



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Northeast India: Eaglenest, Kaziranga & More 2019**

Apr 20, 2019 to May 7, 2019

Phil Gregory & local guide Saurabh Sawant

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



*A highlight of our tour is a visit to Kaziranga, where we see the amazing Indian Rhinoceros, as well as many wonderful birds. Here, one of the rhinos is surrounded by water plants, and is being used as a platform by a couple of Great Mynas. Photo by guide Phil Gregory.*

This tour began in Kaziranga National Park and Nameri National Park with fine conditions, though subsequent rainy weather from a cyclone made birding in Arunachal Pradesh difficult (in fact, we were unable to go far below Bompu as it just never cleared down in the valley!). Nevertheless, we had some fantastic sightings. Our beginning near Kolkata gave us a Greater Painted-Snipe with three small chicks. Moving on to Kaziranga, we met our excellent local guide Saurabh and enjoyed several visits to this great park, with truly memorable highlights: a Tiger late one afternoon, Asian Elephants, a Wild Boar, and a mud wallow with 12 Great Indian Rhinoceroses in it, a fantastic sight. We also had a terrific experience with Smooth-coated Otters, with a group of around 20 of them splashing and foraging in a lake and calling loudly. Among top birds were a roosting Brown Fish-Owl, a nest of the rare Pallas's Fish-Eagle was right by the road, Swamp Francolin in the open—and we saw the elephant grass waving where Slender-billed Babblers had come in, but again this year, they stayed out of sight! A Blue-naped Pitta was a very good find near a tea estate, and both Lesser and Greater adjutants showed very well, along with Black-headed Ibis and some late migrant Palearctic ducks.

Nameri National Park came next, where we stayed in comfortable tents with en-suite facilities. Here we were lucky and saw a fine female White-winged Duck on a quiet forest pond, also Great Thick-knee, Ruddy Kingfisher, River Tern, River Lapwing, Small Pratincole, Brown Boobook, and Wreathed Hornbill, plus an entertaining troop of Capped Langurs. Heading into Arunachal, despite the weather we connected well with Hill Partridge, a marvelous, calling Green Cochoa, a stunning Purple Cochoa, Spotted Elachura singing well and perched up briefly, Rusty-throated Wren-Babbler, Golden-throated Barbet, Scarlet Finch, and the stunning trio of Mrs. Gould's, Green-tailed, and Fire-tailed sunbirds. Laughingthrushes are always a challenge, but we managed Striated, Chestnut-crowned, Bhutan, Gray-sided, White-necked and ... even a Bugun Liocichla! We managed to get reasonable views of this great rarity.

Our Sela Pass day included an incredible male Himalayan Monal right out on a mountainside, an unbelievably close flock of Grandalas at Sela Lake, Black-headed (Brandt's) Mountain-Finch, and an enormous-looking Alpine Thrush, plus White-capped and Blue-fronted redstarts. In Mandala, we salvaged what we could in the weather, with Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Crimson-browed Finch, Brown Bush Warbler, and Pale-chinned Blue Flycatcher.

My thanks to Rinku for excellent driving, Saurabh Sawant for being a knowledgeable local guide, to Sharon at Field Guides, and to Sue and Rowan at Sicklebill Safaris for putting it all together with Avijit our local ground agent. Next year we have reversed the trip order and will do the mountains early on and finish at Kaziranga!

Why not sign up for a memorable adventure in 2020 in this remote and seldom visited part of the great sub-continent?

Phil Gregory, Kuranda May 2019

#### 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*) – Widespread in small numbers, first seen at Rajarhat.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – Small numbers in Kaziranga, a lovely bird to see.

**COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE** (*Nettapus coromandelianus coromandelianus*) – Just a couple in Kaziranga.

**GARGANEY** (*Spatula querquedula*) – A small distant flock in Kaziranga, getting late for this migrant.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – One female at the wetland by the hide at Kaziranga.

**GADWALL** (*Mareca strepera*) – A few late migrants at Kaziranga.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Mareca penelope*) – 4 in Kaziranga, getting a bit late for them here.

**INDIAN SPOT-BILLED DUCK** (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) – Just a single record of 10 from Kaziranga.

**WHITE-WINGED DUCK** (*Asarcornis scutulata*) – A terrific female with dusky spotted face on the quiet backwater lake at Nameri, lucky no other group was coming here today as it may well have been scared away. A very rare bird with this park holding a very significant population with around 70 birds.

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

**HILL PARTRIDGE** (*Arborophila torqueola*) – One lovely bird on the road right in front of the truck as we came back over to Lama Camp.

**RUFOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE** (*Arborophila rufogularis*) – Heard daily around Bompou and almost seen on the way back to Eaglenest Pass when Saurabh saw 2 but could not get us onto them as they scuttled away. [\*]

**GRAY PEACOCK-PHEASANT** (*Polyplectron bicalcaratum*) – Heard below Bompou. [\*]

**SWAMP FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus gularis*) – A big surprise were some 4 birds out on the short turf at Daflong Tower in Kaziranga; a hard to see species that is a specialty for this area of the Brahmaputra floodplain.

**RED JUNGLEFOWL** (*Gallus gallus*) – Good views at Kaziranga.

**HIMALAYAN MONAL** (*Lophophorus impejanus*) – A fabulous male on a mountainside at Sela Pass, first seen in flight by Joan then found on the grassy slope for excellent scope views; a marvelous creature and one of the birds of the trip.

**SNOW PARTRIDGE** (*Lerwa lerwa*) – Heard below Sela at the monal site, but we were unable to pick them up and fog intervened later. [\*]

**KALIJ PHEASANT** (*Lophura leucomelanos*) – Great views in Kaziranga with 5 birds (3 males), then a couple of sightings on the track below Bompou.

### *Podicipedidae (Grebes)*

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Seen at Rajarhat.

### *Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Widespread in the urban areas.

**SPECKLED WOOD-PIGEON** (*Columba hodgsonii*) – A flock of 15 flushed out of the trees above Bompou.

**ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Great views in the Sengti Valley; this nominate taxon is very richly coloured and rather dark.

**RED COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*) – A couple at Rajarhat.

**SPOTTED DOVE (WESTERN)** (*Streptopelia chinensis suratensis*) – A few in disturbed areas at lower elevations.

**ASIAN EMERALD DOVE** (*Chalcophaps indica*) – A couple of sightings of singles from Nameri.

**ORANGE-BREASTED PIGEON** (*Treron bicinctus*) – Two fine birds in Kaziranga.

**YELLOW-FOOTED PIGEON** (*Treron phoenicopterus*) – Good looks at Kaziranga; a pair perched in a fruiting tree with Great Hornbill alongside being the best.

