



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Southern India 2014: Western Ghats Endemics**

Nov 16, 2014 to Dec 7, 2014  
Terry Stevenson & Sathyan Meppayur

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



*Indian Peafowl are truly spectacular, and we marveled at plenty on this tour. (Photo by participant Becky Hansen)*

Our 2014 South India tour mainly followed our well-tryed route through the Western Ghats, but for the first time we also included three nights in the Thettekkad area, a fabulous lowland forest with the additional attraction of some some great nocturnal species, including Brown Hawk-Owl, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, and both Jerdon's Nightjar and Great Eared-Nightjar.

As usual our tour began from Bangalore with a short drive to Kokkare Bellure, where Spot-billed Pelicans nest right in the village. The nearby rice paddies held a good variety of herons and the striking Red-naped Ibis, while isolated trees and roadside wires provided perches for White-throated Kingfishers, Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, and Black Drongos. A late-afternoon visit to Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary (near Mysore) gave us our first views of Greater Coucal, Coppersmith Barbet, a lovely Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher, and the "special" here -- a pair of Great Thick-knees.

We then headed to Nagarhole National Park, seeing Cotton Pygmy-goose, both Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged jacanas, and the rather uncommon Gray-headed Lapwing along the way.

As always Nagarhole provided us with many great birds, with just a few highlights being Gray Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Crested Hawk-Eagle, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Brown Fish-Owl, Malabar Pied-Hornbill, our first Malabar and Plum-headed parakeets, Orange Minivet, Indian Nuthatch, Malabar Starling, and Jerdon's Leafbird. Mammals were great too, with many sightings of Bonnet Macaque and Common Langur, the charming Indian Giant Squirrel, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Sambar, and Gaur. We also had several close encounters with Indian Elephant, and a couple of our group saw a Leopard streaking across a forest trail.

Our next stop was at Jungle Hut in the Mudumalai Reserve, but first we searched some arid fields and found several species of larks, including Malabar, the rather localized Tawny (Sykes's), and Rufous-tailed. While at Mudumalai we added the endangered White-rumped Vulture, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Brown Wood-Owl, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Malabar Gray Hornbill, White-naped Woodpecker, Indian Pitta, Gray-headed Bulbul, Large-billed Leaf-Warbler, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher, and Indian Blue Robin.

Leaving the lowlands behind we then climbed to Ooty in the Nilgiri Hills, finding Black-chinned Laughingthrush, Black-and-rufous Flycatcher, Indian Blackbird, and Indian Flowerpecker, all special birds of this region. Continuing (but still in the hill country), our next base was Munnar where sadly we had an afternoon of horrible weather. However, during our visit to this region we did get good looks at Nilgiri Tahr (a strange goat-like creature), and we found Painted Bush-Quail (just fabulous looks at this real skulker), Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Tit, Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, Kerala Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Flycatcher, White-bellied Shortwing, and Nilgiri Pipit.

Once more heading to lower country (but still forested), we spent three nights at the delightful Spice Village, taking a variety of morning and afternoon walks along the trails of Periyar Tiger Reserve. Group favorites here included great scope views of Black Baza, a flooded field with close Pin-tailed Snipe, Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, Jungle Owlet, Malabar Trogon, Great Hornbill, White-bellied Woodpecker, Buff-spotted and Common flamebacks, Flame-throated Bulbul, Rufous Babbler, Orange-headed Thrush, and Little Spiderhunter.

We then spent three nights in the Thattekkad area, the lowest-altitude forest of our tour, giving us a different avifauna and the chance to stay out until dark looking for nightbirds (elsewhere the parks and reserves close at dusk). We made visits to three different areas, each with good trails, as we enjoyed such fabulous birds as a low-circling Black Eagle, a pair of perched Crested Goshawks, Brown Hawk-Owl, Sri Lanka Frogmouth (very close at a day roost), Great Eared-Nightjar, White-rumped Needletail, Malabar Barbet, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Malabar Woodshrike, Ashy Woodswallow, Dark-fronted Babbler, Wynaad Laughingthrush (for some), and Crimson-backed Sunbird.

Lastly, we stayed at The Backwaters, with a night at Coconut Lagoon (another delightful lodge) and then at Brunton's Boatyard Hotel in Kochi. It was a great way to relax a bit as the tour came to an end and with many great birds right around our hotel; Indian Cormorant, Yellow Bittern, Watercock, and Stork-billed Kingfisher were just a few of the less common species, while the numerous Rose-ringed Parakeets and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters kept the photographers busy.

--Terry

*Our next South India tour begins in November 2016.*

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#### 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

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### BIRDS

#### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**LESSER WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna javanica*) – We saw a total of about 50 in the wetlands between Bangalore and Mysore, and then another 90+ at a couple of sites around Thattekkad and Coconut Lagoon.

**COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE** (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) – Pairs in the ponds with lily-pads around Mysore, in total we saw 9.

**INDIAN SPOT-BILLED DUCK** (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) – We saw about 14 of these attractive ducks in the Mysore area, and then 5 at Coconut Lagoon.

**GARGANEY** (*Anas querquedula*) – One at a pool to the west of Mysore.

#### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**GRAY FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and Chinnar.

**PAINTED BUSH-QUAIL** (*Perdica erythrorhyncha*) – Fantastic looks at a pair with a young one as they picked around in a garbage pile at Lokhart Gap.

**RED SPURFOWL** (*Galloperdix spadicea*) – One was flushed in Nagarhole, and 1 heard at Periyar.

**GRAY JUNGLEFOWL** (*Gallus sonneratii*) – Great looks at Nagarhole (where we saw about 50), and then small numbers at Jungle Hut, Chinnar and Periyar.

**INDIAN PEA FOWL** (*Pavo cristatus*) – Most common at Nagarhole (40+), and a few along the road to Chinnar and Munnar.

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Small numbers at wetlands between Bangalore and Nagarhole.

#### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**ASIAN OPENBILL** (*Anastomus oscitans*) – Two at Nagarhole, and 2 at Bandipur, although all were rather distant.

**WOOLLY-NECKED STORK** (*Ciconia episcopus*) – Two at Mysore, and 1 in the Bandipur area.

**PAINTED STORK** (*Mycteria leucocephala*) – About 10 in the Mysore area, 1 at Nagarhole, and 8 in flight on our boat trip in The Backwaters.

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**INDIAN CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) – Two in flight at Ranganathittu, 1 at Nagarhole, and about 100 in The Backwaters.

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Small numbers in the Bangalore to Mysore area, and then 6 at Periyar, and 10 in The Backwaters; in all we saw about 30.

**LITTLE CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax niger*) – Common and widespread at wetlands throughout the tour, and especially numerous in The Backwaters.

#### Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ORIENTAL DARTER** (*Anhinga melanogaster*) – Five at Ranganathittu, 4 at Nagarhole, and about 25 in The Backwaters.

#### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**SPOT-BILLED PELICAN** (*Pelecanus philippensis*) – Very good numbers this year, with 80 around the village at Kokkare Bellur, 100+ at Ranganathittu, and 50+ at Mysore.

#### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**YELLOW BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus sinensis*) – Nice looks at 3 near Coconut Lagoon.

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Small numbers at wetlands between Bangalore, Mysore and Nagarhole, 1 at the Tapovan Hotel, and 1 near Coconut Lagoon.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – We saw a total of 5 between Mysore and Nagarhole, 1 at Tapovan Hotel, and about 30 in The Backwaters.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – About 30 between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and then 120+ in The Backwaters.  
**INTERMEDIATE EGRET** (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – About 60 between Bangalore and Nagarhole (with 50 in the rice paddies near Kokkare Bellur), and then several hundred in The Backwaters.  
**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – At least 100 were seen in the Kokkare Bellur to Mysore area, and then much smaller numbers at a variety of scattered wetlands throughout the tour.  
**WESTERN REEF-HERON** (*Egretta gularis*) – One of our group saw 1 near Brunton's Boatyard Hotel.  
**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Very common and widespread.  
**INDIAN POND-HERON** (*Ardeola grayii*) – Very common and widespread.  
**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – Singles at Nagarhole and Thattekkad.  
**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – About 10 at Kokarhally Park in Mysore, and then a single immature at Kochi.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Six in the rice paddies at Kokkare Bellur.  
**BLACK-HEADED IBIS** (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) – Common between Bangalore and Nagarhole (100+), and 5 at Coconut Lagoon.  
**RED-NAPED IBIS** (*Pseudibis papillosa*) – Fabulous looks this year at about 20 around Kokkare Bellur, and 15 at Bandipur.

