



Field Guides Tour Report

BHUTAN 2015

Apr 4, 2015 to Apr 22, 2015

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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



Bhutan is internationally important for its preservation of Himalayan forests (perhaps 60% of the country). Thrumshingla National Park, here seen above Yongkola at 7,000' (2100m), protects seemingly endless montane forest. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)

Bhutan is a cold, rainy place. Or, it can be, and it was, and, as chance had it, it was a cold, rainy place when we went camping! Bhutan is a glorious place, even when it is cold and rainy, and more so when it isn't, which was most of the time. Actually, the weather was probably average, a real mix, with a few really clear days, a couple of rainy periods, and many more days that were cloudy but pleasant.

We had a wonderful time. Thanks to Sangay, Kinley, Nadu, Kaka, and the rest of the crew (and good offices behind the scenes, here and there) we journeyed safely and comfortably two-thirds of the way across Bhutan to the east, then part way back and south to India. The food was good, our lodgings comfortable, and the camping went well.

The birding was successful, too. For most visitors, a third to half of the Himalayan birds are new, so there is plenty of novelty, and some of it is gorgeous novelty, including such species as Chestnut-tailed Minla, Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie, Verditer Flycatcher, Silver-eared Mesia, Blue-fronted Redstart, and all the barbets, minivets, and sunbirds.

We did very well with the specialties, too. Ibisbill was seen at close range along three of the rivers. Rufous-necked Hornbill cooperated on seven days (and Great Hornbill on three). Ward's Trogon put in one appearance after much trying. Yellow-rumped Honeyguide was seen at four cliffs with Giant Rock Bee combs. We connected well with all four possible pheasants: Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, and Blood and Kalij pheasants, each a stunning species that was seen well. We had bonuses in the form of two birds we often miss, White-bellied Heron and Beautiful Nuthatch.

In addition to the much-advertised specialties, there are many local, distinctive, beautiful, and attractive birds that ensure fun birding every day of the trip. Please recall the Fire-tailed Myzornis, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Slender-billed Scimitar-babbler, Spotted Laughingthrush, Pale Blue-Flycatcher and its song, Scarlet Finch, and Fire-tailed Sunbird. Remember the cooperative Black-tailed Crake, excellent views of flocks of Snow Pigeons, Fire-capped Tit, Rufous-faced and Black-faced warblers, six species of parrotbill, and Red-headed Bullfinch. Relish the Mountain Hawk-Eagle battling the Crested Serpent-Eagle and the several close Black Eagles; the subtle nest of the Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike; the several waterbird surprises of Mandarin Duck, Bar-headed Goose, and Great Black-headed Gull in breeding plumage; Himalayan Cutias acting like nuthatches; the choruses of cuckoos and barbets reverberating through the forests; and the dynamic Little and Spotted forktails.

The mammal list is short, but stirs some fine memories. We had repeated visits with troops of Golden Langurs, and enjoyed lengthy encounters with Common (the consumer of Magnolia flowers) and Capped Langurs. Muntjac (Barking Deer) and Goral were seen well, we saw several Black Giant Squirrels, and were lucky to see two Yellow-throated Martens. And domestic yaks!

The ability to enjoy so much wildlife is attributable to Bhutan's efforts to preserve more than half of the country in a forested state. Those forests were often stunning, from the huge conifers at high elevations to the bands of broadleaved forest on the lower slopes, including flowering magnolias and many sizes and colors of blooming rhododendron. Spring is a great time to visit Bhutan.

The taxonomy tries to follow the Clements Checklist (Cornell). Anglicized versions of Bhutanese place names have not been standardized; we offer something that is close enough! Conservation status is drawn from the publications of BirdLife International.

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BAR-HEADED GOOSE (*Anser indicus*) – April is getting late for northbound migrants, so we are always pleased to find one. We had good looks at one that was keeping company with a large flock of Ruddy Shelducks near Punakha. This species is famed for its ability to cross the highest Himalaya during migration (without oxygen tanks!) (most species migrate around the flanks of the range). [b]

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – An unusually large flock was along the banks of Puna Tsang Chhu near Punakha (about 60).

MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*) – The rarity of the trip was a male with the Ruddy Shelduck flock along the Puna Tsang Chhu near Punakha. The Birds of Bhutan lists only one record, although there was a report last year. It was certainly a very rare straggler from the north (8-9 April). [b]

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – We puzzled over a distant sleeping female duck near Punakha, the ID revealed when it flew. [b]

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*) – As usual, the most numerous duck left over from the winter. In addition to the small group near Punakha, Kinley spotted one along the Mangde Chhu near Tingtibi. [b]

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*) – A northbound male was on the Thimphu sewage ponds, as seen from the bus. [b]

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN) (*Anas crecca crecca*) – Three females of the Old World "Common Teal" were with other migrants near Punakha. [b]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

HILL PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila torqueola*) – The little partridges make the big pheasants seem easy. We heard this species on most days of the tour, but were never especially close to one. [*]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila mandellii*) – This specialty was heard several times at distance near Yongkola. It is considered "Vulnerable." [*]

RUFIOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila rufogularis*) – We gave this species a good try below Tama La, but it did not seem to come any closer despite playing its voice back. [*]

BLOOD PHEASANT (*Ithaginis cruentus*) – We have often seen more (especially in bad weather), but our views were as good as any, including of birds Nancy spotted on Pele La and a couple of close encounters on Thrumshing La; a stunning bird.

SATYR TRAGOPAN (*Tragopan satyra*) – We heard them several times, and had several views of a species that can be missed entirely. Easily missed. Part of the group saw a male that ran through the rhododendron thickets on Pele La, we all enjoyed a female in the road below Sengor, and then were fortunate to follow that good luck up with more luck, good views of a male on a rainy early morning. It is considered "Near Threatened."

HIMALAYAN MONAL (*Lophophorus impejanus*) – Perhaps the most ever, about ten birds, with great views, mostly of males, on Chele La, Pele La, and Ura La.

KALIJ PHEASANT (*Lophura leucomelanos*) – A fine bird, but the least lovely pheasant of the lot! We saw several on Chele La, DoChu La, along the Mo Chhu, and Joe had one from the bus on our southward journey.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

WHITE-BELLIED HERON (*Ardea insignis*) – One of the prizes of the tour. Sangay spotted a large bird in flight along the Mo Chhu in Jigme Dorji N.P., and guessed it was the heron. Fortunately, it came back and we saw it perch in a pine across the river, ending up with lengthy telescope views. This heron of Asian rivers is considered "Critically Endangered," with a population under 250 mature individuals.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON (*Gyps himalayensis*) – This huge vulture was seen at several spots, the most, as usual, on Pele La, where we had excellent views in flight and perched. We watched two Large-billed Crows try to get something out from underneath one perched vulture; did the vulture have something in its talons? It is considered "Near Threatened."