**WEDGE-TAILED PIGEON** (*Treron sphenurus*) – Heard below Bompou but too foggy to find. [\*]

**GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula aenea*) – A couple of day records from Nameri.

**MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula badia*) – Ones and twos from the Eaglenest area.

### *Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**LESSER COUCAL** (*Centropus bengalensis*) – A couple of sightings from Kaziranga.

**GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA** (*Phaenicophaeus tristis*) – One seen well at a tea estate near Kaziranga.

**ASIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) – Commonly heard in the lowlands and seen in Nameri.

**ASIAN EMERALD CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx maculatus*) – A great view of a male below Bompou during a gap in the clouds.

**PLAINTIVE CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis merulinus*) – Seen near Dirang and calling as we came back to Tezpur.

**SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO** (*Surniculus lugubris*) – A great view of one at the Kaziranga permit office, singing really loudly, and another seen by Joan and Saurabh as we came back to Tezpur. There is confusion and disagreement about the taxonomy of this species. Most treat the birds here as Square-tailed, but Payne 2005 and the IOC list seem to treat them as Fork-tailed *S. dicruroides*, (these two groups are increasingly split). Our bird had a slightly forked tail, which is apparently OK for Square-tailed, as opposed to a deep fork.

**LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococyx sparveroides*) – Commonly heard in the higher altitude areas but stayed remarkably well hidden. [\*]

**COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococyx varius*) – Saurabh was sure the perched bird as we came into the broadleaf forest below Sela was this species.

**INDIAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus micropterus*) – Seen at Kaziranga and near Tezpur, a common voice of the lowlands.

**HIMALAYAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus saturatus*) – Frustratingly, this was only heard in the mountains and would not come to the recording, the hoopoe-like hooting is quite distinctive. [\*]

**COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – Lovely to hear this at Dirang and then to see it on the Mandala road. THE classic Cuckoo, of course.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**GRAY NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus jotaka*) – Calling at Lama Camp long before dusk, and we saw 2 in flight on the second night there.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – A couple in Arunachal as we were heading back to Tezpur, seen nicely with the white throat obvious.

**BLYTH'S SWIFT** (*Apus leuconyx*) – Unexpectedly elusive, we had good views of 6 in the hills above Dirang, with a couple later en route back to Tezpur. A split from what was Pacific Swift.

**ASIAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*) – Widespread in the lowlands from Rajarhat onwards.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**GRAY-HEADED SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio poliocephalus*) – One from Rajarhat and then a few in Kaziranga.

**WATERCOCK** (*Gallinula cinerea*) – Heard at Rajarhat but well hidden in dense reeds; sorry, Joan. [\*]

**WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – Seen at Rajarhat and then one in Kaziranga by our hotel.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**INDIAN THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus indicus*) – We got a bird sitting down in the vegetation at Nameri, but neither Joan nor Grace could discern it in the scope, as it kept perfectly still and was hard to make out! An interesting ethical dilemma, you have seen it but not picked it out!

**GREAT THICK-KNEE** (*Esacus recurvirostris*) – Lovely view of a pair by the river at Nameri, with a well-grown juvenile at one point.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**RIVER LAPWING** (*Vanellus duvaucelii*) – Lovely views of 2 by the river at Nameri; a scarce and declining species as disturbance increases.

**RED-WATTLED LAPWING** (*Vanellus indicus atronuchalis*) – This taxon with the white neck stripe was quite widespread in the lowlands, with 2 at the Sangti valley later.

**LONG-BILLED PLOVER** (*Charadrius placidus*) – 5 birds at the Sangti Valley, including two juveniles.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Two from the river at Nameri.

*Rostratulidae (Painted-Snipes)*

**GREATER PAINTED-SNIPE** (*Rostratula benghalensis*) – A male with 3 small juveniles was in the wet grass at Rajarhat, a very nice find. The male does the parenting in this species.

*Jacaniidae (Jacanas)*

**PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA** (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) – Spectacular in breeding dress, and quite widespread at wetlands.

**BRONZE-WINGED JACANA** (*Metopidius indicus*) – Much less common than its relative, but also in breeding dress; we saw one or 2 on 4 days at Rajarhat and Kaziranga.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** (*Calidris temminckii*) – A fine bird at Daflong wetland in Kaziranga.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – One or two on 4 days at Kaziranga, Nameri and Sangti Valley.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Tringa ochropus*) – One heard flying over by the river at Nameri, but none of us could find it! [\*]

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** (*Tringa erythropus*) – Good views of a couple in Kaziranga, with one coming into the striking silver and black breeding plumage.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – One or two at Rajarhat and Kaziranga.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – 60 at Rajarhat, and a few from Kaziranga.

**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – Two in Kaziranga.

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola maldivarum*) – 4 at Rajarhat, where they looked as if they were nesting.

**SMALL PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola lactea*) – Two on the river at Nameri by the stone-curlers.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – 20 at Kaziranga on the first day only.

**RIVER TERN** (*Sterna aurantia*) – Another stunning tern, this one has an orange bill and gorgeous pale silvery-grey upperparts; we only saw 2 singles on the river at Nameri.

*Ciconiidae (Storks)*

**ASIAN OPENBILL** (*Anastomus oscitans*) – Widespread and seen at many lowland sites.

**WOOLLY-NECKED STORK (ASIAN)** (*Ciconia episcopus episcopus*) – A few seen in Kaziranga. Split as Asian Woollyneck by HBW/Birdlife.

**BLACK-NECKED STORK** (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus asiaticus*) – Some nice views from Kaziranga but only a handful of individuals; this is a rare subspecies. There was one independent juvenile.

**LESSER ADJUTANT** (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) – Very good looks en route to Kaziranga, then small numbers, with up to 7 in the park.

**GREATER ADJUTANT** (*Leptoptilos dubius*) – This rare bird was seen in Kaziranga, with two individuals, the grey wing coverts showing nicely.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ORIENTAL DARTER** (*Anhinga melanogaster*) – A maximum of 10 from Kaziranga, another rare waterbird.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**LITTLE CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo niger*) – Widespread in small numbers in the lowlands; the stubby bill is distinctive.

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Two sightings from Kaziranga.

**INDIAN CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) – Up to 10 in Kaziranga and one at Nameri.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**SPOT-BILLED PELICAN** (*Pelecanus philippensis*) – A few seen at Kaziranga; quite a rare species overall, the highest daily count was just 10 birds.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Just 2 in Kaziranga.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – 2 at the beel near Guwahati and singles from Kaziranga.

