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India and Sri Lanka - Jan 12th - Feb 18th 2013

Published by Greg Roberts (ninderry AT westnet.com.au)

Participants: Greg Roberts, Tony Palliser, Bill Watson, Glenn Scherf, Sandra Watson, Ketil Knudsen, Bente Knudsen

Photos with this report (click to enlarge)

Hypocolius

See here for photos - http://sunshinecoastbirds.blogspot.com.au/

A highly successful sojourn, during which I saw all the possible endemics of southern India and Sri Lanka, along with smattering of other good species including Hypocolius and Macqueen's Bustard in Gujarat, and White-bellied Minivet in Mudumalai. The icing on the cake was an excellent list of mammals including Wolf, Leopard, Dhole, Indian Elephant, Blue Whale, Indian Wild Ass, Gaur and Niligir Tahr.

ITINERARY:

January 12 – Flight from Sydney to Delhi with Tony Palliser and Bill Watson, overnight Delhi.

January 13 – Flight from Delhi via Mumbai to Bhuj in the north-west Indian state of Gujarat. Picked up by Jugal Tiwari and transferred to the Centre for Desert and Ocean (CEDO), a nice accommodation centre run by Jugal near the village of Moti-Vivani. The food here was plentiful and tasty, if somewhat monotonous. Our week-long visit to Gujarat was organised most efficiently by Jugal, who has excellent knowledge of local bird specialties (see his website - http://www.cedobirding.com/).

January 14 – Greater Rann of Kutch. Our morning began near the village of Fulay, where we were soon on to our chief target – the Hypocolius, a small population of which famously overwinters at this spot. Six or seven Hypocoliuses were flittering among the tops of Salvadoria persica trees as the sun rose.

We moved on through the Banni Grasslands, a huge expanse of dry desert grasslands and steppe, seeing thousands of overwintering Common Cranes and numerous larks before having breakfast at Bird Rock, a prominent rocky outcrop where the chief attraction was a tame Red-tailed Wheatear. A late-morning stop in an area of short, sparse shrubs produced Asian Desert Warbler and White-browed Bushchat.

In the afternoon we visited the acacia scrub of Phot Mahadeo, quickly locating White-naped Tit, a regional specialty. We checked out a waterhole at another scrubby site, finding Painted Sandgrouse, before visiting the wetlands of the Chhari-Dhand Reserve in the late afternoon. As we returned in the early evening, we spotlighted both Indian and Sykes's Nightjars, along with a Pallid Scops-Owl.

January 15 – In the morning we journeyed some distance to the Naliya Grasslands, failing to connect with Great Indian Bustard (a species I had seen in India in 1990). We moved on to the coastal town of Mandvi, where waterbirds were in abundance. We found a group of 8 Demoiselle Cranes while driving between Mandvi and the coastal centre of Modhba; good birds on the beach here included Crab Plover.

January 16 – We spent the morning again birding the acacia scrub of the Phot Mahadeo area, connecting with Grey-necked Bunting and flushing a Rock Eagle-Owl from its day-time roost in a rocky gorge, but failing to see Rock Bush-Quail. We returned to the Banni Grasslands and Chhari-Dhand in the afternoon, notching up all three races of Variable Wheatear.

January 17 – A long drive from CEDO to the Rann Riders Lodge near the town of Dasada, our base for exploring the Little Rann of Kutch. The accommodation was comfortably set in a pleasant, birdy garden, but a couple of us fell ill here - a common enough problem in the subcontinent due to less than ideal standards of hygiene in food preparation. In the late afternoon we visited Nawa Talao Lake, where we saw a flock of several hundred Demoiselle Cranes flying in to roost.

January 18 – An early morning outing to huge saltpans fringed with sparse acacia scrub in the Little Rann reserve. The jeeps used for visiting the park are among the most uncomfortable I've experienced, but nice views of Macqueen's Bustard and Laggar Falcon helped ease the pain, along with close encounters with the endangered Indian Wild Ass.

