



Field Guides Tour Report

Bhutan 2016

Apr 2, 2016 to Apr 20, 2016
Richard Webster & Thinley Gyeltshen

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



A summary photo of the 2016 Bhutan tour: Many sunny days, much habitat for birding, grand vistas, the beautiful Trongsa Dzong and Watch Tower, and evidence of the ugly aspect of the new road construction. Photo by guide Richard Webster.

A trip to Bhutan is hard to summarize; there are so many varied aspects. It was a good trip, rich in birds and plants and scenic vistas, all in the context of a welcoming and fascinating culture.

The negative change was the recent start of a massive road construction project affecting Bhutan's major road (our major road). The road over three major passes was in the works and there are signs that two more passes are slated for "improvements." As a result, our travels on several days were slowed as we were jolted along the way, and the birding was more difficult. Further clearing of the road edge in Phrumsengla N.P. also affected the birding, although we were spared much active construction. Of course better roads are important to the country, but it was sad to see that some sections were being done in an environmentally harmful way.

The weather was a more positive story. We had almost no rain, and no rain that seriously affected birding. It was much sunnier than the average trip, and we did have too many sunny mornings that became slow birding, but sun is much more comfortable than rain, and sun leads to good views, which we had on several days on which high peaks were visible.

The birding was, of course, fun. Populations seemed low of many common birds, but we still had repeated views of most of Bhutan's core avifauna. Among the specialties, we were fortunate to have an excellent encounter with the scarce Ward's Trogon, a pair that provided repeated views. We had repeat encounters with three fabulous pheasants: Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, and Blood Pheasant (views of Kalij were brief). Ibisbill was enjoyed at length, we found several Yellow-rumped Honeyguides at sites with the impressive combs of Giant Rock Bees, and Rufous-necked Hornbill was seen well on several occasions. Beautiful Nuthatch eluded us (as did White-bellied Heron, a true rarity), but we did have good views of several striking, distinctive birds, including Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Great Parrotbill, and Fire-tailed Myzornis. Some other special memories include many eagle sightings (sunny days helped), Black-tailed Crake, that flock of Great Hornbills, any and all minivets, Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie, Sultan Tit, Brown Dipper, Pygmy Cupwing, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Rufous-faced and Black-faced warblers, Pale Blue-Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, all the good and bad laughingthrushes (and there are no indifferent laughingthrushes), Himalayan Cutia, sunbirds at such close range, Scarlet Finch, and Collared Grosbeak.

Waterbirding is a minor part of the tour, but we did have a few nice sightings, especially a Lesser Adjutant (new to Bhutan?), Mandarin Duck, and

Pallas's (Great Black-headed) Gull. Scarce landbirds included Wallcreeper, White-throated Redstart, Red-throated (Dark-throated) Thrushes with one Dusky Thrush mixed in, and Spot-winged Starling. Overall, it seemed to be a "late spring," and we had more winter species than normal while arriving migrants seemed delayed. Oddly, the flora seemed advanced in comparison with normal. The rhododendrons were, by Bhutanese standards, average (which means lovely), while the magnolias were excellent and at their peak. Mammals are a relatively minor part of this tour, and we had nothing out of the ordinary, although mention must be made of the near-endemic Golden Langur, at which we had repeated good looks.

Our journey through Bhutan was made possible by our hard-working Gangri crew, especially Thinley, Sangay, Karma, and Kaka.

This list is based on the Clements Checklist (Cornell), with additional comments. Anglicized Bhutanese names are not standardized, but should be close enough. Conservation information 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)

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – Waterbirding is very limited on this tour, mostly to the rocky flats of the Puna Tsang Chhu, where we found a lovely flock of about 70 Ruddy Shelducks.

MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*) – Apparently back for another winter, this great rarity for Bhutan, a male, was again hanging out with the Ruddy Shelducks. [b]

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Small numbers were along the Puna Tsang Chhu. [b]

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*) – A few lingering winterers were also along the river. [b]

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – Ditto. [b]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

HILL PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila torqueola*) – A common voice, but an elusive one, a genus that does not seem to have a reason to cross the road. We made one modest effort to see one, but otherwise let them be. [*]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila mandellii*) – Heard several times above Yongkola. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000. [*]

RUFIOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila rufogularis*) – Heard several times above Tingtibi. [*]

BLOOD PHEASANT (*Ithaginis cruentus*) – While pheasants are a substantial challenge, they are much more readily seen than the partridges. Blood Pheasants are one of the many Bhutanese birds that surprise the observer--they are so much better than the book. We had excellent views on Chele La and on Phrumseng La.

HIMALAYAN MONAL (*Lophophorus impejanus*) – Chele La has often been a good spot, but we only had two brief views there, but this was rescued by Pele La, where two birds were seen well in all their finery (which was a good thing--none on Phrumseng La).

SATYR TRAGOPAN (*Tragopan satyra*) – We were in the bonus category with this pheasant of the forests, seeing two males on Pele La and a third on Sheytang La, and several females briefly below Sengor. This species is quite missable, and the guide would have like to bank one or two of these for the future. It is considered "Near Threatened," with a population under 15,000.

KALIJ PHEASANT (*Lophura leucomelanos*) – Perhaps the most widespread pheasant on our route, we never had a good experience for the whole group, instead having four encounters that were good for one or two people at a time.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

LESSER ADJUTANT (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) – The most surprising rarity of the trip was a Lesser Adjutant soaring over the Mangde Chhu on 17 April; good views of this impressive bird. The most recent editions of several books show no records for Bhutan, although more recent coverage of lowland areas along the Indian border may have turned one up (the species is regular on the plains of Assam). It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Small numbers, some still in breeding plumage, were still along the Puna Tsang Chhu.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – One bird was seen in flight over the town of Gelephug before we crossed into India.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON (*Gyps himalayensis*) – Pele La is usually the best area for this species, and was again this year, with more than a dozen on one day; another was seen after breakfast on Yutong La. All were in flight, except one that Sangay spotted perched, providing the "barn door" perspective on this huge bird. It is considered "Near Threatened," which means it is doing much better than most other Asian vultures.

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – We had great views of one of this widespread Asian raptor, a bird that perched over the road above Yongkola.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – It was a good trip for raptors, relating in part to the sunny weather on many days. We saw perhaps 10 of this species, including several at close range, perched and in flight.

RUFIOUS-BELLIED EAGLE (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*) – A bird we don't always see, so a close adult just above Yongkola was very nice, and an immature over the Trongsa Dzong a specially memorable setting.

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – Perhaps a dozen, certainly one of our largest totals, including several at close range flying through the forest canopy searching for prey.