**GREAT EGRET (EURASIAN)** (*Ardea alba alba*) – A few from Rajarhat and Kaziranga.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET (INTERMEDIATE)** (*Ardea intermedia intermedia*) – A single at Kaziranga. This species is split into 3 by HBW/BirdLife and this taxon is the Intermediate Egret proper.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Mostly ones and twos in Kaziranga but 50 on the last day.

**CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN)** (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Small numbers were widespread in the lowlands. This taxon is split by HBW-BirdLife and the IOC; the breeding dress is very distinct to Western Cattle Egret.

**INDIAN POND-HERON** (*Ardeola grayii*) – Widespread in the lowlands of Assam.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Just 3 at Rajarhat as the dusk came on apace.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – 7, then 15 birds, seen on two days in Kaziranga only.

**BLACK-HEADED IBIS** (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) – Just 4 birds in Kaziranga, an endangered species.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Just one over the river at Nameri.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**BLACK-WINGED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Two singles from Kaziranga.

**ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – One at Hathikuli tea estate.

**SLENDER-BILLED VULTURE** (*Gyps tenuirostris*) – Two from Kaziranga. I was getting worried we had not seen any, but we managed two in the end. Critically Endangered, of course.

**CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE** (*Spilornis cheela*) – Good views in Kaziranga and Nameri; a vocal species, too.

**CRESTED HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus cirratus*) – One flying right over us at Kaziranga. Split from Changeable Hawk-Eagle.

**MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE** (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – One en route to Tezpur as we came back through the mountains.

**BLACK EAGLE** (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – One near Bompou and one on the journey back to Tezpur.

**SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Heard in Kaziranga. [\*]

**BLACK KITE** (*Milvus migrans*) – Just 10 at Rajarhat, and oddly none from Kaziranga.

**PALLAS'S FISH-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucorhynchus*) – One on a nest at Kaziranga east, right by the track, and another in Kaziranga later. A rare and declining species, a good one to get.

**GRAY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus ichthyaeus*) – Seen well in Kaziranga, with one or 2 on some 4 days there.

**HIMALAYAN BUZZARD** (*Buteo relictus*) – Lovely views of one near the road as we were climbing up to the Sela Pass, not far below the army camp intriguingly named "The Stud Factory"! Another soggy bird the next day at Mandala.

Strigidae (Owls)

**MOUNTAIN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus spilocephalus*) – Heard at Lama on the night we arrived, but oddly not on the second night we had there. [\*]

**BROWN FISH-OWL** (*Ketupa zeylonensis*) – Our driver knew of a site, and we got great daylight views of this huge owl with the big ear tufts at Kaziranga.

**COLLARED OWLET** (*Glaucidium brodiei*) – Heard at Bompou and Lama, and Saurabh's mob-tape of choice, which seemed quite effective. [\*]

**ASIAN BARRED OWLET** (*Glaucidium cuculoides*) – Good views of singles from Kaziranga.

**SPOTTED OWLET** (*Athene brama*) – Lovely, daytime visible birds at Kaziranga on a couple of occasions.

**BROWN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox scutulata*) – Calling pre-dusk at Nameri, and seen well when we went to look for it, taking the young Indian girl birder along with us.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

**RED-HEADED TROGON** (*Harpactes erythrocephalus*) – Heard in Kaziranga. [\*]

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Three day-records of singles from Kaziranga, Sangti Valley and Mandala. One of Joan's favourites.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

**GREAT HORNBILL** (*Buceros bicornis*) – Great views of a pair feeding in a fruiting tree at Kaziranga; a magnificent species.

**ORIENTAL PIED-HORNBILL** (*Anthraceros albirostris*) – 4 near Kaziranga, an uncommon bird here.

**WREATHED HORNBILL** (*Rhyticeros undulatus*) – Just one flying over late afternoon at the Jia Boreli River.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – One on the river at Nameri.

**STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – Seen nicely at the Infinity Resort.

**RUDDY KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon coromanda*) – One from Nameri, very vocal early morning and came in and sat up briefly.

**WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Widespread in the lowlands.

**PIED KINGFISHER** (*Ceryle rudis*) – Small numbers on the lowland rivers.

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters).*

**BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER** (*Nyctyornis athertoni*) – Seen a couple of times in Kaziranga with some terrific views.

**GREEN BEE-EATER (RUSSET-CROWNED)** (*Merops orientalis ferrugiceps*) – Split as Asian Green Bee-eater by HBW/BirdLife, and seen well at Rajarhat.

**BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER** (*Merops philippinus*) – Small numbers from Kaziranga on some 3 days.

**CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER** (*Merops leschenaulti*) – Great views in Kaziranga.

*Coraciidae (Rollers).*

**INDIAN ROLLER (BLACK-BILLED)** (*Coracias benghalensis affinis*) – Another HBW/BirdLife split, this black-billed dull colored taxon is Indochinese Roller; we saw it at Kaziranga. Now also split by the IOC, and Clements will follow....

**DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Seen well in Kaziranga.

*Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets).*

**COPPERSMITH BARBET** (*Psilopogon haemacephalus*) – Heard at Kaziranga. [\*]

**GREAT BARBET** (*Psilopogon virens*) – Very vocal in the foothills around Lama and below Bompou, and seen a couple of times, though the best view was as we came back to Tezpur.

**LINEATED BARBET** (*Psilopogon lineatus*) – Vocal at Kaziranga and Nameri and seen well.

**GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET** (*Psilopogon franklinii*) – Good views below Bompou during a break in the fog.

**BLUE-THROATED BARBET** (*Psilopogon asiaticus*) – Very noisy at Nameri Camp and seen nicely.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers).*

**GRAY-CAPPED WOODPECKER** (*Yungipicus canicapillus*) – One from Kaziranga and 2 from Nameri. Most checklists more accurately list this genus as pygmy-woodpeckers.

**RUFIOUS-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*) – Frustrating at Mandala in the rain, where two birds played hide and seek all too well, giving only glimpses.

**FULVOUS-BREASTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos macei*) – Seen twice in Kaziranga.

**DARJEELING WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos darjellensis*) – Heard above Bompou but only seen as it vanished. [\*]

**BAY WOODPECKER** (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) – Heard at Lama and Mandala but stayed out of sight. [\*]

**GREATER FLAMEBACK** (*Chrysocolaptes guttastratus*) – Seen well at Kaziranga and 3 at Nameri.

**RUFIOUS WOODPECKER** (*Micropternus brachyurus*) – One from Kaziranga was a good find of an uncommon bird.

**BLACK-RUMPED FLAMEBACK** (*Dinopium benghalense*) – Two birds on 2 days from Kaziranga.

**LESSER YELLOWNAPE** (*Picus chlorolophus*) – One at Nameri showed quite nicely.

**STREAK-THROATED WOODPECKER** (*Picus xanthopygaeus*) – One from Kaziranga, perched on a dead tree right by the track.

**GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER (BLACK-NAPED)** (*Picus canus hessei*) – Another woodpecker seen at Kaziranga; this taxon is a likely split as Black-naped Woodpecker.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).*

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Just single females at Kaziranga and then in the Sangti valley.

*Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).*

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula krameri*) – Small numbers from Nameri; they were nesting in tall tree full of holes by the camp, a kind of parakeet condo.

**BLOSSOM-HEADED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula roseata*) – Seen quite nicely in Kaziranga.

**RED-BREASTED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula alexandri*) – Seen regularly at Kaziranga and Nameri, where very vocal.

*Eurylaimidae (Asian and Grauer's Broadbills).*

**LONG-TAILED BROADBILL** (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*) – Calling and seen all too briefly below Sessni, but fog stopped play.

*Pittidae (Pittas).*

**BLUE-NAPED PITTA** (*Hydroornis nipalensis*) – Heard on the first day at Hathikuli tea estate, then seen quite well after the elephant ride and before the park opened; one of the hardest pittas to see. A lifer for Phil.

*Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies).*

**LARGE WOODSHRIKE** (*Tephrodornis virgatus*) – Just one from Kaziranga.

*Artamidae (Woodswallows).*

**ASHY WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus fuscus*) – A couple from Kaziranga.

*Aegithinidae (Ioras).*

**COMMON IORA** (*Aegithina tiphia*) – Seen at Kaziranga and Nameri, and very vocal.

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes).*

**GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – 4 birds below Bompou at Sessni, with both sexes showing nicely.

**SHORT-BILLED MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*) – Two at Mandala in the rain.

**LONG-TAILED MINIVET** (*Pericrocotus ethologus*) – Two near Dirang on the travel day as we were leaving.

**SCARLET MINIVET (SCARLET)** (*Pericrocotus speciosus speciosus*) – Two also near Dirang on the travel day as we were leaving.

**LARGE CUCKOO-SHRIKE** (*Coracina macei*) – One from Kaziranga and 2 from Nameri.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**BROWN SHRIKE (BROWN)** (*Lanius cristatus cristatus*) – One from Kaziranga and another at Sangti valley; oddly scarce.

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (TRICOLOR/LONGICAUDATUS)** (*Lanius schach tricolor*) – Two at Rajarhat, then three day-records from the mountains with 3 at Sangti valley. This group is long overdue for splitting.

**GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius tephronotus*) – Singles seen on 3 days, the most obliging on the way back from Sela Pass; a striking bird.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*

**BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (CHESTNUT-WINGED)** (*Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris*) – Formerly known as White-browed Shrike-Babbler, this was seen well at Lama Camp.

**BLACK-EARED SHRIKE-BABBLER** (*Pteruthius melanotis*) – One was seen above Bompu; I managed to miss it.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**SLENDER-BILLED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus tenuirostris*) – A fine bird in the Sangti Valley was an Indian tick for Phil.

**BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus xanthornus reubeni*) – Small numbers from Kaziranga and Nameri; quite a vocal species.

**MAROON ORIOLE** (*Oriolus traillii*) – Heard around Bompu and Lama but the dire visibility meant views were poor.

*Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**BLACK DRONGO** (*Dicrurus macrocerus*) – Common throughout the lowlands.

**ASHY DRONGO** (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Common in the mountains, and over 30 down in the Sangti valley, clearly migrants. They all looked to be of one of the blackish taxa, and I anticipate multiple splits here soon.

**LESSER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus remifer*) – Good looks in the forest near Sessni; the lack of a crest is a good feature.

**HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – Small numbers from Kaziranga.

**GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) – One seen at the tea estate near Kaziranga.

*Rhipiduridae (Fantails)*

**WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – Small numbers below Bompu and at Mandala.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**RUFOUS TREEPIE** (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) – Quite widespread around Kaziranga.

**GRAY TREEPIE** (*Dendrocitta formosae*) – Just 2 near Dirang as we were leaving.

**EURASIAN NUTCRACKER (SOUTHERN)** (*Nucifraga caryocatactes macella*) – This subspecies is one of the populations in the Southern group, a.k.a. Spotted Nutcracker (but separate from multipunctata = Kashmir Nutcracker). We saw singles at Eaglenest and Mandala.

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – One bird in the snow at Sela Pass was unexpected, though we had heard one near the monal site earlier. A good pick-up and an Indian tick for Phil.

**HOUSE CROW** (*Corvus splendens*) – Only seen around Kolkata.

**LARGE-BILLED CROW (LARGE-BILLED)** (*Corvus macrorhynchos tibetosinensis*) – This was the one at higher altitudes; we saw a couple around Sela and one at Mandala. Clements and IOC do not yet split this species; we saw *C. m. tibetosinensis*; the whole complex needs unravelling.

**LARGE-BILLED CROW (EASTERN)** (*Corvus macrorhynchos levaillantii*) – The common crow in the lowlands, split as Eastern Jungle Crow by the IOC and vocally quite different to the Large-billed Crow of the mountains.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**BENGAL BUSHLARK** (*Mirafra assamica*) – Good views of 6 at Rajarhat.

**SAND LARK** (*Alaudala raytal*) – Just one flighty bird at the Jia Boreli River.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**GRAY-THROATED MARTIN** (*Riparia chinensis*) – This diminutive swallow was seen in small numbers at Kaziranga and Nameri.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – 30 at Rajarhat and small numbers from Kaziranga.

**NEPAL HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon nipalense*) – A nice find in the hills on the way back to Tezpur; some flew close enough for us to see the blackish chin and we had about 20 birds, probably nesting here.

*Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)*

**YELLOW-BELLIED FAIRY-FANTAIL** (*Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus*) – Seen nicely near Bompu Camp, and now in the new family of Stenostiridae or Fairy-flycatchers.

**GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER** (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – A few sightings around Bompu and Sessni. The other member of the Stenostiridae here.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**YELLOW-BROWED TIT** (*Sylviparus modestus*) – One seen well at Eaglenest, a modest but interesting little bird with a slight crest.

**RUFOUS-VENTED TIT** (*Periparus rubidiventris*) – Great views of two right by us as we neared the top of Sela Pass.

**GREEN-BACKED TIT** (*Parus monticolus*) – Seen well on the Sela Pass day and at Mandala.

**CINEREOUS TIT** (*Parus cinereus*) – This grey and white bird, formerly part of the Great Tit complex, was seen at Kaziranga and at our hotel there, feeding juveniles at the latter site.

