who could never do enough to help.

Finally, I would like to thank Ian Windle for allowing me to use the following great photos in this report.

Beach scenes (pg 3), Black-rumped Flameback (pg4), Dusky Blue-flycatcher (pg8), Bear Monkey & Ashy Prinia (pg9), Ceylon Junglefowl (pg13), Serendip Scops Owl (pg14), Jungle Cat & Jeep scene (pg15), Indian Elephant (pg17), Black-necked Stork (pg19), Sloth Bear & Lesser Adjutant, (pg20), Spot-billed Pelican & Golden Jackal (pg21), Tusker (pg22), Blue Whale & Red-billed Tropicbird (pg24), Beyond the call of duty! (pg26).

SPECIES E = Endemic Species ER = Endemic race		Scientific Name	No of days out of 13 recorded	Highest daily count C.= Common LC = Locally Common H.= Heard only N/C.= No count
1.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	3	LC
2.	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	7	C
3.	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	5	N/C
4.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1	3
5.	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	5	LC
6.	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	4	30+
7.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	9	LC
8.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	5	N/C
9.	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	6	3
10.	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	5	LC
11.	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	5	C
12.	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	13	C
13.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	13	C
14.	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	1	3
15.	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	3	N/C
16.	Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	2	2
17.	Cinnamon bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	1	1
18.	Black Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>	2	1
19.	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	4	N/C
20.	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	6	N/C
21.	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	2	2
22.	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	2	2
23.	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	2	2
24.	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	4	N/C
25.	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	4	N/C
26.	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	6	N/C
27.	Cotton Pygmy-Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	2	2
28.	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	1	30+
29.	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	1	N/C
30.	Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	2	1
31.	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	2	N/C
32.	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur alac</i>	10	10+
33.	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	6	2
34.	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	4	2
35.	Crested Serpent Eagle ER	<i>Spilornis cheela spilogaster</i>	4 + 1H	1
36.	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1	1
37.	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	6	2
	Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>	1	H
38.	Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	1	1
39.	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1	1
40.	Crested Hawk Eagle ER	<i>Spizaetus celanensis</i>	7	3+
41.	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3	N/C

	Ceylon Spurfowl E	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>	3	H
42.	Ceylon Junglefowl E	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>	5 + 1H	4
43.	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	4	N/C
44.	Barred Buttonquail ER	<i>Turnix suscitator leggei</i>	2	4+
45.	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	10	C
46.	Watercock	<i>Gallicrex cinerea</i>	1	1
47.	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	4	N/C
48.	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	N/C
49.	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	4	N/C
50.	Black-winged Stilt ER	<i>Himantopus himantopus ceylonensis</i>	5	N/C
51.	Indian Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus indicus</i>	2	2
52.	Great Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus recurvirostris</i>	3	5+
53.	Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola _alacca</i>	1	1
54.	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	3	3
55.	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	2	1
56.	Kentish Plover ER	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus seebohmi</i>	2	N/C
57.	Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	4	80+
58.	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	4	4+
59.	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	8	LC
60.	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	2	2
61.	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	1	1
62.	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa _alacca</i>	4	N/C
63.	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	4	N/C
64.	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	3	2
65.	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	5	LC
66.	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	3	1
67.	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	4	30+
68.	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	2	N/C
69.	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	1	4
70.	Brown-headed Gull	<i>Larus brunnicephalus</i>	1	12+
71.	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	3	15+
72.	Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	3	2
73.	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	2	3
74.	Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	4	10+
75.	Common Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	1	1
76.	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	3	N/C
77.	Bridled Tern	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>	1	8+
78.	Noddy Tern sp.	-	1	A single bird seen on day 2 whilst looking for dolphins failed to give good enough views to confirm species!
79.	Red-billed Tropicbird		1	3
80.	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	8	N/C
81.	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	3	N/C
82.	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia domesticus</i>	11	C
83.	Ceylon Woodpigeon E	<i>Columba torringtoni</i>	1	6+
84.	Spotted Dove ER	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	11	C