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*) – Rare for this tour, we had two distant dark-phase birds soaring together over a forested slope below Zhemgang. Large-billed Crows in strafing mode; lengthy but not close.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – A routine wintering species in Bhutan, most seem to be gone by our tour dates. We saw two, one Sangay spotted in the Phobjika Valley on 8 April and a migrant over Yutong La Thinley spotted on 15 April. We also called it "Hen Harrier": about half of the lists (but not Clements) splits North American *C. hudsonius* from Eurasian *C. cyaneus*. [b]

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) – At least a half dozen accipiters were consistent with this species, but we never had a really good look.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*) – A regular species in Bhutan, but one we often don't see. This year we had two, one Jack spotted over Drugyel Dzong and one Shari spotted below Sengor.

PALLAS'S FISH-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) – We were searching in vain for White-bellied Heron when Marianne greatly improved the afternoon by spotting a perched bird near Punakha. We had good telescope views of it in a pine tree and then down on rocks in the river. a.k.a. Pallas's Sea-Eagle. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000.

HIMALAYAN BUZZARD (*Buteo refectus*) – Buteos in this region are in a state of nomenclatural, taxonomic, and systematic chaos, and your guide is not expert (and wonders if anyone really is on this subject!). Clements now splits Himalayan Buzzard from Common Buzzard; Clements uses *B. refectus*, but some regard 'refectus' as an invalid name, and use 'burmanicus' instead. Rasmussen and Anderton do not seem to recognize the presence of 'japonicus' Eastern Buzzard in the region, but many books do (all burmanicus??). Anyway, dark birds in upper montane areas like the one Johnny spotted on Chele La our first full day seem classic for "Himalayan"; less clear are some of the light immatures we saw at lower elevation (wintering or migrating?) and of which we saw more than normal (part of the late spring effect of this tour?). A great deal of verbiage for a Red-tail without a red-tail?? :)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BLACK-TAILED CRAKE (*Amaurornis bicolor*) – We tried several places without a whiff, but then returned to an old spot (a tiny channel between the road and a house, with a truck being loaded nearby!) and had a fabulous performance by a wonderful little bird.

Ibidorhynchidae (Ibisbill)

IBISBILL (*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*) – Although the Par Chhu is increasingly disturbed, we managed to find four there our first morning, a great start to the tour, and another was near Punakha.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

NORTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*) – Three on the Puna Tsang Chhu below Punakha on 6 April; regular in small numbers in winter, most are usually gone by April. It is considered "Near Threatened" (the population numbers in the millions, but it is thought to be declining rapidly). [b]

RIVER LAPWING (*Vanellus duvaucelii*) – When scanning for Ibisbills, one most often spots this species, which is just fine because it is a handsome bird. It is considered "Near Threatened," with a population under 17,000.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*) – One on the Puna Tsang Chhu on 6 April was perhaps slightly late for this uncommon wintering species. [b]

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Several were seen on riverbeds early in the tour. [b]

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – A couple were seen near Paro and Punakha. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

PALLAS'S GULL (*Ichthyophaga ichthyophaga*) – One of this striking gull (in lovely breeding plumage) was seen on a rocky island in the Puna Tsang Chhu on 6 April; it was northbound from Indian wintering grounds to breeding grounds in Central Asia. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – A few were on some rocky slopes, but most were commensal with humans. [I]

SNOW PIGEON (*Columba leuconota*) – A few were seen on Chele La, mostly in flight, once briefly on the ground, and a large flock was seen distantly over the fields of Shingar (Jack estimated 75).

SPECKLED WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba hodgsonii*) – Widespread in Bhutan, but we are never sure where we will see it. This year we had nice looks at a few above Paro, saw a flock feeding in a farm field near Punakha, and had a small flock fly by near Sengor.

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – One of those species that is seen nearly daily on the tour. This year our first good look was from the breakfast table as one walked under the bus! Many more good views were to come (it is a nice looking dove).

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Generally in disturbed areas at lower elevations.

BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia unchall*) – Thinley spotted one in a fruiting tree above Yongkola. Our only one, fortunately it was very cooperative, and we had great looks.

EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*) – This widespread Asian bird is hard to see well, so it was a real treat to have lengthy views of a lovely individual in the road below Zhemgang, with a few more, mostly in flight, near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Green-winged Pigeon.

PIN-TAILED PIGEON (*Treron apicauda*) – Thanks to some fruiting trees we were able to improve our views above Tingtibi.

WEDGE-TAILED PIGEON (*Treron sphenurus*) – Wayne got us on a young bird in one of the fruiting trees with Pin-tailed near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*) – An uncommon bird on this tour, we found several in a forested valley above Tingtibi that has been good for them before.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx sparveroides*) – Heard on most days of the tour, although in smaller numbers than normal. We did not have to struggle this year, and had several good sightings by chance.

HODGSON'S HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx nasicolor*) – One was seen near the Botanic Gardens. Note that "Hodgson's" has been split several ways (versus populations in SE Asia, Japan, and the Philippines), this one retaining in Clements the old common name for a reduced range (a.k.a. Whistling).

INDIAN CUCKOO (*Cuculus micropterus*) – Heard once near Tingtibi (usually a late arrival, so not a surprise to just hear one). [*]

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*) – Heard on about half of the days, with fewer individuals than normal. We had telescope views of a singing bird near Zhemgang.

HIMALAYAN CUCKOO (*Cuculus saturatus*) – The second most common cuckoo of the trip, mostly heard, but also seen several times, including one

that Brian spotted below Zhemgang. As split from Oriental Cuckoo.

BANDED BAY CUCKOO (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) – We only heard one near Tingtibi, and it would not respond from a long distance; we usually hear more (late spring?). [*]

ASIAN EMERALD CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx maculatus*) – Fortunately our one bird was a good performer. It stayed high in the trees, but we had telescope views that provided some emerald!

SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*) – Fewer than normal, with just two near Tingtibi, one of which was seen. There is confusion and disagreement about the taxonomy and the allocation of birds in Bhutan. Most treat the birds here as Square-tailed, but Payne 2005 and the IOC list seem to treat them as Fork-tailed (these two groups are increasingly split). As Susan noted, our bird had a small notch to the tail, which is OK for Square-tailed, as opposed to a deep fork.

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) – Heard once, at the Punakha Dzong (and heard more often during the early morning hours by jet-lagged people at our hotel in New Delhi!!). [*]

Strigidae (Owls)

COLLARED SCOPS-OWL (*Otus lettia*) [*]

COLLARED OWLET (*Glaucidium brodiei*) – A frustrating time; they are not easy, but the couple of times we were close to one they seemed to be in one of those impossible trees, the trees with hundreds of epiphytes. [*]

ASIAN BARRED OWLET (*Glaucidium cuculoides*) – Less frustrating only because we had fewer of them! [*]

HIMALAYAN OWL (*Strix niviculum*) – From our Sengor camp. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

HIMALAYAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus brevirostris*) – Several flocks were watched feeding leisurely over mountain forest.