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**BLACK-THROATED TIT** (*Aegithalos concinnus*) – A nice pick up as we headed back to Tezpur, in the feeding flock not far from Dirang.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta himalayensis*) – Great views at Eaglenest, even seeing the white in the tail of this diminutive nuthatch.

**VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta frontalis*) – Some folks saw one at the tea estate near Kaziranga.

Certhiidae (Trecreepers)

**RUSTY-FLANKED TRECREEPER** (*Certhia nipalensis*) – A great view of one despite the fog at Mandala; the supercilium was quite prominent and we could see the rusty flanks.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

**BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL** (*Rubigula flaviventris*) – Seen at the tea estate near Kaziranga.

**STRIATED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus striatus*) – This striking bird has a hairdo like it has been camping, and was seen a couple of times near Lama and Bompu.

**RED-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Common in disturbed areas at lower and middle elevations, and wild ones as opposed to feral birds in Fiji, New Caledonia, Oman etc.

**RED-WHISKERED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) – A handful of sightings from the Kaziranga and Nameri areas.

**WHITE-THROATED BULBUL** (*Alphoixus flaveolus*) – Calling and seen briefly at the tea estate near Kaziranga, they were very wary.

**BLACK BULBUL** (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) – A few sightings from the mountains.

**MOUNTAIN BULBUL** (*Ixos mcclllandii*) – Two up near Bompu.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings)

**PYGMY CUPWING** (*Pnoepyga pusilla*) – A nice view of a calling bird above Bompu, and now in their own family, another change from what were formerly wren-babblers.

Scotocercidae (Bush Warblers and Allies)

**GRAY-BELLIED TESIA** (*Tesia cyaniventer*) – Heard close by around Bompu but none seen. [\*]

**SLATY-BELLIED TESIA** (*Tesia olivea*) – Heard daily around Bompu, and one seen down near Sessni.

**CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA** (*Cettia castaneocoronata*) – Commonly heard, and seen several times near Bompu and at Eaglenest; a very colourful, tiny furtive bird with bright yellow underparts.

**BLACK-FACED WARBLER** (*Abroscopus schisticeps*) – Good views of a couple above Bompu.

**MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD** (*Phyllergates cucullatus*) – One seen by Bompu, amazingly like Broad-billed Warbler in plumage but not voice! Now a warbler too, and not a tailorbird any more.

**BROAD-BILLED WARBLER** (*Tickellia hodgsoni*) – Two of this monotypic genus above Bompu camp were hard to get into view, skulking in the bamboo, but eventually they showed very well. We saw one briefly next day too.

**BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH WARBLER** (*Horornis fortipes*) – Vocal in the foothills, and seen well at Bompu Camp.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

**ASHY-THROATED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*) – Just one from Eaglenest.

**DUSKY WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*) – One skulking bird was seen at Kaziranga.

**WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus intermedius*) – One from Eaglenest, a lifer for Phil.

**GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus poliogenys*) – A couple of nice sightings near Lama and Bompu.

**WHISTLER'S WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus whistleri*) – Singles near Bompu and at Mandala.

**GREENISH WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – A good view of one at Mandala.

**LARGE-BILLED LEAF WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – A couple seen below Lama; one of the more distinctive Phylloscops.

**CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus castaniceps*) – We had some very nice close views on two days above Bompu.

**BLYTH'S LEAF WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus reguloides*) – The common Phylloscops in the mountains; the pale bill, call and active behavior were diagnostic.

**GRAY-HOODED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*) – Two singles, one very nice as we came down from Sela and one en route back to Tezpur; a rather distinctive warbler.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**STRIATED GRASSBIRD** (*Megalurus palustris*) – Heard at Rajarhat and then Kaziranga; a large and vocal species. [\*]

**BROWN BUSH WARBLER** (*Locustella luteoventris*) – Seen very nicely and calling remarkably well at Mandala during a gap in the fog and rain.

**RUSSET BUSH WARBLER** (*Locustella mandelli*) – One was heard but stayed out of sight below Lama.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**COMMON TAILORBIRD** (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – Calling at Kaziranga. [\*]

**BLACK-THROATED PRINIA** (*Prinia atrogularis*) – Two showed well in roadside vegetation near Dirang, but all too briefly.

**ZITTING CISTICOLA (ZITTING)** (*Cisticola juncidis cursitans*) – 5 at Rajarhat and heard in Kaziranga. A break-up of this widespread species is way overdue, so note which taxa you have seen!

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

**GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA** (*Lioparus chrysotis*) – Seen nicely on 3 days around Bompu; a striking species.

**BROWN PARROTBILL** (*Cholornis unicolor*) – A surprise one afternoon up in a tree above Bompu, the stubby yellow bill and lack of any barring revealed it, unexpectedly large, and a lifer for Phil.

**WHITE-BREASTED PARROTBILL** (*Psittiparus ruficeps*) – Three sightings above Bompu including a juvenile with an adult on one day; also called Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill.

**BLACK-THROATED PARROTBILL** (*Suthora nipalensis*) – Tremendous one afternoon above Bompu, with a noisy and very active flock of at least 10 in the bamboos.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

**WHITE-NAPED YUHINA** (*Yuhina bakeri*) – Just two birds below Bompu, one of the lower elevation species.

**WHISKERED YUHINA** (*Yuhina flavicollis*) – Most at Eaglenest where it was quite common, with up to 5 seen, also at Mandala and en route from Sela.

**STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA** (*Yuhina gularis*) – A noisy group of at least 10 at Eaglenest and 5 at Mandala.

**RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA** (*Yuhina occipitalis*) – Two birds in the mixed flock at Eaglenest, and 4 at Mandala.

**BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA** (*Yuhina nigrimenta*) – Two below Lama were all too brief and never gave good views.

**ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Seen at Kaziranga and Nameri. The species no longer exists, as it has been divided into 4, so identification is now based on range (which I hate!) This will be Indian White-eye (*Z. palpebrosa*) when Clements updates.

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

**CHESTNUT-CAPPED BABBLER** (*Timalia pileata*) – Seen nicely in Kaziranga.

**PIN-STRIPED TIT-BABBLER** (*Mixornis gularis*) – Three at Hathikuli tea estate.

**GOLDEN BABBLER** (*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*) – Three records from the bamboo at Bompou and Lama; another lovely little bird.

**RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER** (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*) – Seen below Lama on both trips.

**RUFOUS-THROATED WREN-BABBLER** (*Spelaeornis caudatus*) – Heard above Bompou but could not be lured in. [\*]

**SLENDER-BILLED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus superciliaris*) – Two fantastic birds from below Lama. Sadly, I was not ready with my video, as this one is usually very skulking, but not these two!

**STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER** (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*) – Seen nicely twice near Bompou; another skulker that came good.

**BLACKISH-BREASTED BABBLER** (*Stachyris humei*) – Joan and I got one above Bompou on an afternoon foray there, a really good pick up. Also called Sikkim Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler.

*Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)*

**YELLOW-THROATED FULVETTA** (*Schoeniparus cinereus*) – Two seen very well below Lama.

**RUFOUS-WINGED FULVETTA** (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*) – Two above Bompou.

**PUFF-THROATED BABBLER** (*Pellorneum ruficeps*) – Heard at Nameri. [\*]

**SPOT-THROATED BABBLER** (*Pellorneum albiventris*) – One seen by all except Phil at Sessni. I was off looking for my specs and missed this lifer. Oh well.

**LONG-BILLED WREN-BABBLER** (*Napothera malacoptila*) – Heard close by near Sessni but stayed in the shadows and we never got a glimpse. [\*]

**ABBOTT'S BABBLER** (*Turdinus abboti*) – One from Nameri.

*Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)*

**NEPAL FULVETTA** (*Alcippe nipalensis*) – Heard at Bompou. [\*]

**STRIATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Grammatoptila striata*) – One of the more obliging laughing-thrushes, seen quite well near Lama Camp.

**HIMALAYAN CUTIA** (*Cutia nipalensis*) – Two fine birds near Lama Camp, a very pleasing addition.

**STRIATED BABBLER** (*Turdoides earlei*) – One perched up at Daflong in Kaziranga late one afternoon.

**SLENDER-BILLED BABBLER** (*Turdoides longirostris*) – Again, heard very well at Kaziranga and I thought this was going to be it as we could see the grass waving, but too many noisy vehicles went by at just the wrong moment. I have yet to see this species. [\*]

**WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Garrulax leucolophus*) – Two seen near Sessni.

**SPOTTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Ianthocincla ocellata*) – Frustrating, it was heard several times at Eaglenest but no-one got a good view.

**GRAY-SIDED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Ianthocincla caerulea*) – Three day-records and some good views from Bompou and Mandala.

**BHUTAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron imbricatum*) – Seen by Lama Camp which seems to be a favourite spot. This is almost a Bhutanese endemic, a.k.a. Bhutan Streaked Laughingthrush, as split from Streaked Laughingthrush of the western Himalaya.

**BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron squamatum*) – Aaargh, we all heard them really close by around Bompou camp, but again no view. [\*]

**BLACK-FACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron affine*) – A fine view of a singing bird on the way back from Sela Pass.

**CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*) – Seen well below the Lama Camp area and at Bompou.

**BEAUTIFUL SIBIA** (*Heterophasia pulchella*) – Aptly named, it is subtly gorgeous with those muted color tones, and was common in the foothill forests.

**LONG-TAILED SIBIA** (*Heterophasia picaoides*) – Good looks at 2 near Sessni.

**SILVER-EARED MESIA** (*Leiothrix argentea*) – Seen well below Sessni and above Bompou next day; a very attractive bird.

**RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX** (*Leiothrix lutea*) – Heard below Lama but I may have been the only one to see one.

**RED-TAILED MINLA** (*Minla ignotincta*) – Two seen well at Eaglenest; a scarce species.

**RUFOUS-BACKED SIBIA** (*Minla annectens*) – I think Joan and Grace saw this at Sessni when I was away.

**BUGUN LIOCICHLA** (*Liocichla bugunorum*) – Heard below Lama Camp one afternoon and very close, but no sighting, then next morning in some reasonable weather we heard 3 calling well. I missed the first and best sighting due to poor directions, but thankfully salvaged another later. HBW says: "Known population tiny; in searches since 2005, best total on one day was ten, and no more than 14 individuals confidently known. In 2012–2013, habitat at Lama Camp was fragmented by the construction of a new road, which destroyed two territories and which is expected to lead to more habitat degradation in the immediate vicinity. Originally listed as Vulnerable, the tiny known population (conjectured on the basis of 14 known birds to be fewer than 250 mature individuals) and inferred population decline triggered uplisting to Critically Endangered in 2014. It may be found in nearby areas or even Bhutan, further work needed."

**STREAK-THROATED BARWING** (*Actinodura waldeni*) – 4 birds below Lama Camp one afternoon.

**RUSTY-FRONTED BARWING** (*Actinodura egertoni*) – This barwing was in fine form, with some good views above Bompou.

**BLUE-WINGED MINLA** (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*) – Seen a couple of times around Bompou.

**CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA** (*Actinodura strigula*) – Seen several times above Bompou and again at Mandala. a.k.a. Bar-throated Siva.

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – Two day-records from Bompou and Lama.

**ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN** (*Copsychus saularis*) – In disturbed areas at lower elevations from Kaziranga on; a colonist of the valleys.

**WHITE-GORGETED FLYCATCHER** (*Anthipes monileger*) – Heard below Bompou but hidden. [\*]

- PALE-CHINNED BLUE FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis poliogenys*) – One from Kaziranga showed well and was a promotion tick for Phil, as he only heard it on a previous trip- he counts heard birds but a sighting is a promotion, kind of like a second lifer! Recording posted on IBC site.
- BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – One seen nicely en route to Mandala.
- LARGE NILTAVA** (*Niltava grandis*) – A pair above Bompou one afternoon.
- SMALL NILTAVA** (*Niltava macgrigoriae*) – One below Lama Camp.
- RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA** (*Niltava sundara*) – One en route to Eaglenest showed nicely.
- VERDITER FLYCATCHER** (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – A frequent bird of broadleaf forests below Bompou and around Mandala; we saw one or two on most days here.
- RUSTY-BELLIED SHORTWING** (*Brachypteryx hyperythra*) – Surabh thought this was singing above Bompou one afternoon. [\*]
- LESSER SHORTWING** (*Brachypteryx leucophris*) – Heard around Bompou and seen nicely one afternoon.
- BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH** (*Myophonus caeruleus*) – Nice views of a couple as we came down from Sela into the mixed broadleaf forest.
- LITTLE FORKTAIL** (*Enicurus scouleri*) – The only forktail of the trip, in the road by a stream as we came up to Eaglenest.
- WHITE-TAILED ROBIN** (*Myiomela leucura*) – One female seen at Eaglenest by the mixed flock there.
- BLUE-FRONTED ROBIN** (*Cinclidium frontale*) – Heard close by at Eaglenest twice, and once very close above Lama, but as usual very skulking and elusive. [\*]
- RUFOUS-GORGETED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula strophciata*) – Some saw this near Bompou.
- BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – This beauty was at Sela Pass; it showed very well and we saw about 4 birds on this day.
- PLUMBEOUS REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Up to 8 in the Sengti valley, including a spotted juvenile, and seen again by the river at Tenga.
- WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Great looks at Sela in the wet meadows; also seen on large, open rivers. This attractive bird is better known as River Chat and used to have its own genus *Chaimarrornis*.
- CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola rufiventris*) – Two at Mandala; a beautifully colored bird.
- BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola cinclorhyncha*) – Two great birds below Lama Camp, one of the best of the genus, and one later near Sangti.
- BLUE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola solitarius*) – Just one flyover up at Sela.
- SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN)** (*Saxicola maurus indicus*) – A pair of these by the roadside in Arunachal as we went back to Tezpur, presumably this taxon.
- GRAY BUSHCHAT** (*Saxicola ferreus*) – A pair at Mandala near the Birding Lodge site.