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Two at Ranganathittu, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Two in the Nagarhole to Bandipur area, and 1 on the way to Kumily.  
**ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – We saw mostly single birds in four or five widespread locations; with a total of 7 birds.  
**BLACK BAZA** (*Aviceda leuphotes*) – At least 5 along the main road at Periyar included great looks at 1 in the scope.  
**WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE** (*Gyps bengalensis*) – One in the Mudumalai area.  
**CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE** (*Spilornis cheela*) – Good looks at Nagarhole, Chinnar, and 2 in the Idamalayar Valley.  
**SHORT-TOED EAGLE** (*Circaetus gallicus*) – One near Kokkare Bellur.  
**CRESTED HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*) – Six at Nagarhole (included a couple of really close perched birds) and then an immature at Chinnar.  
**BLACK EAGLE** (*Ictinaetus malayensis*) – A distant adult and an immature at Bodi Mett, and then fabulous close views of a circling bird in the Idamalayar Valley.  
**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – A pale morph bird was seen from our bus as we drove from Bangalore to Kokkare Bellur.  
**TAWNY EAGLE** (*Aquila rapax*) – Four at Bandipur.  
**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – We saw a male and then a female on the way to Nagarhole.  
**PALLID HARRIER** (*Circus macrourus*) – Some of the group saw a female at Bandipur.  
**CRESTED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter trivirgatus*) – Fantastic scope looks at 2 perched in a tall bare tree at Urulanthanni Forest, Thattekkad.  
**SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Singles in a variety of open woodland; in all we saw 7.  
**BESRA** (*Accipiter virgatus*) – One at Nagarhole.  
**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – One near Jungle Hut.  
**BLACK KITE** (*Milvus migrans*) – Several hundred at Bangalore, about 10 at Mysore, and then a few singles at Munnar and Kumily.  
**BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliaeetus indus*) – About 40 between Bangalore and Mysore, 15 at Nagarhole, 1 at Mudumalai, and about 40 in The Backwaters.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – Small numbers at wetlands near Mysore, Nagarhole, the Tapovan Hotel, and at Coconut Lagoon.  
**WATERCOCK** (*Gallix rex cinerea*) – Usually very shy and difficult to see well, but we were lucky this tour and had repeated good looks at about 6 in the rice paddies behind Coconut Lagoon.  
**PURPLE SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) – The gray-headed form 'poliocephalus' was common at several wetlands in the Mysore area (120+), and then at The Backwaters (70+).  
**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – About 10 (on 2 or 3 wetlands) in the Mysore area.  
**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*) – At least 200 between the Bangalore, Mysore and Nagarhole areas.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**GREAT THICK-KNEE** (*Esacus recurvirostris*) – Great scope views of 2 on the rocks at the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING** (*Vanellus malabaricus*) – Two at Nagarhole, and 5 at between Ooty and Chinnar.  
**GRAY-HEADED LAPWING** (*Vanellus cinereus*) – Good looks at this uncommon migrant to southern India; we saw a single bird on the way to Nagarhole.  
**RED-WATTLED LAPWING** (*Vanellus indicus*) – Fairly common and widespread in farmland and around wetlands in the early part of the tour; in all we saw about 45.  
**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – One at Kokkare Bellur, and 5 on the way to Nagarhole.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) – About 15 at a couple of wetland areas with lily-pads in the Mysore area, and then 50+ in The Backwaters.  
**BRONZE-WINGED JACANA** (*Metopidius indicus*) – Just stunning in sunlight; we saw a total of about 25 in the Mysore area, and 50+ in The Backwaters.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Singles at Kokkare Bellur, Nagarhole, and Periyar.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Tringa ochropus*) – About 8 at Nagarhole.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – Two at Nagarhole.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – Forty at Kokkare Bellur, and about another dozen on the way to Nagarhole.

**PIN-TAILED SNIPE** (*Gallinago stenura*) – At least 30 were in a flooded field at the edge of the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

#### *Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**CASPIAN GULL** (*Larus cachinnans*) – Some of the group saw 2 fly by the Chinese fishing nets at Kochi.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – About a dozen at Kokkare Bellur, 6 in the Thattekkad area, and 100+ in The Backwaters.

**RIVER TERN** (*Sterna aurantia*) – Three at Nagarhole, and then about 14 along a river in the Thattekkad area.

#### *Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Common in towns and villages throughout the tour.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and Chinnar.

**SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Common and widespread throughout most of the tour.

**LAUGHING DOVE** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Six at Nagarhole, and 10 at Mudumalai.

**EMERALD DOVE** (*Chalcophaps indica*) – One in flight in the forest behind Jungle Hut, and then another flying bird in the Urulanthanni Forest.

**GRAY-FRONTED GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron affinis*) – Heard, and seen briefly as 'fly-overs' in the Urulanthanni Forest.

**YELLOW-FOOTED PIGEON** (*Treron phoenicopterus*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Jungle Hut, and Bodi Mett.

**GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula aenea*) – Great views at about 7 at Nagarhole, and then heard at Urulanthanni Forest.

**MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula badia*) – Some of the group saw a single bird in flight at Periyar.

#### *Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococcyx varius*) – Three at Nagarhole, and then singles Mudumalai and Periyar, and several 'heards' at a variety of widespread areas.

**SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO** (*Surniculus lugubris*) – Good looks at 1 at Periyar.

**ASIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) – Fairly common between Bangalore, Nagarhole and Mudumalai, and then at Coconut Lagoon; in all we saw about 20.

**BLUE-FACED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*) – One for some of the group at Nagarhole, and then 2 tee'd up beautifully on the escarpment below Bodi Mett.

**GREATER COUCAL** (*Centropus sinensis*) – About 12 between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and then occasional singles at Bodi Mett, Periyar, and Coconut Lagoon.

#### *Strigidae (Owls)*

**ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus sunia*) – Heard distantly at Jungle Hut.

**BROWN FISH-OWL** (*Ketupa zeylonensis*) – Nice scope views of 1 at Nagarhole.

**JUNGLE OWLET** (*Glaucidium radiatum*) – Five at Periyar, and 2-3 in the Thattekkad area.

**SPOTTED OWLET** (*Athene brama*) – Good looks at 2 pairs at Mudumalai.

**BROWN WOOD-OWL** (*Strix leptogrammica*) – Great looks in the forest above Jungle Hut.

**BROWN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox scutulata lugubris*) – We saw 2 very responsive birds in the forest near the Tapovan Hotel.

#### *Podargidae (Frogmouths)*

**SRI LANKA FROGMOUTH** (*Batrachostomus moniliger*) – Fabulous close looks at a female at Urulanthanni Forest.

#### *Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**GREAT EARED-NIGHTJAR** (*Lyncornis macrotis*) – At our third attempt, 2 flew close by and over us in a forest clearing near the Tapovan Hotel.

**JERDON'S NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus atripennis*) – About 6 heard and 2-3 seen well in a forest clearing near the Tapovan Hotel, Thattekkad.

#### *Apodidae (Swifts)*

**WHITE-RUMPED NEEDLETAIL** (*Zoonavena sylvatica*) – Four in the Idamalayar Valley, and 5 investigating an old tree trunk in the Urulanthanni Forest.

**INDIAN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus unicolor*) – Widespread throughout the tour; with a total of about 110.

#### *Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**MALABAR TROGON** (*Harpactes fasciatus*) – We saw a pair along the Ancholi Trail at Periyar, and then a female in the Idamalayar Valley, and a close male in the Urulanthanni Forest.

#### *Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – Heard at Chinnar, and then 2 were seen very nicely at Coconut Lagoon.

**WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

#### *Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER** (*Nyctornis athertoni*) – We scoped a single bird in the open woodlands near Jungle Hut.

**GREEN BEE-EATER** (*Merops orientalis*) – A total of about 45 between Nagarhole and Chinnar.

**BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER** (*Merops philippinus*) – About 40 between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, 10 in the Thattekkad area, and 30 at Coconut Lagoon.

**CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER** (*Merops leschenaulti*) – Nice looks at 2 along the lake shore at Nagarhole, and 3 at the Tapovan Hotel.

#### *Coraciidae (Rollers)*

**INDIAN ROLLER** (*Coracias benghalensis*) – We saw a total of about 10 (mostly on our drives through farmland).



Upupidae (Hoopoes)

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Four at Nagarhole, and 8 at Mudumalai.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

**MALABAR GRAY HORNBILL** (*Ocyrceros griseus*) – One near Jungle Hut, 2 at Periyar, and heard in the Thattekkad area.

**INDIAN GRAY HORNBILL** (*Ocyrceros birostris*) – Good looks at 3 at Ranganathittu, near Mysore.

**MALABAR PIED-HORNBILL** (*Anthracoceros coronatus*) – Nice to see at least 5 of these striking hornbills at Nagarhole.

**GREAT HORNBILL** (*Buceros bicornis*) – Another fabulous hornbill! We saw a total of 5 of these giants of the forest at Periyar.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

**BROWN-HEADED BARBET** (*Megalaima zeylanica*) – Heard on the Bodi Mett escarpment.

**WHITE-CHEEKED BARBET** (*Megalaima viridis*) – Very common and widespread.

**MALABAR BARBET** (*Megalaima malabarica*) – Heard in most forest areas, and seen on high exposed branches at Periyar and Thattekkad.

**COPPERSMITH BARBET** (*Megalaima haemacephala*) – Seen well several times at Mysore, and in the Mudumalai area.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*) – Very uncommon in South India, so we were lucky to see 1 near Jungle Hut.

**BROWN-CAPPED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos nanus*) – Two at Nagarhole, about 6 at Mudumalai, and 1 at the Urulanthanni Forest.

**YELLOW-CROWNED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos mahrattensis*) – Four at Nagarhole, 3 at Mudumalai, and 1 at Chinnar.

