



Field Guides Tour Report

Bhutan 2019

Apr 6, 2019 to Apr 25, 2019

Megan Edwards Crewe with Lebo, Sangay and Wangchuk

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The Ibisbill is on many people's "most wanted birds" list, due to the fact that it's the sole member of its family. Photo by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.

The gorgeous, mountainous country of Bhutan makes a fabulous backdrop against which to search for some of the special birds of the Himalayas. And we traversed a goodly portion of this still largely untrammled country, from snow-dusted passes in the west, to the steamy lowlands along the southern border with India, to epiphyte-laden broadleaf forests in the east and magnificent stands of spruce across the country's middle -- with fluttering prayer flags, water-driven prayer wheels, roadside chortens and scattered dzongs adding to the ambiance at every turn. The weather was largely in our favor, with little rain (none on the nights we camped, fortunately), a bit of atmospheric snow (which didn't render things too cold) and some spectacularly sunny days, which brought some of the country's highest peaks into clear focus. We did spend a rather chilly night at Sengor camp (no thanks to a hard frost), but otherwise managed quite well indeed!

The tour's specialty birds cooperated marvelously. Our closest Ibisbill (which was hunting along the riverbed very close to the road) was seen only a few miles from the airport along the Par Chhu. A White-bellied Heron prowled the edge of the Puna Tsang Chhu, surprisingly close to a noisy construction zone, and another stepped along a gravel bar in the Mangde Chhu -- meaning that we saw just over three percent of all the known White-bellied Herons left in the world! A male Himalayan Monal foraged on an open hillside, his colors changing every time he moved. A female Satyr Tragopan picked her way along a steep road bank, and a glowing male suddenly appeared from behind a pile of dirt nearly right beside us. Three Beautiful Nuthatches crawled along the epiphyte-laden branches and trunks of a huge tree near Yongkola. Blood Pheasants rummaged along mountain roadsides. A male Ward's Trogon flitted from branch to branch in Phrumsengla NP, allowing us to admire him from just about every possible angle, and a pair did the same (though a bit further away) on Dochu La. We spotted Rufous-necked Hornbills on seven different days, sometimes in flight, often perched up on a conveniently open branch -- though none as close as the roadside Great Hornbill that brought us to a screeching halt in the Mangde Chhu gorge! A Yellow-rumped Honeyguide returned again and again to the same perch below us, showing us his yellow rump between raids on a nearby Giant Honeybee comb. A pair of Kalij Pheasants browsed along a field edge, drawing our attention (which completely bemused a bunch of passing school children).

A half dozen Fire-tailed Myzornis pivoted at eye-level, glowing against fog-shrouded evergreens. Two Pallas's Fish-Eagles shared a branch (but not a fish). A Golden-breasted Fulvetta danced across the edge of a bamboo stand. A Black-tailed Crane stepped cautiously through a tiny remnant patch of marsh near Paro. A gaudy pair of Fire-tailed Sunbirds flicked through an equally eye-catching rhododendron bush -- eyeball overload! An adult Rufous-bellied Eagle and a Black Eagle spiraled together just above our heads. A Pale-billed Woodpecker led us on a merry dance before we finally figured out which clump of bamboo it was calling from. Brown Dippers flung themselves into rocky, swiftly flowing rivers. A number of normally "bad" laughingthrushes -- including Rufous-chinned, Greater and Lesser Necklaced, Gray-sided and Scaly -- disported themselves in plain view.

And there were plenty of other things to keep us entertained. Some of them were the "regular" host of colorful barbets and minivets and sunbirds and warblers and babblers and bulbuls and laughingthrushes that enliven Bhutan's forests. Some of them were uncommon things, like the Solitary Snipe that

crouched, frozen in place, along a little rivulet, the Eastern Spot-billed Ducks that snoozed among a handful of other ducks along the Puna Tsang Chhu, the Gray-headed Lapwing that pattered across the embankment between some very distant rice paddies, the trio of Red-throated Thrushes that paused in a dead treetop, or the unexpected Collared Treepie that accompanied a gang of Gray Treepies in the foothills near Nganglam. Some of them sported fur rather than feathers, like the sinuous Siberian Weasel that twisted its way through the rip-rap edging the Par Chhu, the Serow that bounded down the hill into the road right in front of our bus, and the amazingly fluffy (and amazingly clean) Golden Langurs we saw along the country's southern border. Some of them were cultural -- like Lebo's marvelous guided tours of the Punakha and Trongsa dzongs, with explanations of Bhutan's version of Buddhism. And who will soon forget our final picnic breakfast on Pele La, savoring our bowls of hot porridge while gazing out beyond the gnarled spruces and pink-bloomed rhododendron bushes to the white-dusted slopes of the Rinchenzoe Range with Jhomolhari (Bhutan's second highest mountain at 24,000 feet) rearing its snowy head beyond them? Wow -- what a view!

Of course, a trip like this wouldn't be possible without the help of our amazing ground crew: guide Lebo and driver Sangay, trainee guide Wangchuk, camp crew chief Kaka and Boto Namgay, our cook, with the capable help of the camp assistants who cooked and cleaned and served, and set up tents and heated bath water and charged camp lights and did all the hundreds of other little things that kept our tour running smoothly throughout. Many thanks to all of them -- and to Karen in the FGI office, who set it all up, and then had to cope with changing flight arrangements for well over half the group when airlines cancelled flights or went out of business while we were there! And most of all, thanks to all of you, who made this trip such a joy to lead. This truly was a special group; I don't think I've laughed so hard or so often on any other trip I've ever led! And your spotting abilities were legendary. I hope to see you all again some day on another Field Guides adventure somewhere.

-- Megan

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)

LESSER WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna javanica*) -- Several dozen snoozed along the concrete edges of the settling ponds at the Gelephu sewage works, or floated in some of the open water ponds there. This is one of the few places in the country where this species breeds.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE (*Anser indicus*) -- One slept on the stony bank of the Puna Tsang Chhu, seen as we drove to the Punakha Dzong one afternoon. The next day, it was up and floating among the dozens of Ruddy Shelducks with which it was associating. This species is famous for migrating OVER the Himalayas (though many go around the end) -- without oxygen tanks! [b]

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) -- Scores floated along the edges of the Puna Tsang Chhu, while others flapped past overhead. These handsome ducks are winter visitors (and passage migrants) to Bhutan. [b]

GADWALL (*Mareca strepera*) -- A male slept on the rocky shore of the Puna Tsang Chhu -- though he woke up enough to raise his head at one point. This species is primarily a passage migrant in Bhutan. [b]

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Mareca penelope*) -- A female flew upriver past us along the Puna Tsang Chhu, nearly collided with some high-tension wires crossing the water, and retreated back down the river again, mouth agape. This too is a passage migrant in Bhutan. [b]

EASTERN SPOT-BILLED DUCK (*Anas zonorhyncha*) -- Two snoozed along the stony shore of Puna Tsang Chhu, keeping company with a few other ducks. This is a local winter visitor in Bhutan, identified by its blue (rather than green) speculum and the lack of a white patch on its tertials. [b]

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN) (*Anas crecca crecca*) -- A female mingled with a handful of other sleeping ducks along the gravel bank of the Puna Tsang Chhu. This is an occasional passage migrant and winter visitor to Bhutan, where it is found along rivers and streams across the country.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

HILL PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila torqueola*) -- We heard this highland species on most days in the mountains -- but never close. [*]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila mandellii*) -- Two scratching around below the road in Phrumsengla NP totally disrupted our attempts for a better look at Pygmy Cupwing -- nice spotting, Doug! Unfortunately, it was a rather narrow window through the dense vegetation, and not everybody had the chance to get into the right spot before they moved away. We heard them elsewhere in the park, and near our Darachu camp.

RUFIOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila rufogularis*) -- We heard a pair singing (and singing and singing) from the bamboo stand near our Tingtibi camp, but just couldn't convince them to come out to where we could see them. We heard others along the ridge west of Nganglam. [*]

INDIAN PEAFOWL (*Pavo cristatus*) -- We heard the distinctive call of this species from the scrubby fields around the Gelephu sewage works. [*]

RED JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus gallus*) -- A couple of handsome males along the road through Mangde Chhu gorge, with another male on the road out of Nganglam -- and a female that catapulted herself across the road at our Pale-headed Woodpecker spot, leading to temporary delusions of partridges. So, why DOES the chicken cross the road?!

BLOOD PHEASANT (*Ithaginis cruentus*) -- Superb studies on Chele La, where we saw more than two dozen, including several pairs foraging right along the roadside and a flock of eight males and a female near our breakfast spot. We saw four more on Thrimsengla, where a male posed nicely atop a stump for a few minutes.

HIMALAYAN MONAL (*Lophophorus impejanus*) -- Our first flushed from an unseen point just below the road on Chele La and glided off to the next ridge, where some of us saw it prowl up the hill through the snowy vegetation. Fortunately for Jean, who was still up the road taking pictures, Russ spotted us another one at Pele La on our last morning. It wandered along on the grassy slope, its spectacularly iridescent colors shifting with every step.

SATYR TRAGOPAN (*Tragopan satyra*) -- A female foraged -- bold as brass -- right beside the road near Sengor, seen as we emerged from our bus after a long rain delay, and a stunning male made a surprise appearance from behind a big pile of dirt right near us a few minutes later. We heard others calling from the hillsides on Pele La and around our Sengor camp.

KALIJ PHEASANT (*Lophura leucomelanos*) -- A pair foraged in a farm field along the Po Chhu, seen on our pre-breakfast outing (to the bemusement of a group of passing school children). This species can be decidedly harder to see later in the day, when they retreat into thicker cover.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) -- Particularly common around cities and towns, but also scattered around rural homesteads.

- SNOW PIGEON** (*Columba leuconota*) – A small flock or two in flight over Chele La, but -- surprisingly -- we never saw them well or for long. Presumably, these were new arrivals getting ready to pick nest sites; they winter from 1800-3200 meters (5900'-10500') and move up to 3400-4600 meters (11000'-15000') to breed.
- ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Very common and widespread, seen nearly every day of the tour -- often on wires right along the roads.
- SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Reasonably common, particularly at lower elevations. This tends to be a dove of disturbed habitats, so we saw plenty along roadside wires and around towns and villages.
- BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia unchall*) – Especially nice views of a perched bird along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, with others in the Mangde Chhu gorge (where they are reported to be particularly common) and in Phrumsengla NP.
- ASIAN EMERALD DOVE** (*Chalcophaps indica*) – A few seen in flight in the lowlands, including one that did a slalom run between us and a roadside cliff along the Mangde Chhu gorge.
- PIN-TAILED PIGEON** (*Treron apicauda*) – Common around Tingtibi camp, though we had to contend with a lot of flybys before we finally found a pair munching berries right out in the open. We found others in the Mangde Chhu gorge and along the road north from Nganglam. The long, pointed tail of this species is diagnostic.
- WEDGE-TAILED PIGEON** (*Treron sphenurus*) – Seen along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway. This species lacks the patterned wings of Bhutan's other green pigeons, and tends to be at higher elevations.
- GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula aenea*) – A few in flight along the fringe of trees surrounding the rice paddies near the Gelephu sewage works, with others along the river near our lunch spot at Pangthang.
- MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula badia*) – Small numbers in the middle part of the tour, including some along the ridge west of Gashari, and others on the road north from Nganglam. Despite its name, this species can be found at elevations as low as 200meters (650 ft) in Bhutan, though its main range extends from 400-2000 meters (1300-6500').