#### *Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

- GRANDALA** (*Grandala coelicolor*) – A great triumph at Sela, with a flock of these wonderful birds in the snow at the edge of the lake. The males are just an unbelievable shining blue, and the females have double pale wing bars, plus they are shaped like bee-eaters. One of the birds of the trip for sure, and they were not seen here yesterday it seems. Bizarre that they are supposed to be thrushes; like cochoas, it just does not add up.
- ALPINE THRUSH** (*Zoothera mollissima*) – A major find during the monal watch, it perched out against the hillside and looked huge; the underparts were heavily scalloped dark and it was quite impressive. A lifer for all of us, formerly part of Plain-backed Thrush.
- PURPLE COCHOA** (*Cochoa purpurea*) – One of the megas of the trip, a calling bird above Bompou was initially elusive and gave fleeting flight views, then finally perched out in reasonable light. The underparts appeared blackish as they often do in photos too, but you could see the odd purple cap. One of Phil's big wants this trip, as we heard it sooo close last year without seeing it.
- GREEN COCHOA** (*Cochoa viridis*) – A fabulous calling male below Lama; he sat up on a dead snag and you could see the orange gape as he gave the monotone whistle, just a shame the fog was wrecking the light.
- GRAY-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus boulboul*) – One below Lama Camp.
- WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus albocinctus*) – 3 on the Sela Pass day, and 3 at Mandala, a very striking bird.

#### *Sturnidae (Starlings)*

- COMMON HILL MYNA** (*Gracula religiosa*) – A single then 2 later at the tea estates near Kaziranga.
- ASIAN PIED STARLING** (*Gracupica contra*) – Six at Rajarhat then a few at Kaziranga.
- CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING** (*Sturnia malabarica*) – Small numbers in Kaziranga.
- COMMON MYNA** (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Common in Assam in the more disturbed areas at lower elevations.
- JUNGLE MYNA** (*Acridotheres fuscus*) – Common in the lowlands from Kaziranga to Nameri.
- GREAT MYNA** (*Acridotheres grandis*) – Just a single in Kaziranga, strangely scarce this trip.

#### *Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)*

- GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD** (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) – One at a tea estate near Kaziranga.

#### *Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)*

- FIRE-BREADED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) – Two below Lama Camp, and seen well on the way back from Sela Pass.
- SCARLET-BACKED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum cruentatum*) – Heard in Kaziranga. [\*]

#### *Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

- PURPLE SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) – Just one male from a tea estate near Kaziranga.
- FIRE-TAILED SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga ignicauda*) – This wonderful bird, one of the most glorious of the family, was seen at Eaglenest, and some saw one at Sela Pass.
- BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga saturata*) – A few below Bompou, breeding at lower altitudes than several others.
- GOULD'S SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga gouldiae*) – This stunning bird was seen at Eaglenest Pass, and then especially at Mandala, with some good views. Named for the much-neglected and overshadowed Elizabeth Gould, so should be called Mrs Gould's Sunbird as in other checklists.
- GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga nipalensis*) – The most common sunbird at altitude, a really beautiful bird and a first responder to owl recordings. We had many fine views and photos at close range.
- CRIMSON SUNBIRD** (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – Just one fine male at Hathikuli tea estate.

**STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER** (*Arachnothera magna*) – Heard in the fog near Sessni. [\*]

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – One at altitude down below Sela Pass on a stream on the Tawang side.

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (THUNBERGI)** (*Motacilla flava thunbergi*) – 30 Yellow Wagtail of uncertain subspecies flying over at Rajarhat, and one at Nameri with a grey head and yellow chin and throat.

**CITRINE WAGTAIL (GRAY-BACKED)** (*Motacilla citreola citreola*) – Small numbers from Kaziranga and Nameri.

**CITRINE WAGTAIL (BLACK-BACKED)** (*Motacilla citreola calcarata*) – 3 from Kaziranga and one from the Sangti Valley. A possible split here.

**WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) – Just one, with a juvenile on a log at the Jia Boreli River in Nameri, the only one of the entire trip.

**WHITE WAGTAIL (HODGSON'S)** (*Motacilla alba alboides*) – Nice views of this distinctive taxon in the Sangti Valley. The species complex is long overdue for splitting.

**PADDYFIELD PIPIT** (*Anthus rufulus*) – The default large pipit, starting at Rajarhat in Kolkata then a few in Kaziranga.

**ROSY PIPIT** (*Anthus roseatus*) – 4 up at Sela Pass were in fine rosy plumage and were singing, it looks as if they may nest up here.

**OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT** (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – 4 or 5 each day at Bompu, then a couple at Mandala.

*Elachuridae (Spotted Elachura)*

**SPOTTED ELACHURA** (*Elachura formosa*) – One was singing amazingly well above Bompu one afternoon, and both Saurabh and I saw it well, sorry Joan! Now a monotypic family too, formerly in wren-babblers.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**COMMON ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) – One fine male at Lama Camp.

**SCARLET FINCH** (*Carpodacus sipahi*) – A super male found by Grace near Bompu, then another below Lama later.

**CRIMSON-BROWED FINCH** (*Carpodacus subhimachalus*) – One of the best birds of our Mandala washout; a fine view of this hulking great finch, apparently related to Pine Grosbeaks.

**GOLD-NAPED FINCH** (*Pyrrhoptectes epauletta*) – 3 below Lama Camp, the females seen well and the male glimpsed, then one by the camp itself later.

**BLACK-HEADED MOUNTAIN-FINCH** (*Leucosticte brandti*) – Good views of at least 3 of this dark faced species up at Sela Pass; we managed to get them in the scope too. A lifer for Phil.

