



Field Guides Tour Report

Southern India: Western Ghats Endemics 2016

Nov 13, 2016 to Dec 3, 2016

Terry Stevenson with Sathyan Meppayur



We saw at least a dozen gorgeous Crimson-backed Sunbirds at Cheekode Forest and Thattekkad. Photo by guide Sathyan Meppayur.

Our small group experienced our Southern India tour's best weather ever -- perhaps five minutes of light drizzle during our boat ride to Alleppey, but otherwise not a drop of rain the whole tour! As usual, we followed our well-tried route, beginning in Bangalore and then passing through the forests and grasslands of Nagarhole and Mudumalai to the Western Ghats. Here, we stayed in the Nilgiri, Anamalai, and Cardamon hills, and then continued to the lowland forests around Thattekkad, The Backwaters, and finally to Kochi (Cochin) at the coast. Southern India is not well known to US birders, but read on and you'll see why, for anyone with an interest in world birding, this region really is a must!

We began the first day by driving from Bangalore to Kokkare Bellur, where a colony of Spot-billed Pelicans breed right in the village. A nearby marshy area was great for Red-naped Ibis, and during a couple of hours at the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, we saw large numbers of herons, egrets, and ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Great Thick-knee, Indian Gray Hornbill, Blue-tailed and Green bee-eaters, and Indian Paradise-Flycatcher.

Driving to Nagarhole the following day was fabulous for waterbirds, with a series of small pools holding Lesser Whistling-Duck, Indian Spot-billed Duck, and Cotton Pygmy-goose. The newly split Black-backed Swampphen was common, and we saw at least ten Pheasant-tailed Jacanas. The migrant Gray-headed Lapwing is far rarer, but we had good close looks at two in flight.

We then spent three nights at Nagarhole National Park, where we enjoyed not only numerous new birds, but also some big mammals, including Indian Flying-Fox, Indian Giant Flying Squirrel (a major highlight of the tour), Stripe-necked Mongoose, Indian Elephant (including a large bull that chased us), Wild Boar, Spotted Deer (1000+), and Sambar. Among the birding highlights were Indian Peafowl, Gray Junglefowl, super close Crested Serpent-Eagle, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Brown Fish-Owl, Malabar Pied-Hornbill, White-naped Woodpecker, Indian Pitta, Orange Minivet, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Malabar Lark, Indian Nuthatch, Forest Wagtail, and Red Avadavat.

Continuing on, we met with our local expert guide Sathyan Meppayur, who immediately took us see to the localized endemic Tawny (Skyles's) Lark -- a great start. We next spent two nights at Jungle Hut, seeing such varied species as the endangered White-rumped Vulture (at least 32), Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Blue-faced Malkoha (a real group favorite), Malabar Parakeet, Spot-breasted Fantail, Jerdon's Bush-Lark, Indian Scimitar-Babbler, White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher, Indian Blue-Robin (a gorgeous male this year), and Malabar Whistling-Thrush.

Leaving this area behind, we climbed the Nilgiri Hills -- the first of the mountain blocks we would visit; highlights here included Indian Swiftlet, Cinereous Tit, Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, Black-chinned Laughingthrush, Black-and-Rufous Flycatcher, and Indian Blackbird.

Our next mountains were the Anamalai Hills, and for two days (with nights at Munnar), we explored the extensive forests at Chinnar, some smaller mountain "shola's", and the high grasslands at Eravikulam National Park. The birding was wonderful again, with just a sampling including Legge's Hawk-Eagle, Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon (a difficult endemic), Indian Tit, Kerala Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Flycatcher, White-bellied Shortwing (a real skulker that we all saw well), and Nilgiri Flowerpecker. Mammals in this area included Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Nilgiri Tahr, and the world's biggest bovine -- Gaur.

We then went to Periyar, where Nilgiri Langur and Dusky Palm Squirrel were new mammals, and birds included a low flying (chicken hunting) Black Eagle, Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, beautiful Malabar Trogons, massive Great Hornbills, Malabar Barbet, Rufous Woodpecker, Indian Golden Oriole, White-bellied Treepie (another group favorite), Rufous Babbler, Blue-throated Flycatcher, and Jerdon's Leafbird.