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- GREATER COUCAL** (*Centropus sinensis*) – One flew low over the grassy vegetation along the edge of the river at Royal Manas NP, seen as we drove towards the boat launch spot. Its large size ruled out Lesser Coucal.
- GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus tristis*) – One bounced through a tree near the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, swinging that distinctively long tail as it moved. We were lucky; this species usually keeps out of sight in dense tangles of vegetation.
- ASIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamis scolopacea*) – We heard the distinctive onomatopoeic calls of this widespread Asian species on several days early in the tour, including one right outside the Punakha Dzong. [*]
- PLAINTIVE CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis merulinus*) – A male that Sangay spotted sitting on a roadside wire en-route to Gelephu (at our Collared Falconet spot) looked almost like a little dove. The gray head and chest and peachy belly and vent of the male is distinctive -- as is the lack of barring on the underparts.
- SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO** (*Surniculus lugubris*) – As usual, we heard more of these than we saw, but one atop a tree near Tingtibi camp allowed scope views. Its distinctive song, a series of rising whistles ("I'm a drongo-cuckoo") was a regular part of the tour soundtrack in the middle of the tour.
- LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococcyx sparveroides*) – As usual, this species was far more commonly heard than seen. One flew past along the road on Dochu La while we searched for our first calling Ward's Trogons, but our best views came west of Gashari, when some super spotting by Lebo netted us one singing from a branch near the top of a tree right over the road.
- INDIAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus micropterus*) – We heard the repetitive four-note song of this species (was it saying MADAGASCAR or HIMALAYAS?) on several days in the middle of the tour, but never close enough that we could track one down. This is a summer visitor to Bhutan. [*]
- HIMALAYAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus saturatus*) – Heard regularly throughout much of the tour, though missing from the highest elevations. Some patient tracking by Lebo finally netted us a view of one singing from a treetop near Namling in Phrumsengla NP.
- COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – One flew in and landed near the top of a tree right over our picnic breakfast site at the Queens Botanical Garden -- and fortunately sang a few loud phrases, making it easy to identify. We heard others around Tingtibi and Yongkola.

Apodidae (Swifts)

- HIMALAYAN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus brevirostris*) – Easily the most common swift of the tour, with scattered sightings on about half of the days -- sometimes in big numbers.
- HOUSE SWIFT** (*Apus nipalensis*) – Some in the air over the Tsirang-Gelephu highway and Tama La, and others zipping over the forests of Phrumsengla NP. Its distinctive white rump patch is shared by the Blyth's Swift, but that species has a longer forked-tail.
- ASIAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Cypsiurus balaisiensis*) – A few folks saw some rocketing around over the river behind our Nganglam hotel during one afternoon's break there, and Doug spotted others from the bus in Phrumsengla NP one day. The small size and long pointed tail of this species helps distinguish it from Bhutan's other regularly occurring species.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

- WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – A few strode along the edges of the concrete ponds at the Gelephu sewage works and through the nearby rice paddies. This is primarily a lowland species, though they are slowly "invading" the valleys of Bhutan as the valleys converted to rice paddies.
- BLACK-TAILED CRAKE** (*Zapornia bicolor*) – One of the first birds we saw after leaving the Paro airport was a very obliging individual in a little roadside wet spot -- so little, in fact, that it hardly qualified as a marsh at all. If only all crakes were so confiding...

Ibidorhynchidae (Ibisbill)

- IBISBILL** (*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*) – Yahoo! Our first -- and closest -- were in the Par Chhu on our first day in Bhutan; we found one near where we found our Black-tailed Crane, then spotted another even closer in a stretch of the river right beside the road as we headed back to town after visiting the Drukgyel Dzong. We saw two more distant birds along the Po Chhu. What a stunner!

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

- RIVER LAPWING** (*Vanellus duvaucelii*) – Margaret spotted our first (while we were scanning the Puna Tsang Chhu trying to find our first Ibisbill) and we saw other scattered pairs on other rocky rivers on six different days. This handsome plover is considered Near Threatened, with a population numbering less than 17,000.

GRAY-HEADED LAPWING (*Vanellus cinereus*) – One near the Gelephu sewage works was a surprise -- great spotting, Jonathan! It was a long way out, working its way along an embankment between rice paddies. This is a vagrant in Bhutan.

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*) – Nice views of several pairs in fields along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway, with others in the rice paddies near the Gelephu sewage ponds. This is a widespread species in the lowlands across much of southeast Asia.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*) – One pattered across a stony gravel bar in the middle of the Puna Tsang Chhu, seen from our breakfast spot at Bajo. Through the scopes, its distinctive yellow eye ring was clearly visible. This is a winter visitor to Bhutan. [b]

Rostratulidae (Painted-Snipes)

GREATER PAINTED-SNIPE (*Rostratula benghalensis*) – A colorful female chased a plainer male around and around in circles low over the rice paddies near the Gelephu sewage works. There are only a handful of records of this species for the country.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SOLITARY SNIPE (*Gallinago solitaria*) – Wahoo! This was certainly an unexpected bonus. Lebo knew of a site in the Ura valley, not far from our route to Jakar, so we stopped to try our luck. And our luck was in! One flushed from nearly under Lebo's feet as he checked a little rivulet winding through a well-grazed pasture and it rocketed up and over a nearby ridge. Fortunately, with a little bit of casting around, he and Sangay refound it crouched in a nearby wet spot, giving us marvelous opportunity to study it at leisure through the scopes. This is a winter visitor to Bhutan. [b]

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago gallinago*) – Four snipe, which appeared to be this species, probed in the muddy rice paddies at Gelephu. All of the snipe species are uncommon winter visitors to Bhutan -- particularly in the lowlands, where "Birds in Bhutan: Status and Distribution" shows no records. [b]

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – A few folks got a look at one Margaret spotted along the Par Chhu our first morning in Bhutan. Fortunately for those who didn't, we found more along the Po Chhu and the Puna Tsang Chhu a few days later, and still more waggling along the edges of the settling ponds at the Gelephu sewage works. This is the Old World sister species of North America's Spotted Sandpiper, and has the same stiff-winged flight. [b]

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – One picked its way along the edge of the Po Chhu, searching for tasty morsels -- nice spotting, Suzi! We found others at Gelephu. Like the previous species, this is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in Bhutan. [b]

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*) – Two flew over, calling, shortly after we arrived at the Gelephu sewage works. This is another winter visitor, less common than the previous two species. [b]

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) – A few rummaged in the rice fields at Gelephu. This is listed as a rare spring passage migrant in Bhutan, though they might prove more common in the southern border areas, where few birders visit. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BROWN-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*) – One floated down the Puna Tsang Chhu, seen as we started our journey south from Bajo towards Darachu. This is a passage migrant through Bhutan. [b]

Ciconiidae (Storks)

LESSER ADJUTANT (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) – At least four (and possibly five) hunted in the rice paddies near the Gelephu sewage works or rested in some of the larger trees scattered along the field edges. This species occurs in Bhutan only in the lowlands along the border.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE CORMORANT (*Microcarbo niger*) – A handful rested -- some spread-eagled -- on boulders along the edge of the Sarbhang Khola Chhu, a river we paralleled on our drive along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway.

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – We spotted a few in the Puna Tsang Chhu, resting on rocks scattered along the riverbed at the foot of the gorge, seen as we searched for our first White-bellied Heron. This is a winter visitor to Bhutan, though it's unknown where the birds migrate from. [b]

INDIAN CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) – A few among the Little Cormorants on the Sarbhang Khola Chhu appeared to be these slightly larger, more patterned birds. They're not often reported in Bhutan, though few people are birding along the country's southern border.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

WHITE-BELLIED HERON (*Ardea insignis*) – Yahoo!! Catching any sight of a species with a world population thought to number only 60 or so would have been a treat. So watching not one, but TWO different birds foraging along the edge of two different rivers (and one resting in the shade of nearby trees) was a real privilege. Super spotting, Jonathan -- both times!

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Ardea intermedia*) – A handful in the rice paddies at Gelephu.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – A few sprinkled across the rice paddies of Gelephu or hunting along the concrete edges of the settling ponds at the nearby sewage ponds.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Some in the lowland fields along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway, with others in the pasture near the Gelephu rice fields. The subspecies found in Bhutan is *coromandus*, sometimes known as the Eastern Cattle Egret.

INDIAN POND-HERON (*Ardeola grayii*) – Another regular species in Gelephu where they hunted inconspicuously among the rice paddies -- until they flew with a flurry of white wings.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – One soared over the ridge west of the Gashari turnoff, seen as we birded our way towards Nganglam. This species is presumed to be primarily a passage migrant in Bhutan, but it may also breed in some of the eastern valleys.

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON (*Gyps himalayensis*) – Doug proved to be our griffon-spotter extraordinaire, finding both the first group, which glided over our breakfast spot (a gazebo) along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, and the second which soared over the Royal Manas NP. Our best views, though, came along the old road on Pele La, where we found a couple perched just down the hill. Wow, they're HUGE!

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – Seen on just over a third of the days of the tour, often in flight -- where the wide white band on their primaries was very obvious. This is a widespread species from the Indian subcontinent right across southwest Asia.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – Among the most widespread of the tour's raptors, seen on most days of the trip -- including one soaring just over our heads on Dochu La, seen as we searched for our first Ward's Trogon.

RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*) – A gorgeous adult circled overhead with a Black Eagle at one of our stops en route to Yongkola, giving us long, satisfying views -- far better than those we'd had of a more distant bird on the ridge west of Gashari the day before.

- BLACK EAGLE** (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – Another common species, usually quartering just above the forest canopy, and seldom flapping. They specialize in plucking their prey from the treetops.
- STEPPE EAGLE** (*Aquila nipalensis*) – We saw one of these dark eagles in flight over Tama La. This is another passage migrant in Bhutan. [b]
- CRESTED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter trivirgatus*) – Jonathan and I were the only two to get on one that flew past on Chele La.
- SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Singles seen on a couple of days along the Puna Tsang Chhu, including one circling over the stretch where we searched for Wallcreeper. The very pale underwing of this species is distinctive.
- BESRA** (*Accipiter virgatus*) – A little male spun circles over the forest in Phrumsengla NP. This is a forest specialist, which primarily hunts small birds in the understory.
- EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – One flap-flap-glided over the forest just down the hill from our Darachu camp, seen as we birded along the road there. Unlike most Accipiters, this species regularly hunts in the open. The range of this species stretches across virtually the entire Palearctic.
- BLACK KITE** (*Milvus migrans*) – One circled against the parched hills beyond the Par Chhu on our first morning.
- PALLAS'S FISH-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*) – A pair along the Po Chhu before breakfast one morning were a lovely surprise -- nice spotting Doug! This globally threatened species has been increasingly tough to find in recent years. The female appeared first, followed a few minutes later by the smaller male, who arrived carrying a fish -- which he didn't share.
- HIMALAYAN BUZZARD** (*Buteo refectus*) – Those on the right side of the bus saw one circling against the hillsides as we drove along the Par Chhu on our first morning, and the rest of the group caught up with another soaring over our heads on Chele La. We also saw a darker plumaged bird spiraling over Thrimsengla NP.