**RUFIOUS WOODPECKER** (*Ceolus brachyurus*) – One along the Ancholi Trail at Periyar.

**WHITE-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus javensis*) – Great looks at 2 along the Ancholi Trail at Periyar.

**LESSER YELLOWNAPE** (*Picus chlorolophus*) – Two at Nagarhole, great looks at 1 at Jungle Hut, and then 2 in the Thattekkad area.

**STREAK-THROATED WOODPECKER** (*Picus xanthopygaeus*) – We saw a total of 4 singles at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and in the Idamalayer Valley.

**COMMON FLAMEBACK** (*Dinopium javanense*) – Five together with a mixed species flock at Periyar.

**BLACK-RUMPED FLAMEBACK** (*Dinopium benghalense*) – The most common and widespread flameback; with a total of about 25.

**BUFF-SPOTTED FLAMEBACK** (*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*) – Recently split from Greater Flameback; we saw singles at Mudumalai, Periyar, along the Neriamangalam Road, and in the Thattekkad area.

**WHITE-NAPED WOODPECKER** (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) – Fabulous looks at a female in a *Gravillea* plantation near Jungle Hut.

**HEART-SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Hemicircus canente*) – We had brief looks at a single at Nagarhole, 2 at Periyar, and for most of the group another single at Thattekkad.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Small numbers in a variety of widespread open country.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula krameri*) – Common from Bangalore to Mudumalai, and then in The Backwaters to Kochi area; in all we saw about 300.

**PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) – We saw these gorgeous parakeets at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and in the Thattekkad area; in all we saw a total of about 140.

**MALABAR PARAKEET** (*Psittacula columboides*) – Common and widespread in forest areas throughout the tour.

**VERNAL HANGING-PARROT** (*Loriculus vernalis*) – Three at Mudumalai, 1 along the Neriamangalam Road, and 5 in the Thattekkad area.

Pittidae (Pittas)

**INDIAN PITTA** (*Pitta brachyura*) – Heard in several forested areas, and seen very nicely at the edge of the forest behind Jungle Hut.

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

**MALABAR WOODSHRIKE** (*Tephrodornis sylvicola*) – One for some of the group at Periyar, and then about 5 were seen well in the Urulanthanni Forest.

**COMMON WOODSHRIKE** (*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*) – Singles at Mudumalai and Bodi Mett.

**BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE** (*Hemipus picatus*) – Singles at Pettimudi Shola, Neriamangalam Road, and in the Idamalayar Valley.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

**ASHY WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus fuscus*) – Three near the Tapovan Hotel, and about 15 in the Thattekkad area.

Aegithinidae (Ioras)

**COMMON IORA** (*Aegithina tiphia*) – Three at Nagarhole, about 8 at Mudumalai, and 3 in the Thattekkad area.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

**SMALL MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*) – Widespread in small numbers at a variety of open woodland areas throughout the tour.

**ORANGE MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus flammeus*) – Formerly lumped with Scarlet Minivet; they were common throughout the tour with a total of about 80.

**LARGE CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina macei*) – Four at Nagarhole, and 1 at Mudumalai.

**BLACK-HEADED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Lalage melanoptera*) – About 5 between Mysore and Mudumalai, and then 1 at Bodi Mett.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

**BROWN SHRIKE** (*Lanius cristatus*) – A total of about 15 were seen at a variety of widespread scattered sites.

**BAY-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius vittatus*) – About 10 in the Mudumalai area.

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE** (*Lanius schach*) – Most common along the roads between Nagarhole and Mudumalai, and the few others elsewhere.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

**INDIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus kundoo*) – About 25 between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and then singles at Periyar, the Thattekkad area, and Coconut Lagoon; in all we saw about 35.

**BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus chinensis*) – Three female/immatures near the Tapovan Hotel, and then a good looking male in the Idamalayar Valley.

**BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus xanthornus*) – Nice looks at single males at Mudumalai and Periyar, and then an immature bird at Thattekkad.

*Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**BLACK DRONGO** (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) – Common and widespread in open country.

**ASHY DRONGO** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Common and widespread in forested areas.

**WHITE-BELLIED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus caerulescens*) – Small numbers in several widespread well wooded areas.

**BRONZED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – This drongo prefers good quality forest; we saw them in 5 different areas throughout the tour.

**GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) – A common, conspicuous and noisy drongo of forested areas (and surprisingly at Coconut Lagoon); in all we saw about 80.

*Rhipiduridae (Fantails)*

**SPOT-BREASTED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albogularis*) – Recently split from White-throated Fantail, we saw 4 in the Ranganathittu and Mysore areas.