Continuing on, we left the Cardamom Hills behind and descended to the Thattekkad area of lowland forests, small hills, grassy areas, and farmland. This is only the second time we included this area on the tour, but the birding and the friendly staff of the Bird Lagoon Hotel made for a great stay. A few of the new birds we saw in this area included Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Sri Lanka Frogmouth (6 this year, with some only 10 feet away), Jerdon's Nightjar, Great Eared-Nightjar (feeding just above our heads), Brown-backed Needletail, Blue-eared Kingfisher (uncommon in South India), Dollarbird, Flame-throated Bulbul, Dark-fronted Babbler, and Crimson-backed Sunbird.

We finished our tour with a night at Coconut Lagoon, and a boat trip across The Backwaters to Alleppey and on to Kochi at the coast. The numbers of Little and Indian cormorants here were just staggering, and almost as impressive were the thousands of Northern Pintail and Glossy Ibis that passed over us in the evening. But, perhaps most memorable were Yellow Bittern, Watercock, an immature Slaty-breasted Rail, and Stork-billed Kingfisher right around our lodge -- though the trip on the traditional house boat and the prawn and fish lunch brings back fond memories too!

-- Terry

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*) – We saw about 60 at a variety of freshwater pools between Bangalore and Nagarhole.

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) – About a dozen on a couple of ponds with water-lilies in the Mysore area, and 7 at Coconut Lagoon.

INDIAN SPOT-BILLED DUCK (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) – At least 130 were seen between Mysore and Nagarhole, and 20+ at Coconut Lagoon.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – One on a small pool south of Nagarhole.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – We saw a single male on a pond near Mysore, and then 'many thousands' flying in the evening over Coconut Lagoon.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*) – We saw a total of about 12 in the Mysore area, and 20 at Coconut Lagoon.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN) (*Anas crecca crecca*) – Six, on two different ponds in the Mysore area.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

INDIAN PEAFOWL (*Pavo cristatus*) – Widespread in small numbers in a variety of open country, including farmland.

RED SPURFOWL (*Galloperdix spadicea*) – Heard near Bird Lagoon.

JUNGLE BUSH-QUAIL (*Perdica asiatica*) – Five flushed from under our feet at Mudumalai.

GRAY FRANCOLIN (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) – One at Nagarhole, and 1 at Mudumalai.

GRAY JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus sonneratii*) – Great looks at this attractive species at Nagarhole (40+), the Jungle Hut area (6), Periyar(1), and Thattekkad (40). [E]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – About 70 between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

ASIAN OPENBILL (*Anastomus oscitans*) – Four in the Kokkare Bellur to Mysore area, 3 at Bird Lagoon, and 5 from the boat on the way to Alleppey.

WOOLLY-NECKED STORK (*Ciconia episcopus*) – Three at Nagarhole, and 2 at Periyar.

PAINTED STORK (*Mycteria leucocephala*) – We saw about 80 of these attractive storks between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, and 5 from the boat near Alleppey.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE CORMORANT (*Microcarbo niger*) – Common on freshwater wetlands throughout the tour, and many many thousands at The Backwaters.

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – About 50 between Ranganathittu and Nagarhole, and about a dozen at Coconut Lagoon.

INDIAN CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) – Great looks, including many birds in breeding plumage at The Backwaters.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ORIENTAL DARTER (*Anhinga melanogaster*) – Small numbers on a variety of widespread freshwater lakes and pools; in all we saw about 40.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

SPOT-BILLED PELICAN (*Pelecanus philippensis*) – Great looks at the colony at Kokkare Bellur, a couple of hundred at the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, and 8 at Kokkorahally.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

YELLOW BITTERN (*Ixobrychus sinensis*) – Four at Coconut Lagoon were more than usual - nice looks too!

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*) – Widespread in small numbers, with a total of about 20.

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*) – Five in the Mysore area, and 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Widespread on wetlands throughout the tour.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Very common and widespread on wetlands throughout the tour.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – Common and widespread.

WESTERN REEF-HERON (*Egretta gularis*) – One at Kabini River Lodge was quite unusual for that area, and we then saw several along the seafront at Kochi.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

INDIAN POND-HERON (*Ardeola grayii*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – One along the river at the Cheekode Forest.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – About 10 at Kokkorahally in Mysore, and 500+ at Coconut Lagoon.