Strigidae (Owls)

- MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus spilocephalus*) – Some of us heard one calling late in the night at Tingtibi camp, and others heard one calling from behind our hotel in Yongkola. Doug and I had several calling from down the hill while birding after dark along the road near our Yongkola hotel, but we couldn't call it close enough to see. [*]
- TAWNY FISH-OWL** (*Ketupa flavipes*) – An on-the-fly detour to check a spot Lebo had heard about turned up aces when we found a day-roosting bird silhouetted against a rocky cliff face -- nice spotting, Doug! We got some great scope views (and photographs) while it gazed down at us.
- COLLARED OWLET** (*Glaucidium brodiei*) – Heard regularly in the middle part of the tour, often frustratingly close. [*]
- ASIAN BARRED OWLET** (*Glaucidium cuculoides*) – Some of us heard one calling outside our Punakha hotel as we walked down the hill to the bus for our pre-dawn departure. [*]
- BROWN WOOD-OWL** (*Strix leptogrammica*) – One called from the forest above our Darachu campground, starting from about 4 a.m. I must admit, this one hadn't been on my radar screen for Bhutan! [*]
- HIMALAYAN OWL** (*Strix nivicolium*) – We had no luck when we tried calling one in near our Sengor camp one evening, but Jonathan had more luck with a cooperative bird right over his moth trap before dawn the following morning.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

- RED-HEADED TROGON** (*Harpactes erythrocephalus*) – Our first looks -- at a male in one of the gullies on the ridge west of Nganglam -- were far too brief; it flashed onto an open branch, took one look at the group, and disappeared into the leaves, never to be seen again. We had another, only marginally more cooperative, along the stretch of road where we spotted our Pale-headed Woodpecker.
- WARD'S TROGON** (*Harpactes wardi*) – A calling pair hunting their way through some of the big trees below one of the switchbacks on Dochu La was a big relief, particularly as they repeatedly perched in the open, giving us the chance to get everybody a view in the scopes. We had even closer (and longer) views of another calling male along the road in Phrumsengla NP. This "Near Threatened" species has quite a small world range.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

- EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Seen -- and heard -- on scattered days, including a cooperative singer high in a tree near the Drukgyel Dzong on our first day in Bhutan, one in a farm yard right beside the road along the Po Chhu, and one grubbing in a little patch of grass along the rivulet running through the Trongsa Dzong.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

- GREAT HORNBILL** (*Buceros bicornis*) – Two flapped high over Tingtibi camp, seen on our late afternoon ramble there, and we saw others along the river in Royal Manas NP, and along the highway north out of Nganglam. But our best views came on the day we drove through the Mangde Chhu gorge, when we found a very photogenic bird right beside the road. This stunner can be more than a meter long -- 105 cm (41 inches) to be exact!
- ORIENTAL PIED-HORNBILL** (*Antracoceros albirostris*) – Some good spotting by Lebo netted us views of one along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway.
- RUFIOUS-NECKED HORNBILL** (*Aceros nipalensis*) – Regular in the foothills in the middle part of the tour. Our first was a flighty bird (initially missed by some) along the ridge near our Japanese bridge lunch spot on the Tsirang-Gelephu road, but we had much better looks at others on Tama La and in Phrumsengla NP. Overall, we saw more rufous-necked males than black-necked females.
- WREATHED HORNBILL** (*Rhyticeros undulatus*) – Two in the trees near one of the paperwork checkpoints we passed provided plenty of entertainment while we waited for the official to go through our documents. We saw others each day at Royal Manas NP.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

- COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – One seen sitting on a boulder along the lower Puna Tsang Chhu before we headed for breakfast at Bajo. This species is resident in Bhutan, though only in small numbers as the appropriate habitat is fairly limited. This was the smallest of the tour's kingfishers.
- WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Regular along rivers in the middle part of the tour, including a few sprinkled along the Po Chhu and Punakha Chhu with others at Gelephu, Royal Manas NP and along the Nganglam-Gyelpozhing road.
- CRESTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle lugubris*) – A handful of birds seen, including a rather cryptic pair tucked into trees along the bank of the Po Chhu, a few at some of the river crossings along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway, and one behind our Nganglam hotel. This is the largest of Bhutan's kingfishers.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

- BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER** (*Nyctornis athertoni*) – Small numbers in the lower elevation forests in the middle of the trip, including one hunting near the ranger's cabins at Royal Manas NP and a pair hawking insects along the road in Phrumsengla NP. This species is distinctively big-headed.

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*) – Sangay spotted our first, sitting in a tree near the Gelephu sewage works, and we saw others from the bridge near our lunch restaurant in Pangthang, at Royal Manas NP and behind our Nganglam hotel -- all in the lowlands or foothills.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

INDIAN ROLLER (*Coracias benghalensis*) – We spotted several perched along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway, but our best views probably came at Royal Manas NP, where we found them hunting around the ranger's cabins. The subspecies found in Bhutan -- *affinis* -- has just been split into a new species: Indochinese Roller, whose range stretches from northeastern India to south-central China, the northern Malayan peninsula and Indochina.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

GREAT BARBET (*Psilopogon virens*) – Abundant nearly throughout (though missing from the highest passes), with many lovely views of these, the biggest of Bhutan's barbets. And we certainly all knew their distinctive song by the end of the tour, as we heard it nearly non-stop!

LINEATED BARBET (*Psilopogon lineatus*) – One at Royal Manas NP, near where we found the young elephant on our walk with the park ranger.

GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon franklinii*) – Among the most common of the tour's birds, seen (or more often heard) on most days. Our first was a very cooperative bird that posed for long minutes in a tree near one of the chortens on the descent from Dochu La, in the same area where we found our Fire-capped Tits.

BLUE-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon asiaticus*) – Common in the middle part of the tour, where their ringing songs were a regular part of the tour's soundtrack. We had some fine views of these handsome little birds, including one gobbling berries from a bush at Royal Manas NP.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

YELLOW-RUMPED HONEYGUIDE (*Indicator xanthonotus*) – Our first was a very cooperative bird that returned again and again to the same perch below the road, seen on our way down from Dochu La; when it was sitting quietly, it was amazingly tough to spot again if you looked away for a minute! We spotted another female briefly at the top of a tree over the road at Phrumsengla NP one afternoon while searching for Beautiful Nuthatch.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

SPECKLED PICULET (*Picumnus innominatus*) – A pair of these tiny woodpeckers flicking along a branch over the road at Royal Manas NP got our morning there off to a good start, and we had another in the bamboo forest along the road north of Nganglam, while searching for Pale-headed Woodpecker.

GRAY-CAPPED WOODPECKER (*Yungipicus canicapillus*) – Another small woodpecker, seen well a couple of times around Nganglam. This species, known widely known as the Gray-capped PYGMY-Woodpecker, is generally found in the foothills.

RUFIOUS-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*) – Lovely looks at this richly colored woodpecker investigating crevices in a lichen-covered tree at the Queens Botanical Garden -- nice spotting, Jonathan! Suzi spotted another one in Phrumsengla NP.

FULVOUS-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos macei*) – One in the foothills west of Nganglam, in the same area where we pursued our first Common Green-Magpie -- and about as uncooperative! Fortunately, one along the road north of Nganglam was a lot more obliging.

DARJEELING WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos darjellensis*) – One near our picnic breakfast spot on Chele La. This is the largest of the black-and-white woodpeckers possible on this tour.

CRIMSON-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates cathpharius*) – Fine views of one of these little woodpeckers just across the road from Darachu camp, seen as we started our walk down the hill, with others in Phrumsengla NP. This species resembles the larger Darjeeling Woodpecker, but lacks the latter's red vent and yellow sides of the neck.

BAY WOODPECKER (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) – A pair of birds in the foothills along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway were a bit flighty to start with, but showed pretty well eventually. Their longer, pale bills and boldly-patterned wings help to separate them from the smaller Rufous Woodpecker.

GREATER FLAMEBACK (*Chrysocolaptes guttastratus*) – We heard one calling from the tall forest up the hill from the park road at Royal Manas NP, but couldn't entice it in for a view. [*]

RUFIOUS WOODPECKER (*Micropternus brachyurus*) – One in the same area as our first Speckled Piculets in Royal Manas NP -- but looking a whole lot bigger -- with another along the Kerong road outside Nganglam the next day. The dark bill helps to separate it from the larger, darker Bay Woodpecker.

PALE-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Gecinulus grantia*) – Yahoo! It took a bit of time -- and a lot of patience -- but we finally tracked down a calling bird in a bamboo stand along the road north from Nganglam. It clung to one of the big bamboo stalks, peering around as it occasionally called. This bamboo specialist is an uncommon resident of the Bhutanese foothills.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*) – The more common of the tour's two yellownapes, with our best views coming in Royal Manas NP, where we found one in the fruiting trees near the ranger complex. We saw others in the Mangde Chhu gorge and along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road. The barred belly and smaller size help to separate it from the larger Greater Yellownappe.

GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Picus canus*) – One in the Royal Manas NP foraged low in tree along the road, seen before our picnic breakfast there.

GREATER YELLOWNAPE (*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*) – All-too-brief views for a few of a bird along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, that flashed across the road in front of us, perched on a trunk just downhill, then disappeared as soon as we piled out of the bus. Arg!

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

COLLARED FALCONET (*Microhierax caerulescens*) – One sat quietly on the fronds of a palm near our first Large Cuckooshrikes, along the road from Tsirang to Gelephu -- super spotting, Mike B! This species, which feeds primarily on large insects (and occasionally small birds) is resident in the lowlands and lower foothills along Bhutan's southern border.

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Seen on scattered days in the Paro and Ura valleys and around the Punakha Dzong. This widespread species breeds from Europe and Africa to Japan, and is resident (and abundant) in Bhutan -- said (in the book "Birds in Bhutan: Status and Distribution") to be among the country's most widespread species.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET (*Psittacula eupatria*) – At least three of these larger parakeets flew past while we birded near the Gelephu sewage works. This is a lowland species in Bhutan, found at elevations below 300 meters (980 feet) -- and Gelephu is one of their strongholds in the country.

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (*Psittacula krameri*) – Another species seen in pretty good numbers around Gelephu, principally in somewhat distant, screeching flocks passing by on their way to an out-of-view roost site. This is another species found primarily in the lowland towns (and nearby foothills) of the country's southern border.

RED-BREASTED PARAKEET (*Psittacula alexandri*) – A few around the soccer field at Royal Manas NP, showing the pink breasts and bellies that distinguish them from the country's other parakeets.

Eurylaimidae (Asian and Grauer's Broadbills)

LONG-TAILED BROADBILL (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*) – At least one seen near the Gashari turnoff on the ridge west of Nganglam (flipping its long tail repeatedly as it sat on a utility wire), and a couple of others hunting through a big tree along the Kerong road after our afternoon siesta in Nganglam. This is another widespread species throughout much of southeast Asia, principally in mid-elevation forests (from 400-2000 meters in elevation).

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

LARGE WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis virgatus*) – It took a bit of looking, but we eventually found a couple hunting along the track on the far side of the river at Royal Manas NP. This is another species found in the lowlands and foothills along Bhutan's southern border.

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – Our first were a pair actively hunting along the road near Sankosh, our last stop before Darachu camp late one afternoon. We found others in the forest edging Tingtibi camp on our late afternoon's walk there, and still more along the Mangde Chhu gorge. This species often accompanies mixed flocks.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

ASHY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus fuscus*) – One or two made brief sorties from high-tension wires running past our Panbang hotel, seen as we waited for everyone to gather for our late afternoon's outing to Royal Manas NP.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – Daily in Phrumsengla NP, with others in the Mangde Chhu gorge -- the last of the four expected species of minivet to be seen this year. The pale throat of the male quickly separates him from the other minivets.

SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*) – The first of the tour's minivets, seen at the Drukgyel Dzong on our first morning in Bhutan, with others along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway and in Phrumsengla NP. The shape of the patch on its wing panel helps to separate it from the other minivets.

LONG-TAILED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus ethologus*) – The most common of the tour's minivets this year, seen on about half the days of the tour; its "checkmark" wing patch is distinctive. This is an altitudinal migrant, descending to the plains and foothills for the winter and breeding at 1800-2900 meters (5900-9200').

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus speciosus*) – Small numbers seen on a few days scattered through the tour, with especially nice views of several at Royal Manas NP. This is the largest of the tour's minivets, and the only one that shows multiple colored patches in its wing panel.

LARGE CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina macei*) – Two hunted from trees along the road to Gelephu, in the same area where we found our Collared Falconet. They were a bit of a challenge to get a look at initially -- always seeming to land just out of view behind branches or leaves -- but we got there in the end! We saw another near the Gelephu sewage works.

BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melaschistos*) – Easily the more common of the tour's two cuckooshrike species, seen on scattered days in broadleaf forest -- including a couple hunting in the treetops at the Queens Botanical Garden and others in the foothills around Nganglam.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – Surprisingly, we found only a single bird this year -- along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road on our drive to Tingtibi camp. This species is an altitudinal migrant, with most birds on their breeding territories by mid-April. The subspecies found in Bhutan is the handsome "tricolor".

GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius tephronotus*) – By far the more common of the tour's shrikes, seen on scattered days throughout the tour -- including one hunting from some shrubs right beside the road at Dochu La -- at least until the massive pack of dogs started their barking session right below the bushes!

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (CHESTNUT-WINGED) (*Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris*) – Fine views of these stocky birds on several days, including one working along the edge of the road near Sankosh (our last stop en route to Darachu camp), a confiding pair along a hot, dry section of the road on Tama La, and others with a mixed flock in Phrumsengla NP. This species was split from the former White-browed Shrike-Babbler.

GREEN SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius xanthochlorus*) – Jonathan saw one at our last roadside stop before we reached Darachu camp, but it took the rest of us until nearly the very end of the trip to catch up. We finally saw one with a mixed flock in a stretch of bamboo and broadleaf forest in Thrimsengla NP on the day we left Sengor.

BLACK-EARED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius melanotis*) – We had several nice encounters with these handsome little birds, including a handful with a big mixed flock near our picnic spot at the Japanese bridge, a showy male on Tama La, and others with mixed flocks in Phrumsengla NP.

WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS (*Erpornis zantholeuca*) – One with a mixed flock along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road -- nice tag-team spotting, Mike B. and Jonathan -- with others in Royal Manas and Phrumsengla NPs. Formerly considered a yuhina, this species is now known to belong to the Vireonidae.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE (*Oriolus xanthornus reubeni*) – We heard one calling at our lunch spot on Dochu La, and finally laid eyes on one (after chasing it back and forth for a bit) in some fruiting trees near the ranger station at Royal Manas NP. This is a scarce species in Bhutan, recorded only in the lower foothills; the timing of the Bhutanese records suggest the oriole may be dispersing from breeding sites in northern India during the dry season.

MAROON ORIOLE (*Oriolus traillii*) – Regular throughout much of the second half of the trip, with especially nice views of both males and females in Phrumsengla NP. We heard their rich, melodic songs even more regularly than we saw the singers.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocerus*) – A few around the Punakha Dzong, with others around Gelephu and Nganglam. This species tends to be found in more open areas than the next, often hunting around houses and towns.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – The most widespread and regularly encountered of the tour's drongos, seen on most days -- typically hunting from treetops or utility wires. This species reaches higher elevations than do the tour's other drongos.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Our first pair, in the Mangde Chhu gorge, were nesting already, with one bird already brooding. We had others around the Gashari turnoff (where one looked strikingly blue-green) and in the lower stretches of Phrumsengla NP. This species has a less notched tail than the previous two.

LESSER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus remifer*) – Small numbers in the dense forests of the temperate zone and foothills. Our first swooped back and forth over the roadside near the Japanese bridge, trailing those distinctive tail streamers, and another sat side by side on a branch with an Ashy Drongo in the foothills west of Nganglam.

HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – One high up the ridge over the road in the Mangde Chhu gorge showed its distinctively curled tail feathers briefly as it flicked from perch to perch up the hill and disappeared into the trees.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) – A few seen in Royal Manas NP and the Mangde Chhu gorge, but never particularly well. The brushy crest, larger bill and curled tail feathers (with a proportionately shorter shaft) help to distinguish them from the Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – Regular in small numbers in understory of mid-elevation forests, where their twitchy habits and fanned tails often drew our attention.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea*) – Our first flicked along a gully edge near the Garshari turnoff, and we found another working the edge of the Nganglam-Gyelpozhing road while trying to track down a Pale-headed Woodpecker. The bright electric blue of this species (in good light anyway) is certainly more noticeable than the black nape!

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*) – A noisy showy gang along the pond edge at the Queens Botanical Garden were most cooperative, and Doug spotted another on our drive back to Paro the final day. In the breeding season, this species appears restricted to the oak forests.

YELLOW-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*Urocissa flavirostris*) – Common in the highlands, with multiple encounters -- including a rather secretive few with the Spotted Laughingthrushes on the far side of Chele La, and far showier birds bounding across the pastures near our Sengor campsite.

COMMON GREEN-MAGPIE (*Cissa chinensis*) – Small numbers in the foothills west of Nganglam and in Phrumsengla NP, but always a bit of a skulker -- popping into the open and then quickly disappearing before everyone got a proper look. I think we all got there in the end though -- and we certainly all knew its songs! What a handsome bird.

RUFIOUS TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) – A few worked through some of the bigger trees along the edge of the Gelephu rice fields. This is the only Bhutanese treepie with an all dark head -- and also the one found at the lowest elevations.

GRAY TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta formosae*) – The most common of the tour's treepies, seen on many days. It's resident in warm broadleaf forests and second growth, so widespread across much of our tour route, missing only from the lowlands around Gelephu and the highest passes.

COLLARED TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta frontalis*) – At least one with a mixed flock along the ridge west of Gashari -- great spotting Jonathan! The combination of all-black tail, rusty back and belly and black and gray wing (with no pale spots or panels) help to separate this rare resident from its more expected cousins.

BLACK-RUMPED MAGPIE (*Pica bottanensis*) – Scattered birds in the Ura valley and around Jakar. This species, which was recently split from the former Eurasian Magpie complex, is found from central Bhutan to western-central China.

EURASIAN NUTCRACKER (SOUTHERN) (*Nucifraga caryocatactes macella*) – Regular in the highest passes, with our first coming right at the summit at Chele La, when we found one sitting on a prayer flag pole, watching us as we reveled in the snowy scene.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrhacorax pyrrhacorax*) – After our first few, which circled against the hills on the opposite side of the Par Chhu our first morning in Bhutan, we didn't see another until the end of the trip, when we found some around Sengor and the Phobjikha valley.

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – Some in Thimphu, with bigger numbers around Gelephu, including mobs along the roadsides in town. The two-toned look of this species quickly separates it from the Large-billed Crow.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (LARGE-BILLED) (*Corvus macrorhynchos tibetosinensis*) – By far the most common crow of the trip, seen everywhere but the lowlands and lower foothills of the middle part of the tour. Our best looks probably came at our Sengor camp, where a couple of popcorn-eating birds sidled within arm's length. Funny how often this species miraculously appeared within minutes of us starting our picnics...

LARGE-BILLED CROW (EASTERN) (*Corvus macrorhynchos levaillantii*) – The lower-elevation subspecies of the Large-billed Crow, seen in the lowlands and foothills from Gelephu and Tingtibi to Nganglam.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Scattered birds swirled low over the waters of the Puna Tsang Chhu while we enjoyed our picnic breakfast at Bajo. This is an uncommon passage migrant through Bhutan.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – Best seen wheeling over the gas station in Gyelpozhing, where we stopped on our journey north from Namling. This is principally a passage migrant in Bhutan, though a small number stay to breed.

ASIAN HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon dasypus*) – A flock spiraled over the Par Chhu on our first morning in Bhutan, their snowy white undersides separating them from the next species. That white rump patch is pretty eye-catching too! This is an altitudinal migrant in Bhutan.

NEPAL HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon nipalense*) – First seen over the Mangde Chhu gorge, with others near the Phrumsengla waterfalls, at the Trongsa Dzong and in the Phobjikha valley. The dark throat and undertail coverts help to quickly separate this species from the previous, similarly-plumaged one.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

YELLOW-BELLIED FAIRY-FANTAIL (*Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus*) – Small numbers in Phrumsengla NP, with another on Pele La. Though it shares the eye-catching "fan dance" of the true fantails, this species has now been moved to the family Stenostiridae -- the fairy-flycatchers.

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Quite common in the lowlands, foothills and valleys, though missing from the higher elevations. We had especially nice looks at two hunting right near the road at Sankosh (our last stop before Darachu camp); they kept perching again and again on nearby utility wires. This is another altitudinal migrant.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

FIRE-CAPPED TIT (*Cephalopyrus flammiceps*) – Spectacular looks at a little gang working through the twigs just over our heads near one of the chortens on a flank of Dochu La; at some points, they were almost too close to use our binoculars. This is a species that appears to be at least partially

migratory in Bhutan, and is regularly missed -- so we were lucky to get such lovely views.

YELLOW-BROWED TIT (*Sylviparus modestus*) – One with a big mixed flock we encountered on our way down from Chele La proved a bit of a challenge as it wormed through some dense evergreens. Fortunately for those who struggled with that first one, we found more cooperative birds on Dochu La. This is easily the drabest of Bhutan's many tits.

SULTAN TIT (*Melanochlora sultanea*) – A pair of these big, colorful tits enlivened the proceedings at our Mangde Chhu gorge breakfast, and Mike B. spotted another during our walk at Royal Manas NP the following morning.

COAL TIT (HIMALAYAN) (*Periparus ater aemodius*) – Scattered birds in the highlands, including a few along the road through the taller evergreen forest on the Ha Valley side of Chele La, with others in Thrimsengla NP and on Yutong La. Though very similar to the next species, this one is a bit duller-plumaged and has a line of tiny white spots along the wing coverts.

RUFUS-VENTED TIT (*Periparus rubidiventris*) – We had some great close views of these jaunty, pointy-crested tits in short shrubs right beside the road on Pele La. This was another common highland species, also found on Chele La, Yutong La, and in Thrimsengla NP.

GRAY-CRESTED TIT (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – A few with that wonderful big mixed tit flock on the flanks of Chele La, with others heard in Thrimsengla NP. Their plain faces quickly distinguish them from Bhutan's other crested tits. This species seems to prefer hemlock, fir and mixed forests in Bhutan.

GREEN-BACKED TIT (*Parus monticolus*) – Common in the highlands, with plenty of good looks -- including our first, encountered in the orchard at the foot of the hill up to the Drugyel Dzong our first morning in Bhutan.