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – We saw about five during the tour, including one on the south side of Tama La that was being attacked by a Mountain Hawk-Eagle.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – A series of birds spotted by Patricia, Phyllis, and Nancy; good views over the forested slopes.

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – We did well with sightings this year, memorable ones including one performing a display flight involving dropping and rising, dropping and rising; one low bird first spotted as a shadow on the road in front of us; and one that dropped possible nesting material that floated down toward us (or had it grabbed at prey, missed, and was then dropping what it had grabbed?).

STEPPE EAGLE (*Aquila nipalensis*) – We saw one migrant above Trongsa; another eagle on Thrumshing La was left as *Aquila* sp. [b]

BONELLI'S EAGLE (*Aquila fasciata*) – Patricia and Craig directed us to one soaring distantly over the valley of the Mangde Chhu; we watched as it strafed a Mountain Hawk-Eagle. Widespread in Eurasia, but a bird we seldom see in Bhutan.

CRESTED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter trivirgatus*) – Two birds above Yongkola were interacting like a pair, with display flight and fluffed up tail coverts.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) – Diane spotted where one had perched, to the dismay of a magpie, near Ura. Just the one this trip;

usually the most numerous accipiter.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*) – This widespread species is nonetheless always a welcome sighting; Cynthia spotted it near Sengor.

BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*) – One going over Yutong La (3400m) at 6:30 a.m. on 16 April appeared to be a "Black-eared" type, i.e., a migrant returning to a northern breeding ground, rather than a wanderer from breeding grounds on the plains of India. [b]

PALLAS'S FISH-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) – We had good views of one causing panic amongst the waterbirds near Punakha, and then saw two high-flying birds along the Mo Chhu the next day. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000.

COMMON BUZZARD (HIMALAYAN) (*Buteo buteo burmanicus*) – Three on Chele La and one below Thrumshing La were all above 3400m and were dark birds typical of Himalayan breeders (*burmanicus*, split by some as Himalayan Buzzard). One buzzard south of Tama La was not seen well, and was probably a wintering or migrating individual of some taxon of *Buteo*.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BLACK-TAILED CRAKE (*Amaurornis bicolor*) – We enjoyed close views of a very responsive bird at Paro our first day; a lovely rail.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – One was seen by some along the Mo Chhu in front of the Punakha Dzong! [b]

Ibidorhynchidae (Ibisbill)

IBISBILL (*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*) – So far, so good--every tour has brought sightings of this monotypic shorebird family. They are less common every year close to population centers, but we still managed to find one near Paro, saw several more along the Par Chhu, and had additional birds near Punakha, for a very nice total.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

RIVER LAPWING (*Vanellus duvaucelii*) – Seen along several of the rocky rivers, sharing habitat with the Ibisbills. It is considered "Near Threatened."

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Two near Punakha. [b]

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – Three near Paro. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

PALLAS'S GULL (*Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus*) – A scarce bird, headed north, and a lovely bonus in stunning breeding plumage. We enjoyed one along the Puna Tsang Chhu near Punakha and another along the forested Mo Chhu in Jigme Dorji N.P. the next day. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Although we were on the right continent, the birds we saw are still to some degree "Feral Pigeons," rather than true Rock Pigeons (apparently there are no cliff-nesting Rock Pigeons in Bhutan). [I]

SNOW PIGEON (*Columba leuconota*) – The most sightings (six) and the best views of any tour. Our first were 25 wonderfully tame and close birds on Chele La, and another fun encounter was the flock of about 80 Nancy spotted on a cliff in Thrumshingla N.P.

SPECKLED WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba hodgsonii*) – Happenstance is always involved with this species, and the location of our one encounter this year was again a surprise, the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong.

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Seen almost daily.

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Regular at lower elevations.

BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia unchall*) – Several glancing encounters, first on DoChu La, then near Tingtibi.

EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*) – A series of quick sightings of this terrestrial forest dove, above and below our Tingtibi camp. a.k.a. Green-winged Pigeon.

WEDGE-TAILED PIGEON (*Treron sphenurus*) – After a couple got away, Sangay spotted two below Tama La.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*) – Patricia spotted one from the lunch table on Tama La; we then had telescope views of a bird that was undisturbed by all of the activity. Another was seen in flight the next day.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx sparveroides*) – This year we were fortunate to have several good views without the need for playback (they are responsive, but often furtive in that response); good views of perched birds at least three times.

HODGSON'S HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx nasicolor*) – One the subject of playback, our one on Pele La was certainly responsive and seen by all, even in the telescope, but it would not stay put, and kept slipping away. But for this species, that was a good performance.

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*) – The classic voice was heard regularly, and we saw them twice (for sure), once on DoChu La and again en route to Tingtibi. In general, cuckoos were in very low numbers this year, perhaps as a result of a cool, "late" spring.

HIMALAYAN CUCKOO (*Cuculus saturatus*) – Heard most days, and calling birds were seen twice to provide a visual component. Oriental Cuckoo has been split, this taxon the breeder in the Himalayas.

BANDED BAY CUCKOO (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) – A responsive bird selected a high perch above the Mangde Chhu near Tingtibi.

ASIAN EMERALD CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx maculatus*) – Two females were seen well, first above Yongkola, then on Tama La.

SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*) – We saw drongo-cuckoos twice near Tingtibi, hearing them daily in that area.

Confusion abounds about the taxonomy of this genus; the majority decision is that the birds here are Square-tailed, based on voice and tail. However, some other sources treat birds here as Fork-tailed (Payne 2005, IOC).

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamis scolopacea*) – Heard during our tour of the Punakha Dzong (much more common in India). [*]

GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA (*Phaenicophaeus tristis*) – Apparently not all that rare at lower elevations in Bhutan, but we seldom see it, so two near Khose La below Trongsa were a nice addition.

Strigidae (Owls)

MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL (*Otus spilocephalus*) – Heard distantly from our last camp. [*]

COLLARED OWLET (*Glaucidium brodiei*) – We heard about five, fewer than normal, and failed to get any to come close enough to spot. [*]

ASIAN BARRED OWLET (*Glaucidium cuculoides*) [*]

HIMALAYAN OWL (*Strix nivicolium*) – Distantly from our Sengor camp; not responsive. [*]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

GRAY NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus jotaka*) – Calling birds were twice unresponsive, leaving us with just one sighting, a bird in the headlights of the bus as we left the Bumthang Valley. Note the split of Jungle Nightjar: We saw Gray Nightjar, *C. jotaka*.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – About five of this large, fast bird were with other swifts on our last full day, the 20th. [b]

HIMALAYAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus brevirostris*) – Small groups of this local breeder were seen over forested slopes, e.g., below Namling.