BLACK-HEADED IBIS (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) – We saw about 375 between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

RED-NAPED IBIS (*Pseudibis papillosa*) – Great looks and far more than usual, with 40 in the Mysore area, 80+ in and around Nagarhole.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – About 25 in the Ranganathittu area.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Three at Nagarhole.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*) – One just outside the Nagarhole, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – Good looks at singles at Mysore and Chinnar.

RED-HEADED VULTURE (*Sarcogyps calvus*) – One (and perhaps 2) at Mudumalai.

WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE (*Gyps bengalensis*) – Amazing this year, with no less than 32 of these endangered vultures at Mudumalai.

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – Several very tame birds at Nagarhole.

CRESTED HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*) – Two at Nagarhole. [E]

LEGGES HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus kelaarti*) – We had scope views of a single bird at Chinnar, and then even better scope views of a second adult bird along the Boothankettu Dam Road. [E]

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – One as we went down the Bodi Mett Escarpment, and 1 in the farmlands (chicken hunting) at Periyar.

TAWNY EAGLE (*Aquila rapax*) – Singles near Mysore and Bodi Mett.

WHITE-EYED BUZZARD (*Butastur teesa*) – Nice looks at 1 at Nagarhole.

EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) – We saw a single female near Mysore, and 2 females at Coconut Lagoon.

SHIKRA (*Accipiter badius*) – Singles at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, Bodi Mett, Cheekode Forest, and Coconut Lagoon.

BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*) – About 120 in the Bangalore area, 10 near Mysore, 6 at Mudumalai, and 2 at Kochi.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – At least 80 in the Bangalore area, 10 at Nagarhole, and 100 at The Backwaters.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

SLATY-BREASTED RAIL (*Gallirallus striatus*) – Great looks at an immature bird as it wandered around feeding in some flattened reeds at Coconut Lagoon.

WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – Six between Kokkare Bellur and Kokkorahally, 1 near Nagarhole, 2 at Thattekad, and 10 at Coconut Lagoon.

RUDDY-BREASTED CRAKE (*Zapornia fusca*) – Two of us saw 1 cross some flattened reeds at Coconut Lagoon.

WATERCOCK (*Gallix cinerea*) – Good looks at a bird in non-breeding plumage as it circled around in front of us at Coconut Lagoon.

BLACK-BACKED SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio indicus indicus*) – We saw a total of about 200 between Kokkare Bellur and a few marshes near Nagarhole, and then at least 450 at Coconut Lagoon.

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – About 10 in the Mysore area, and a dozen at Coconut Lagoon.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – We saw a total of about 80 on a variety of pools in the Mysore area, and 3 at The Backwaters.

Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

GREAT THICK-KNEE (*Esacus recurvirostris*) – Fabulous scope views at 3 on the rocks at Ranganathittu.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) – One at Nagarhole.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus malabaricus*) – Six in the dry farmland at Mudumalai.

GRAY-HEADED LAPWING (*Vanellus cinereus*) – We had 2 birds make a close fly-by appearance near Nagarhole.

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*) – Common and widespread.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*) – One at Nagarhole.

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) – About ten at a variety of pools in the Mysore to Nagarhole area, and 30+ at The Backwaters.

BRONZE-WINGED JACANA (*Metopidius indicus*) – One near Mysore, and about 15 at Coconut Lagoon.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago gallinago*) – One of our group saw 1 in the farmland near Periyar.

PIN-TAILED SNIPE (*Gallinago stenura*) – Nice looks at a flying bird at Nagarhole.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Widespread in small numbers; with a total of about 14.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – Nine between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, and 1 at Periyar.

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*) – Four between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) – At least 60 between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, and 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Two near Bird Lagoon, and then hundreds at The Backwaters.

RIVER TERN (*Sterna aurantia*) – One at Ranganathittu, 3 near Bird Lagoon, and 1 at The Backwaters.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

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

NILGIRI WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba elphinstonii*) – We saw 1 in a wooded valley near Munnar, and then 4 in the high forest above the town; great to see 5 of these very localized and uncommon endemic pigeons. [E]

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Two at Nagarhole.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Four at Mudumalai.

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Very common and widespread.

LAUGHING DOVE (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – One at Nagarhole, and 1 near Bird Lagoon.

ASIAN EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*) – Singles at Deshadan Hill and Periyar.