YELLOW-CHEEKED TIT (*Machlolophus sibilans*) – Our first sighting an all-too-quick look at a couple flitting through the canopy of a tree along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road; fortunately, they proved far more obliging as we walked back to the bus. We had others daily with mixed flocks in Phrumsengla NP -- including that big group we found on the way back from the Beautiful Nuthatch spot.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BLACK-THROATED TIT (*Aegithalos concinnus*) – Swarms of these little tits seen among bigger mixed flocks on Chele La and Tama La, and at Phrumsengla and Thrimsengla NPs. The rufous crown, white chin and black throat of this species quickly separate it from the next. It tends to inhabit moister habitats at lower elevations than does the Black-browed Tit.

BLACK-BROWED TIT (*Aegithalos iouschistos*) – Doug spotted one on the hotel grounds on our first evening in Bhutan, but it took the rest of us until the next day to catch up. Fortunately, we found several with a big mixed flock on Chele La, then saw others at Thrimsengla NP and Yutong La. This species is also known as Rufous-fronted Tit.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH (*Sitta cinnamoventris*) – A few along the Mangde Chhu gorge, including one repeatedly gathering nesting material from the middle of the dirt road. Doug spotted another as we searched for the Pale-headed Woodpecker outside Nganglam. It's found in broadleaf forest, at lower elevations than the next species. [N]

WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH (*Sitta himalayensis*) – We found our first along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway, but they were particularly common at Phrumsengla NP, where we saw them daily. This species lacks the bold white cheek patch of the previous one.

BEAUTIFUL NUTHATCH (*Sitta formosa*) – Yahoo! After a LOT of marching up and down various stretches of road in Phrumsengla NP, we tried a "new" (to me) road Lebo and Sangay knew about and struck pay dirt, with not one, not two, but THREE of these well-named nuthatches. They flicked along branches and up trunks for several minutes before disappearing off down the hill -- just before the other birding group arrived. D'oh!

Certhiidae (Trecreepers)

HODGSON'S TREECREEPER (*Certhia hodgsoni mandellii*) – One with a big mixed flock we found on our way down from Chele La; it hitched its way up a succession of big trunks, flashing its white belly and occasionally bursting into song.

RUSTY-FLANKED TREECREEPER (*Certhia nipalensis*) – An unfortunately uncooperative bird with a big mixed tit flock along road in Thrimsengla NP; it called (and called and called) but flew off across the valley mere seconds after Margaret finally spotted it. She got a few lucky folks on it as it crawled up a gigantic tree across the hairpin bend, but most missed it except in flight. Arg!

SIKKIM TREECREEPER (*Certhia discolor*) – One of these distinctively dark trecreepers gave us a nice show in Phrumsengla NP, part of a big mixed flock. This species, which is also known as Brown-throated Trecreeper, is most common in the country's eastern half.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

BROWN DIPPER (*Cinclus pallasii*) – Doug spotted our first, as we scanned the lower portion of the Puna Tsang Chhu en route to Thimphu after our morning on Chele La, and we saw another pair bouncing along the rocks and plunging into the rushing waters of the Po Chhu. But our best views probably came from the bridge near the checkpoint at the start of the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, where one was working along the river below us.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL (*Rubigula flaviventris*) – Small groups in the Mangde Chhu gorge, Royal Manas NP and with a mixed flock in the foothills west of Nganglam, each time in a fruiting tree gobbling berries.

STRIATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus striatus*) – Especially nice views of two near our breakfast gazebo in the Mangde Chhu gorge, with others along the road near our Darachu camp and in Phrumsengla NP. They always look like they're having a bad hair day.

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Very common and widespread, though missing completely from elevations above about 2000 meters (6500 feet). They were often spotted around houses and towns.

RED-WHISKERED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) – After hearing one calling repeatedly from a tangled clearing in Royal Manas NP, we finally laid eyes on another along the road north out of Nganglam, while searching for Pale-headed Woodpecker.

HIMALAYAN BULBUL (*Pycnonotus leucogenys*) – Our new route north from Nganglam takes us through the town of Gyelpozhing, which proved to be well-stocked with this species, which is not particularly common on our tour route. We found a good dozen or so as we traversed the town.

WHITE-THROATED BULBUL (*Alphoixus flaveolus*) – Common in the lower foothills, including a pair showing their puff-out white throats and richly colored plumage nicely along the Jigme-Choling road. We saw others in the Mangde Chhu gorge, and in the foothills west of Nganglam.

BLACK BULBUL (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) – Abundant throughout, with flocks of migrants seen on many days -- including a big group in some tall trees along the lower Puna Tsang Chhu, seen as we made our way towards the potential Wallcreeper spot.

ASHY BULBUL (*Hemixos flavala*) – One perched up in a dead snag in the Mangde Chhu gorge, showing nicely that distinctive chartreuse wing patch. We saw others in the foothills around Nganglam.

MOUNTAIN BULBUL (*Ixos mcclellandii*) – Small numbers in the foothills near Nganglam and in Phrumsengla NP.

Regulidae (Kinglets).

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – One with a big mixed flock swirling through the spruces on Chele La wasn't particularly cooperative, ducking out of view before everybody got a look. Fortunately, we found a showier individual with a mixed flock (where our Rusty-flanked Treecreeper made its all-too-brief appearance) in Thrimsengla NP.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings).

SCALY-BREADED CUPWING (*Pnoepyga albiventer*) – Arg! We were OH SO CLOSE to one along the road up from the Phobjikha valley on our last morning -- and it looked to be the perfect spot to see one -- but only Jonathan caught a glimpse before it slipped away. We certainly all heard it though. Over and over and over!

PYGMY CUPWING (*Pnoepyga pusilla*) – We heard them daily in Phrumsengla NP, but only laid eyes on them once -- in a little gully carved by a stream along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway. We all saw it flash repeatedly back and forth across the narrow gap, but only a lucky few saw it creeping through the underbrush on either side.

Scotocercidae (Bush Warblers and Allies).

SLATY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia olivea*) – We all certainly heard one singing from the dense vegetation along the road through Phrumsengla NP (not far from the old ranger camp), but only a few people caught a poor glimpse of it as it bounced back and forth.

CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA (*Cettia castaneocoronata*) – Arg! One of these adorable little birds bounded back and forth across the mossy ground along the edge of the road near Lumbrang (on our way to Sengor), but it never paused in the open for long, so some folks never did get on it -- and the pouring rain certainly didn't help! We certainly all heard it though!

YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER (*Abroscopus superciliosus*) – One in the bamboo near Tingtibi camp was nicely cooperative, giving us extended views.

RUFIOUS-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus albogularis*) – A few in the group got on one with a big mixed flock in the foothills west of Nganglam. This species has a restricted range in Bhutan, and is found only in the south-central valleys and central foothills.

BLACK-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus schisticeps*) – Our best views probably came in Phrumsengla NP (not far from our Ward's Trogon), when we found a pair with a mixed flock boiling along the road. We saw others on Tama La. This is another regional specialty, found in the country's broadleaf forests.

MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD (*Phyllergates cucullatus*) – An eye-level bird along the road on Tama La showed very nicely for some and not at all for others. We heard its lovely whistled song regularly in Phrumsengla, but never spotted another.

BROAD-BILLED WARBLER (*Tickellia hodgsoni*) – Daily in Phrumsengla NP, always in mixed flocks with other small birds. Found mostly in cool broadleaf forests during the summer, this species is strongly associated with bamboo. This is another regional specialty.

BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH WARBLER (*Horornis fortipes*) – Far more frequently heard than seen, but we did have a super encounter with a showy bird along one of the trails at the Queens Botanical Garden, plus others along the road in Phrumsengla NP. The explosive whistled song of this species reminded some of us of Australia's whipbirds.

HUME'S BUSH WARBLER (*Horornis brunnescens*) – One crawled through the bamboo understory in Thrimsengla NP (poorly seen by some), distracting us while we waited in vain for the Great Parrotbill to reappear. It sang a few half-hearted sub-songs, but didn't really seem to be on territory yet.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers).

ASHY-THROATED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*) – This distinctive little warbler -- with a grayish throat and breast, whitish outer tail feathers and a yellow rump patch -- was seen with mixed flocks on several of the higher passes, with our first ones coming at the Queens Botanical Garden.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) – One worked along the edge of the road in Thrimsengla NP, part of a far-too-small flock we found in the very quiet bamboo forest.

HUME'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus humei*) – One of the birds we found in Thrimsengla appeared to be this species, which has been split from Yellow-browed Warbler. Compared to the nearby bird we'd identified as Yellow-browed, this one seemed smaller and grayer, with a buffier wingbars. It lacked the yellow rump of a Buff-barred Warbler though, as well as the latter's pale legs.

PALE-RUMPED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*) – One of the "leaf warblers" found in small numbers in some of the higher passes, including Chele La, Tama La, and Phrumseng La ; this one lacks any white in the tail. Split from the Pallas's Warbler, it was formerly known as "Lemon-rumped Warbler".

TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – One low in a largely leafless tree along the edge of a pasture at Yongkola, part of the big mixed flock we encountered after we found our Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes. This was probably the plainest of the warblers we saw, with no wing markings and only a faint black eye line.

WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus intermedius*) – Some of the group spotted one low in some trees along the road in Phrumsengla NP, not far from our picnic breakfast spot one morning. The yellow chin, and gray and black crown stripes help to distinguish this one.

GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus poliogenys*) – Daily in Phrumsengla NP, typically between Yongkola (including one with the big mixed flock we found along the forest edge by the pastures on our way back from the Beautiful Nuthatch spot) and Namling.

GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus burkii*) – One in Phrumsengla NP, but our best views came right at the start of the side road we walked along on our descent from Pele La. It flicked from branch to branch along the first 50 yards or so of the rough track, singing pretty much continuously. A study done in the 1990s revealed that the "Golden-spectacled" then consisted of five species, two of which are altitudinal replacements in Bhutan. This one, still called Golden-spectacled, breeds lower the next.

WHISTLER'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus whistleri*) – A few had returned to their upper elevation breeding grounds, including some in the upper reaches of Phrumsengla NP and others in Thrimsengla NP.

LARGE-BILLED LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – We spotted one along the descent from Darachu camp, but only heard them after that.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus castaniceps*) – Quite a distinctive little bird, with one seen nicely in a mixed flock near the entrance gate to the Queens Botanical Garden and others with the mixed flock near the Japanese bridge and along the drive to Tingtibi camp -- often at about eye level.