BLYTH'S SWIFT (*Apus leuconyx*) – A split of Pacific = Fork-tailed Swift, as Wayne reminded your guide, who had forgotten in the last year. From a little more research, the split is not the most compelling ever, and I wouldn't know how to tell the various forms apart in the field (this is the only one in Bhutan). In any event, we had good looks a couple of times, saw more from the bus, and Shari pointed out birds going into cliff nest sites above the macaque toilet zone below Zhemgang (that brings it back, doesn't it?).

HOUSE SWIFT (*Apus nipalensis*) – As split from Little Swift of much of the Indian subcontinent's lowlands. We saw a few at the end of the trip in Gelephug.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

WARD'S TROGON (*Harpactes wardi*) – After a few tries at degraded historic spots early in the tour, we started our search above Yongkola and were thrilled to have nearly instant luck. The male was joined by the female and we had periodic fine views as the two foraged on both sides of the road. Much pursued by all of us birders, this species can be very difficult. Whew! It is considered "Near Threatened," the population size unknown.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Several sightings, including at the spectacular Punakha Dzong.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

GREAT HORNBILL (*Buceros bicornis*) – We usually see this species above Tingtibi, but this year's congregation of 20+ birds around fruiting trees in a canyon above camp was the most yet. Great views. It is considered "Near Threatened."

RUFUS-NECKED HORNBILL (*Aceros nipalensis*) – We had several views above Yongkola, exciting because they were our first, but did not get to savor them until we had close, perched birds below Zhemgang and near Tingtibi. A highlight. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 7,000.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – We saw two along the Puna Tsang Chhu on 6 April; wintering birds are mostly gone by the time of our tour. [b]

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – This is primarily a lowland bird, but we see a few in disturbed areas in mountain valleys.

CRESTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle lugubris*) – Always a tough bird, we saw our average, one, at the most frequent area, near Punakha. It was distant, but still impressive in the telescope.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER (*Nyctornis athertoni*) – Sangay spotted the first, re-found them, and spotted the second pair, but each time they fled quickly, providing only quick views for some.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

GREAT BARBET (*Psilopogon virens*) – Common by voice, and heard daily in broadleaf forests throughout. With time, there were good views.

GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon franklinii*) – Also quite common in the broadleaf forests at middle and upper elevations; good views on multiple occasions, with many more heard.

BLUE-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon asiaticus*) – This bright barbet was also common in broadleaf forests, its distribution centered on the lower slopes, e.g., below Zhemgang and near Tingtibi.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

YELLOW-RUMPED HONEYGUIDE (*Indicator xanthonotus*) – A specialty of the tour, this honeyguide is on few tour routes outside of Bhutan. We had three encounters at well known colonies of Giant Rock Bees, which stirred as much interest as the bird--their huge combs are impressive, especially when covered by a mass of bees. It is considered "Near Threatened," the population unknown.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

WHITE-BROWED PICULET (*Sasia ochracea*) – We had several quick, good, close views of a responsive bird in the bamboo near Tingtibi.

RUFUS-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*) – Our first of this attractive woodpecker was on Chele La, followed by better views on DoChu La and Pele La. Formerly known as Rufous-bellied Sapsucker because of its feeding habits.

CRIMSON-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos cathpharius*) – Susan spotted our first along the Mo Chhu, which was followed by more

than normal, with pairs on Pele La and above Yongkola.

DARJEELING WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos darjellensis*) – Almost totally diverted by pheasants, only Jack got on a calling bird on Pele La. It declined invitations to return, and we failed to find another.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*) – We saw one in broadleaf forest on the west side of Pele La.

GREATER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus flavinucha*) – Uncommon, but seen at several spots, first along the Mo Chhu, where Brian spotted one, and including a bird at an apparent nest hole that Lynda pointed out on Pele La.

GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Picus canus*) – Our first circled us above Yongkola, though staying either far up or far away, and we had more views of a closer one near Zhemgang.

PALE-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Gecinulus grantia*) – It flew right by us, but while briefly responsive in the bamboo near Tingtibi, we did not get any lengthy views of this scarce bird.

RUFOUS WOODPECKER (*Micropternus brachyurus*) – Great views of a very responsive bird that was perhaps traveling with White-crested Laughingthrushes (en route to Zhemgang after our camp).

BAY WOODPECKER (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) – Heard periodically, with three sightings, first before breakfast along the Mo Chhu, then nicely as we left the forests above Yongkola, and finally near Tingtibi.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – A fun addition to our great visit to the Punakha Dzong was the group of at least five kestrels that were riding the wind currents at rooftop level and calling.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Jack and Thinley pointed out a bird flying down the Mangde Chhu Valley.

Eurylaimidae (Asian and Grauer's Broadbills)

LONG-TAILED BROADBILL (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*) – Lynda saw one above Tingtibi.

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

LARGE WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis virgatus*) – We had several quick sightings of a bird foraging in the canopy below our Tingtibi camp.

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – We saw several active pairs below Tingtibi.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – After a first pair with a nest on DoChu La, this minivet was common above Yongkola, with a few more near Zhemgang.

SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*) – Most common in broadleaf forest on Pele La, where several pairs put on a show (all minivets can't do anything other than put on a show?), with further sightings above Yongkola and Tingtibi.

LONG-TAILED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus ethologus*) – The most widespread minivet, often on the move over the higher passes, and largely gone from the lower slopes by April.

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus speciosus*) – This slightly larger splash of color was easily seen at lower to middle elevations.

BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melaschistos*) – A study in gray that we saw regularly, and heard frequently, in broadleaf forest.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – A regular bird in agricultural land and pastures on the lower slopes, with an especially nice view of one near Trogon Villa.

GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius tephronotus*) – The upper elevation shrike, also in disturbed and agricultural areas; good views, starting our first morning near Paro (bleary-eyed as we were that first morning).

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (CHESTNUT-WINGED) (*Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris*) – Fairly common by voice, but not easy to see in the canopy. With time we had views with several flocks above Yongkola. This is one of the four splits of the former White-browed Shrike-Babbler. This genus has been shown genetically to be related to the vireos, and currently is included in them.

BLACK-EARED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius melanotis*) – This ornately decorated gem was seen with several flocks, first on Pele La, then above Yongkola and on Tama La.

WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS (*Erpornis zantholeuca*) – It was a struggle, but Jack relocated our one bird below Zhemgang. Formerly considered a yuhina (babbler), genetic studies have shown that it is a vireo, or close relative of the vireos. It is widespread in Asia, but uncommon on this tour route.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

MAROON ORIOLE (*Oriolus traillii*) – Heard daily in the broadleaf forest, and seen regularly, eventually in good light.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) – Seen in open country below Punakha.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – The common, widespread drongo, seen nearly daily, including at fairly high elevation, but not regularly in pure conifers.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – This glossy smaller drongo was fairly common in the Tingtibi area.

LESSER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus remifer*) – Seen briefly by Brian, and perhaps a few others, above Tingtibi.

HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – A few folks saw one below Tingtibi while others were seeing a Crimson Sunbird and others were about to feel bummed; it was a busy moment.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – In small numbers, but regular, in broadleaf forest, first seen at the Queens' botanical gardens.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea*) – Johnny spotted a pair as we started to bird in the bamboo near Tingtibi; yes, it has a black nape, but it is the electric shade of blue that grabs one.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*) – For most of us who do not bird in Europe much, we think things like "this is one of Asia's great birds." It is a great bird anywhere! In Bhutan it is somewhat local, but usually fairly common on DoDchu La, where we saw several groups.

YELLOW-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*Urocissa flavirostris*) – Not as conspicuous as in some years, but we still saw it on seven days. Not quite so bold as the crows, they wait until we leave our picnic site to come for scraps. a.k.a. Gold-billed Magpie.

COMMON GREEN-MAGPIE (*Cissa chinensis*) – We heard a few and then had good looks at one that Thinley pointed out above Yongkola. It is probably more common than we realized, but it is an unobtrusive forest bird. As Jack noted, the diversity of Bhutan's corvids is impressive.

GRAY TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta formosae*) – Seen first after breakfast above the Mo Chhu, then regularly and fairly commonly in broadleaf forest throughout.

EURASIAN MAGPIE (BLACK-RUMPED) (*Pica pica bottanensis*) – This subspecies, named for Bhutan, is one of several populations in Asia; as split from Black-billed of the New World. In Bhutan it is locally fairly common in the Bumthang Valleys, but absent from seemingly suitable habitat in the other valleys.

EURASIAN NUTCRACKER (SOUTHERN) (*Nucifraga caryocatactes macella*) – This bold bird was seen on most of the higher passes and more were heard (sounds similar to Clark's). We saw this subspecies, one of the populations in the hemispila or Southern group. a.k.a. Spotted Nutcracker (but separate from *multipunctata* = Kashmir Nutcracker).

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Our first views were on a roof near Paro, and roofs were the substrate for some again at Gongkhar Lodge. But we also saw some in wilder circumstances along the way!

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – Thimphu has apparently been colonized, where it was seen or heard outside our hotel for some; otherwise just in the border town of Gelephu.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Our friend, the Large-billed Crow, first to every picnic, or so it seemed. They have plenty of personality and a great range of vocalizations. Clements does not split this species; we saw *C. m. tibetosinensis* (e.g., not part of Jungle Crow or Eastern Crow of some lists).

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A small stream was working up the Puna Tsang Chhu valley toward Punakha. a.k.a. Sand Martin. [b]

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – We saw about five along the river on a windy afternoon near Punakha. [b]

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

NEPAL HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon nipalense*) – Small flocks were seen over forested areas several times, and we had better views near a couple of cliffs at which they were breeding.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

YELLOW-BELLIED FAIRY-FANTAIL (*Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*) – This small, bright fantail was seen regularly, mostly altitudinal migrants working their way up to the higher elevations where they will breed. They were often making long, fluttering sallies after insects. Genetic studies have made this one of nine species in a small family spread widely over Africa and Asia, the Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers). a.k.a. Yellow-bellied Fantail.

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – The other Bhutanese member of the Stenostiridae. Johnny spotted our first on Pele La, and we were to see a few daily in broadleaf forests, where they are actually quite common based on the remarkably loud song for such a small bird, often audible from the moving bus.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

YELLOW-BROWED TIT (*Sylviparus modestus*) – Small numbers of this small, rather plain tit were seen on most of the higher passes, fewer than normal (most had not yet returned from the lower slopes??).

SULTAN TIT (*Melanochlora sultanea*) – We had a responsive pair put on a good show along the Zhemgang ridge, much to the enjoyment of all.

COAL TIT (HIMALAYAN) (*Periparus ater aemodius*) – In small numbers on all of the high passes. Jack and Johnny likened the song to an Ovenbird.

RUFIOUS-VENTED TIT (*Periparus rubiventris*) – Likewise, small numbers were seen on five of the higher passes.

GRAY-CRESTED TIT (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – Most tits were scarce, this one especially so (though always one of the less common ones); we had three encounters, best after lunch on Phrumseng La.

GREEN-BACKED TIT (*Parus monticolus*) – This is a trash bird, but even in Bhutan the trash is lovely? Anyway, we saw this bird nearly daily, and heard many more. It looks like a Great Tit, but the Great Tits in Bhutan are actually gray and very local.

YELLOW-CHEEKED TIT (*Machlolophus spilonotus*) – The one tit of which we saw more than normal, and it is a fine one with which to have repeated encounters; Johnny even got a couple in the telescope.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BLACK-THROATED TIT (*Aegithalos concinnus*) – The numbers were generally small, but we saw it every day that we were in the appropriate middle-elevation broadleaf forests. A tiny bird of much beauty. a.k.a. Rufous-capped Tit.

BLACK-BROWED TIT (*Aegithalos iouschistos*) – This relative of the Bushtit was scarcer than normal, like a number of birds of the upper slopes. Seen well on Chele La and Phrumseng La, but missed in several other suitable areas. a.k.a. Rufous-fronted Tit.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH (*Sitta cinnamoventris*) – We enjoyed lovely pairs on three days near Tingtibi. As split from Indian Nuthatch of the lowlands, this form keeping the former common name for the combined species.

WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH (*Sitta himalayensis*) – Common in the higher broadleaf forests.

Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)

WALLCREEPER (*Tichodroma muraria nepalensis*) – Regular in winter, most are gone by the time of our tour, so we were fortunate to find one along the Par Chhu. Great looks as it foraged along a rocky bank. [b]

Certhiidae (Trecreeper)

HODGSON'S TRECREEPER (*Certhia hodgsoni mandellii*) – We saw this species first on Chele La, then on Phrumseng La; thanks to a recording on Xeno-Canto (Craig Robson), our best looks ever at responsive birds, the rather rusty back of this form coming as a surprise. As split from Eurasian Trecreeper.

