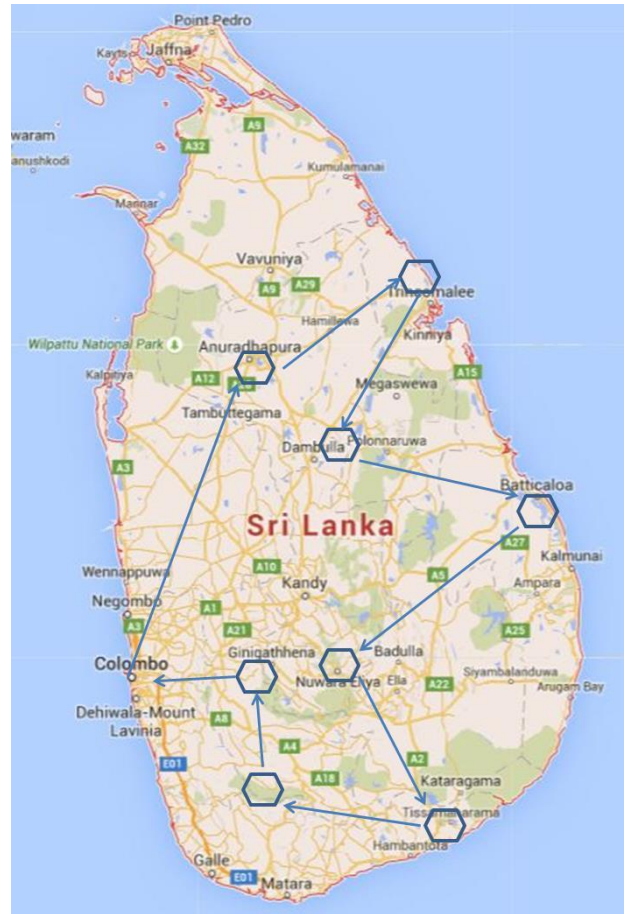


Sri Lanka. 14th July – 5th August 2015

General information

We combined a family holiday (me, my wife and children 17 & 18 years old) with a birding trip. Nature, culture and activities were combined. Nature: 176 bird species, almost all endemics, several reptiles (including Spectacled cobra) and mammals (including Leopard). Culture: old cities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya and as highlight the rock temple in Dambulla. Activities: swimming (pools and sea) and snorkeling (Pigeon Island), kayaking (Batticaloa) and hiking (Adams peak, Singaraja).

The trip was superbly organized by Birding Sri Lanka (www.birdingsrilanka.com). They contributed to a pleasant and very interesting holiday. The itinerary was put together in good cooperation. We traveled with a van, comfortable and safe driven by Mehende. The guide Ashoka was perfect (great spotter, competent in all natural specie groups). Both were flexible and good company. The costs were very reasonable and included entry fees, hire of jeeps and accommodation (including breakfast, often very good meals and most of the time Wifi). They also organized specialized local guides, especially to find leopards in Yala.



Itinerary

After arrival we drove to Anuradhapura and acclimatized 3 days. The Palm Garden hotel had a nice swimming pool and neighbored a lake to get used to more than 60 more common bird species. One day visit to Wilpatthu NP, which will be disappointing if this is done at the end of the trip. Next 3 days beach Nilaveli (north of Trincomalee), ‘in paradise’, and snorkling with Blacktip reef sharks at Pigeon Island. Back to the old stones near Sigiriya, also 3 days. Batticaloa (2 days) is nice for kayaking, but has not much extra’s. Tea-land Nuwera Eliya (2 days), including a visit to Horton plains NP, and 1 more day near the climb to Adams peak (same as Sri Pada holy mountain). Next 5 days to Tissamaharama (usually shortened to Tissa), including 2 full day safari’s to Yala NP. Finally rain-forest, 2 days Singaraja (safari in the forest NP) and 1 day Kitulgala (rafting). We had only rain in the rainforest. Because of the climate we planned only 3 days in the area with most birds, but despite of the weather I was able to see most bird species. Driving is slow as cars, bicycles, tuk-tuks, busses, cattle and dogs share the road. Trips between accommodations were easily 3-4 hours and if you do not consider traveling as enjoying the scenery, you may consider to skip Batticaloa.

Species lists

I used Birds of Sri Lanka (Helm field guide 2012), which was accurate. They distinguish 27 endemic birds, which are printed in bold. I missed 2 relatively easy endemics (Green-billed Coucal and Brown-capped Babbler), because of heavy rain and priority for rafting on the last day. Several near-endemics (only in south/central India also) may be seen. Because it was outside the migration season, I did not bring a telescope and I didn’t miss it. Ashoka had books for reptiles and mammals.

Abbreviations used in the annotation: A = Anuradhapura including Wilpatthu, K = Kitulgala, N = Nilaveli, NE = Nuwara Eliya including Horton, S = Singaraja, Si = Sigirya, T = Tissa including waterponds and Yala. No annotation means common in suitable habitat.