85.	Emerald Dove ER	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	4 + 1h	N/C
86.	Orange-breasted Green-pigeon ER	<i>Treron bicincta</i>	4	12+
87.	Ceylon Green-pigeon ER	<i>Treron pompadora</i>	3 + 1h	7+
88.	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>	6	C
89.	Ceylon Hanging Parrot E	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>	6	LC
90.	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	5	8+
91.	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	9 + 1H	C
92.	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	2	8
93.	Layard's Parakeet E	<i>Psittacula calthropae</i>	2 + 1H	N/C
94.	Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	2	2
95.	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>	2	1
96.	Common Hawk Cuckoo ER	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	1	1
97.	Grey-bellied Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus passerinus</i>	2	3
98.	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	4 + 5H	2
99.	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>	2	2
100.	Red-faced Malkoha E	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>	1	1
101.	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	5 + 1H	C
102.	Green-billed Coucal E	<i>Centropus chlororhynchus</i>	2	1
	Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	1	3 birds in captivity awaiting release back to wild
103.	Serendip Scops Owl E	<i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>	1	1
104.	Brown Fish Owl ER	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	3	2
105.	Chestnut-backed Owlet E	<i>Glaucidium radiatum castanonotum</i>	1 + 1H	2
	Brown Hawk Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>	1	1bird in captivity awaiting release back to wild
106.	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>	2 + 1H	2
107.	Jerdon's Nightjar ER	<i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i>	1	2
108.	Indian Nightjar ER	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	1 + 1H	2
109.	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	6	LC
110.	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>	4	N/C
111.	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	5	C
112.	Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba bakeri</i>	2	3+
113.	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	6	N/C
114.	Malabar Trogon ER	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>	1	2
115.	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	6	3
116.	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	4	2
117.	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	12	C
118.	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	3	1
119.	Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	4	LC
120.	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	4	3+
121.	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	2	2
122.	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	3	LC
123.	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	3	3
124.	Ceylon Grey Hornbill E	<i>Ocyeros gingalensis</i>	3	1
125.	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>	3	4+
126.	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	10 + 1H	C

127	Yellow-fronted Barbet E	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>	5	LC
128	Ceylon Small Barbet E	<i>Megalaima rubricapilla malabarica</i>	3 + 1H	6+
129	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	2	N/C
130	Indian Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>	2	2
131	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>	1	1
132	Lesser Yellownape ER	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	2	1
133	Black-rumped Flameback ER	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	4 + 2H	N/C
134	Crimson-backed Flameback E	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>	2	2
135	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	3	1
136	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafra assamica</i>	3	LC
137	Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	3	5+
138	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	8	C
139	Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo domicola</i>	2	5
140	Ceylon Swallow E	<i>Hirundo daurica hyperythra</i>	7	4+
141	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi rufulus</i>	5	LC
142	Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>	2	2+
143	Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>	3	2
144	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	2	100+
145	Ceylon Woodshrike E	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus affinis</i>	3	5+
146	Black-headed Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>	3	1
147	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	4	4
148	Orange (Flame) Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	4	NC
149	Pied Flycatcher-shrike ER	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>	2	3+
150	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	8	C
	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus lucionensis</i>	1	1
151	Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	3	5+
152	Black-capped Bulbul E	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>	3	NC
153	Red-vented Bulbul ER	<i>Pycnonotus cafer cafer</i>	12	C
154	Yellow-eared Bulbul E	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>	2	6+
155	White-browed Bulbul ER	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus insulae</i>	5 + 1H	N/C
156	Yellow-browed Bulbul ER	<i>Hypsipetes indicus</i>	3	N/C
157	Square-tailed Black Bulbul ER	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus humii</i>	5	LC
158	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	5	C
159	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	3	2+
160	Indian Blue Robin	<i>Luscinia brunnea</i>	2	1
161	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	11	C
162	White-rumped Shama ER	<i>Copsychus malabaricus leggei</i>	4	2
163	Pied Bushchat ER	<i>Saxicola caprata atrata</i>	1	3+
164	Black-backed Robin ER	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	5	LC
165	Ceylon Whistling Thrush E	<i>Myiophonus blighi</i>	1	1
166	Pied Thrush	<i>Zoothera wardii</i>	2	1
167	Spot-winged Thrush E	<i>Zoothera spiloptera</i>	2 + 1h	2
	Ceylon Scaly Thrush E	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>	1	H
168	Indian (Ceylon) Blackbird ER	<i>Turdus simillimus kinnisii</i>	1	4+
169	Sri Lanka Bush Warbler E	<i>Bradypterus palliseri</i>	1	1
170	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	2	N/C
171	Grey-breasted Prinia ER	<i>Prinia hodgsonii leggei</i>	1	1