January 19 – In the morning we visited the Tundi Wetlands, where we saw Indian Reed-Warbler and Grey-necked and Black-headed Buntings, though the stand-out sighting was a lone Wolf. In the afternoon we searched fields in the Vanod area unsuccessfully for Sociable Plover. We visited a site near the township of Dumana where India's severely diminished vulture population somehow continues to thrive, before being transferred to the Gujarat capital, Ahmedabad.

January 20 – We flew to Delhi, where we parted company with Tony. Bill and I connected with our partners for the rest of the India trip - Sandra Watson and Glenn Scherf – after a great deal of trouble. Monumental stuff-ups by our online accommodation service, Agoda, and by our pre-booked hotel in Delhi, the Green Palace, were seriously challenging.

January 21 – We hired a vehicle and driver to take us to the tourist centre of Agra, where we visited the Red Fort and Sikandra.

January 22 – We visited the Taj Mahal in the morning, seeing several Small Pratincoles on the Yamana River behind the Taj. In the afternoon we returned to Delhi.

January 23 – We flew to the Kerala city of Kochi, where we were met by our driver, Joji. Our tour of SW India was organised by Kochi-based Kalypso Adventures (website - http://www.kalypsoadventures.com/). We elected not to have a birding guide, but instead a driver who knew where to stop for key birds. Joji was the ideal choice from that perspective; as well as being consistently reliable and helpful, he had quite good knowledge of many bird specialties. In the end, we were to miss none of the SW Indian endemics. We highly recommend Kalypso for its excellent organisation, but we weren't happy about having our luggage tied to the vehicle roof while in transit because of inadequate space inside.

In the afternoon we transferred to Hornbill Camp, our base for birding the Thattekkad area. The camp is nicely positioned by the Periyar River and the food and service was excellent. All the regional specialties of this part of Kerala can be found around Thattekkad, contrary to what some trip reports suggest. On our first evening, I taped in a Jerdon's Nightjar for close views outside the camp dining area.

January 24 - We visited two key Western Ghats forest sites in the Thattekkad area. In the morning at Kallyparye, in mixed dry scrub in rocky terrain, we saw several Grey-headed Bulbuls, one of the harder endemics, along with a host of good birds including Malabar Trogon and Malabar Woodshrike. In wet forest in the afternoon at Urulanthanni, we were shown three roosting Sri Lankan Frogmouths at two sites; other nice birds included White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher and Dark-fronted Babbler.

In another area, we were fortunate to find a Wynaad Laughingthrush, the most difficult of the regional endemics, accompanied by an Indian Scimitar-Babbler, in a thicket of dense bamboo. Wild elephants were clearly close by, rendering our foray in the bamboo a tad unsettling. In the late afternoon, we found a roosting Brown Fish-Owl near the camp.

January 25 – In the morning we visited a third site in Thattekkad area, Idamalayar.
Roadside birding here turned up excellent views of Red Spurfowl, another tricky endemic, Rufous Babbler and White-bellied Treepie. An unexpected find was Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon, a rarity in the lowlands. Best of all was a Dhole, or Asian Wild Dog, which stared at me from a distance of a few metres in a stream bed before disappearing into the scrub; Danish saw a second dog briefly, immediately after this encounter. Again, smells and sounds indicated that elephants were very close at times.

January 26 – In the early morning, we returned to Urulanthanni and scored a rare view of a Sri Lanka Bay Owl just before sunrise. We then found some Black-throated Munias at a spot near the camp; Mottled Wood-Owls are resident here but they failed to materialise.

We departed for the hill town of Munnar, at 1600m, and the delightful Olive Brook Resort. Amid the extensive tea plantations we went to an area of tall grassland and shrubs. We battled to climb steeply uphill through dense vegetation before reaching a ridge known as the key site for the rare Broad-tailed Grassbird. Our efforts were rewarded with views of two grassbirds along with Nilgiri Pipit and Painted Bush-Quail.