BLYTH'S SWIFT (*Apus leuconyx*) – I knew about several errors on our checklist that involved recent splits, but I was clueless about this one until I got home and happened to look it up. Pacific (Fork-tailed) Swift has been split several ways, including three localized species, Salim Ali's (Tibet), Cook's (e.g., N Thailand), and this one from the Himalayas. What remains as Pacific Swift does not occur in Bhutan. We saw several flocks near nesting cliffs.

HOUSE SWIFT (*Apus nipalensis*) – Not a common bird in Bhutan. We saw a few pairs, the nests of which Nancy spotted under the eaves of a home near our last camp site. More checklists are splitting House Swift from Little Swift; House occurs in the Himalayas, whereas Little is the bird of the Indian plains, including New Delhi.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

WARD'S TROGON (*Harpactes wardi*) – We heard three of this specialty, and after a long time had a female in view for less than a minute, a good look but not a lengthy enough one. We had tried repeatedly for this species on several passes, but only had (limited) success above Yongkola (it must not help that so many birders are trying for them there). It is considered "Near Threatened."

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Diane spotted them near Punakha, and a couple more of this stunning bird were seen near Tingtibi.

CRESTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle lugubris*) – We had been searching, but it was during our visit to the Punakha Dzong that Joe spotted one from the bridge, perched on a wire over the Mo Chhu.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER (*Nyctornis athertoni*) – Our first was between Zhemgang and Tingtibi, with a second above the Mangde Chhu near Tingtibi.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – A sprinkling of this striking species were seen in dry valleys, including one Diane observed carrying food to a hole in a bank near Punakha on 8 April.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

GREAT HORNBILL (*Buceros bicornis*) – A widespread hornbill, but always a thrill. At least four were seen on our southward leg, including for our "yard list" at the Tingtibi camp. Great views. It is considered "Near Threatened."

RUFIOUS-NECKED HORNBILL (*Aceros nipalensis*) – A much more local species, one of the specialties of the tour. We saw more than normal and had several excellent studies, including the bird below Zhemgang that we watched at length as it plucked fruit and then deftly manipulated them in its bill. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 7,000.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

GREAT BARBET (*Psilopogon virens*) – One of the characteristic voices of Bhutan's forests, heard nearly daily (often a chorus of them), and seen frequently. a.k.a. Great Hill Barbet.

GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon franklinii*) – Another common barbet, though less so than Great Barbet. Mostly heard, but regularly seen as well.

BLUE-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon asiaticus*) – This lovely barbet occurs only at lower elevations, where it is often heard and periodically seen; we encountered it on the southward leg through Tingtibi.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

YELLOW-RUMPED HONEYGUIDE (*Indicator xanthonotus*) – Four individuals may have been our record total; we were fortunate that most of the regular spots were occupied when we stopped. The regular spots are cliffs with combs of the Giant Rock Bee, including the "Danger Zone" below Tama La, where apparently bees have entered open car windows and stung people, so one is supposed to roll the windows up and not stop near the combs (we have never had any problems, and the fact that there are large combs on the much-visited Punakha Dzong suggests this must be a unique situation). It is considered "Near Threatened," population unknown.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

WHITE-BROWED PICULET (*Sasia ochracea*) – A very responsive bird in the bamboo near Tingtibi provided excellent views of this tiny, attractive species of woodpecker.

GRAY-CAPPED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos canicapillus*) – A pair above our Tingtibi camp had a nest that they were visiting regularly.

FULVOUS-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos macei*) – Good views of one near Tingtibi.

RUFIOUS-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*) – Our first and best views were on DoChu La, with additional sightings on Pele La and Yutong La. Some older books called it Rufous-bellied Sapsucker; it drills rows of sap wells like North American sapsuckers.

CRIMSON-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos cathpharius*) – Five seen, more than normal.

DARJEELING WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos darjellensis*) – Susan spotted one on DoChu La at the Royal Botanical Garden; it was #3,000 for friend Phyllis!

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*) – One near Yongkola, with another on our last full day in Bhutan providing a better view.

GREATER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus flavinucha*) – Two sightings: One along the Mo Chhu and a pair above Tingtibi with a nest hole on 17 April.

RUFIOUS WOODPECKER (*Micropternus brachyurus*) – A responsive bird near Tingtibi provided good views.

BAY WOODPECKER (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) – After a series of failures, this reclusive forest woodpecker twice showed up well near Tingtibi.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – A scattered few, including the nesting pairs at the Punakha Dzong.

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – Seen several times on the southward leg, including a pair with an apparent nest in a stub on 17 April.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – Minivets are a glorious ID challenge--among the female and male plumage characters and the calls, ID is quite possible, but it can take a little bit of time to assess some of the variables. This species was fairly common in lower montane forest.

SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*) – The one of which we identified the fewest; several sightings in lower montane forests.

LONG-TAILED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus ethologus*) – One of the more common minivets, and the minivet that occurs at the highest elevations.

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus speciosus*) – A common species from the foothills up to middle elevations.

BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melaschistos*) – Fairly common, visually and vocally, in the montane forests.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – A bird of open areas, especially agricultural areas, mostly below the next species. We saw "black-headed" types.

GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius tephronotus*) – The upper-elevation shrike, breeding around higher elevation pastures and fields, but also seen lower around Tingtibi (still on the winter grounds).

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-HEADED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius rufiventer*) – Unfortunately, but not entirely surprisingly, heard only; a scarce specialty. [*]

BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (CHESTNUT-WINGED) (*Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris*) – Mostly heard; good looks a couple of times above Yongkola. The former "White-browed Shrike-Babbler" has been split various ways; Clements current treatment is that Blyth's is in Bhutan (this subspecies), but some texts are uncertain about the affiliation of *validirostris* (f.k.a. as "Pied," but that common name now used for the Javan form that was mistakenly on the checklist) (*Himalayan Shrike-Babbler*, *P. ripleyi*, occurs farther west from Nepal to Kashmir).

GREEN SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius xanthochlorus*) – A regional specialty that was relatively scarce this year, with just two seen (but good looks at the second one).

BLACK-EARED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius melanotis*) – This lovely little bird was seen several times, with good looks eventually above Yongkola.

WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS (*Erpornis zantholeuca*) – Another species that was unusually scarce. We saw just two, birds that Diane spotted high in the canopy above Yongkola.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

SLENDER-BILLED ORIOLE (*Oriolus tenuirostris*) – One below Trongsa at a stop occasioned by Sangay needing to make a delivery.