**YELLOW-BREASTED GREENFINCH** (*Chloris spinoides*) – 2 down in the Sangti valley atop the pines there.

*Emberizidae (Old World Buntings)*

**CRESTED BUNTING** (*Emberiza lathami*) – Joan and Grace saw this on the day we left Dirang.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Small numbers from Kolkata and Kaziranga towns.

**RUSSET SPARROW** (*Passer cinnamomeus*) – 7 in the sangti Valley and a couple of sightings later near Dirang.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Very few, just at Sangti valley then Dirang.

*Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)*

**BAYA WEAVER** (*Ploceus philippinus burmanicus*) – 2 females in Kaziranga, and 2 at nest near a tea estate later; this is the potentially splittable eastern subspecies *burmanicus*.

## MAMMALS

**RHESUS MACAQUE** (*Macaca mulatta*) – Quite common In Kaziranga and also by the road near Nameri.

**CAPPED LANGUR** (*Presbytis pileata*) – Great views of this at Nameri by the camp, and again not far from Dirang; very grey in color with a long tail. A lifer mammal for Phil who missed it on one of the previous trips.

**WHITE-BROWED GIBBON** (*Hylobates hoolock*) – Heard at the tea estate forest at Kaziranga. [\*]

**INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL** (*Funambulus palmarum*) – Phil saw this in Bombay on his fruitless "pitta in the park" check.

**BLACK GIANT SQUIRREL** (*Ratufa bicolor*) – One from Nameri.

**HOARY-BELLIED (IRAWADDY) SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) – The first squirrel of the trip, seen near the Kaziranga tea estate, usually called Hoary-bellied Squirrel.

**RED-BELLIED SQUIRREL** (*Callosciurus rubriventer*) – One seen in Kaziranga.

**HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL** (*Tamiops maccllellandi*) – The one that looks like a chipmunk, seen below Lama Camp.

**SMOOTH-COATED OTTER** (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) – A fantastic experience with these in Kaziranga, where there was a very vocal group of 10 animals frolicking about in one of the small lakes, coming onto the banks then moving sinuously back into the water. We saw 3 groups next day also, of 10, 6 then 2; wonderful to see otters so well. I have posted the sound recording which should be linked with the triplist.

**MASKED PALM CIVET** (*Paguma larvata*) – A big thrill was one of these emerging from the undergrowth below Bompu and then walking slowly away for great views of the masked face and long bushy tail. A lifer mammal.

**SMALL INDIAN MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) – I think some folks saw one in Kaziranga.

**LEOPARD CAT** (*Felis bengalensis*) – One was at Bompu one night coming into the rubbish area, but Phil only saw it running away and was surprised at how small it was.

**TIGER** (*Panthera tigris*) – Our second afternoon visit to Kaziranga, and we were heading for the exit when the driver answers his phone, grins and turns and says the immortal word "Tiger!" We turned around and drove about 10 minutes to where 4 or 5 other vehicles were parked, and there, sure enough, was a wonderful Tiger stretched out by some elephant grass. We got good binocular views, though most viewers in the other jeeps had no optics so it must have been quite frustrating. Anyway, after my dreadful dip on the last trip due to bad directions, "there there" not working for us, it all came good this time and I was one happy possum. Joan had seen them before but this was a nice look, and what's not to like about seeing a tiger?

**INDIAN ELEPHANT** (*Elephas maximus*) – Great looks at a few of these magnificent creatures in Kaziranga, but tracks, dung and trails were all over Eaglenest, and I was quite relieved we did not run into one there! I did not realize how many people they kill each year. Now of course, classified as

Endangered.

**ASIAN ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS** (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) – One of the highlights of the trip was the sighting of good numbers of this astonishing and highly aquatic Great Indian Rhino at Kaziranga, seen really well from elephant back too. They are a lovely silvery-grey when dry, and look like they are covered in boilerplate, with orange hairs fringing the very large and very mobile ears. We saw something like 20 and 30 on the 2 days we went into the park, and you can even see them from the main road outside. The rangers have a shoot to kill policy as regards poachers; so long may the rhinos survive. Some had evidently been dehorned too, which seems a wise precaution.

**WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – A few seen in Kaziranga, quite large and very dark in colour, much blacker than European boar. Two troops of striped piglets were seen, one from elephant back, and one of the boars accompanied us as we trekked out on the elephants that morning!

**MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER)** (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – One ran across the track at Nameri and it was heard barking later.

**HOG DEER** (*Axis porcinus*) – This small, stocky, rich brown deer was common in Kaziranga.

**SAMBAR** (*Cervus unicolor*) – A few seen in Kaziranga.

**SWAMP DEER (BARASINGHA)** (*Cervus duvaucelii*) – Good looks at herds of them in Kaziranga; classified as Vulnerable and >5000 in total it seems. All of these brow-antlered deer are rare species now.

**ASIAN WATER BUFFALO** (*Bubalus bubalis*) – Quite good numbers of this endangered aquatic animal at Kaziranga, with up to 70 in a day; the horns are much longer and slimmer than the domestic versions.

#### Herps

**TOKAY GECKO** (*Gekko gekko*) – A great view of one in a huge banyan at Nameri; nice to see it so well as you more usually hear this species.

**BENGAL (LAND) MONITOR** (*Varanus bengalensis*) – One large one in Kaziranga.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The favourite birds of the trip were really not much of a contest- The Himalayan Monal, the Grandala, then Cutia, Purple Cochoa and Fork-tailed Sunbird, plus of course some great mammals, with Tiger a major highpoint, but the Great Indian Rhinos were up there, too, and that Masked Civet was fantastic, as were the Smooth-coated Otters frolicking and calling in Kaziranga.

Phil was the only one to see a snake, a small carpet patterned one near Sessni, which remains unidentified as it was too quick to photograph.

Recommendations:

I recommend the xeno-canto (XC) website which is a fantastic archive of bird sounds of most of the species in the world, freely downloadable. I usually publish significant cuts from my tours here as it is a valuable research tool for anyone interested.

The Internet Bird Collection (IBC) run by Lynx Edicions (of Handbook of Birds of the World) is another wonderful free access site, you just have to register, and can then view thousands of videos, photos and sound recordings, with many of them from my tours. Again, it is an invaluable research site.

I also recommend the IOC World Checklist of Birds, a free access downloadable Excel file of all the world's species which is updated every 4 months or so. This is the one I use for my own checklists as it is the most current and has a progressive outlook on taxonomy and names. You can find them at [worldbirdnames.org](http://worldbirdnames.org) or google IOC (but NOT the olympics stuff!)

**Totals for the tour: 333 bird taxa and 21 mammal taxa**