January 27 – We left early in the morning for a long drive to Bodi Ghat, the site for Yellow-throated Bulbul; we saw at least four birds, first spotted by our driver, Joji. In the afternoon we visited Kunniamally, a tiny shoala, or fragment of native forest that is a key site for several specialties; Kerala Laughingthrush and Blue-capped Rock-Thrush were seen here. The traffic in Munnar was chaotic due to some kind of big ceremony going on – we lost several hours travelling short distances.

January 28 – We joined hordes of Indian tourists to visit the Eravikulam National Park (at 2200m) in the morning, seeing little of interest other than Nilgiri Tahr and more Painted Bush-Quail for the pain of getting on and off crowded buses to reach the park. In the afternoon we returned to Kunniamally, connecting with White-bellied Blue-Robin and Black-and-orange Flycatcher.

January 29 – An early departure for the dry scrub of the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. We saw Blue-faced Malkoha from the car and joined a park guide for a stroll along a rocky river bed, seeing Puff-throated Babbler. We arrived in the afternoon at the hill town of Ooty (Ootacumundi), staying at the Monarch Hotel, a noisy venue for a constant procession of traditional weddings.

January 30 – In the morning we visited a shoala at Doddabetta, where numerous Nilgiri Laughingthrushes and Indian Blackbirds were oblivious to the bustling stream of Indians making their way along the forest track to some sort of fun-park at its end. Here we also saw Mountain Hawk-Eagle and Nilgiri Blue-Robin.

In the afternoon we strolled around Ooty's Botanic Gardens; another Nilgiri Blue-Robin and a Nilgiri Thrush were foraging around an unofficial rubbish dump.

January 31 – We left Ooty to travel east through Tamil Nadu to the dry Acacia woodlands of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve area. Descending the steep Kallatti Road, we saw Tytler's Leaf-Warbler at our first stop. We arrived at our accommodation, the Jungle Hut, seeing Jerdon's Leafbird. The grounds were scenic and pleasantly birdy, although two of us fell ill with food-related stomach disorders here.

February 1 – We had hired the Jungle Hut bird expert, Siddha, only to find that he palmed us off on to two friends who could not speak English while he went off with another client. It was nonetheless pleasant to stroll with these guys through the Africa-like savannah in the early morning a few kilometres up the road from the Jungle Hut, with elephants sounding off nearby. We saw a male White-bellied Minivet, a difficult species and a specialty of the area. We move on to a bare hill nearby, where we saw another regional speciality, Malabar Lark. (Siddha had told us falsely that this was a difficult bird which required us hiring him for two days.) In the evening, I tracked down an Oriental Scops-Owl near our rooms.

February 2 – We went to the reserve headquarters at Theppakada to join a bus "safari" and saw a group of three Indian Elephants on this otherwise disappointing sojourn. The afternoon was spent relaxing and birding around the Jungle Hut grounds. Good birds about here included Indian Pitta, Nilgiri Thrush and Malabar Starling.

February 3 – In the early morning, as we left Theppakada heading east, we saw a couple of male Gaur by the road. We travelled to Alleppey, a tourist centre south of Kochi and the base for a thriving rice boat industry. We hired one of these former rice boats for a couple of days relaxing on the backwaters of Kerala.

February 4 – On our boat, Cruisor II, with plenty of birds about although nothing special.

February 5 – We left Allepey for Kochi, staying at the Fort House Hotel.

February 6 – Glenn and I farewelled Bill and Sandra and flew to the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. We were met at the airport by our companions for our Sri Lankan trip – Ketil and Bente Knudsen from Norway, and our driver and birding guide, Chandima Jayaweer of Birding Sri Lanka (http://www.birdingsrilanka.com/). Chandima was an excellent choice and we highly recommend him. He offered very good service at reasonable prices and knew his birds; we missed no endemics in Sri Lanka. We drove the hill city of Kandy, staying at the pleasant Swiss Residence.

February 7 – We spent the morning in Kandy's Botanic Gardens, a nice introduction to Sri Lankan birds with species including Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot, Small Sri Lanka Barbet and Sri Lanka Green-Pigeon. In the afternoon we checked out the Tooth Relic Temple.