- YELLOW-VENTED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus cantator*) – One at Royal Manas NP showed well the distinctive yellow vent -- and even yellower throat -- of this small species. This is a rather local species, found only from Nepal to Laos.
- BLYTH'S LEAF WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus reguloides*) – Probably the most common warbler of the trip, seen well -- and in good numbers -- on most days. The very yellow bill is a good ID feature for this species.
- GRAY-HOODED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*) – Very common in the broadleaf forests of middle and lower elevations, seen (and heard!) daily from Darachu to Phrumsengla NP
- Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)*
- COMMON TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – After hearing the rhythmic song of this species on our drive from Tingtibi to Panbang, some of us finally laid eyes on one along the trail at Royal Manas NP, and we all saw one along the road out of Nganglam while we searched for the calling Pale-headed Woodpecker.
- STRIATED PRINIA** (*Prinia crinigera*) – A super cooperative singing bird along the Puna Tsang Chhu (not far from our breakfast spot along the river at Bajo) perched for long minutes right out in the open, giving us good looks at its long, scraggly tail.
- BLACK-THROATED PRINIA** (*Prinia atrogularis*) – A singing bird wriggled through the ferns near our breakfast (and lunch!) spot in Phrumsengla NP, occasionally popping up to the top for a look around.
- Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrenit, and Allies)*
- FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS** (*Myzornis pyrrhoura*) – Wow! We had a fabulous encounter with a whirling flock of SIX at Dochu La. They flitted through the little trees bordering the walkway up to the temple, gleaming against the early morning mist. We saw others at Thrimseglia NP, just shy of the pass, and Mike B. had some at Yutong La. Believe it or not, this can sometimes be a hard species to see well.
- GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA** (*Lioparus chrysotis*) – One of these gorgeous little birds flicked through the bamboo at Namling, peering out from among the stems.
- WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA** (*Fulvetta vinipectus*) – Quite common, mostly at higher elevations, where we often found these handsome little birds in mixed flocks -- including some with that huge mob in the Queens Botanical Garden. The bold white supercilium and pale eye are distinctive.
- GREAT PARROTBILL** (*Conostoma aemodium*) – Arg! Some great spotting by Mike B. turned up one of these big parrotbills down a bamboo-strewn hillside in Thrimseglia NP -- but only for a few, too-brief seconds. Most didn't get on it before it dropped down into the vegetation, never to be seen again.
- BROWN PARROTBILL** (*Cholornis unicolor*) – Some fine views of a busy group in the Queens Botanical Garden, flashing their pale bills and calling to each other as they moved through bushes right in front of us. We had others on Chele La, and along the road on our way back to Paro at the trip's end.
- GRAY-HEADED PARROTBILL** (*Psittiparus gularis*) – Two flicked through shrubby growth along the ridge west of Namling, investigating twigs and branches -- great spotting, Jonathan! This species tends to be somewhat less skulking than other parrotbills.
- Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)*
- STRIATED YUHINA** (*Yuhina castaniceps*) – A very active mob of these little birds, which are less crested than the other yuhinas on this tour, swarmed through a roadside bush in the Mangde Chhu gorge -- and climbing out to get a look at them led to Jonathan's spotting of our second White-bellied Heron. We found others on the road north out of Nganglam.
- WHITE-NAPED YUHINA** (*Yuhina bakeri*) – Especially good studies of a little gang among the mixed flock at the Japanese bridge, where we birded before our picnic lunch, with others on Tama La and in Phrumsengla NP. This is something of a regional specialty, with a restricted range in the Himalayas.
- WHISKERED YUHINA** (*Yuhina flavicollis*) – Common and widespread, and seen well in many close encounters, often with other small insectivores.
- STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA** (*Yuhina gularis*) – Our first were along the Tsirang-Darachu road, and we found others at Latongla, Thrimseglia NP and along the little dirt side road we birded on the lower flanks of Pele La. This is the largest of Bhutan's yuhinas, and is typically found at higher elevations than the previous species -- though there is a broad area of overlap.
- RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA** (*Yuhina occipitalis*) – Especially nice views of many at Latongla, where we found a big party feeding along the roadside after the rainstorm, with others elsewhere in the highlands of Thrimseglia NP, Yutong La and Pele La. The rufous nape on this species is even more eye-catching than the rufous vent!
- BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA** (*Yuhina nigrimenta*) – Our first was right up in the canopy of a big tree near Tingtibi camp -- which made seeing that tiny black chin a bit of a challenge. We saw others in Royal Manas NP and along the Kerong road that were a bit more obliging.
- ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Fairly common (in small numbers) in the foothills of the central part of the tour, typically with big mixed flocks -- including some with the swarming birds near the Japanese bridge and others along the path we walked with the ranger at Royal Manas NP.
- Timaliidae (Tree-Babblers, Scimitar-Babblers, and Allies)*
- PIN-STRIPED TIT-BABBLER** (*Mixornis gularis*) – A handful of these skulkers proved difficult to get much of a look at as they worked their way along the edge of the road near our picnic spot in Royal Manas NP, creeping through the very thickest bits of the understory.
- GOLDEN BABBLER** (*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*) – Jonathan spotted one along the Jigme-Choling road, but it took the rest of us until the foothills around Nganglam to catch up. We had others foraging low in the understory with mixed flocks along the road in Phrumsengla NP.
- RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER** (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*) – A little group boiled through the bushes with the Brown Parrotbills at the Queens Botanical Garden, part of a much larger mixed flock. We saw others along the Jigme-Choling road, in Phrumsengla NP and (some of us) along the side road we walked on the descent from Pele La.
- STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*) – Our first rummaged through the knee-high vegetation along the track at the Queens Botanical Garden, eventually working their way up into the trees as they followed the rest of a big mixed flock. We found another big, noisy group in the big bamboo stand at Namling.
- WHITE-BROWED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*) – After hearing (but not seeing) them in the Mangde Chhu gorge, we connected with a few calling birds in the foothills west of Nganglam -- good spotting Jean! They started well up the hill in some open trees, and eventually worked their way down the slope (with the rest of the flock) right to the edge of the road.
- RUSTY-CHEEKED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Megapomatorhinus erythrogegens*) – Two bounced along the edge of the road in the Mangde Chhu gorge, flinging bits of dross aside in their search for something edible, and allowing super scope studies. We found others along the ridge west of Nganglam, part of the same big mixed flock that held our Gray-headed Parrotbills.

GRAY-THROATED BABBLER (*Stachyris nigriceps*) – A small group twitched through the undergrowth along the road at Royal Manas NP, doing their best to defy our attempts to get a good look at them.

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

YELLOW-THROATED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus cinereus*) – Daily in Phrumsengla NP, always as part of mixed flocks and often foraging right on or near the ground. We were close enough to some of them to clearly see their speckled crowns -- and those distinctive yellow eyebrows, of course!

RUFIOUS-WINGED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*) – Another regular species in mixed flocks in Phrumsengla NP, with others along the road between Tsirang and Gelephu. This species is found primarily in broadleaf forest (at a variety of elevations), and is generally scarce in the west.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

NEPAL FULVETTA (*Alcippe nipalensis*) – Our best was a nicely showy bird foraging with the big mixed flock near the hilly pasture at Yongkola as we birded our way back from the Beautiful Nuthatch spot. We saw others along the ridge west of Gashari and elsewhere in Phrumsengla NP. The gray head and bold white eye ring of this otherwise largely olive-brown bird are distinctive.

STRIATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Grammatoptila striata*) – This large, jay-like bird was common in the broadleaf forests of middle elevations, and was one of the "good" laughingthrushes -- as in gratifyingly easy to see. Our first were a few with the big mixed flock in the Queens Botanical Garden, but they were probably most common in Phrumsengla NP.

HIMALAYAN CUTIA (*Cutia nipalensis*) – Our first was a single bird traveling with the big mixed flock in the Queens Botanical Garden -- good spotting, Jean! We found others boiling along the edges of the road at Phrumsengla NP (a nice consolation prize as we searched for Beautiful Nuthatch), and Doug spotted another on the day we transferred to Jakar. This species looks (and acts) like a giant nuthatch.

WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax leucolophus*) – Arg! This was one of the few laughingthrushes that got away this year; we heard far more than we saw, and those we did see we only had for fleeting seconds, typically as they disappeared into the foliage.

LESSER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax monileger*) – On the other hand, this normally "bad" laughingthrush was uncharacteristically cooperative, including one that sat for long minutes right out in the open on a utility wire well below the road.

RUFIOUS-CHINNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla rufogularis*) – Wow! This is normally a proper skulker -- often only heard and not seen -- so to have not one, not two, not three, but FOUR parade along a fence rail right in the open on a back road near Yongkola showed just how lucky this group was. And we saw them multiple times as we continued to bird in the area.

SPOTTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ocellata*) – A trio rummaged on a steep bank beside the road on the backside of Chele La, in the company of some Yellow-billed Blue-Magpies. This is surely one of the handsomest of the laughingthrushes.

GREATER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla pectoralis*) – A little group along the start of the road through the Mangde Chhu gorge -- in the same area as our showy Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babblers -- were unusually cooperative, foraging right in the open along the roadside and flitting through some nearby bushes. We saw others on the ridge west of Nganglam (near where we found our Gray-headed Parrotbills) and along the road up from the Phobjika valley on our last day in Bhutan.

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla albogularis*) – This probably rates as the easiest of all of Bhutan's laughingthrushes to see; we found them on many days in the highlands, often in big numbers -- including a mob feeding on the ground near the restrooms at the Queens Botanical Garden, and another big group working their way across a pasture in front of a house in Namling.

RUFIOUS-NECKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ruficollis*) – Seen several times in the foothills around Nganglam, and in Yongkola, where we had especially good views of one along the roadside, not far from where we spotted our Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes. This can be a "bad" laughingthrush, so we were lucky!

GRAY-SIDED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla caerulata*) – This is another potentially "bad" laughingthrush, but not this year! We found one bounding along the trail at the Queens Botanical Garden -- nice spotting, Jonathan!

BHUTAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron imbricatum*) – Especially nice views of one rummaging along the road edge in Phrumsengla NP, with others on the drive to Darachu camp and along the Tsirang-Gelephu road. This species, which was split from the Streaked Laughingthrush, is found in Bhutan and southeastern Tibet.

SCALY LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron subunicolor*) – This is often another "bad" laughingthrush -- and it did make us work a bit for our looks -- but a handy gap in the vegetation near the Namling waterfall gave us a great viewpoint to watch as they (and other members of their mixed flock) worked their way back and forth across a little clearing. It's a subtly handsome bird!

BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron squamatum*) – Definitely one of the "bad" laughingthrushes -- and it lived up to its reputation, skulking in the undergrowth along the road in Phrumsengla NP and showing itself only in fits and starts to a few.

BLACK-FACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron affine*) – Our first laughingthrush, seen digging in the snow on Chele La, not far from our first rosefinches. We saw others elsewhere in the highlands, including at the Queens Botanical Garden, in the higher stretches of Phrumsengla and in many of the passes on our way back towards Paro.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*) – Two in the rhododendrons near the cafe at Dochu La showed well (right at eye level). We spotted others near the Namling waterfall (while trying to catch a glimpse of the Scaly Laughingthrushes, and saw others along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road and in some of the higher broadleaf forest on the flanks of the higher passes.

RUFIOUS SIBIA (*Heterophasia capistrata*) – Gratifyingly common throughout much of the trip, with lots of good looks -- including one sitting quietly on a twig right beside the road to Darachu camp late on the afternoon of our arrival.

LONG-TAILED SIBIA (*Heterophasia picaoides*) – Small groups on scattered days in the foothills, with our first looks coming near the Japanese bridge and others in the Mangde Chhu gorge and in a fruiting tree along the Kerong road near Nganglam.

SILVER-EARED MESIA (*Leiothrix argenteauris*) – Sangay spotted our first -- a handful along the edge of the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road -- and we found others in the foothills west of Nganglam.

RED-TAILED MINLA (*Minla ignotincta*) – Our first were with a mixed flock on Tama La, but our best views probably came in Phrumsengla NP, where we encountered them regularly with mixed flocks along the roads. This is another altitudinal migrant that joins up in big flocks during the winter.

RED-FACED LIOCICHLA (*Liocichla phoenicea*) – Two -- or maybe three -- twitched through the low, dense vegetation along a switchback along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, periodically flicking up into the open.