MAROON ORIOLE (*Oriolus traillii*) – Heard regularly in the broadleaf forests, and seen regularly.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Nearly daily in Bhutan, the common drongo of upper elevations. Small groups were regular at Giant Rock Bee colonies, and seemed to be eating the bees.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Fairly common in the Tingtibi area.

LESSER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus remifer*) – Craig saw a full-tailed bird in flight near Zhemgang, saying it was like a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and more.

HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – We saw a few in the Mangde Chhu Valley near Tingtibi, observing the distinctive hackles and tail shape. As split from Spangled and others, this is the species in the Indian Subcontinent.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – In small numbers, but this perky insectivore was regular in broadleafed forests.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea*) – Craig got us on two near Tingtibi, and we enjoyed good views of the electric blue of this flycatcher.

ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – Widespread on the Indian Sub-Continent, but scarce on our route in Bhutan. We enjoyed good views, including of a stunning white-tailed male, near Tingtibi.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*) – With a North American perspective, "The Jay" of Europe seems as exotic as the rest of Bhutan's birds. We had some very nice views on DoChu La and again on Pele La.

YELLOW-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*Urocissa flavirostris*) – A regular species in the higher-elevation conifer forests, we had some excellent looks. There were different perspectives on the "personality"--photographers found them a little shy, but the birds are also camp followers that were watched eating left over cheese potatoes and noodles after lunch. a.k.a. Gold-billed Magpie.

COMMON GREEN-MAGPIE (*Cissa chinensis*) – Cynthia spotted one along the Mo Chhu and the rest of us caught up with one below Tama La.

GRAY TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta formosae*) – This was the "Pie" of the broadleafed forest, with many good views at places such as the Mo Chhu, Yongkola, and Tingtibi.

EURASIAN MAGPIE (*Pica pica*) – Locally common in the four Bumthang Valleys, otherwise scarce or absent in Bhutan. We saw *P. p. bottanensis* (there may be splits of Eurasian, which has been separated from Black-billed of North America).

EURASIAN NUTCRACKER (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) – Common in the conifer forests below the passes; for those that know Clark's Nutcracker, the call is quite similar. a.k.a. Spotted Nutcracker.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Locally common, seen most often around communities in the higher valleys, even around a couple of our hotels.

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – Common in Gelephu, a reintroduction to birding India.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Common and widespread, seen daily throughout, though in tiny numbers by the end of the trip (they all seemed to be this species, not Eastern Jungle).

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Just one encounter--apparently nesting under the eaves of the same home as the House Swifts and Red-rumped Swallows.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – Ditto.

ASIAN HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon dasypus*) – A couple of encounters at higher and drier locales--near Paro and on Pele La.

NEPAL HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon nipalense*) – Colonies were nesting on cliffs in broad-leafed forest at middle elevation, e.g., on Pele La, below Namling, and near Zhemgang.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

YELLOW-BELLIED FAIRY-FANTAIL (*Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*) – One of the taxonomic surprises of recent genetic studies of birds was the family Stenostiridae, comprised of nine diverse relicts from Africa to Indonesia, including this, the former "Yellow-bellied Fantail." We saw small numbers of this altitudinal migrant as they were reaching high-elevation breeding grounds.

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Common by voice and regularly seen; Bhutan's other Fairy Flycatcher, so different from the Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

COAL TIT (*Pariparus ater*) – Occurring from Ireland to Taiwan, there are many subspecies, but no splits (yet). We saw *P. a. aemodius*. This was of the several tits that we could count on seeing in the conifer forests on every pass.

RUFIOUS-VENTED TIT (*Pariparus rubiventris*) – Another regular at high elevation, seen on most every La.

GRAY-CRESTED TIT (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – Less common than the previous two, but regular.

GREEN-BACKED TIT (*Parus monticolus*) – Nearly daily, a common bird in broadleafed forests, with some occurring with the previous three in the uppermost forests.

YELLOW-CHEEKED TIT (*Parus spilonotus*) – We saw a couple in forest above Yongkola; never common, but we usually see more.

YELLOW-BROWED TIT (*Sylviparus modestus*) – Numbers of this species seemed especially low; we saw just a handful the whole trip, a number more typical of many days in some years.

SULTAN TIT (*Melanochlora sultanea*) – We usually see this species, but they are scarce and it is a nice find in general, and of course a great bird. Our first were in the flock with the Beautiful Nuthatches, and we had two more in a forested ravine below Tama La.

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

FIRE-CAPPED TIT (*Cephalopyrus flammiceps*) – We often miss this species, but this year we had a record total, with about 15 in a flock on DoChu La and a few more on Pele La. The status of this species in Bhutan is poorly understood; they seem migratory to some degree. This monotypic genus is still something of a puzzle, variously treated as part of the penduline-tits or as the basal lineage of the (regular) tits.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BLACK-THROATED TIT (*Aegithalos concinnus*) – This tiny beauty was seen regularly in small numbers in broadleafed forest. a.k.a. Rufous-capped Tit.

BLACK-BROWED TIT (*Aegithalos iouschistos*) – The higher elevation replacement of the preceding, occurring in the conifer zone. a.k.a. Rufous-fronted Tit (or Rufous-fronted Bushtit as by the IOC; this is the family of the Bushtit of North America).

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH (*Sitta cinnamoventris*) – Nancy spotted our first en route to Tingtibi, and we saw several more on Tama La across the valley. Note the correction; Indian Nuthatch is the bird of peninsular India.

WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH (*Sitta himalayensis*) – The most common nuthatch, a regular in the broadleafed forests.

BEAUTIFUL NUTHATCH (*Sitta formosa*) – One of our prizes was a great view of at least two near Yongkola, a location where no one had seen them in years of looking, but which looked perfect. Of course we only bird a narrow transect on those steep slopes, and there have probably always been some away from the one road. In any event, good views of bird that we never count on seeing. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population between 2,500 and 10,000.

Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)

WALLCREEPER (*Tichodroma muraria*) – A bonus, a bird that we usually do not see--most wintering birds have departed during March. Sangay spotted one on a rocky slope above the Par Chhu, and we had lengthy looks as it foraged above us.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

HODGSON'S TREECREEPER (*Certhia hodgsoni mandellii*) – Two were in the high-elevation conifers on Chele La, our most regular site. As split recently from Eurasian Treecreeper, *C. familiaris*.

RUSTY-FLANKED TREECREEPER (*Certhia nipalensis*) – Part of the group saw one from the bus (yes, we were stopped!) below Sengor in Thrumshingla N.P.

SIKKIM TREECREEPER (*Certhia discolor*) – Nancy pointed out one foraging in broadleafed trees on the lower slopes of Pele La. Brown-throated Treecreeper has been split into this species and Hume's.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

BROWN DIPPER (*Cinclus pallasii*) – Bhutan has many rivers, but we never see all that many of this bird, and this year was typical, with just a few along the Thim Chhu, Mo Chhu, and below Tama La.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

STRIATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus striatus*) – This heavily-striated bulbul was seen well several times in the cool broadleafed forests.

BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*) – One near Tingtibi.

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – A common bird of the lowlands that extends well up the settled valleys.

WHITE-THROATED BULBUL (*Alophoixus flaveolus*) – We had good views of several along the road near our Tingtibi camp.

BLACK BULBUL (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) – The most widespread bulbul of the tour route, inhabiting higher elevations than the others, while still common lower down.

ASHY BULBUL (*Hemixos flavala*) – A few near Tingtibi, where our best views were of birds foraging in a fruiting tree above camp.

MOUNTAIN BULBUL (*Ixos mccllellandii*) – Uncommon; we saw a few along the Mo Chhu, below Zhemgang, and across Tama La.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – A huge range across Eurasia; generally scarce in Bhutan, and we had just one, on Chele La.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings)

SCALY-BREASTED CUPWING (*Pnoepyga albiventer*) – A responsive bird was eventually seen well (and heard) on Yutong La. Genetic studies have shown that wren-babblers are a diverse lot, and the cupwings are a small family representing part of that former wren-babbler assemblage.

PYGMY CUPWING (*Pnoepyga pusilla*) – Unusually scarce/quiet/unresponsive. [*]

Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

GRAY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia cyaniventer*) – The three tiny tesias with big voices were seen well, although not quite all by all. We saw this one first on Pele La, and one or two more were seen in Thrumshingla N.P.

SLATY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia olivea*) – Part of the group saw one along the Mo Chhu and the rest saw a couple on either side of the road above Yongkola.

GRAY-SIDED BUSH-WARBLER (*Cettia brunnifrons*) – We saw a responsive, singing bird on Yutong La, and another above our camp below Tama La.

CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA (*Cettia castaneocoronata*) – Still called a Tesia, but now placed in the genus *Cettia*, most of us managed views of a responsive bird clambering around in tall shrubbery below Sengor.

YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER (*Abroscopus superciliosus*) – We had a good view of one in the stands of tall bamboo along the Mangde Chhu.

RUFIOUS-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus albugularis*) – In short supply at some regular spots, we finally connected with a responsive bird above the Mangde Chhu near Tingtibi and had good views of this tiny bird.

BLACK-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus schisticeps*) – Another tiny warbler! We had several encounters in broadleaved forests; a regional specialty.

MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD (*Phyllergates cucullatus*) – We were treated to great views of two birds that were interacting strongly with each other in bamboo near Namling. Although it is shaped and patterned like a tailorbird, genetic studies have shown that it is not related to them, and instead part of the Cettiidae (bush-warblers).

BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis fortipes*) – Good views of an unusually cooperative bird during our rainy walk above Namling.

HUME'S BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis brunescens*) – We saw one on DoChu La, perhaps a migrant or wintering bird; we did not hear or see any in the high-elevation bamboo where they breed.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – Probably migrants moving higher and onward; we finally ran into several above Tingtibi.

BUFF-BARRED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus pulcher*) – Locally common on a few of the higher passes, where we saw several that were moderately dusted by rhododendron pollen. a.k.a. Orange-barred Warbler.

ASHY-THROATED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*) – One of the more distinctive warblers, and one of the more common.

PALE-RUMPED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*) – Also fairly common to common on the higher passes. a.k.a. Lemon-rumped Warbler; as split from Pallas's Warbler.

HUME'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus humei*) – We saw several that looked/sounded like this species, which is very similar to Yellow-browed, from which it was recently split. We also saw several "sp." warblers of this type.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – We saw one of this complex, a bird with one weak wingbar. Supposedly common in Bhutan, they always seem anything but.

BLYTH'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus reguloides*) – Breeding birds had returned, and were singing strongly. Seen often and well, the bright color on the bill a helpful reminder.

YELLOW-VENTED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus cantator*) – A local bird from Nepal to Laos, it is usually a lifebird for most. It is locally common in Bhutan in broadleaved forests at lower elevations, and we had good views, and heard many more, along the Mo Chhu and near Tingtibi.

GRAY-HOODED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*) – Another common bird by voice, and they were vocal even during a cool spring in Bhutan. With time, many were seen as well as heard.

GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus burkii*) – The original Golden-spectacled was split into five species, including this and Whistler's. In Bhutan this is the lower elevation breeder of the two; we saw several, first along the Mo Chhu, then singing in Thrumshingla N.P.

WHISTLER'S WARBLER (*Seicercus whistleri*) – Reflecting either a late spring or a bad breeding season or two, this bird was strangely scarce at higher elevations. We saw one in Thrumshingla N.P. and finally ran into more normal numbers on Yutong La.

WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus affinis*) – Not an easy bird, we had just a couple in the Namling area.

GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Seicercus poliogenys*) – Several encounters, our best coming above Yongkola.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER (*Seicercus castaniceps*) – The high, thin voice was heard regularly in the broadleaved forests, and we saw several of this attractive species.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – A true tailorbird (cf. Mountain), this lowland species can be found in disturbed areas of the lower slopes, as we did near Tingtibi.

STRIATED PRINIA (*Prinia crinigera*) – Susan saved us some effort by pointing out one that was singing in sight of our breakfast spot below Trongsa.

BLACK-THROATED PRINIA (*Prinia atrogularis*) – We had good views in a hemp patch above Tingtibi. a.k.a. Hill Prinia.

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS (*Myzornis pyrrhous*) – We are never sure if or where we are going to find this strange and lovely bird. Fortunately we

did connect with two singles on Yutong La, individuals perhaps returning to the breeding grounds, and got a very nice taste of the odd shade of green and fine markings. Formerly placed in the traditional babblers, genetic studies show that it is something like that, generally now placed in with the Sylviid "warblers", which are a different flavor of "babbler."

GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA (*Lioparus chrysotis*) – Uncommon and missable, it was whew! and wow! when we connected with this lovely small bird in a flock in bamboo near Namling. The babblers were overall a cohesive lot under the genetic microscope, but within the group there was much change, with "fulvettas" divided into three sections.

WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA (*Fulvetta vinipectus*) – Common in treeline scrub and forests; tame and confiding.

GREAT PARROTBILL (*Conostoma oemodium*) – We did very well with parrotbills, finding six species, a couple more than average. That we saw those six species a total of eight times points to the scarcity of them. This largest species was home at an old spot, which was a good thing--much of its preferred high-elevation bamboo died off naturally five years ago, and little remains on our route.

BROWN PARROTBILL (*Cholornis unicolor*) – Patricia spotted a pair on DoChu La, and we saw it again two days later in the Phobjika Valley.