February 8 – We drove to the tea plantation town of Nuwara Eliya, visiting a tea factory on the way. The afternoon saw us in Victoria Park, where we had Pied Thrush and Kashmir Flycatcher after some effort. In a small forest patch near the town we saw Dull-blue Flycatcher and Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler.

February 9 – We spent the day in the Horton Plains National Park, a pleasant reserve of moist highland forest interspersed with grassland. We saw Sri Lanka Wood-Pigeon and Sri Lanka Whistling-Thrush here, the latter proving to be particularly difficult to spot.

February 10 – We left the highlands for a forest patch on the Surrey tea plantation, where Brown Wood-Owl and Brown-capped Babbler were present. We moved on to the Peacock Reach Hotel in the town of Tissa, or Tissamaharama, our base for exploring the drier woodlands of the nation's south-east. We enjoyed watching a huge procession of birds flying to their roosting places at sunset from the hotel roof, but two of us had those troublesome stomach illnesses at this hotel.

February 11 – An all-day safari in an open-back jeep in Yala National Park with its extensive Acacia woodlands and wetlands. We enjoyed close encounters with Leopard and Indian Elephant along with Spot-billed Pelican, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Sri Lanka Woodshrike.

February 12 – In the morning we checked out some of the wetlands around Tissa. We found White-naped Woodpecker at its favoured coconut grove. In the afternoon we transferred to the Bay Beach Hotel at Welidama, near Galle; this lovely hotel on the beach was an excellent choice by Chandima.

February 13 – We joined a boat in the port of Merissa for a morning offshore whaling trip, seeing at least six Blue Whales at a depth of about 1500m. So we saw both the world's biggest animal and the biggest land animal (elephant) in the space of a couple of days. In the afternoon, we walked around the Galle Fort.

February 14 – A long drive to the Rock View Hotel at Sinharaja, a pleasant place with fine views. We had booked three nights here but reduced that to two nights because we found all the specialties so quickly. First was a delightful Serendip Scops-Owl which a local guide had earlier tracked to its daytime roost in a forest patch not far from our hotel. In the same area was a Green-billed Coucal, found with some difficulty, and Sri Lanka Myna.

February 15 – A day in the Sinharaja World Heritage Area. At the reserve headquarters early in the morning, a Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill and a Purple-faced Langur were waiting about for fruit left out for the wildlife. The main walking track to the research centre was reached following a bumpy jeep ride up the mountain. The birding was superb – in quick succession we found Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Sri Lanka Thrush, Red-faced Malkoha and Ashy-headed Laughingthrush. In the afternoon we spotted two Crimson-backed Flamebacks near the hotel.

February 16 – We transferred to Kithulgala and the delightful Plantation Hotel, where we saw White-throated Flowerpecker.

February 17 – We tracked down a Chesnut-backed Owlet, the last Sri Lankan endemic on our list, along with an unexpected Black-backed Kingfisher.

February 18 – We transferred to the pleasant Gomez Hotel in Negombo, near Colombo, where we relaxed until our departure from Sri Lanka on February 21.

Species Lists

Common names and taxonomy follow the latest changes in The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World along with pending splits. * denotes lifer. [] = heard only.