GRAY-FRONTED GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron affinis*) – Nice looks at a female feeding in a fruiting tree at Nagarhole, and then one in flight at Cheekode Forest. [E]

YELLOW-FOOTED PIGEON (*Treron phoenicopterus*) – About 40 at Nagarhole.

GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula aenea*) – Really nice to see at least 20 at Nagarhole, and then another 20 at Thattekkad.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*) – Two singles at Periyar.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER COUCAL (*Centropus sinensis*) – About 10 in the Mysore to Nagarhole area, 2 along the Boothankettu Dam Road, and 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

BLUE-FACED MALKOHA (*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*) – Great looks at this striking bird in the undergrowth near Jungle Hut - a group favorite! [E]

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) – Five singles between Mysore and Nagarhole, then heard in several more places, and 3 seen at Coconut Lagoon.

GRAY-BELLIED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis passerinus*) – One in the forest high above Munnar.

SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*) – One along the Boothankettu Dam Road.

COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx varius*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, near Munnar.

Strigidae (Owls)

ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL (*Otus sunia*) – Heard in the forest near Bird Lagoon.

BROWN FISH-OWL (*Ketupa zeylonensis*) – Nice day time looks at 1 at Nagarhole.

JUNGLE OWLET (*Glaucidium radiatum*) – One at Nagarhole, and several others heard at Bird Lagoon and Thattekkad.

SPOTTED OWLET (*Athene brama*) – Two singles near Jungle Hut.

BROWN BOOBOOK (*Ninox scutulata*) – More commonly known as Brown Hawk-Owl; we heard 2 in the forest near Bird Lagoon.

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

SRI LANKA FROGMOUTH (*Batrachostomus moniliger*) – Just fabulous this year, with super close looks at a total of 6 in the forest at Thattekkad - all in daylight too! [E]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

GREAT EARED-NIGHTJAR (*Lyncornis macrotis*) – Absolutely fantastic, as we watched at least 6 birds hunting just above our heads near Thattekkad.

JERDON'S NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus atripennis*) – One as we returned to our lodge one evening at Nagarhole, and then 2 near Thattekkad. [E]

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-RUMPED NEEDLETAIL (*Zoonavena sylvatica*) – Three at Nagarhole.

BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus giganteus*) – About 10 over the forest at Thattekkad.

INDIAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus unicolor*) – About 20 at Dodda Betta, and 30 in the Munnar area.

ALPINE SWIFT (*Apus melba*) – About 40 in a single high flying flock near Munnar.

AFRICAN PALM-SWIFT (*Cypsiurus parvus*) – One at Coconut Lagoon.

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

CRESTED TREESWIFT (*Hemiproctne coronata*) – Six at Nagarhole, and another 6 at Thattekkad.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

MALABAR TROGON (*Harpactes fasciatus*) – Great looks at a female and then 2 males at Periyar. [E]

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Three at Nagarhole, and 4 at Mudumalai.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

GREAT HORNBILL (*Buceros bicornis*) – At Periyar we heard a pair 'honking' in a tall tree near us and then had great views as they nosily flapped away.

INDIAN GRAY HORNBILL (*Ocyrceros birostris*) – Four at Ranganathittu.

MALABAR GRAY HORNBILL (*Ocyrceros griseus*) – Four at Jungle Hut, 2 at Periyar, 40+ along the Boothankettu Dam Road included 25 in a single flock, and finally we saw about 30 in a fruiting tree above our heads near Thattekkad. [E]

MALABAR PIED-HORNBILL (*Anthracoceros coronatus*) – Nice looks at 2 and then 3 at Nagarhole. [E]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – Eight between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole, and 1 at Periyar.

BLUE-EARED KINGFISHER (*Alcedo meninting*) – Great scope looks at 1 along a forested stream at Thattekkad; very uncommon in South India.

STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – One at Coconut Lagoon, and 1 from the boat to Alleppey.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Common and widespread; with a total of about 80.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

GREEN BEE-EATER (*Merops orientalis*) – We saw about 20 between Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole.

BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER (*Merops philippinus*) – Twenty at Kokkare Bellur, 10 at Nagarhole, 4 on the way to Chinnar, 4 at Cheekode Forest, and 40 at Coconut Lagoon.