GRAY-HEADED PARROTBILL (*Psittiparus gularis*) – We had a quick encounter with one in a rapidly moving flock below Zhemgang, the one area where we have found it before, unassociated with bamboo.

WHITE-BREASTED PARROTBILL (*Psittiparus ruficeps*) – They got away quickly, but we stayed in the area, and ended up with good views of several of this striking bird in bamboo above Yongkola. a.k.a. Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, a name that conveys something useful.

PALE-BILLED PARROTBILL (*Chleuasicus atosuperciliaris*) – A single bird was slipping through a large stand of large bamboo near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill.

BLACK-THROATED PARROTBILL (*Suthora nipalensis*) – This exquisite, small parrotbill was seen twice, first in a fast-moving flock on Pele La (about 20!) and again below Namling. Some lists split this species into many, in which event we saw Orange-eared, *S. humii*.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

STRIATED YUHINA (*Yuhina castaniceps*) – A few of this rather plain babbler were seen near Tingtibi.

WHITE-NAPED YUHINA (*Yuhina bakeri*) – Uncommon, but we don't expect to miss it, which was what we were doing until we found a few below Zhemgang (good views) and again the next day on Tama La.

WHISKERED YUHINA (*Yuhina flavicollis*) – Common in the broadleaved forests.

STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA (*Yuhina gularis*) – Seen well multiple times, but overall scarce this year; generally above Whiskered in elevation, occurring in the conifers and treeline scrub.

RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA (*Yuhina occipitalis*) – Seen on all the high passes; an attractive yuhina on which the rufous nape stands out, not the rufous vent.

BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA (*Yuhina nigrimenta*) – Seen twice, first along the Mo Chhu, then en route to Tingtibi, where there was a large flock that did not distract most from some big, gaudy hornbill!

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Fairly common in broadleaf forest at middle and lower elevations.

Timaliidae (Tree-Babblers, Scimitar-Babblers, and Allies)

GOLDEN BABBLER (*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*) – Seen first above Yongkola, with a repeat good performance in a shaded ravine near Zhemgang.

RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*) – Regular in small numbers; often an inconspicuous element of mixed flocks.

RUFOUS-THROATED WREN-BABBLER (*Spelaeornis caudatus*) – We had trouble with wren-babblers, but this one was responsive along a gully above Yongkola. It is considered "Near Threatened."

SLENDER-BILLED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus superciliaris*) – Another 'whew' and 'wow' bird. After a couple of "heard only"s, we had a very responsive pair in bamboo above Yongkola in Thrumshingla N.P.

STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*) – A skulker with a serious response time lag, but we were lagging, too, so it worked out fine for good views in bamboo near Namling.

RUSTY-CHEEKED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Megapomatorhinus erythrognys*) – A skulker in general, but we met a pair that was in a different frame of mind below Trongsa, and enjoyed good looks at them.

GRAY-THROATED BABBLER (*Stachyris nigriceps*) – We had unsatisfying looks at our first ones below Zhemgang, and we never got fully engaged with them again. [*]

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

YELLOW-THROATED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus cinereus*) – A regional specialty, we had lengthy looks at close range above Yongkola.

RUFOUS-WINGED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*) – In small numbers, often with mixed flocks; close views several times.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

NEPAL FULVETTA (*Alcippe nipalensis*) – First seen along the Mo Chhu, with more later between Zhemgang and Tingtibi.

STRIATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Grammatoptila striata*) – This large, jay-like bird was common by voice in the broadleaved forests, and as one of the better (beware the moral judgment of the tour guide!) laughingthrushes, was fairly easy to see.

HIMALAYAN CUTIA (*Cutia nipalensis*) – This striking babbler that behaves like a giant nuthatch was seen first on Pele La, and then again near Yongkola. As split from Vietnamese Cutia.

WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax leucolophus*) – Normally not too hard to see, we were having trouble until we found a group of this great animal below Tama La.

LESSER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax monileger*) – Seen with some difficulty below our Tingtibi camp.

RUFOUS-CHINNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla rufogularis*) – Usually a bad laughingthrush, and it certainly was this time. [*]

SPOTTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ocellata*) – This striking bird can be a bad laughingthrush, but on Chele La our first full day in Bhutan we met the best of the best, and had views in the open several times.

GREATER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla pectoralis*) [*]

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla albogularis*) – A really good laughingthrush that was especially in evidence this year, with flock after flock along the road above Yongkola and elsewhere.

RUFOUS-NECKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ruficollis*) – Usually a rather bad laughingthrush, we had some fine specimens below Trongsa that were much appreciated.