Grey Francolin (common Gujarat), Black Francolin (3 Naliya Grasslands),
Barred Buttonquail (1 Yala),
*Painted Bush-Quail (group of 5 near Munnar; 6 Eravikulam on trail),
*Red Spurfowl (good views of a pair roadside, Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Spurfowl (2 vocal birds seen well, Sinharaja),
Indian Peafowl (widespread),
*Grey Junglefowl (common throughout SW India),
*Sri Lanka Junglefowl (common throughout Sri Lanka),
Greylag Goose (common Little Rann),
Lesser Whistling-Duck (common Sri Lanka),
Ruddy Shelduck (common Little Rann), Comb Duck (1 Yala; 2 Greater Rann),
Common Teal, Garganey Teal (several Tissa), Cotton Pygmy-Goose (3 Tissa),
Common Pochard, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon,
Indian Spot-billed Duck (common Mandvi),
Eurasian Wryneck (1 Greater Rann), Rufous Woodpecker (1 Thattekkad),
*Heart-spotted Woodpecker (3 Thattekkad),
Brown-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker (several Thattekkad),
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker (2 Mudumalai),
Lesser Yellownape (race wellsi; 1 Surrey estate, 1 Sinharaja),
*Crimson-backed Flameback (2 Sinharaja),
Black-rumped Flameback (common SW India; race psarodes common Sri Lanka),
Greater Flameback (several Thattekkad),
*Brown-headed Barbet (a couple Kochi; common Sri Lanka),
*White-cheeked Barbet (common SW India),
*Yellow-fronted Barbet (common Sri Lanka),
*Malabar (Crimson-fronted) Barbet (small numbers Thattekkad, Mudumalai),
*Malabar Grey Hornbill (fairly common Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill (3 Sinharaja),
*Malabar Pied Hornbill (2 pairs, Tissa),
Coppersmith Barbet, Common Hoopoe (Gujarat),
Indian Roller, Dollarbird (Thattekkad),
*Malabar Trogon (1 pair Thattekkad; 1 pair Sinharaja),
Common Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher (Gujarat),
Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher,
*Black-backed Kingfisher (1 Kithulgala),
Blue-bearded Bee-eater (1 Jungle Hut; 1 Thattekkad),
Blue-tailed Bee-eater (widespread),
Chesnut-headed Bee-eater (widespread), Green Bee-eater (widespread),
Pied (Jacobin) Cuckoo (1 Yala), Common Hawk-Cuckoo (1 Thattekkad),
Banded Bay Cuckoo (1 Thattekkad),
*Grey-bellied Cuckoo (1 Mudumalai),
*Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo (2 Thattekkad; dicruroides split from Drongo-Cuckoo),
Asian Koel, Greater Coucal (common, Southern Coucal parroti pending split),
*Green-billed Cuckoo (1 Sinharaja),
Sirkeer Malkhoa (1 Greater Rann; 1 Yala),
*Blue-faced Malkhoa (1 Chinnar; 1 Mudumalai),
*Red-faced Malkhoa (4 Sinharaja),
*Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot (common Sri Lanka),
Vernal Hanging-Parrot (a few Thattekkad),
Alexandrine Parrot (Sri Lanka), Rose-ringed Parakeet, Plum-headed Parakeet,
*Malabar Parakeet (fairly common SW India),
*Layard's Parakeet (sparce but widespread Sri Lanka),
*Indian Swiftlet (widespread),
Brown-backed Needletail, White-rumped Needletail (Thattekkad),
Asian Palm Swift (Kandy), House Swift (Sinharaja), Alpine Swift (Mudumalai),
Crested Tree-Swift (small numbers below Ooty, Sinharaja),
Barn Owl (1 in cave, Greater Rann),
*Rock Eagle-Owl (1 flushed from day roost, Greater Rann),
*Sri Lanka Bay-Owl (1 just before dawn, Thattekkad),