RUSTY-FLANKED TREECREEPER (*Certhia nipalensis*) – It was then nice to compare this species, with a sighting of one on Phrumseng La shortly after seeing Hodgson's. An uncommon bird we usually see somewhere, but can't count on.

SIKKIM TREECREEPER (*Certhia discolor*) – Shari pointed out one above Yongkola, with another the next day; this is a bird of broadleaf forests, generally below the other two. This is a split of Brown-throated Treecreeper.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

EURASIAN WREN (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – It is supposed to be common, but has been anything but that on our tour (it is generally too early for them to be singing). This year we had three calling bird at high elevation on Phrumseng La; good views. It would not be a surprise if this species were to be split someday (we saw *T. t. nipalensis*).

Cinclidae (Dippers)

BROWN DIPPER (*Cinclus pallasii*) – As usual, any we see are in the first part of the tour, this year first near Paro, then over to the Mo Chhu. We saw several juveniles; this bird is typically finishing up breeding in early spring.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

STRIATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus striatus*) – This striking bird seemed more numerous than normal, with many encounters with the bird that has a hairdo like it has been camping.

BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*) – Typically scarce (more of a lowland bird), Thinley got us on two below Tingtibi, with two more briefly there the next day.

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Common in disturbed areas at lower and middle elevations.

WHITE-THROATED BULBUL (*Alophoixus flaveolus*) – We had repeated good views on two days near Tingtibi.

BLACK BULBUL (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) – One of the more common bulbuls.

ASHY BULBUL (*Hemixos flavala*) – Just a few near Tingtibi; OK looks.

MOUNTAIN BULBUL (*Ixos mccllellandii*) – A few sightings that included a couple of good looks; first along the Mo Chhu, then on lower Pele La, and finally several times below Zhemgang.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – Uncommon (or inconspicuous), we did well to have good looks on Chele La and Sheytang La.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings)

SCALY-BREADED CUPWING (*Pnoepyga albiventer*) [*]

PYGMY CUPWING (*Pnoepyga pusilla*) – We found a very responsive bird above Yongkola; good views of this tiny bird. Genetic studies have put the "wren-babblers" in at least four different families.

Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

GRAY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia cyaniventer*) – A number were heard, and most saw a responsive bird above Yongkola.

SLATY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia olivea*) – Some folks may have had glimpses, but this tesia was essentially heard only. [*]

GRAY-SIDED BUSH-WARBLER (*Cettia brunnifrons*) – Great looks at a very responsive bird above Yongkola.

CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA (*Cettia castaneocoronata*) – After several attempts we found a responsive bird that gave us several views below Sengor. Genetic studies have shown that this "tesia" belongs in a different genus from the others.

YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER (*Abroscopus superciliosus*) – We had good views of responsive birds in the big bamboo near Tingtibi.

RUFIOUS-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus albogularis*) – A singing bird at the Rufous Woodpecker spot was seen well, and more were heard near Tingtibi.

BLACK-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus schisticeps*) – This tiny, attractive warbler was regularly seen in the canopy of broadleaf forest, where its high-pitched song tested our hearing. It has a limited range in the eastern Himalayan region.

MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD (*Phyllergates cucullatus*) – Good views above Namling and above Yongkola. One interesting result of genetic studies was the placement of this tailorbird-shaped species in a warbler family apart from the other tailorbirds.

BROAD-BILLED WARBLER (*Tickellia hodgsoni*) – This was a struggle in the bamboo (and there was much else going on, like the Golden-breasted Fulvetta), but many did manage a look at this scarce and local warbler that resembles a Mountain Tailorbird in plumage.

BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis fortipes*) – A common voice in disturbed areas, we managed a series of good views above Namling.

HUME'S BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis brunnescens*) – The slopes of the Phobjika Valley were very quiet and barely starting to leaf out, but one of this species had returned to the breeding grounds, and was nicely responsive. a.k.a. Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – A small flock of migrants was seen above Yongkola; in the canopy of a towering tree, looks were so so.

BUFF-BARRED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus pulcher*) – A few were seen on several high passes, and they were quite common (and singing) on Phrumseng La. a.k.a. Orange-barred Warbler.

ASHY-THROATED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*) – Widespread and fairly common; seen on all the passes (and relatively easy to identify).

PALE-RUMPED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*) – In small numbers on most of the passes. a.k.a. Lemon-rumped Warbler; as split from Pallas's Warbler.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – We saw one along the Mo Chhu. Listed as common in Bhutan, they never seem that during our tours.

BLYTH'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus reguloides*) – One of the most common and widespread warblers, commonly heard and frequently seen.

YELLOW-VENTED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus cantator*) – A common breeder in broadleaf forest at lower elevations, we found them singing along the Mo Chhu and near Tingtibi. Good looks at an attractive bird.

GRAY-HOODED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*) – Another common warbler, heard often from the bus in secondary woodland, and seen regularly.

GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus burkii*) – A study in the 1990s revealed that "Golden-spectacled" consisted of five species, two of which are altitudinal replacements in Bhutan. This one, still called Golden-spectacled, breeds below Whistler's. We saw it several places, including on Pele La and above Yongkola.

WHISTLER'S WARBLER (*Seicercus whistleri*) – A few had returned to the upper elevation breeding grounds, including on DoChu La and near Sengor.

WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus affinis*) – We saw one in bamboo above Namling; always an uncommon bird.

GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Seicercus poliogenys*) – Occurring in the same areas as White-spectacled, this warbler seems more common and easier to see around Namling and Yongkola.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER (*Seicercus castaniceps*) – A fairly common warbler of the canopy, we had some very nice, close views, at eye level or below, on several days.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

STRIATED PRINIA (*Prinia crinigera*) – We had a responsive bird despite the wind after lunch as we journeyed down the Mangde Chhu valley.

BLACK-THROATED PRINIA (*Prinia atrogularis*) – Our second attempt connected with a responsive bird; good views. a.k.a. Hill Prinia.

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS (*Myzornis pyrrhoura*) – We usually see this stunning bird, but it can be on any of a half dozen passes--they simply seem erratic and highly mobile. For the second year in a row, we had a last minute save on Yutong La, enjoying close views in great light. Formerly considered a strange babbler, genetic studies have shown it to be a strange sort of adjunct babbler, variously included with parrotbills and some fulvetas in Clements and in the Sylviidae by the IOC checklist. Whatever its affiliations, it is a unique knockout.

GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA (*Lioparus chrysotis*) – Another one of Bhutan's special birds, we had fantastic looks at two in bamboo near Namling, our one encounter (they are uncommon).

WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA (*Fulvetta vinipectus*) – A common bird at high elevations, we had many good looks at confiding individuals.