HOARY-THROATED BARWING (*Actinodura nipalensis*) – A sleepy one blinking on a branch in the Queens Botanical Garden -- one that eventually lagged far behind the rest of the gang -- was followed by others in the higher forests of Phrumsengla and Latongla.

RUSTY-FRONTED BARWING (*Actinodura egeroni*) – A couple just across the road from Darachu camp got our walk down the hill off to a nice start, and we saw others in the central foothills and in Phrumsengla NP. Their three-note whistle was a common backdrop to Phrumsengla's sounds.

- BLUE-WINGED MINLA** (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*) – You never see ONE Blue-winged Minla -- you see dozens! And dozens we did see, nicely, on many days in the foothills, including a mob around our breakfast gazebo along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road. The plain faces of this species are distinctively blank, and their plumage is rather less striking than the field guide illustrations would have you believe.
- CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA** (*Actinodura strigula*) – A little gang swarming through the bushes near the pond at the Queens Botanical Garden got our post-breakfast walk off to a busy start, and we saw others around Sengor and in some of the higher valleys and passes: Yutong La, Pele La and the Phobjikha valley. This species is also known as the Bar-throated Siva.
- Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)*
- ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD** (*Irena puella*) – Single birds seen on each of our visits to Royal Manas NP: a powder-blue female the first afternoon and a resplendent male glowing against the greenery the following morning.
- Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*
- DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – The few hunting from treetops in Royal Manas NP and the Mangde Chhu gorge appeared to have barely started their migration up to their summer breeding grounds. The one we found high in Phrumsengla NP was probably closer to "home"; they breed at elevations between 1500-3400 meters (4920-11150'). They look like little Olive-sided Flycatchers.
- FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa ferruginea*) – A few of the group got a quick glimpse of one of these distinctively rusty little flycatchers along the road west of Gashari before it disappeared into the forest, never to be seen again.
- ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa dauurica*) – One hunting low along the Tsirang-Gelephu highway appeared to be this uncommon species -- good spotting, Suzi!
- ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** (*Copsychus saularis*) – Sightings of this widespread lowland bird on many days, particularly in the middle of the tour, in lowlands and settled valleys -- including some singing from the utility wires right around the Trogon Villa in Yongkola. The subspecies found in Bhutan is the nominate "saularis".
- PALE BLUE FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis unicolor*) – One foraged very low along the road in Phrumsengla NP, initially proving to be a bit of challenge to actually see -- despite that powder blue plumage.
- LARGE NILTAVA** (*Niltava grandis*) – One, conveniently close to the next species, along the road near the Japanese bridge, seen just before lunch. The "do re mi" song of this species was a regular part of the tour soundtrack in wetter broadleaf forest.
- SMALL NILTAVA** (*Niltava macgrigoriae*) – Far more often heard than seen, but we did get nice looks at one hunting just up the hill from the road near the Japanese bridge along the Tsirang-Gelephu road -- nice spotting, Mike B! We had others in the foothills west of Nganglam and in Phrumsengla NP.
- RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA** (*Niltava sundara*) – Two sat motionless, high up on some trees among the bamboo at Namling, giving us a great chance to study them in the scopes. This is an altitudinal migrant which undergoes the largest change in elevation of any niltava.
- VERDITER FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – Another very common and widespread species -- and a cooperative one too, often sitting high up on a bare branch, singing lustily.
- WHITE-BROWED SHORTWING** (*Brachypteryx montana*) – One bounced through a little clearing below the road near the Nganglam waterfall, in the company of some Scaly and Chestnut-crowned laughingthrushes -- and equally unaware of our ability to spot them through a convenient gap in the vegetation.
- BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH** (*Myiophonus caeruleus*) – Very common and widespread throughout, with super views of many along the roadsides. If only all whistling-thrushes were so confiding!
- LITTLE FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus scouleri*) – Two of these short-tailed forktails bounced along the road near the Namling Waterfalls, giving us reasonable looks before vanishing behind some rocks. They appeared briefly again at various points higher and higher beside the falls.
- SLATY-BACKED FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus schistaceus*) – At least one (and possibly two) busy birds in the stream by our picnic breakfast spot along the Mangde Chhu road entertained us during a rain delay and we had others elsewhere in the foothills -- including one perched nicely on a wire beside the Kerong road outside Nganglam.
- WHITE-TAILED ROBIN** (*Myiomela leucura*) – Heard singing (in the rain) one afternoon in the foothills west of Nganglam, with another heard in Phrumsengla NP. [*]
- HIMALAYAN BLUETAIL** (*Tarsiger rufilatus*) – Our first was a young male, singing loudly in the snow on Chele La; he still looked like a female, but his heart was certainly in it! We found a full adult male near the pass at Phrumseng La. This species, which is found throughout the Himalayas, was split from the Red-flanked Bluetail.
- WHITE-BROWED BUSH-ROBIN** (*Tarsiger indicus*) – Only slightly more cooperative than the next species -- and that's not saying much. We found both in the same place: a stretch of bamboo high in Phrumsengla NP. This one paraded back and forth through some of the saplings just up the hill from the road, but never really landed in good view.
- GOLDEN BUSH-ROBIN** (*Tarsiger chrysaeus*) – A quick flash of gold was about all some managed of a male in a stretch of bamboo high in Phrumsengla NP -- but a few were able to spot him once or twice for a second or two as he moved through the forest.
- RUFOUS-GORGETED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula strophiatea*) – Best seen at higher elevations towards the end of the trip, including one in the ditch right beside the road in Thrimsengla, near where we found our White-tailed Robin -- so close, we could even see the narrow little rufous band on its throat.
- LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula westermanni*) – One with a mixed flock along the Tsirang-Gelephu road -- nice spotting Jean! We found others in Phrumsengla NP. This species is found in broadleaf forests at lower and middle elevations.
- ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula superciliaris*) – Some great spotting by Margaret netted us one hunting in the upper-story of some big roadside trees in Phrumsengla NP. We saw surprisingly few this year -- though perhaps this summer visitor just hadn't arrived yet.
- TAIGA FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula albicilla*) – One low in a tree along the PNH-11 (the highway north out of Nganglam) showed pretty well until that noisy truck rumbled past. This is a regular passage migrant and winter visitor in Bhutan, and sightings suggest they may move along the base of the Himalayas in Bhutan, crossing the mountains further east.
- BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – A male flicking through the orchard at the base of the Drukgyel Dzong was one of our few new birds there -- and probably a late departure from its wintering ground. Most of the birds we saw were far higher: in Chele La, Phrumseng La, the Queens Botanical Garden and Tama La, headed for (or already in) their breeding grounds.
- PLUMBEOUS REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Seen on rocky rushing streams on scattered days throughout the tour, including along the Par Chhu and the Puna Tsang Chhu, with others in the foothills around Nganglam.

WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Seen in many of the same places as the previous species, including in the foothills around Nganglam. The one flashing around the feet of our first White-bellied Heron was entertaining -- and the snowy white crown was visible even from our position hundreds of yards away!

HODGSON'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – A couple of roadside females were all we managed this trip. This is a winter visitor to Bhutan, and all the males had apparently already headed to their breeding grounds in eastern Tibet and northern and western China.

CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola rufiventris*) – Far less common than the next species, and found at higher elevations, with good looks at both male and female (which are strikingly different) along the road over Phrumseng La.

BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola cinclorhyncha*) – Our first was an eye-level bird in a tiny spruce right near our breakfast spot on Chele La. Most, though, were at lower elevations -- in Royal Manas NP, the foothills around Nganglam, and Phrumsengla NP.

SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN) (*Saxicola maurus maurus*) – A winter visitor that appeared to have mostly departed by the time of our tour; we spotted one in the farm fields along the Po Chhu, and another briefly near our breakfast spot in Bajo later the same morning, then found another later on the tour as we drove towards Yongkola. This species was one of many split from the former Common Stonechat. [b]

GRAY BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola ferreus*) – Our first were a busy pair scurrying around on the ground near the pond at the Queens Botanical Garden, and we had more on other scattered days in the foothills -- including a few right outside the Trogon Villa in Yongkola.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

GRAY-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus boulboul*) – A pair along the road near our campsite at Darachu flicked up through a nearby sapling -- nice spotting, Margaret -- and found others on Tama La. This species is normally found at lower elevations than the next.

WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus albocinctus*) – Some fine views of these handsome thrushes at some of the highest elevations we reached, including a few against the snowy hillsides on Chele La, and others on Dochu La and Pele La, often perched right up at the tops of trees.

RED-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus ruficollis*) – A lingering trio of these winter visitors perched high in a dead tree along the road up to Chele La, then flew off in the direction of the pass.

Sturnidae (Starlings).

COMMON HILL MYNA (*Gracula religiosa*) – A couple of birds perched up at the far end of the soccer field near the ranger station at Royal Manas NP, giving us the chance to study their orange bills and yellow wattles in the scope.

ASIAN PIED STARLING (*Gracupica contra*) – Quite common around the rice paddies at Gelephu, with small flocks perched in the saplings.

CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING (*Sturnia malabarica*) – Two in the garden of a house along the Mangde Chhu gorge, spotted by Sangay.

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Common through much of the middle of the tour, particularly around villages and towns, where we often saw them rummaging along the roadsides. This species appears to have colonized the country relatively recently, as accounts from the 1930s and 40s make no mention of it, and accounts from the 1960s and 70s say it was seen only in small numbers at a very few locations.

JUNGLE MYNA (*Acridotheres fuscus*) – Another common species in Gelephu, particularly around the rice paddies and sewage works.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds).

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) – Several along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, with others in Royal Manas NP, where we saw them conveniently close to the next species in some fruiting trees.

ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis hardwickii*) – Easily the more common of the tour's two leafbirds, seen on most days in the middle of the tour -- and that orange belly makes them easy to identify. This is an abundant resident in the temperate zone and foothills, sometimes descending to elevations as low as 200 meters (650 feet) in the spring.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers).

PLAIN FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum minullum*) – A well-named little bird, seen in some flowering trees around the ranger station at Royal Manas NP. In Bhutan, this is a fairly uncommon species with a scattered distribution, ranging from the foothills up into the central valleys.

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) – Males of this species, on the other hand, are real stunners, dazzling us in Phrumsengla NP on a couple of days -- including one with the big mixed flock we found along the back road in Yongkola.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters).

FIRE-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga ignicauda*) – Mike B. saved the day with a last-minute spot of a pair of these beauties at the very last place we could have seen them, on Pele La. Wow -- what a knockout the male is! This species breeds high in the mountains at 3000-4000 m (10000'-13000').

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga saturata*) – Very common in the lowland and middle-elevation forests of the middle part of the tour, where it was always one of the first to respond to the fuss tape. Though the males look dark overall (particularly in poor light), when they get into the sunlight, those maroon and purple highlights just POP!

GOULD'S SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga gouldiae*) – The busy mob feeding in a flowering bush right beside the bus at a rainy stop en route to Sengor camp was particularly entertaining, but this species proved to be quite regular in the highlands. Formerly MRS Gould's Sunbird, since it was named for Gould's wife (herself a bird illustrator).

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga nipalensis*) – Probably the most common and widespread of the tour's sunbirds (mostly in middle and higher elevations), and another one that regularly responded to the fuss tape. The male, in particular, is a real stunner.

CRIMSON SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – One retina-searing male seen on our walk across the river at Royal Manas NP, and we spotted another along the road north of Nganglam as we searched for our Pale-headed Woodpecker. This is the only lowland sunbird on the list.

STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera magna*) – Another regular in the low and middle elevation forests in the middle of the tour, with some fine views of two or three working through some eye-level branches just off the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, not far from where we found our Green-billed Malkoha.

Prunellidae (Accentors).

ALPINE ACCENTOR (*Prunella collaris*) – One posed, far too briefly, on a concrete block along the road descending from Phrumseng La, but threw itself off down the hill as the bus rumbled past. Unfortunately, we couldn't refind it for those who'd been snoozing or reading or looking in the wrong direction at the time.

RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR (*Prunella strophiatea*) – Regular in the highlands, including a few rummaging in the orchard near the bottom of the hill at Drukgyel Dzong, some bouncing through the snow on Chele La and one mooching in the grass along the abandoned road at Pele La, seen just before we found the Himalayan Monal.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Individuals on scattered days, typically along the edge of the roads we were birding. This is a widespread passage migrant and winter visitor in Bhutan, with most birds headed north between mid-March and May.

CITRINE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla citreola*) – An adult male trundled around on the top of one of the stinkier ponds at the Gelephu sewage works; we didn't want to look too closely at what it was walking on! This species breeds in the western Himalayas, but is only a winter visitor and passage migrant through Bhutan.

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – A few waggled their way along the stony edges of the Par Chhu, both above and below the town of Paro. The subspecies found in Bhutan is the masked 'alboides', which has a solidly black mantle, breast, head and nape. They're altitudinal migrants in Bhutan, breeding at elevations up to 16000'!

PADDYFIELD PIPIT (*Anthus rufulus*) – A few strode through newly-sprouting agricultural fields along the Po Chhu.

ROSY PIPIT (*Anthus roseatus*) – Small numbers at the beginning and end of the tour, with especially nice looks at some foraging along the edge of the Par Chhu on our first morning, showing the distinctively pinkish breasts and dark moustachial stripes of breeding-plumaged birds. This species is an altitudinal migrant and the birds we saw were probably headed upslope; they breed high up in the Himalayas, from 3600 to 4400 meters (11,800 to 14,400 feet).

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Regular in the foothills and higher, from Chele La and the Queens Botanical Garden to Phrumsengla NP and Pele La. We came across the occasional sizable groups, particularly around Namling (on the morning we visited the bamboo patch) and in the pass at Phrumsengla. This is another altitudinal migrant in Bhutan.

Elachuridae (Spotted Elachura).

SPOTTED ELACHURA (*Elachura formosa*) – Well, we certainly got lucky with the first one we found, given that we heard only a single bird calling from the forests in Phrumsengla, where they're typically quite common! We heard that first one near the start of the Mangde Chhu gorge, calling from the undergrowth near the road. Many long minutes later, some of the group had gotten reasonably good looks at the mouse-like little bird as it crept back and forth along the carpet of dead vegetation beside the road though others only saw bits and pieces or flighty shadows. Arg!

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

COLLARED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas affinis*) – A handsome male sat right at the top of one of the big conifers near our breakfast spot on Chele La -- great spotting, Margaret!

WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas carnipes*) – Very common on the first couple of days of the tour, with both males and females seen well - including a gang right along the road near where we found our first White-collared Thrush on the way up Chele La our first morning. The gray extending well down onto the belly is one of the best field marks for this species.

COMMON ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) – Our first were a noisy mixed group of males and females bouncing through some trees along the road near our Darachu camp on our early morning ramble there. We found a group of females in rhododendrons high on Pele La on our penultimate day.

HIMALAYAN BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus pulcherrimus*) – A female on Yutong La, in the same general area as our bullfinch flock.

CRIMSON-BROWED FINCH (*Carpodacus subhimachalus*) – Superb views of a pair sitting quietly at the top of a shrub along the road to Sengor, part of an exciting mix of birds we found after the downpour. We found a number of additional females nibbling flowers in a shrub near where we spotted our on-the-ground Himalayan Monal.

HIMALAYAN WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus thura*) – Lovely views of a little group of these handsome finches rummaging in the snow under bushes near the top of Chele La on our magical snowy morning there.

BROWN BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula nipalensis*) – One flew in and landed in a small tree among the bamboo at Namling -- nice spotting, Jonathan! Fortunately for those who were down the road photographing White-throated Laughingthrushes, Lebo found us several others (conveniently right next to the next species) nibbling birch buds at a stop on Yutong La.

RED-HEADED BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*) – A few, including a pair feeding side by side, in a newly-sprouting birch tree on Yutong La. This species is restricted to the mountains of the northern Indian subcontinent.

BLANFORD'S ROSEFINCH (*Agraphospiza rubescens*) – We found one -- a plain, very dark brown female -- with some female Common Rosefinches at our roadside stop just below the fog layer on our way up to Pele La.

GOLD-NAPED FINCH (*Pyrrhoptes epauletta*) – A lingering male with a mixed flock along the road to Sengor was a nice find. This is an altitudinal migrant which breeds at 9100-12750 feet, but winters as low as 5900 feet.

DARK-BREASTED ROSEFINCH (*Procarduelis nipalensis*) – At least one female -- nearly as dark as the Blanford's Rosefinch, but with pale tips to her scapulars and a faint pale wingbar -- mixed with a finch flock on the road up from the Phobjikha valley on our final morning. Presumably, we were seeing mostly female finches because the males had already headed to their breeding grounds to set up territories before the females arrive.

PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte nemoricola*) – Only a handful, skittering across the ground along the edge of the wide clearing where we had our breakfast at DoChu La.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) – A few swirled through the treetops near our breakfast spot on Chele La, and we saw others on Pele La on our final day in Bhutan. The subspecies found in the Himalayas is (appropriately enough) *himalayensis*.

TIBETAN SERIN (*Spinus thibetanus*) – A quartet nibbled alder cones on some trees along the roadside in Phrumsengla NP one morning, often hanging upside down from the branches as they did so. This is a winter visitor to Bhutan. [b]

Emberizidae (Old World Buntings).

LITTLE BUNTING (*Emberiza pusilla*) – A small group of these winter visitors flicked along the grassy edge of the road near our Darachu camp, feeding on grass seeds.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

RUSSET SPARROW (*Passer cinnamomeus*) – Quite common at middle to higher elevations, particularly around human habitations. The chirpy birds flicking through the sparse vegetation along the Par Chhu on our first morning drew particular attention, and the all-rusty back of the males quickly separated them from the next species.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Another common species at middle elevations, particularly around towns and villages. We had especially nice views of several habituated birds at the Trongsa Dzong, including a showy male right next to the path up to the main gate. The black "ear muff" of both males and females is distinctive.

MAMMALS

- RHESUS MACAQUE** (*Macaca mulatta*) – The macaques we saw at Royal Manas NP were this species, which is restricted to the low foothills along the Indo-Bhutanese border. This highly adaptable species is found in a variety of habitats, including right around villages.
- ASSAM MACAQUE** (*Macaca assamensis*) – By far the more common macaque in Bhutan, found across much of the country up to 2900 m (9500 feet). We saw them on six days, with especially close looks at some feeding in trees right over the road along the Puna Tsang Chhu. They were often lined up along roadsides or balanced on guard rails along the highways.
- GOLDEN LANGUR** (*Presbytis geei*) – Several sizable groups seen along the Tsirang-Gelephu road, and on Tama La, including one group gobbling clay from a roadside cliff and another leaping acrobatically through branches along the road. We did wonder how they manage to keep that pale fur so clean! This species is also found just over the border into India, but the vast majority lives in Bhutan.
- CAPPED LANGUR** (*Presbytis pileata*) – Especially nice looks at a group of four or five near the entrance gate to Royal Manas NP which kept us entertained while Lebo sorted out our entry into the park. The dark, bicolored fur of this species helps to separate them from the previous species. This species is found further east than the previous.
- PIKA SP.** (*Ochotona roylei*) – Common or Royle's Pika. Pikas were seen in small numbers on a few days in the highlands, including a few zipping around in the snow at Chele La and others at or near treeline on Thrimseng La, Yutong La and Pele La. Multiple species of pika occur in Bhutan. This is the most common and widespread species and is typical of where we saw them, but we can't be sure of what we had.
- BLACK GIANT SQUIRREL** (*Ratufa bicolor*) – Daily in the lower foothills, where we often spotted them sprawled out on a tree branch, seemingly asleep. They're huge -- nearly as big as a langur!
- HOARY-BELLIED (IRAWADDY) SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) – Seen on each of our visits to Royal Manas NP. Also known as Hoary-bellied Squirrel, this is a species of lower elevations, told from the Himalayan Ground-Squirrel by its grayish-white (rather than rusty) belly.
- HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL** (*Tamiops maccllellandi*) – This is the one that looks a bit like a chipmunk. We saw these speedy arboreal squirrels in middle to upper elevation forests on a number of days.
- HIMALAYAN GROUND-SQUIRREL** (*Dremomys lokriah*) – This one, also known as Orange-bellied Squirrel was seen on three days in the middle of the tour, especially around Nganglam. It has a dark, rather than pale belly.
- SIBERIAN WEASEL** (*Mustela sibirica*) – One of these lithe predators scampered through a rip-rap wall beside the Paro River on our first afternoon, distracting us briefly from our search for Ibisbills as we tried to get a better look at it. Also known as Himalayan Weasel.
- INDIAN ELEPHANT** (*Elephas maximus*) – A youngster in the clearing near the rangers' station at Royal Manas NP was a wild one -- brought from India after locals were going to kill her for ruining their crops. Sadly, she's now without a herd, though she'll presumably become a working elephant once she's old enough to be ridden.
- WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – We saw a large one grubbing along a well-scarred hillside (where it had clearly been feeding for a while) on our drive to the Phobjikha valley. According to the book "Mammals of Bhutan", the animals found in Bhutan are hybrids between Wild Boars and domestic pigs.
- MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER)** (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – Singles darted across the road in front of our bus on two different occasions as we drove along the Gelephu-Jigme Choling road, including one that paused briefly before scrambling up a steep bank.
- SAMBAR** (*Cervus unicolor*) – A couple of these big deer wandered around the Queens' Botanical Garden -- including one that was chased into the lake by some barking dogs, and came for a scratch on the nose after we "rescued" it.
- ASIAN WATER BUFFALO** (*Bubalus bubalis*) – A handful foraged on the far side of the clearing around the rangers' housing in Royal Manas NP. They're probably a mix of wild and feral animals; wild bulls often join domestic cows in herds around Manas.
- SEROW** (*Capricornis sumatrensis*) – A few of the group spotted one along the Puna Tsang Chhu, but our best views came along the highway as we approached the Ura valley, when one leapt down a bank in front of the bus and careened off down the hill. It paused down lower in the woods, giving us the chance to see it.

Herps

- TROPICAL HOUSE GECKO** (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) – Small numbers at our hotels in Gelephu and Panbang. This widespread species has been introduced to tropical areas all around the world.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Here's Boto Namgay's recipe for Paneer Masala

1. Fry the paneer (Indian packed cheese like tofu). You will get the paneer packed in a tin.
2. Fry onion, tomato, ginger and garlic separately with Indian curry powder, turmeric powder and jeera powder (cumin).
3. Add little water and then add the fried paneer and let it boil and it's ready to serve.

Unfortunately, Boto Namgay didn't specify any quantities for the ingredients, so we'll have to experiment a bit with that!

Totals for the tour: 338 bird taxa and 16 mammal taxa