Pallid Scops-Owl (1 while spotlighting nightjars, Greater Rann),
*Oriental Scops-Owl (1 Jungle Hut; heard Thattekkad),
*Serendip Scops-Owl (1 at roost Sinharaja),
*Brown Fish-Owl (1 at roost Thattekkad),
Brown Wood-Owl (1 at roost Surrey plantation),
Spotted Owlet (2 Greater Rann),
Jungle Owlet (1 Thattekkad race malabricum),
*Chesnut-backed Owlet (2 Kithulgala),
[Brown Hawk-Owl (calling Thattekkad)],
*Sri Lanka Frogmouth (3 Thattekkad; 1 Sinharaja),
Grey Nightjar (1 at roost, Eravikulam), Savannah Nightjar (Allepey),
*Indian Nightjar (several while spotlighting, Greater Rann; 3 before dawn Yala),
*Jerdon's Nightjar (1 Thattekkad),
*Sykes's Nightjar (4 while spotlighting, Greater Rann),
Rock Pigeon, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Mountain Imperial-Pigeon (Ooty),
*Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon (2 Thattekkad; 1 Munnar),
*Sri Lanka Wood-Pigeon (several Horton Plains),
Laughing Dove, Spotted Dove, Eurasian Collared-Dove,
Emerald Dove (Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
*Grey-fronted Green-Pigeon (2 flocks Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Green-Pigeon (fairly common Kandy, Sinharaja),
Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon (Yala),
Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon (Mudumalai),
*Macqueen's Bustard (3 Little Rann),
Sarus Crane (a few between Little Rann and Ahmedabad),
Common Crane (common Gujarat),
*Demoiselle Crane (8 near Mandvi; several hundred Little Rann),
[Slaty-legged Crake (heard Sinharaja)],
White-breasted Waterhen, Watercock, Purple Swamphen,
Common Moorhen, Eurasian Coot,
Chesnut-bellied Sandgrouse (common Greater Rann),
*Painted Sandgrouse (flock of 8 Greater Rann),
Pintail Snipe (several Gujarat, Yala, Tissa),
Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel,
Spotted Redshank, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank,
Marsh Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper,
Common Sandpiper, Ruff, Temminck's Stint, Little Stint, Curlew-Sandpiper,
Terek Sandpiper, Indian Courser (a few Greater Rann, Little Rann),
Indian Thick-knee (small numbers Greater Rann, Tissa),
Great Thick-knee (small numbers Modhba, Tissa),
Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Crab Plover (2 Modhba),
Pheasant-tailed Jacana (Tissa), Bronze-winged Jacana (Alleppey),
*Small Pratincole (3 behind Taj Mahal along Yumana River),
River Lapwing (several behind Taj Mahal),
Red-wattled Lapwing, Yellow-wattled Lapwing (Greater Rann, Yala),
Pacific Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover,
Large Sand-Plover, Mongolian Plover,
Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull (common Gujarat),
Heuglin's (Lesser Black-backed) Gull (a few Modhba, heuglini),
Black-headed Gull, Brown-headed Gull, Slender-billed Gull (a few Mandvi),
Crested Tern (Galle), Lesser Crested Tern (Modhba),
Whiskered Tern, White-winged Tern (Allepey),
Gull-billed Tern (widespread), Common Tern, Little Tern (a few Modhba),
River Tern (small numbers Gujarat, SW India),
Great White Pelican (common Gujarat), Dalmation Pelican (a few Mandvi),
*Spot-billed Pelican (about 20 – Yala, Tissa),
Painted Stork (common Gujarat), Asian Openbill, Woolly-necked Stork,
Eurasian Spoonbill, Black Ibis, Black-headed Ibis,
Great Egret, Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Intermediate Egret,
Western Reef-Egret (common Gujarat), Indian Pond-Heron,
Black-crowned Night-heron, Striated Heron, Black Bittern (1 Thattekkad),
Grey Heron, Purple Heron,
Greater Flamingo (common Modhba), Lesser Flamingo (common Little Rann),
Little Grebe (Gujarat), Black-necked Grebe (3 Mandvi),
Little Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Indian Shag (Allepey), Oriental Darter,
Black-winged Kite, Black-Kite (common; 1 race lineatus Greater Rann),
Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Egyptian Vulture (a few around Agra).
White-rumped Vulture (20+ Dumana village),
Short-toed Eagle (fairly common Gujarat), Crested Serpent-Eagle,
Black Eagle (1 Kithulgala), Western (Eurasian) Marsh-Harrier (Gujarat),
Montagu's Harrier (common Gujarat), Pallid Harrier (a few Greater Rann),
Pied Harrier (1 Munnar), Crested Goshawk (1 Munnar),
Shikra (common), Besra (1 Ooty), Oriental Honey-Buzzard (widespread),
Long-legged Buzzard (a few Greater Rann),
Eurasian (Common) Buzzard (race vulpinus 2 Mudumalai),
White-eyed Buzzard (1 Mudumalai),
Greater Spotted Eagle (a few Greater Rann),
Tawny Eagle (a few Greater Rann), Steppe Eagle (6 Greater Rann),
Imperial Eagle (2 Little Rann), Bonelli's Eagle (1 nearAgra) ,
Booted Eagle (Mudumalai), Rufous-bellied Eagle,
*Crested Hawk-Eagle (limnaeetus split from Changeable Hawk-Eagle – a few SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Mountain Hawk-Eagle (race kelaarti - 1 Ooty; 1 Horton Plains),
Common Kestrel, Red-necked Falcon (1 Greater Rann),
Peregrine Falcon (1 Mudumalai),
*Lagger Falcon (1 Little Rann),
*Indian Pitta (several Thattekkad, Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
*Jerdon's Leafbird (1 Jungle Hut),
Golden-fronted Leafbird,
Brown Shrike (common Gujarat, Sri Lanka including race lucionensis),
Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike (Gujarat),
Bay-backed Shrike (a few Gujarat, SW India),
Long-tailed Shrike (common Gujarat, Thattekkad),
Southern Grey Shrike (Gujarat),
*Sri Lanka Blue-Magpie (several Sinharaja),
Rufous Treepie (common SW India),
*White-bellied Treepie (2 Thattekkad),