1.	<i>Turnix sutor</i>	Barred Buttonquail	1 in Yala
2.	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	difficult; heard at K and seen shortly in S
3.	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	
4.	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Indian Peafowl	
5.	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	Lesser Whistling Duck	A, T
6.	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	Cotton Pygmy Goose	A, T
7.	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	Painted Stork	N, T
8.	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	Asian Openbill	
9.	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	Woolly-necked Stork	A
10.	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	Black-necked Stork	2 in Yala
11.	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Ibis	
12.	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	Lesser Adjutant	A, T
13.	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Eurasian Spoonbill	T
14.	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	Cinnamon Bittern	T
15.	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Black-crowned Night Heron	Si, T
16.	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Indian Pond Heron	
17.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Heron	
18.	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Purple Heron	
19.	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Cattle Egret	Si
20.	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great Egret	
21.	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	Intermediate Egret	
22.	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	
23.	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	Spot-billed Pelican	N, T
24.	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Little Grebe	A, Si
25.	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	Little Cormorant	
26.	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	Indian Cormorant	
27.	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant	
28.	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	Oriental Darter	
29.	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	1 when climbing Sigirya rock
30.	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Black Kite	1 in Yala
31.	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	Brahminy Kite	
32.	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	N, T
33.	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	A, T
34.	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Shikra	
35.	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>	Besra	T
36.	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	Crested Serpent Eagle	A
37.	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	Black Eagle	NE
38.	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>	Crested Hawk-Eagle	T, S
39.	<i>Nisaetus nipalensis</i>	Mountain Hawk-Eagle	NE
40.	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	White-breasted Waterhen	
41.	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	Purple Swampphen	N, T
42.	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	
43.	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	A, Si, T
44.	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>	Great Thick-knee	
45.	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	A, T
46.	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	T
47.	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	Red-wattled Lapwing	
48.	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Ringed Plover	T
49.	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Kentish Plover	1 in Wilpatthu
50.	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Lesser Sand Plover	T
51.	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	T
52.	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	T
53.	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Little Tern	N, T
54.	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Gull-billed Tern	T

55. <i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Greater Crested Tern	B
56. <i>Columba livia</i>	Common Pigeon	
57. <i>Columba torringtoniae</i>	Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	NE
58. <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	Spotted Dove	
59. <i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Emerald Dove	A, NE
60. <i>Treron bicincta</i>	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	Si, S, T
61. <i>Treron pompadora</i>	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	N, S
62. <i>Ducula aenea</i>	Green Imperial Pigeon	A, S
63. <i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>	Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot	S, K
64. <i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	Alexandrine Parakeet	N, K
65. <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Rose-ringed Parakeet	
66. <i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	Plum-headed Parakeet	S
67. <i>Psittacula calthropae</i>	Layard's Parakeet	S, K
68. <i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	Jacobin Cuckoo	T, S
69. <i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	Asian Koel	N, Si
70. <i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>	Blue-faced Malkoha	N
71. <i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>	Red-faced Malkoha	S, K
72. <i>Centropus sinensis</i>	Greater Coucal	
73. <i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	1 on a nest in S
74. <i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	Indian Nightjar	T
75. <i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>	Serendib Scops Owl	1 in K
76. <i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	Collared Scops Owl	4 roosting in tree at Embilipitiya
77. <i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>	Chestnut-backed Owlet	2 in K
78. <i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	Brown Fish Owl	Si, T
79. <i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	Brown Wood Owl	S
80. <i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>	Indian Swiftlet	S
81. <i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>	Brown-backed Needletail	NE
82. <i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	Asian Palm Swift	
83. <i>Apus affinis</i>	House Swift	
84. <i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	Crested Treeswift	
85. <i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	Indian Roller	N, T
86. <i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	Dollarbird	1 in K
87. <i>Merops orientalis</i>	Green Bee-eater	
88. <i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	Si
89. <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	White-throated Kingfisher	
90. <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Common Kingfisher	
91. <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	Pied Kingfisher	A, T
92. <i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>	Malabar Trogon	S, K
93. <i>Upupa epops</i>	Common Hoopoe	T
94. <i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	Brown-headed Barbet	A, S
95. <i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>	Yellow-fronted Barbet	S
96. <i>Megalaima rubricapilla</i>	Crimson-fronted Barbet	Si
97. <i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	Coppersmith Barbet	A, NE
98. <i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>	Malabar Pied Hornbill	A, S
99. <i>Ocyroceros gingalensis</i>	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	A, T, S
100. <i>Dendrocopos mahratthensis</i>	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	Si, S
101. <i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	Lesser Yellownappe	S, K
102. <i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	Lesser Goldenback	A, NE
103. <i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>	Crimson-backed Goldenback	S
104. <i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	A, T, S
105. <i>Coracina macei</i>	Large Cuckooshrike	A
106. <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	Scarlet Minivet	NE, S
107. <i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	Small Minivet	Si, S
108. <i>Hemipus picatus</i>	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	Si
109. <i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	Common Iora	A, T
110. <i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>	Jerdon's Leafbird	A, N, Si
111. <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	Golden-fronted Leafbird	K
112. <i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	Black-hooded Oriole	