GREAT PARROTBILL (*Conostoma oemodium*) – We found them twice, the first time a real struggle to see though vocally responsive, the second time much more visually responsive. This species has become more difficult, as with several other parrotbills, after large die-offs of bamboo on several passes.

BROWN PARROTBILL (*Cholornis unicolor*) – We had a flock on the move on DoChu La, a recent good site for them, but the bamboo there was seeding and may be on the way out. Good views, but we had to keep up with them.

WHITE-BREASTED PARROTBILL (*Psittiparus ruficeps*) – Another parrotbill prize, we had pairs with Rusty-fronted Barwings twice above Yongkola, perhaps the same birds, and others were perhaps with the following species near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill.

PALE-BILLED PARROTBILL (*Chleuasicus atrosuperciliaris*) – At least a couple were in bamboo near Tingtibi, and were very briefly very responsive, then much more difficult. a.k.a. Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

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

WHISKERED YUHINA (*Yuhina flavicollis*) – We atypically struggled with this species for a while, but around Yongkola we found them in flocks and had more typical numbers.

STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA (*Yuhina gularis*) – Fewer than normal (still downslope in a late spring??), but enough, and good views.

RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA (*Yuhina occipitalis*) – Common at upper elevations; seen on all of the high passes.

BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA (*Yuhina nigrimenta*) – Found three times, including telescope views of resting birds along the Mo Chhu and an energized flock below Zhemgang.

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Fairly common in the Tingtibi area.

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

GOLDEN BABBLER (*Cyanoderma chrysaemum*) – We had good views several times of this small babbler of the understory.

RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*) – Seen twice, and with apologies, I really thought there would be more, quite a few more; strangely scarce.

RUFOUS-THROATED WREN-BABBLER (*Spelaornis caudatus*) – Another wren-babbler challenge, this one with good success above Yongkola. It is considered "Near Threatened."

SLENDER-BILLED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus superciliaris*) – One of the highlights of the tour was our experience with this really cool bird, seen at close range at length below Sengor. A few more were heard.

STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*) – A nice show by a nice bird above Namling, though not up to the level of the preceding species. A few more were seen with a small flock below Zhemgang.

WHITE-BROWED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*) – We enjoyed good views with the White-crested Laughingthrush flock at the Rufous Woodpecker spot below Khose La.'

RUSTY-CHEEKED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Megapomatorhinus erythrognys*) – This can be a skulker, so it was very nice to watch a family group doing some thrasher-like 'gardening' at Yongkola.

GRAY-THROATED BABBLER (*Stachyris nigriceps*) – After many brief views for some of a responsive-but-not-really-cooperative bird below Zhemgang, Susan spotted two in the relative open just up the road. Much better!

BLACKISH-BREASTED BABBLER (*Stachyris humei*) – Lynda saw one above Yongkola. a.k.a. Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler.

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

WHITE-HOODED BABBLER (*Gampsorhynchus rufulus*) – We usually miss this bamboo specialist; we had some of our best views ever below Tingtibi. This species has been split from Collared Babbler, its one congener, of SE Asia, e.g., Thailand.

YELLOW-THROATED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus cinereus*) – We had several excellent looks at close range; this species can be very responsive, as we saw above Yongkola and below Zhemgang.

RUFOUS-WINGED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*) – Relatively few this tour, but still some good looks at the complicated plumage pattern. Although the babblers turned out to be relatively cohesive as a whole, genetic studies greatly scrambled the contents, putting fulvetas in at least three different places.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

NEPAL FULVETTA (*Alcippe nipalensis*) – A relatively plain bird of the understory, gradually seen well over the course of the tour.

STRIATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Grammatoptila striata*) – One of the better laughingthrushes, this bold, jay-like bird was seen regularly in the canopy of broadleaf forests.

HIMALAYAN CUTIA (*Cutia nipalensis*) – We connected twice with pairs of this nuthatch-like (in behavior) babbler in the forests above Yongkola. A fine looking bird. Cutia has been split into this species (including Malaysia) and Vietnamese Cutia.

WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax leucolophus*) – Another pretty good laughingthrush, not at all tame and confiding, but far from the terminally shy end of the spectrum. We had multiple encounters on the Tingtibi section, even up in a fruiting tree our last morning there. Great looking bird.

SPOTTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ocellata*) – Great looks at a great bird on Chele La, memories of which were refreshed by another excellent encounter on Phrumseng La. This bird can be a really bad laughingthrush, and was being just that on Chele La when a different recording produced a big reaction from them.

GREATER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla pectoralis*) – Definitely slippery, but we had a series of quick views as some worked in and out of a fruiting tree near Tingtibi.

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla albogularis*) – This should be a model for laughingthrush behavior, but that is not the way the world works! We saw many flocks of this nice bird bounding off the road and otherwise in good view.

RUFOUS-NECKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ruficollis*) – This bird can be very difficult, but our experiences were otherwise this year, first when Thinley pointed out a flock working through light scrub near Trogon Villa, and again en route to Zhemgang. The best looks at difficult laughingthrushes often occur when the birds naturally appear, rather than from playback, but we saw some only with playback, and missed a couple of species that never did appear naturally or with playback!

BHUTAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron imbricatum*) – We saw this small, simple laughingthrush three times. This is about as close to a Bhutanese endemic as there is. a.k.a. Bhutan Streaked Laughingthrush, as split from Streaked Laughingthrush of the western Himalaya.

SCALY LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron subunicolor*) – One of the bad characters, and our first experience was mostly that, but we had better looks from the bus at a flock that was crossing the road, unconcerned by us in the bus.

BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron squamatum*) – Another bad laughingthrush, and we mostly heard them, about half the group getting satisfactory quick looks.

BLACK-FACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron affine*) – Not the best of the laughingthrushes, but common enough at upper elevations that they get seen periodically. Our first views were on Chele La, including from breakfast.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*) – Ditto, and some emerged our second full day on DoChu La, with a couple of subsequent sightings.

RUFOUS SIBIA (*Heterophasia capistrata*) – Common, seen nearly daily; a great looking bird, but it is hard not to end up in "oh, another sibia" mode.

SILVER-EARED MESIA (*Leiothrix argentauris*) – A real beauty, seen several times in shrubbery below Zhemgang.

RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX (*Leiothrix lutea*) – Listed a common in Bhutan, but it is usually scarce for us. This year we had one on Pele La and a handful slipping through shrubbery near Zhemgang; not singing much yet.

RED-TAILED MINLA (*Minla ignotincta*) – This altitudinal migrant was seen in small numbers where they may breed, and several larger, wintering flocks were seen above Yongkola.

RED-FACED LIOCICHLA (*Liocichla phoenicea*) – Like a bad laughingthrush, we heard great concerts from them, and had two "for the fortunate few" types of encounters.