172	Jungle Prinia ER	<i>Prinia sylvatica valida</i>	2	N/C
173	Ashy Prinia ER	<i>Prinia socialis brevicauda</i>	5	N/C
174	Plain Prinia ER	<i>Prinia subflava insularis</i>	5 + 1H	N/C
175	Common Tailorbird ER	<i>Orthotomus sutorius sutorius</i>	4 + 3H	N/C
	Common Tailorbird ER	<i>Orthotomus sutorius fernandornis</i>	1	N/C
176	Blyth's Reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	4 + 1H	LC
177	Bright Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>	1	1
178	Large-billed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>	2	2
179	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>	2	2
180	Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva subrubra</i>	1	1
181	Dusky-blue Flycatcher E	<i>Eumyias sordida</i>	1	4+
182	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher ER	<i>Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni</i>	2 + 1H	2
183	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1	3
184	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	3	2
185	Black-naped Monarch ER	<i>Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis</i>	2 + 1H	1
186	Sri Lanka Paradise-flycatcher ER	<i>Terpsiphone alacca ceylonensis</i>	4	2
	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradise paradisi</i>	1 + 2H	N/C
187	Brown-capped Babbler E	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillum</i>	1	1
188	Ashy-headed Laughingthrush E	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>	1	6+
189	Ceylon Scimitar-babbler E	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii melanurus</i>	2	2
190	Tawny-bellied babbler ER	<i>Dumetia hyperythra phillipsi</i>	1	4
191	Dark-fronted Babbler ER	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>	3	4+
192	Yellow-eyed Babbler ER	<i>Chrysomma sinense nasale</i>	3	N/C
193	Ceylon Rufous Babbler E	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>	2	6+
194	Yellow-billed Babbler ER	<i>Turdoides affinis taprobanus</i>	10	C
195	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	2	N/C
196	Purple-rumped Sunbird ER	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>	7	C
197	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>	2	N/C
198	Loten's Sunbird ER	<i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>	3	N/C
199	Legge's Flowerpecker E	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>	2	3
200	Pale-billed Flowerpecker ER	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonese</i>	4	C
201	Ceylon White-eye E	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>	1	5+
202	Oriental White-eye ER	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus egregia</i>	3 + 1H	LC
203	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	3	2+
204	Black-hooded Oriole ER	<i>Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis</i>	7 + 1H	C
205	White-bellied Drongo ER	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens insularis</i>	5	LC
	White-vented Drongo ER	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens leucopygialis</i>	2	N/C
206	Ceylon Crested Drongo E	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus lophorhinus</i>	1 + 1H	1
207	Ceylon Blue Magpie E	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>	1	3+
208	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	12	C
209	Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	9	C
210	Rosy Starling	<i>Sturnus roseus</i>	2	25+
211	White-faced Starling E	<i>Sturnus senex</i>	1	1
212	Ceylon Hill-Myna E	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>	1	2
213	Southern Hill-Myna ER	<i>Gracula religiosa indica</i>	3 + 1H	2
214	Common Myna ER	<i>Acridotheres tristis melanosturnus</i>	13	C
215	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	10	C

216	Indian Silverbill	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	3	N/C
217	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	4	N/C
218	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	9	LC
219	Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura _alacca</i>	2	N/C

OTHER ANIMALS

Giant Squirrel	Recorded on 5 days. Good views at Udawalawe of a very tame individual!
Indian Palm Squirrel	Very common, Recorded on 11 days.
Dusky-striped Squirrel	Recorded on 2 days in the Highlands.
Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	Recorded on 2 days and included the race “ <i>Bear Monkey</i> ” found in the Highlands.
Toque Macaque	Recorded on 5 days. Common.
Grey Langur	Recorded on 3 days around Yala NP and Udawalawe.
Indian Elephant	Recorded on 3 days. Counts of 30+ at Udawalawe
Water Buffalo	Recorded on 4 days. Wild ones at Udawalawe and Yala NP.
Ruddy Mongoose	Recorded on 2 days in Yala NP.
Brown Mongoose	Recorded on 2 days .
Black-naped Hare	Recorded on 3 days.
Wild Boar	Recorded on 3 days. Really good views in gardens of Yala Village.
Spotted Deer	Recorded on 4 days. Very common in Yala NP with a max.count of 70+
Sambar	Recorded on 3 days at Yala NP and on Horton Plains.
Indian Flying Fox	Recorded on 5 days often around habitation.
Golden Jackal	Recorded in Yala NP on 2 days.
Leopard	ENDEMIC RACE - Recorded very close, typically partially concealed, on our first evening at Yala NP.
Jungle Cat	Recorded only at Udawalawe on our first evening with an incredible 4 sightings of 3 different animals!
Sloth Bear	A fantastic sighting of 2 small cubs in Yala NP that walked right out in the open and across the track in front of a number of jeeps!
Blue Whale	At least 5 different animals enjoyed at close range and close to shore.
Land Monitor	Recorded on 4 days.
Water Monitor	Recorded on 2 days.
Common Garden Lizard	Recorded on 4 days.
Sri Lanka Kangaroo (Earless) Lizard	ENDEMIC. Couple Recorded at Sinharaja.
House Gecko	Recorded on 6 days.
Marsh Mugger	Recorded at Yala NP on 2 days.
Giant Millipede	Recorded on 2 days.
Firefly	Recorded on 2 days.
Carpenter Bee	Recorded on 3 days.
Soft-shelled Terrapin	Recorded on 1 day in Yala NP.
Hard-shelled Terrapin	Recorded on 2 days.
Black-lipped Lizard	ENDEMIC – Recorded on 1 day in the Highlands.
Horned Lizard	ENDEMIC – Recorded on 1 day.
Green Garden Lizard	ENDEMIC – Recorded on 1 day at Kitulgala
Dung Beetle	Recorded on 1 day in Yala NP.

Rat Snake	Recorded on 1 day.
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BUTTERFLY LIST

Red-spot Duke	Common Bluebottle
Common Crow	Peacock Pansy
Blue Mormon	Crimson Rose
Southern Birdwing	Glad-eye Bush Brown
Tree Nymph	Common Sailor
King Crow	Small Grass Yellow