113. <i>Urocissa ornata</i>	Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	S
114. <i>Corvus splendens</i>	House Crow	
115. <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Large-billed Crow	
116. <i>Hirundo domicola</i>	Hill Swallow	NE
117. <i>Cecropis hyperythra</i>	Sri Lanka Swallow	Si, NE
118. <i>Artamus fuscus</i>	Ashy Woodswallow	N
119. <i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	White-bellied Drongo	A, S, K
120. <i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i>	Sri Lanka Drongo	S
121. <i>Anthus rufulus</i>	Paddyfield Pipit	A, T
122. <i>Mirafra affinis</i>	Jerdons Bushlark	A, S
123. <i>Alauda gulgula</i>	Oriental Skylark	T
124. <i>Eremopterix griseus</i>	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	at entrance of Yala NP
125. <i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>	Black-capped Bulbul	S
126. <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Red-vented Bulbul	more common than tuk tuks...
127. <i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	White-browed Bulbul	
128. <i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>	Yellow-eared Bulbul	NE
129. <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	Black Bulbul	K
130. <i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	Grey-breasted Prinia	Si
131. <i>Prinia sylvatica</i>	Jungle Prinia	N, Si
132. <i>Prinia socialis</i>	Ashy Prinia	Si
133. <i>Prinia inornata</i>	Plain Prinia	
134. <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Zitting Cisticola	
135. <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Common Tailorbird	
136. <i>Elaphrornis palliseri</i>	Sri Lanka Bush Warbler	NE
137. <i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	White-browed Fantail	
138. <i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	Black-naped Monarch	A, S
139. <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	A, T, S
140. <i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>	Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	NE, S
141. <i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>	Dark-fronted Babbler	NE, S
142. <i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>	Tawny-bellied Babbler	Si
143. <i>Turdoides rufescens</i>	Orange-billed Babbler	S
144. <i>Turdoides affinis</i>	Yellow-billed Babbler	
145. <i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>	Ashy-headed Laughingthrush	S
146. <i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>	Sri Lanka Hill Myna	NE
147. <i>Gracula indica</i>	Lesser Hill Myna	S
148. <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Common Myna	
149. <i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>	White-faced Starling	1 in bird flock at S
150. <i>Myophonus blighi</i>	Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	NE
151. <i>Zoothera spiloptera</i>	Spot-winged Thrush	S, K
152. <i>Zoothera imbricata</i>	Sri Lanka Thrush	difficult, 1, first record in NE for the guide
153. <i>Turdus simillimus</i>	Indian Blackbird	NE
154. <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Oriental Magpie-Robin	
155. <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	White-rumped Shama	A, S, K
156. <i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>	Indian Robin	
157. <i>Saxicola caprata</i>	Pied Bushchat	NE
158. <i>Eumyias sordidus</i>	Dull-blue Flycatcher	NE
159. <i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	Thickell's Blue Flycatcher	Si, NE
160. <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	NE
161. <i>Dicaeum agile</i>	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	A, NE, T
162. <i>Dicaeum vincens</i>	Legge's Flowerpecker	S
163. <i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>	Purple-rumped Sunbird	
164. <i>Leptocoma asiatica</i>	Purple Sunbird	
165. <i>Cinnyris lotenius</i>	Loten's Sunbird	A, T, S
166. <i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>	Sri Lanka White-eye	NE
167. <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	Oriental White-eye	A
168. <i>Parus major</i>	Great Tit	NE
169. <i>Sitta frontalis</i>	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	S
170. <i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	

171. <i>Ploceus manyar</i>	Streaked Weaver	T
172. <i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	Baya Weaver	T
173. <i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	Indian Silverbill	T
174. <i>Lonchura striata</i>	White-rumped Munia	
175. <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Scaly-breasted Munia	A, T
176. <i>Lonchura malacca</i>	Black-headed Munia	A, T

Other species – Mammals

Asian Elephant, Leopard, Sri Lanka Jackal, Spotted civet, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer/Muntjac, Sambar Deer, Water Buffalo, Ruddy Mongoose, Tufted Gray Langur, Purple-faced Langur, Toque Macaque, Indian flying Fox, Palm squirrel, Dusky Palm Squirrel, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel (both dry zone and wet zone).

Other species – Reptiles

Crocodile, Green Turtle, Star Tortoise, Rat Snake, Spectacled Cobra, Buff striped Keelback, Green Vine Snake, Monitor Lizard, Water Monitor, Agama, Garden Lizard, Horned lizard, Kangaroo Lizard

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