- GRAY-SIDED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Ianthocincla caerulata*) – Another skulker that was kind to us, and came out to feed on the road edge on their own above Yongkola. Nice.
- BHUTAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron imbricatum*) – Seen carrying nesting material near Pele La and again briefly near Zhemgang. Not the most striking laughingthrush, but (since the split from Streaked) the most localized.
- SCALY LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron subunicolor*) – Another bad one, but when we finally found some (at the seemingly low elevation of 1900m) they were good enough, and we had satisfying views in the dense undergrowth above Yongkola.
- BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron squamatum*) – Perhaps you had a bad guide, not a bad laughingthrush?! Heard at three spots. [*]
- BLACK-FACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron affine*) – This species is common enough at high elevation that one can usually count on seeing them without testing goodness or badness. That was especially true when a flock emerged at dawn to bathe in the puddles in the road at 3400m on Pele La (brrrr!).
- CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*) – A little skulkier than Black-faced, but also widespread enough that one can expect some to emerge several times during tour, which they did. Note that Chestnut-crowned has been split five ways, this one of the Indian subcontinent retaining the scientific and common name, the others occurring farther east in Thailand and Malaysia.
- RUFIOUS SIBIA** (*Heterophasia capistrata*) – One of the most common and widespread babblers in Bhutan, seen daily once we entered broadleafed forests east of Thimphu.
- SILVER-EARED MESIA** (*Leiothrix argentauris*) – We worked to see a couple in shrubbery below Zhemgang, and then delighted in great views the next day near there.
- RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX** (*Leiothrix lutea*) [*]
- RED-TAILED MINLA** (*Minla ignotincta*) – A couple of sizeable flocks suggested that this species was still in winter mode. Our best views were of a pair with a mixed flock below Tama La.
- RED-FACED LIOCICHLA** (*Liocichla phoenicea*) – Seen first above Yongkola, where we had quick, good views along the road, and then below Tama La, where we struggled with a strong singer that wanted to maintain its privacy, but did emerge briefly many times.
- HOARY-THROATED BARWING** (*Actinodura nipalensis*) – This regional specialty was seen well enough to count the bars, of which there are many. Seen first on DoChu La, and then on several more passes.
- RUSTY-FRONTED BARWING** (*Actinodura egertoni*) – We connected very well with this bird this year, having repeated encounters and many good views of small groups moving through thickets, but not really skulking.
- BLUE-WINGED MINLA** (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*) – Not the brightest species in plumage, so it was often a bit of an ID challenge at a distance, but we had several good views.
- CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA** (*Actinodura strigula*) – Another high-elevation species that seemed to be in low numbers. We had good views, just not as often as expected.
- Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*
- DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – A few were heading northward and upward toward the breeding grounds, first along the Mo Chhu (three) and then near Zhemgang. a.k.a. Siberian Flycatcher; somewhat like a small Olive-sided Flycatcher in pattern and very much in behavior, selecting the highest bare perches from which to sally. [b]
- FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa ferruginea*) – A species we often miss, we were fortunate to see two, the first along the Mo Chhu, the second above Tingtibi.
- ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** (*Copsychus saularis*) – A lowland bird that has colonized upward, seen in the cleared valleys up to middle elevations, e.g. around Trogon Villa.
- WHITE-GORGETED FLYCATCHER** (*Anthipes monileger*) – Heard at length at close range, but we could not spot it in the thicket. [*]
- PALE BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis unicolor*) – A different shade of blue from Verditer, and very different in behavior, occurring in the forest understory. It took a while to spot this skulker below Zhemgang, during which time we greatly enjoyed the beautiful song.
- BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – A responsive bird was seen quickly above our Tingtibi camp. a.k.a. Blue-throated Blue-Flycatcher.
- LARGE NILTAVA** (*Niltava grandis*) – Heard regularly, with several seen, especially on the Namling-Yongkola stretch of Thrumshingla N.P.
- SMALL NILTAVA** (*Niltava macgrigorae*) – The high, thin song is hard to pinpoint, but we eventually spotted and had good views of our first along the Mo Chhu.
- RUFIOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA** (*Niltava sundara*) – This gleaming bird of the forest interior was seen on DoChu La, Pele La, and near Namling.
- PYGMY BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapella hodgsoni*) – A scarce bird with which we did well, finding it three times on Pele La, above Yongkola, and Tama La; good views of both sexes.
- VERDITER FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – Widespread and easily seen on most days of the tour.
- BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH** (*Myophonus caeruleus*) – Seen almost daily, most commonly bounding off the road, especially early and late in the day. From time to time we had a close one while on foot, and could study the subtle highlights (birds can see UV wavelengths, and apparently this species really lights up in UV).
- LITTLE FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus scouleri*) – After trying several historic spots without success, our last prime spot came through, and we had great views looking down from the bridge. It seemed like a little wave from the rapid current might have swept one away, but it was seen flying clear!
- SPOTTED FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus maculatus*) – A tough one, often occurring in the breeding season along forested creeks, but this year we did well with great looks twice, starting with the pair Nadu spotted near our first honeyguide (but we missed Slaty-backed, one we often see).
- WHITE-TAILED ROBIN** (*Cinclidium leucurum*) – Seen in the forest understory on DoChu La at the same spot as our first Rufous-bellied Niltava.
- HIMALAYAN BLUETAIL** (*Tarsiger rufilatus*) – Seen well on a couple of the high passes, Chele La and Ura La, where they were singing (and will breed). Note the change from the checklist: This species has been split, and as split we saw *T. rufilatus*, not *cyanurus*. There are many common name permutations, e.g., Himalayan Orange-flanked Bush-Robin.
- GOLDEN BUSH-ROBIN** (*Tarsiger chrysaesus*) – Two encounters with this tough bird, the first a female near Namling (migrant or wintering bird at this location), the second a furtive male that kept circling us higher in Thrumshingla N.P. (a breeding location) that was variously seen well, glimpsed, or missed.
- LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula westermanni*) – A sprinkling in broadleafed forests at lower elevation.

ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula superciliaris*) – Small numbers were seen on Pele La and between Zhemgang and Tingtibi, with good views of both male and female.

RUFIOUS-GORGETED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula strophiiata*) – Seen daily at higher elevations, including the highest passes (where they will breed); one of the easier flycatchers to see.

SAPPHIRE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula sapphira*) – Scarce, missed on most tours; we had a male above Yongkola.

BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – Seen on five days, ranging from glowing birds on their breeding grounds at Chele La to wintering birds or grounded migrants in a clearing near Namling on a wet day.

PLUMBEOUS REDSTART (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Fairly common on most watercourses. a.k.a. Plumbeous Water-Redstart.

WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Widespread in small numbers; perhaps fewer than normal (altitudinal migrants had not yet returned?), but we had many good views. a.k.a. River Chat, White-capped Water-Redstart.

HODGSON'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – Wintering birds were still present early in the trip, and we saw them on several days, including shortly after our arrival in Paro. [b]

BLACK REDSTART (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – A male below Sengor was a migrant. [b]

CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola rufiventris*) – Diane photographed a female below Sengor, and when we started looking around Phyllis found the male. A few more pairs were seen near Namling.

BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) – Returning breeders were present in numbers at lower elevations toward the end of the tour, and were often conspicuous, perching on utility wires and concrete road abutments.

SIBERIAN STONECHAT (*Saxicola maurus*) – We saw one below Paro and later Phyllis spotted a male on the slope above our breakfast spot on Yutong La. Migrants or winterers. As split from Common Stonechat.

GRAY BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola ferreus*) – Scattered in small numbers; pairs were periodically seen in cleared areas.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

TICKELL'S THRUSH (*Turdus unicolor*) – A scarce migrant from Indian wintering grounds; we saw a male on the south slope of Tama La. [b]

WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus albocinctus*) – Breeders were at high-elevation sites, with a few seen on most of the higher passes.

GRAY-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus boulboul*) – This scarce species was seen twice, first at a traditional spot on DoChu La, and again at a new site for us, Tama La.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Common in disturbed areas at lower and middle elevations.

CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING (*Sturnia malabarica*) – Uncommon, seen twice, first near Tingtibi, then on the back side of Tama La.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis hardwickii*) – Seen daily on the southward leg of the trip.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) – Widespread in small numbers.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

FIRE-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga ignicauda*) – Another uncommon altitudinal migrant that we are never sure where we will see it, hence if we will see it! So it was an exciting moment when we found a few in the still wintry habitat of Thrumshing La, and had repeated good views. Later, on Yutong La, we saw several brilliant fly-bys, and were glad we had seen them better earlier.

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga saturata*) – A sunbird of lower elevations, where fairly common. The colors are subtle, but with time everyone got a good angle and enjoyed some flashes of brilliance.