HOARY-THROATED BARWING (*Actinodura nipalensis*) – We had good views, but of fewer than normal; seen first on DoChu La and then on Pele La, with a few more heard.

RUSTY-FRONTED BARWING (*Actinodura egertoni*) – This barwing was in fine form, with many good views above Yongkola and below Zhemgang.

BLUE-WINGED MINLA (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*) – This minla was also mostly in winter flocks still; not the most dramatic plumage, but with time we got better views and enjoyed them.

CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA (*Actinodura strigula*) – Unusually scarce, but still seen on a half dozen days, with several excellent views of the ornate plumage. a.k.a. Bar-throated Siva.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – We had three migrants one morning below Sengor, acting, and looking a little like, Olive-sided Flycatcher. [b]

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*) – In disturbed areas at lower elevations; an upward colonist of the valleys.

PALE BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis unicolor*) – We had to try a number of times, but then found a lively one, some people even getting telescope views. A lovely blue, but a very different behavior from Verditer. One of the finest voices in Bhutan.

BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – This bird is something of a skulker, but we kept seeing birds in the relative open near Tingtibi, which was just fine with us. a.k.a. Blue-throated Blue-Flycatcher, with or without a hyphen in the second part! As for the use of hyphens in bird names,

LARGE NILTAVA (*Niltava grandis*) – We had telescope views of a responsive and cooperative bird above Yongkola, and heard several more.

SMALL NILTAVA (*Niltava macgrigoriae*) – Several sightings, first along the Mo Chhu, foraging in the relative open at moderate height, and then more briefly above Yongkola and on Tama La.

RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA (*Niltava sundara*) – Three quick views in the Yongkola-Namling stretch.

VERDITER FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – A common bird of broadleaf forests, enjoyed (seen and heard) on most days.

LESSER SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx leucophrys*) [*]

BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH (*Myiophonus caeruleus*) – Seen daily, often in numbers in terms of the birds bounding off the road in front of the bus. It may take hours or days to get the kind of look that reveals the subtle colors and patterns, but by the end of the tour a number of such looks occur.

LITTLE FORKTAIL (*Enicurus scouleri*) – Thinley spotted one on a tributary of the Mo Chhu, and we had great looks, which was a good thing because we did not see them at several of our better past spots (this bird does seem to come and go).

SLATY-BACKED FORKTAIL (*Enicurus schistaceus*) – AWOL last year, we did well along the Mo Chhu, with at least four seen, some well, but we

did not stumble into any others. It seems like forktails should be their own family, but they are, genetically, very much old world flycatchers.

WHITE-TAILED ROBIN (*Cinclidium leucurum*) [*]

HIMALAYAN BLUETAIL (*Tarsiger rufilatus*) – Several heard on two high passes, but (for the first time?) no visual. [*]

PYGMY BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hodgsoni*) – We had four encounters, more than normal, but none of them were totally satisfactory.

RUFOUS-GORGETED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula strophiiata*) – Scarcer than normal, but still common enough, with good views on several passes.

SAPPHIRE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula sapphira*) – Males were seen near Namling in Phrumsengla NP, and on Tama La, both times moving quickly onward.

LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula westermanni*) – Fairly common at middle elevations; good looks several times.

ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula superciliaris*) – Like the preceding, a small canopy flycatcher; we saw multiples on several slopes, getting a couple of good views.

TAIGA FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula albicilla*) – One below Tingtibi was very cooperative, a migrant headed north. a.k.a. Red-throated Flycatcher, as split from Red-breasted. [b]

BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – This beauty was seen well on Chele La, with a few more, probably migrants, working their way upslope, on passes later in the trip.

PLUMBEOUS REDSTART (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Common on rocky, rushing streams.

WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Scattered around, widespread but not super common; seen on large, open rivers and at small, forested streams. This dynamite bird is better known as River Chat!

HODGSON'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – Wintering birds were still common in the Paro Valley, with a few more near Punakha and Ura. [b]

WHITE-THROATED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus schisticeps*) – A regular wintering bird in Bhutan, these were our first for the tour (they generally leave in March). There were at least three birds in the fields near Ura, seen best when Brian relocated the male.

BLACK REDSTART (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – So where was it? Right by the toilet tent! A migrant male along the Mo Chhu at our lunch spot. [b]

CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola rufiventris*) – This species was locally conspicuous this year, particularly in Phrumsengla NP, where we had good views of the brightly-colored male and strikingly patterned female.

BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) – Many had returned to their breeding grounds, and were seen on utility wires and concrete buttresses along the road, particularly near Tingtibi.

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola solitarius*) – A female was seen near Punakha; not unusual in Bhutan, but most may be gone by the time of our tour. [b]

SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN) (*Saxicola maurus maurus*) – As with Hodgson's Redstart, a few more were still around than typical of early April, with a total of five seen. [b]

GRAY BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola ferreus*) – Good views on several days.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus albocinctus*) – Fairly common at high elevation; good views.

GRAY-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus boulboul*) – Typically uncommon; good views of just three on DoChu La, with a couple more heard.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus atrogularis*) – [There appeared to be one or two mixed in with the Red-throated, but we did not deal with them constructively as a group, given the flightiness of them all.]

RED-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus ruficollis*) – Several flocks of this sporadic wintering species were in a limited area of Chele La, perhaps feeding on juniper berries. Most were this form, which is again split ("Dark-throated" into Red-throated and Black-throated), since the last time we saw this species in Bhutan. There may have been a hundred birds, but we did not see any elsewhere.

DUSKY THRUSH (*Turdus eunomus*) – A rarity in Bhutan, seen with the Red-throated Thrushes. It was in the telescope for some, but it moved on, as most of the thrush flock rapidly did. "Dusky" has been split into Dusky and Naumann's; your guide was not prepared to tell them apart had it stuck around long enough to be studied, but from distributional information, it was this species.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

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

SPOT-WINGED STARLING (*Saroglossa spiloptera*) – We had some nice views of a flock of about ten en route to our first camp south of Trongsa. This a rare species in Bhutan, but perhaps regular in spring on the lower slopes (we have had them a couple of times before). An attractive bird as seen through the telescope.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis hardwickii*) – Small numbers, our best views coming near our lunch spot outside of Zhemgang.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) – Fairly common; good views of this tiny bird in the canopy of broadleaf forest.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

FIRE-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga ignicauda*) – Seen twice, on Chele La and Pele La, where small groups were seen in flight, fortunately circling the first time, vivid but frustratingly brief. We never did find any settled down; this species is on the move at this time of year, and unpredictable.