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*) – Six at Nagarhole, and 3 in the Munnar Tea Estates.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

INDIAN ROLLER (*Coracias benghalensis*) – Three singles along the road to Nagarhole, 1 at Periyar, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – One in a forest patch near Thattekkad.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

MALABAR BARBET (*Psilopogon malabaricus*) – Six at Periyar, 1 along the Boothankettu Dam Road, and many others heard in the lowland forested areas. [E]

COPPERSMITH BARBET (*Psilopogon haemacephalus*) – Very common from Bangalore to Nagarhole; with a total of about 75.

BROWN-HEADED BARBET (*Psilopogon zeylanicus*) – One at Mudumalai.

WHITE-CHEEKED BARBET (*Psilopogon viridis*) – Very common in wooded areas throughout the tour; in all we saw about 80. [E]

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

BROWN-CAPPED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos nanus*) – Four singles at Nagarhole and Periyar.

YELLOW-CROWNED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos mahrattensis*) – We saw a pair in a thick Euphorbia tree at Chinnar WS.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*) – One at Periyar.

STREAK-THROATED WOODPECKER (*Picus xanthopygaeus*) – One at Nagarhole.

COMMON FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium javanense*) – Nice looks at 1 at Nagarhole where it is very uncommon, and 3 at Periyar.

BLACK-RUMPED FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium benghalense*) – The most common flameback; with a total of about 20.

RUFIOUS WOODPECKER (*Micropternus brachyurus*) – We saw a total of 6 at Periyar.

GREATER FLAMEBACK (MALABAR) (*Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus socialis*) – Due to variations in recent splitting and lumping this was on our list as Buff-spotted Flameback, but is now known as Greater Flameback of the distinct form 'socialis'. It is expected to be split as Malabar Flameback. We saw 1 in flight and heard it calling at near Bird Lagoon.

WHITE-NAPED WOODPECKER (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) – Great looks at a female at Nagarhole.

HEART-SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Hemicircus canente*) – One was seen briefly by some of the group at Nagarhole, and then we all saw 3-4 at Periyar - a great bird!

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – One near Jungle Hut, and the pair at Lockhart Gap.

AMUR FALCON (*Falco amurensis*) – A single male flew over us at Coconut Lagoon.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (*Psittacula krameri*) – Very common from Bangalore to Mudumalai (170+), and then about 12 at Coconut Lagoon.

PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) – Gorgeous in good light, we saw about 200 at Nagarhole, 15 at Mudumalai, 10 at Periyar, and 20 along the Boothankettu Dam Road.

MALABAR PARAKEET (*Psittacula columboides*) – About 6 between Nagarhole and Mudumalai, and then 200+ from Periyar to the Boothankettu Dam Road and on to Thattekkad. [E]

VERNAL HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus vernalis*) – Nice scope views of 3 birds at Jungle Hut, and then 4 at Periyar.

Pittidae (Pittas)

INDIAN PITTA (*Pitta brachyura*) – Great looks in the grounds of our lodge at Nagarhole, and then 1 (for one of our group) at Spice Village.

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

MALABAR WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis sylvicola*) – One very briefly at Jungle Hut, and then good looks for everyone at Periyar and Thattekkad. [E]

COMMON WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*) – Two at Chinnar.

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – Two at Cairn Hill, and 1 at Thattekkad.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

ASHY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus fuscus*) – Four at Nagarhole, 5 at Chinnar WS, and about 30 near Bird Lagoon.

Aegithinidae (Ioras)

COMMON IORA (*Aegithina tiphia*) – Four in the Jungle Hut area, and 1 at Periyar.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

SMALL MINIVET (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*) – Small numbers at Ranganathittu, Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and the Cheekode Forest.

ORANGE MINIVET (*Pericrocotus flammeus*) – Ten between Nagarhole and Mudumalai, 4 at Periyar, and 16 in the Boothankettu Dam to Thattekkad area. [E]

LARGE CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina macei*) – Some of the group saw 1 at Nagarhole, and then we all saw 3 near Bird Lagoon.

BLACK-HEADED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melanoptera*) – Three at Nagarhole.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

BROWN SHRIKE (*Lanius cristatus*) – Small numbers were in a variety of open country (including farmland).

BAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius vittatus*) – We saw 5 of these attractive shrikes at Mudumalai.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – About 16 in the Bangalore to Mudumalai area.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

INDIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE (*Oriolus kundoo*) – Two at Mudumalai, 1 at Periyar, and 10+ along the Boothankettu Dam Road.

BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE (*Oriolus chinensis*) – One of our group saw 1 in the grounds of our lodge at Nagarhole.

BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE (*Oriolus xanthornus*) – Small numbers in forest throughout the tour; in all we saw about 15.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocerus*) – Very common and widespread outside of forested areas.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Common in forest and woodlands; in all we saw about 100.

WHITE-BELLIED DRONGO (*Dicrurus caerulescens*) – Ten at Nagarhole, and 8 at Mudumalai.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Widespread in forests, with a total of about 30.

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – One in the open woodland at Mudumalai was rather unexpected.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) – Great looking bird with a great voice; we saw a total of about 100.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

SPOT-BREADED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albogularis*) – Small numbers at Mysore and Mudumalai. [E]

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

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea*) – Two near Jungle Hut, and 1 at Periyar.

INDIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – Small numbers from Kokkare Bellur to Mysore and on to Mudumalai, and then 2 at Periyar, and 1 at Cheekode Forest.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

RUFOUS TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) – Fairly common in forested areas; in all we saw about 40.

WHITE-BELLIED TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*) – Nice looks at these striking birds at Periyar (15), and Thattekkad (8). [E]

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

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

Alaudidae (Larks)

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

JERDON'S BUSHLARK (*Mirafra affinis*) – Two at Mudumalai. [E]

ORIENTAL SKYLARK (*Alauda gulgula*) – Two along the lake shore at Nagarhole.

MALABAR LARK (*Galerida malabarica*) – One at Nagarhole, and 2 at Mudumalai. [E]

TAWNY LARK (*Galerida deva*) – More commonly known as Sykes's Lark, we had good scope views of this rather local and uncommon endemic at Bandipur. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

DUSKY CRAG-MARTIN (*Ptyonoprogne concolor*) – Two at Lockhart Gap.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Common in open country throughout the tour.

HILL SWALLOW (*Hirundo domicola*) – About 6 at Lockhart Gap. [E]

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, Lockhart Gap, and Periyar.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – One at Dodda Betta, and 2 at Pettimundi.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CINEREOUS TIT (*Parus cinereus*) – Two at Ranganathittu, about 8 at Dodda Betta, and 1 at Thattekkad.

INDIAN TIT (*Machlolophus aplonotus*) – Two in the high forest above Munnar. [E]

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

INDIAN NUTHATCH (*Sitta castanea*) – Two at Nagarhole.

VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta frontalis*) – One at Nagarhole, 4 at Mudumalai, and 1 at Periyar.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

GRAY-HEADED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus priocephalus*) – Very difficult this year; 1 bird was heard by all, but unfortunately only two of us got a brief view as it flew away. [E]

FLAME-THROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus gularis*) – We saw about 8 of these attractive bulbuls in the Cheekode Forest and Thattekkad areas. [E]

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Fairly common and widespread, with a total of about 120.

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

YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*) – Difficult this year (in the heat of the day) but eventually we all got some sort of looks at Bodi Mett. [E]

WHITE-BROWED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus luteolus*) – Two at our lodge at Nagarhole. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED BULBUL (*Iole indica*) – Four near Jungle Hut, about 30 at Periyar, 20 along the Boothankettu Dam Road, and 4 at Thattekkad. [E]

SQUARE-TAILED BULBUL (*Hypsipetes ganeesa*) – About 60 in some fruiting trees near Munnar. [E]

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – Singles at Nagarhole, Cairn Hill, and Pettimundi.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – Common and widespread.

LARGE-BILLED LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – Good looks in the forest near Jungle Hut, and several other 'heards'.

TYTLER'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus tytleri*) – Great looks at this rather uncommon and poorly known bird at Pettimundi.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

SYKES'S WARBLER (*Iduna rama*) – At least 40 in the dry scrublands at Mudumalai.

PADDYFIELD WARBLER (*Acrocephalus agricola*) – One in the reeds at Coconut Lagoon.

BLYTH'S REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) – Common and widespread; with a total of about 100.

CLAMOROUS REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) – Good looks at 1 just outside Nagarhole, and then at least 4 at Coconut Lagoon.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – Small numbers at forest edge in several widely scattered areas; in all we saw about 10.

ASHY PRINIA (*Prinia socialis*) – Two at Nagarhole, and 1 at Chinnar.