GOULD'S SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga gouldiae*) – This striking bird was seen repeatedly at upper elevations. A.k.a. Ms. Gould's Sunbird!! :)

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga nipalensis*) – Common, but perhaps less common than ever before! Still, a daily joy at higher elevations.

CRIMSON SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – A trio near Tingtibi disappeared way too rapidly.

STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera magna*) – A few were seen, and more heard, near Yongkola and Tingtibi.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

ALPINE ACCENTOR (*Prunella collaris*) – Sangay spotted one on a rocky slope in Thrumshingla N.P., and we stopped to relocate it (good views). [b]

HIMALAYAN ACCENTOR (*Prunella himalayana*) – We had good looks at a small flock feeding on the forest floor below Chele La. [b]

RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR (*Prunella strophiiata*) – The most numerous wintering accentor, seen regularly in small numbers in scrub and hedgerows. [b]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – A few migrants were seen, mostly flying in front of the bus after flushing from a flowing culvert. [b]

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – Local breeders were easily found along the large, rocky rivers in the west. We saw M. a. alboloides.

ROSY PIPIT (*Anthus roseatus*) – We found two lingering migrants/winterers along the Par Chhu. [b]

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Widespread in small numbers, probably a mix of local breeders (birds singing from tree tops at high elevation) and migrants (small flocks along roadsides at lower elevations). a.k.a. Indian Tree Pipit.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

CRESTED BUNTING (*Melophus lathamii*) – We had nice views of a few in agricultural areas below Trongsa.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte nemoricola*) – Unfortunately, no more than quick views of a flock heading elsewhere near Chele La.

GOLD-NAPED FINCH (*Pyrrhoptectes epauletta*) – Most folks managed to get on a male of this uncommon species, always a rather random encounter, on Yutong La.

CRIMSON-BROWED FINCH (*Pinicola subhimachala*) – Nancy re-found a female below DoChu La and we had good looks; this is a species we regularly miss.

BROWN BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula nipalensis*) – Two were seen foraging in a treetop high above us near Tama La; telescope views, but tough viewing in the waving treetops.

RED-HEADED BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*) – We had good views of a half dozen of this erratic species on Pele La, and there were a couple more encounters for part of the group, e.g., by Patricia on Thrumshing La.

DARK-RUMPED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus edwardsii*) – Rosefinches are a difficult group on this tour, and we saw one or two fewer species than average. And we do not even get close to the high elevation habitat of several others in Bhutan. We saw this species twice, a couple of females on Pele La and a male and a female on Thrumshing La.

HIMALAYAN WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus thura*) – A small group was foraging in open forest just below Chele La. As split, "White-browed" into Himalayan and Chinese flavors of the same.

SCARLET FINCH (*Haematospiza sipahi*) – Our first was a single male near Namling, which was followed by a brilliant flock near Zhemgang and a few more wintering birds near Tama La. Many of these finches are in winter mode in April, apparently not breeding until much later (they are in flocks, no song, etc.).

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) – Cynthia spotted our only one on Ura La; this species is generally this scarce in Bhutan.

TIBETAN SERIN (*Serinus thibetanus*) – We had a couple of large (50 & 75) flocks, the most ever, on DoChu La and Pele La.

COLLARED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas affinis*) – This lovely bird was seen three times, a good total, on Chele La, Ura La, and Thrumshing La.

SPOT-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas melanozanthos*) – An uncommon grosbeak that occurs at lower elevations than its two congeners, preferring broadleafed forests. We saw four feeding on Pele La and one the next day on the other side of the pass.

WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas carnipes*) – Fairly common on Chele La, with smaller numbers seen and heard on several other passes.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

RUSSET SPARROW (*Passer rutilans*) – This sexually dimorphic sparrow is locally common in agricultural areas of higher valleys. We saw it well around Paro, DoChu La, and the Bumthang Valleys.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – This sexually monomorphic sparrow was common throughout, typically commensal with humans.

MAMMALS

ASSAMESE MACAQUE (*Macaca assamensis*) – Troops were seen on a half dozen days, usually near cliffs or other topography that provides a secure roost.

COMMON LANGUR (*Presbytis entellus*) – We found one troop (not easy to find on this tour, though widespread in other areas) on Pele La, a regular spot, and enjoyed lengthy views of the monkeys devouring magnolia flowers petal by petal, followed by the center. A bad day for the magnolias, a nice encounter for us. A.k.a. Gray or Hanuman Langur.

GOLDEN LANGUR (*Presbytis geei*) – The easiest langur of the tour and the rarest in global terms, restricted to a limited area of Bhutan and a very small area in adjacent India (so not quite a political endemic). We saw multiple troops on the three days that we were on the left bank of the Mangde Chhu, and enjoyed several close, lengthy encounters with these lovely primates.

LEAF MONKEY SP. (*Presbytis pileata*) – Often known as Capped Langur, a langur that we do not always see. In fact, we had one of our best encounters ever, with a cooperative troop right along the road above Yongkola.

PIKA SP. (*Ochotona roylei*) – There are at least a half dozen species of pika in Bhutan, and the ID is not easy. This is the species that seems to be the common one at treeline, but certainty is lacking.

BLACK GIANT SQUIRREL (*Ratufa bicolor*) – This is an uncommon squirrel, and we did well to see four of this small otter in the trees (a size comment, not a taxonomic one), a couple of them very well.

IRAWADDY SQUIRREL (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) – A few were seen at lower elevations. a.k.a. Hoary-bellied Squirrel.

HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL (*Tamiops macclellandi*) – Widespread in forests at moderate to upper elevations; like an arboreal chipmunk.

HIMALAYAN GROUND-SQUIRREL (*Dremomys lokriah*) – Four sightings. a.k.a. Orange-bellied Squirrel.

YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN (*Martes flavigula*) – Missed more often than seen on this tour, we did very well to have good looks at two.

MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER) (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – This small, forest deer is usually heard during the tour, and is often seen briefly, moving rapidly away, so it was nice to see one moving leisurely across the opposite slope of a small canyon on Pele La.

COMMON GORAL (*Nemorhaedus goral*) – One of this "goat-antelope" was seen en route to Zhemgang, frozen on a steep slope.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Other critters:

Yak. All the ones we see are domesticated animals; there are apparently few truly wild Yaks left, and perhaps none in Bhutan, or at least in the areas we visit. While they do not "count," they are certainly part of the experience at the higher elevations.

Not many other critters. One or two small snakes were seen getting away, and a couple others were squashed on the road. Joe doubtless noted some of the butterflies, but the wet, cool weather did not help (nor does our emphasis on upper elevations help).

Totals for the tour: 291 bird taxa and 12 mammal taxa