**WHITE-BROWED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura aureola*) – Three at Mudumalai.

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**BLACK-NAPED MONARCH** (*Hypothymis azurea*) – Three singles in the Thattekkad area.

**ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – Widespread in small numbers; we saw a total of about a dozen.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**RUFOUS TREEPIE** (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) – Common in wooded areas, with a total of about 70.

**WHITE-BELLIED TREEPIE** (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*) – Fifteen at Periyar, and then about another 20 in the Thattekkad area.

**HOUSE CROW** (*Corvus splendens*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

**LARGE-BILLED CROW** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**JERDON'S BUSHLARK** (*Mirafra affinis*) – Quite difficult this year, but eventually we all saw at least 1 (of 4) in the Mudumalai area.

**INDIAN BUSHLARK** (*Mirafra erythroptera*) – One along the shore of the lake at Nagarhole.

**ASHY-CROWNED SPARROW-LARK** (*Eremopterix griseus*) – About 20 in the farm fields at Bandipur.

**RUFOUS-TAILED LARK** (*Ammomanes phoenicura*) – Two at Bandipur.

**MALABAR LARK** (*Galerida malabarica*) – Two near the lakeshore at Periyar, and then a single at Mudumalai.

**TAWNY LARK** (*Galerida deva*) – More commonly known as Sykes's Lark; we saw at least 40 in the farmland at Bandipur.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**DUSKY CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne concolor*) – About 20 at Lokhart Gap near Munnar.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Common and widespread.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Small numbers at a variety of sites in the highlands.

*Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)*

**GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER** (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Three at Pettimudi Shola above Munnar.

*Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)*

**CINEREOUS TIT** (*Parus cinereus*) – Formerly lumped with Great Tit; they were widespread in small numbers with a total of about 40.

**INDIAN TIT** (*Parus aplonotus*) – Formerly lumped with Black-lored Tit; we had good looks at 4 at Pettimudi Shola above Munnar.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**INDIAN NUTHATCH** (*Sitta castanea*) – Sometimes considered a race of Chestnut-breasted Nuthatch; we saw 4 at Nagarhole, and 2 at Mudumalai.

**VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta frontalis*) – We saw about a dozen at a variety of widespread forested areas.

*Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**GRAY-HEADED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus priocephalus*) – Difficult this year; with only a few of the group seeing 1 at Nagarhole, and then a few others at Jungle Hut, but finally we all got good looks in the Idamalayar Valley.

**FLAME-THROATED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus gularis*) – Small numbers at Periyar, and in the Thattekkad area.

**RED-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Very common and widespread.

**RED-WHISKERED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) – Very common and widespread.

**YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*) – Two birds were heard (calling in misty conditions) on the escarpment at Bodi Mett.

**WHITE-BROWED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus luteolus*) – Surprisingly few; with just 1 at Nagarhole, and then 3 (for the whole group) at Bodi Mett.

**YELLOW-BROWED BULBUL** (*Iole indica*) – About 8 at Mudumalai, 6 at Periyar, and then 10+ in the Thattekkad area.

**SQUARE-TAILED BULBUL** (*Hypsipetes ganeesa*) – About 20 along the road near Munnar town.

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)*

**TICKELL'S LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – One at Pettimudi Shola, and 5 at Eravikulam NP.

**GREENISH WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – Very common and widespread.

**LARGE-BILLED LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – About 8 in the forest above Jungle Hut, and then several others heard elsewhere.

*Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)*

**BOOTED WARBLER** (*Iduna caligata*) – One of the group saw a single bird at Nagarhole, and then most of us saw a second bird at Periyar.

**SYKES'S WARBLER** (*Iduna rama*) – Two at Bandipur, and then at least 6 at Mudumalai.

**BLYTH'S REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) – Common and widespread (especially in the early part of the tour).

**CLAMOROUS REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) – Two were in the tall reeds at Coconut Lagoon.

*Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)*

**COMMON TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – Fairly common from Bangalore to Periyar, and then 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

**GRAY-BREASTED PRINIA** (*Prinia hodgsonii*) – Small numbers were widespread in fairly open country and forest edge.

**ASHY PRINIA** (*Prinia socialis*) – About a dozen between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

**PLAIN PRINIA** (*Prinia inornata*) – Two at Eravikulam NP, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

*Sylviidae (Sylvids)*

**HUME'S WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia althaea*) – At least 1 (of 2) were seen by most of the group in the farmlands at Mudumalai.

*Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrenit, and Allies)*

**YELLOW-EYED BABBLER** (*Chrysomma sinense*) – One at Mudumalai.

*Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)*

**ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – A total of about 50 were seen at a variety of sites between the Ooty Escarpment and Munnar.