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

Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)

HUME'S WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia althaea*) – Small numbers in the dry open country at Mudumalai.

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

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

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Common from Mudumalai to Munnar, and then at Periyar; in all we saw about 120.

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

TAWNY-BELLIED BABBLER (*Dumetia hyperythra*) – Four at Mudumalai.

DARK-FRONTED BABBLER (*Rhopocichla atriceps*) – Two along the Boothankettu Dam Road, and 1 at Thattekkad. [E]

INDIAN SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*) – Two in the forest above Jungle Hut, and 1 at Munnar. [E]

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

PUFF-THROATED BABBLER (*Pellorneum ruficeps*) – Four in the Jungle Hut area.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

BROWN-CHEEKED FULVETTA (*Alcippe poioicephala*) – About 8 in the forest above Jungle Hut and 1 at Thattekkad.

RUFOUS BABBLER (*Turdoides subrufa*) – Very nice looks at these skulkers at Periyar. [E]

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

YELLOW-BILLED BABBLER (*Turdoides affinis*) – About 40 at Mudumalai, and 12 at Chinnar. [E]

BLACK-CHINNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron cachinnans*) – Formerly known as Nilgiri Laughingthrush, they were difficult this year but eventually we all had great looks at 3 birds at Dodda Betta. [E]

KERALA LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron fairbanki*) – Formerly known as Gray-breasted Laughingthrush, we had fabulous views of 1 at Pettimundi, and then 3 in the Eravikulam NP. [E]

Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)

ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD (*Irena puella*) – About 10 at Periyar.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa dauurica*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Jungle Hut, Periyar, and Thattekkad.

BROWN-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa muttui*) – Two at Nagarhole, and singles at Jungle Hut, and Chinnar.

INDIAN ROBIN (*Copsychus fulicatus*) – Three at Bandipur, 8 at Mudumalai, and 1 on the way to Chinnar.

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*) – Common and widespread.

WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA (*Copsychus malabaricus*) – One for some of the group near Jungle Hut.

WHITE-BELLIED BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis pallipes*) – We saw single males in the forest above Jungle Hut and at Periyar. [E]

BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – Some of the group saw a male at Spice Village.

TICKELL'S BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis tickelliae*) – Four at Nagarhole, and 4 in the Jungle Hut area.

NILGIRI FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias albicaudatus*) – Four at a couple of forest patches in the Anamalai Hills, including Eravikulam NP. [E]

WHITE-BELLIED SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx albigentris*) – Great looks at this skulking endemic at Eravikulam NP. [E]

INDIAN BLUE ROBIN (*Larvivora brunnea*) – Another skulker; we had great views of a singing male in the forest above Jungle Hut, and another was seen briefly at Periyar.

MALABAR WHISTLING-THRUSH (*Myophonus horsfieldii*) – One at Jungle Hut, 3 in the Munnar area included birds singing from our hotel roof! Also, 1 at Periyar. [E]

BLACK-AND-RUFOUS FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula nigrorufa*) – Great looks at this gorgeous endemic in the "sholas" at Dodda Betta and Pettimundi. [E]

RUSTY-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula ruficauda*) – One at Periyar.

TAIGA FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula albicilla*) – Singles at Kibini River Lodge, and at Jungle Hut.

BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) – Nice looks at a female at Kibini River Lodge.

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola solitarius*) – We saw a single female at Lockhart Gap.

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Widespread in small numbers.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH (*Geokichla citrina*) – Great looks this year at Jungle Hut, Eravikulam, and Periyar; in all we saw 9.

INDIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus simillimus*) – About 10 at Dodda Betta. [E]

Sturnidae (Starlings)

SOUTHERN HILL MYNA (*Gracula indica*) – Common in good forest like Periyar, along the Boothankettu Dam Road, and at Thattekkad; in all we saw about 140. [E]

BRAHMINY STARLING (*Sturnia pagodarum*) – About 60 at Mudumalai.

CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING (*Sturnia malabarica*) – Most common at Nagarhole and Periyar.

MALABAR STARLING (*Sturnia blythii*) – Seen most frequently at Nagarhole and Thattekkad. [E]

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

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

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

JERDON'S LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis jerdoni*) – Three at Periyar, and 1 at Cheekode Forest. [E]

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) – One at Nagarhole, and 1 along the Boothankettu Dam Road.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

PALE-BILLED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*) – One at Mysore, and 2 at Mudumalai.