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga saturata*) – Common on the lower and middle slopes, breeding below several others. Many good views, the subtle highlights evident in the right light.

GOULD'S SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga gouldiae*) – This stunning bird was regular in small numbers on most of the passes; many good views of Ms. Elizabeth Gould's Sunbird.

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga nipalensis*) – The most common sunbird, and a first responder to owl/fuss recordings. We had many fine views at close range.

CRIMSON SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – This sunbird is scarce on the lower slopes. Some folks saw one Sangay pointed out below Tingtibi.

STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera magna*) – If you are new to Asia, spiderhunters are a distinctive new group of birds, and this is a fun one, with a thick, curved bill, plenty of streaks, and those bright legs. We saw them several times above Yongkola and Tingtibi.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

ALPINE ACCENTOR (*Prunella collaris*) – We are always hoping for a last few wintering birds on rocky road edges, and we had two small groups this year on Pele La and Phrumseng La, the former a good and lengthy study. [b]

HIMALAYAN ACCENTOR (*Prunella himalayana*) – As with the "Dark-throated" Thrushes, it was Chele La or nothing, and on Chele La it was several large flocks, totaling perhaps 75 birds, a good showing. a.k.a. Altai Accentor.

RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR (*Prunella strophiatea*) – The most regular and widespread of the wintering accentors, which we enjoyed repeatedly, especially the one at our feet after breakfast on DoChu La. [b]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – A half dozen migrants were seen, almost all of them in flowing culverts along the road. [b]

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – The local breeding subspecies *alboides* was common along the Par Chhu our first day, with a few more near Punakha and one in the Bumthang Valley.

ROSY PIPIT (*Anthus roseatus*) – We had a good look at one migrant near the pond on DoChu La.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Widespread in small numbers, including the local breeders (*hodgsoni*) singing on several of the higher passes, and migrants along roadsides at lower elevations (mostly *yunnanensis*?). a.k.a. Indian Tree Pipit, and we saw the arboreal element several times, including singing birds.

Elachuridae (Spotted Elachura)

SPOTTED ELACHURA (*Elachura formosa*) – We found two, both singing strongly. Singing and singing and singing. The first one was seen briefly by part of the group, the second one not at all. This "wren-babbler" has been found genetically to be an entirely distinct lineage and is now called Spotted Elachura.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

LITTLE BUNTING (*Emberiza pusilla*) – One along the Puna Tsang Chhu below Punakha on 6 April was a lingering winterer. [b]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte nemoricola*) – The most ever, perhaps the result of a late spring and a good winter flight. We saw flocks of hundreds, and had some very close looks.

GOLD-NAPED FINCH (*Pyrrhoplectes epauletta*) – A scarce bird and always a good find. We had nice looks at two females on Pele La.

CRIMSON-BROWED FINCH (*Pinicola subhimachala*) – Another difficult finch. A female on DoChu La got away quickly, but three females below Sengor stayed put, providing lengthy telescope views of this relative of Pine Grosbeak.

BROWN BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula nipalensis*) – A flock of around 15 made a welcome appearance near Zhemgang; good views.

RED-HEADED BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*) – A pair on Yutong La got away through the rhododendrons before being seen by everyone, and a bird Lynda spotted above Namling turned out to be a female that cooperated for all.

DARK-BREASTED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus nipalensis*) – Jack and Susan saw a male on Chele La and another male was seen briefly by perhaps half of the group on DoChu La.

COMMON ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) – Johnny spotted a female on Sheytang La and Sangay pointed out a group of birds that turned out to be two males and two females of this species below Khose La. [b]

HIMALAYAN BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus pulcherrimus*) – They had to be re-found and re-found by Marianne and Dick, but we ended up with better and better views of perhaps five birds near Ura. An uncommon bird that has eluded us on many trips. As split from Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch.

HIMALAYAN WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus thura*) – One female on Chele La and one male on Pele La. As split from Chinese White-browed Rosefinch.

SCARLET FINCH (*Haematospiza sipahi*) – We had a series of sightings and overall good looks at this stunning bird, first above Yongkola, then near Zhemgang, and finally on Tama La.

COLLARED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas affinis*) – Our first sighting of this uncommon bird was on Chele La, and it was followed by even better views of a small flock Susan pointed out foraging on the ground on Pele La. Gorgeous!

SPOT-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas melanozanthos*) – Our first were a pair seen in the telescope near the Crimson-browed Finches below Sengor, and our second encounter was two small flocks below Zhemgang.

WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas carinipes*) – A series of sightings, eventually with good views, on three different passes; the most regularly encountered of the grosbeaks.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

RUSSET SPARROW (*Passer rutilans*) – Common in the higher, agricultural valleys.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Also common, averaging at lower elevations than Russet, although overlapping at times.

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA (*Lonchura striata*) – Seen briefly by a few below Tingtibi.

MAMMALS

ASSAMESE MACAQUE (*Macaca assamensis*) – Regular sightings along the roads, especially in the lower areas.

COMMON LANGUR (*Presbytis entellus*) – Wayne saw one across a small canyon on Pele La.

GOLDEN LANGUR (*Presbytis geei*) – We enjoyed great views on all four days in the Zhemgang and Tingtibi areas, seeing many family groups going about daily activities. Not quite endemic to Bhutan (occurring in the Manas area of India), but almost so.

LEAF MONKEY SP. (*Presbytis pileata*) – We had a good show from a troop above Yongkola, including mothers making some mighty jumps with babies hanging on tightly. Often named Capped Langur.

PIKA SP. (*Ochotona roylei*) – There are a half dozen species of pika in Bhutan, and this appears to be the prime candidate to be what we saw near treeline on several passes. In some books as Royle's Pika.

BLACK GIANT SQUIRREL (*Ratufa bicolor*) – Thinley spotted a resting squirrel above Tingtibi that provided lengthy looks, and another was seen

the next day.

IRAWADDY SQUIRREL (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) – Common in the Tingtibi area. a.k.a. Hoary-bellied Squirrel.

HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL (*Tamiops maccllellandi*) – The one that looks like a chipmunk. Regular in small numbers.

HIMALAYAN GROUND-SQUIRREL (*Dremomys lokriah*) – The squirrel that has mastered the space-time continuum, here now, across the road through a rip in the fabric. At least we had a couple of people to explain it to us. a.k.a. Orange-bellied Ground-Squirrel of the Trees. And remember, If You Are Married, Divorce Speed, for your sake and the sake of the squirrels crossing the road the normal way.

YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN (*Martes flavigula*) – Seen twice, both times briefly for a minority of the group.

MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER) (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – Noisy deer were heard on four days above Yongkola and Tingtibi. [*]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 291 bird taxa and 11 mammal taxa