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

**DARK-FRONTED BABBLER** (*Rhopocichla atriceps*) – Great looks at this skulker at Idamalayar Valley and Urulanthanni Forest.

**INDIAN SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*) – We saw this striking (and very vocal) species near Jungle Hut and Periyar.

*Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)*

**PUFF-THROATED BABBLER** (*Pellorneum ruficeps*) – Heard several times and then seen well by everyone near Ooty.

*Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)*

**BROWN-CHEEKED FULVETTA** (*Alcippe poioicephala*) – Most common in the forest above Jungle Hut (and heard at several other forested sites).

**LARGE GRAY BABBLER** (*Turdoides malcolmi*) – Two in the farmland at Bandipur.

**RUFOUS BABBLER** (*Turdoides subrufa*) – Normally a super skulker, but we saw them nicely this tour at Periyar, and in the Idamalayar Valley.

**JUNGLE BABBLER** (*Turdoides striata*) – Common and widespread.

**YELLOW-BILLED BABBLER** (*Turdoides affinis*) – Common in the Jungle Hut area, and at Bodi Mett.

**WYNAAD LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Ianthocincla delesserti*) – Always difficult; a few of the group saw 1 along the Nariamangalam Road, and then at least 2 more of the group saw 2 in the Idamalayar Valley.

**BLACK-CHINNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron cachinnans*) – More commonly known as Nilgiri or Rufous-breasted Laughingthrush; we saw 5 at Dodda Betta.

**KERALA LAUGHINGTHRUSH (CENTRAL KERALA)** (*Trochalopteron fairbanki fairbanki*) – More commonly known as Gray-breasted Laughingthrush; we saw about a dozen in the Munnar area.

*Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)*

**ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD** (*Irena puella*) – About 25 in the forest near Jungle Hut, and then small numbers at Periyar and in the Thattekkad area.

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa latirostris*) – Singles at Nagarhole, Jungle Hut, and Periyar.

**RUSTY-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa ruficauda*) – A few of the group saw 1 at Jungle Hut, and then everyone saw 1 in the Urulanthanni Forest.

**BROWN-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa muttui*) – One at Jungle Hut, and 2 at Urulanthanni Forest.

**INDIAN ROBIN** (*Copsychus fulvicatus*) – About a dozen in the Nagarhole to Mudumalai area.

**ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** (*Copsychus saularis*) – Fairly common and widespread throughout the tour.

**WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA** (*Copsychus malabaricus*) – Several were heard in the forest above Jungle Hut, and a few of the group saw 1 there.

**WHITE-BELLIED BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis pallipes*) – We saw a male near Jungle Hut, and then a pair at Periyar.

**BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – Two males at Nagarhole.

**TICKELL'S BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis tickelliae*) – We saw a total of about 6 between Ranganathittu and Nagarhole.

**NILGIRI FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias albicaudatus*) – Two males at Pettimudi Shola, and then another male at the Lokhart Gap Shola.

**VERDITER FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – Three in the Jungle Hut area, and 1 at Periyar.

**WHITE-BELLIED SHORTWING** (*Brachypteryx albibentris*) – Great looks at 1 at Eravikulam NP, and also brief looks there of a second bird for some of the group.

**INDIAN BLUE ROBIN** (*Larvivora brunnea*) – We had 2 nice responsive males in the forest above Jungle Hut.

**MALABAR WHISTLING-THRUSH** (*Myophonus horsfieldii*) – Small numbers were widespread in the forest areas throughout the tour; in all we saw about 9 (and heard many more).

**TAIGA FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula albicilla*) – Singles at Nagarhole and Jungle Hut.

**BLACK-AND-RUFOUS FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula nigrorufa*) – More commonly known as Black-and-orange Flycatcher; we saw singles at Dodda Betta, Cairn Hill, and Pettimudi Shola.

**BLUE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola solitarius*) – One perched atop of a rock at Eravikulam NP.

**PIED BUSHCHAT** (*Saxicola caprata*) – Widespread between Bangalore and Munnar.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH** (*Geokichla citrina*) – Two in the tangled undergrowth at Periyar.

**INDIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus simillimus*) – Singles in the forest above Jungle Hut, at Dodda Betta, and at Eravikulam NP.