NILGIRI FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum concolor*) – One at Lockhart Gap. [E]

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma zeylonica*) – Common outside forest, with a total of about 100.

CRIMSON-BACKED SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma minima*) – We saw about 12 of these gorgeous sunbirds at Cheekode Forest and Thattekkad. [E]

PURPLE SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) – Fairly common and widespread.

LONG-BILLED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris lotenius*) – Four at Periyar, and 1 along the Boothankettu Dam Road. [E]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

FOREST WAGTAIL (*Dendronanthus indicus*) – Six at Nagarhole, and 2 at Periyar were more than usual.

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla flava*) – Fairly common from Bangalore to Nagarhole (80+), and then about 30 at Periyar.

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Common and widespread; with a total of about 60.

WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) – Small numbers were widespread, particularly along open shorelines.

PADDYFIELD PIPIT (*Anthus rufulus*) – About a dozen between Nagarhole and Mudumalai.

NILGIRI PIPIT (*Anthus nilghiriensis*) – After our local guide Sathyan found 2, we arrived just in time to see them flying away. [E]

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in villages and towns throughout the tour.

CHESTNUT-SHOULDERED PETRONIA (*Petronia xanthocollis*) – One at Nagarhole, and 10 at Mudumalai.

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

RED AVADAVAT (*Amandava amandava*) – Nice looks at a small flock along the shore near Kibini River Lodge.

INDIAN SILVERBILL (*Euodice malabarica*) – Two at Mudumalai.

WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA (*Lonchura striata*) – Six at Jungle Hut, and 2 at Bird Lagoon.

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Fifteen at Mudumalai, and 1 from the boat to Alleppey.

TRICOLORED MUNIA (*Lonchura malacca*) – A flock of about 20 were seen in flight on the way to Nagarhole.

MAMMALS

INDIAN FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus giganteus*) – About 100 at Ranganathittu, 200+ at Kibini River Lodge, and 1000+ flying over Spice Village.

BONNET MACAQUE (*Macaca radiata*) – Common and widespread in towns, villages, and at forest edge. [E]

COMMON LANGUR (*Presbytis entellus*) – At least 100 at Nagarhole.

NILGIRI LANGUR (*Presbytis johni*) – About 20 at Periyar. [E]

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

INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL (*Funambulus palmarum*) – Very common and widespread. [E]

DUSKY PALM SQUIRREL (*Funambulus sublineatus*) – Four at Periyar, and 1 at Cheekode Forest. [E]

SRI LANKAN (=GRIZZLED) GIANT SQUIRREL (*Ratufa macroura*) – Rare in the Western Ghats, so we were lucky to get good looks at 1 at Chinnar. [E]

INDIAN GIANT SQUIRREL (*Ratufa indica*) – This striking gorgeous squirrel was common from Nagarhole to Periyar, and then again at Thattekkad. [E]

INDIAN GIANT FLYING SQUIRREL (*Petaurista philippensis*) – Fantastic to see 2 leaping and gliding through the forest at Nagarhole - a highlight of the tour!

STRIPE-NECKED MONGOOSE (*Herpestes vitticollis*) – One at Nagarhole. [E]

INDIAN ELEPHANT (*Elephas maximus*) – Several encounters (including meeting a feisty bull); we saw a total of about 30 at Nagarhole, and a mother and baby at Bandipur.

WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa*) – Six at Nagarhole.

MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER) (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – One at Nagarhole, and 1 in a tea estate near Munnar.

SPOTTED DEER (*Axis axis*) – About 1000 at Nagarhole, and 60 at Mudumalai.

SAMBAR (*Cervus unicolor*) – Three at Nagarhole, and 1 heard at Thattekkad.

GAUR (*Bos gaurus*) – One along the way to Munnar.

NILGIRI TAHR (*Hemitragus hylocrius*) – Great looks at about 20 at Eravikulam NP. [E]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reptiles on the tour included:

Marsh Muggler: about 20 (including some huge ones at Ranganathittu).

Tropical House Gecko: small numbers throughout the tour.

Water Monitor: 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

Rock Monitor: one of our group saw 1 near Coconut Lagoon.

Totals for the tour: 263 bird taxa and 18 mammal taxa