### Sturnidae (Starlings)

**SOUTHERN HILL MYNA** (*Gracula indica*) – Common from Periyar to the Thattekkad area.

**JUNGLE MYNA** (*Acridotheres fuscus*) – Very common and widespread.

**COMMON MYNA** (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Very common and widespread.

**CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING** (*Sturnia malabarica*) – About 20 at Nagarhole.

**MALABAR STARLING** (*Sturnia blythii*) – A few at Nagarhole, and then common from Periyar to Thattekkad.

**BRAHMINY STARLING** (*Temenuchus pagodarum*) – Good looks at about 50 in the Mudumalai area.

**ROSY STARLING** (*Pastor roseus*) – About 5 at Coconut Lagoon.

### Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

**JERDON'S LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis jerdoni*) – Four in the Nagarhole area.

**GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) – Widespread in small numbers; in all we saw about 20.

### Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

**PALE-BILLED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*) – Singles at Mysore and Mudumalai, and then about 8 at Coconut Lagoon.

**NILGIRI FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum concolor*) – Singles at Ooty and Pettimudi Shola.

### Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

**PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma zeylonica*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

**CRIMSON-BACKED SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma minima*) – We saw about 15 of these gorgeous sunbirds in the Thattekkad area.

**PURPLE SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) – Common between Nagarhole and Munnar.

**LONG-BILLED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris lotenius*) – Also known as Loten's Sunbird; we saw several singles at Periyar and Thattekkad area.

**LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera longirostra*) – Fantastic looks on a banana flower at Periyar, and then a second bird at Thattekkad.

### Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla flava*) – Common around Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole.

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla madaraspatensis*) – We saw about a dozen at a variety of widespread sites.

**ORIENTAL PIPIT** (*Anthus rufus*) – Also known as Paddyfield Pipit; we saw small numbers at Nagarhole and Mudumalai.

**TAWNY PIPIT** (*Anthus campestris*) – One at Bandipur.

**NILGIRI PIPIT** (*Anthus nilghiriensis*) – We had good looks at this localised endemic in a garbage patch at Lokhart Gap.

**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – Two at Nagarhole.

**FOREST WAGTAIL** (*Dendronanthus indicus*) – Great looks at this unexpectedly beautiful wagtail at Nagarhole (6), and Mudumalai (1).

### Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Common and widespread.

**CHESTNUT-SHOULDERED PETRONIA** (*Petronia xanthocollis*) – About 40 between Nagarhole and Mudumalai.

### Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

**WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA** (*Lonchura striata*) – About 30 at Coconut Lagoon.

**NUTMEG MANNIKIN** (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Eight at Mudumalai, and 4 at Chinnar.

**TRICOLORED MUNIA** (*Lonchura malacca*) – Nice looks at 3 on a wire near our lodge at Nagarhole, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

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## MAMMALS

**INDIAN FLYING-FOX** (*Pteropus giganteus*) – About 150 at Ranganathittu, and 200+ at Nagarhole.

**BONNET MACAQUE** (*Macaca radiata*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour.

**COMMON LANGUR** (*Presbytis entellus*) – About 30 at Nagarhole, and 20 at Mudumalai.

**NILGIRI LANGUR** (*Presbytis johni*) – Five at Eravikulam Np, and about 30 at Periyar.

**INDIAN HARE** (*Lepus nigricollis*) – One at Mudumalai.

**INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL** (*Funambulus palmarum*) – Common and widespread.

**DUSKY PALM SQUIRREL** (*Funambulus sublineatus*) – Three at Periyar.

**INDIAN GIANT SQUIRREL** (*Ratufa indica*) – These gorgeous squirrels were common in many widespread forested areas; in all we saw about 40.

**INDIAN GRAY MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes edwardsi*) – Two at Jungle Hut, and 1 at Thattekkad.

**STRIPE-NECKED MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes vitticollis*) – Four at Nagarhole.

**LEOPARD** (*Panthera pardus*) – Some of the group saw 1 run quickly across a trail at Nagarhole.

**INDIAN ELEPHANT** (*Elephas maximus*) – Great close looks at males, female and young ones totalling 18 at Nagarhole, and then 5 at Mudumalai.

**WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – About 20 at Nagarhole, and 6 at Periyar.

**MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER)** (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – One at Periyar.

**SPOTTED DEER** (*Axis axis*) – Hundreds at Nagarhole, and about 50 in the Bandipur area.

**SAMBAR** (*Cervus unicolor*) – Five at Nagarhole, and 4 at Periyar.

**GAUR** (*Bos gaurus*) – We saw these huge impressive bovines at Nagarhole (30), and then 1 along the roadside below Ooty.

**NILGIRI TAHR** (*Hemitragus hylocrius*) – At least 50 were seen on the steep grassy hillsides at Eravikulam NP.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reptiles seen on the tour included;



Marsh Mugger; 10 at Ranganathittu, and 1 at Chinnar.

Tropical House Gecko; widespread in small numbers.

Water Monitor; 2 in The Backwaters.

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**Totals for the tour: 257 bird taxa and 18 mammal taxa**