House Crow,
Large-billed Crow (widespread, potential split Indian Jungle Crow culminates),
Ashy Woodswallow (Thattekkad), Indian Golden Oriole (Gujarat),
Black-hooded Oriole, Black-naped Oriole,
*Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike (2 Thattekkad; 2 Yala),
Small Minivet (widespread India, Sri Lanka),
*White-bellied Minivet (1 male, Mudumalai),
*Orange Minivet (flammeus split from Scarlet – common SW India, Sri Lanka),
Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike (Mudumalai),
White-browed Fantail (Ooty, Sri Lanka),
*Spot-breasted Fantail (1 Ooty; 1 Mudumalai),
Black Drongo, Asy Drongo, White-bellied Drongo (Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
Bronzed Drongo (Thattekkad), Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Drongo (common Sinharaja),
Black-naped Monarch, Asian Paradise-Flycatcher (widespread),
Common Iora, Marshall's Iora (small numbers Greater Rann),
Common Woodshrike (Gujarat),
*Malabar Woodshrike (2 Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Woodshrike (2 Yala),
*Blue-capped Rock-Thrush (1 Mudumalai, 1 Munnar),
Blue Rock-Thrush (1 Greater Rann),
*Sri Lanka Whistling-Thrush (1 Horton Plains),
*Malabar Whistling-Thrush (common SW India),
*Pied Thrush (1 Victoria Park),
Orange-headed Thrush (fairly common SW India),
*Spot-winged Thrush (several Sinharaja, Kithulgula),
*Nilgiri Thrush (neilgherriensis split from Scaly – 1 Ooty; 1 Jungle Hut),
*Sri Lanka Thrush (imbricata split from Scaly – 1 Sinharaja),
*Indian Blackbird (fairly common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Nilgiri Blue-Robin [Shortwing] (2 Ooty),
*White-bellied Blue-Robin [Shortwing] (1 Munnar),
Asian Brown Flycatcher (Thattekkad).
Brown-chested Flycatcher (common SW India, Sri Lanka),
Rusty-tailed Flycatcher (1 Mudumalai), Red-throated Flycatcher (Little Rann),
*Kashmir Flycatcher (1 Victoria Park),
*Black-and-orange Flycatcher (1 Munnar; 1 Ooty),
*Dull-blue Flycatcher (a few Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains),
*White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher (3 Thattekkad),
*Nilgiri Flycatcher (common Munnar, Ooty),
Blue-throated Flycatcher (2 Thattekkad),
Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher (Chinnar, Mudumalai),
Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher,
Bluethroat (Greater Rann), Indian Blue-Robin (2 Munnar),
Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama (Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
Indian Robin (widespread), Black Redstart (Gujarat),
Siberian (Common) Stonechat (Gujarat),
*White-browed (Stoliczka's) Bushchat (1 Greater Rann),
Pied Bushchat (widespread), Brown Rockchat (Greater Rann, Agra),
Desert Wheatear (Gujarat), Isabelline Wheatear (Gujarat),
*Rufous-tailed Wheatear (1 Greater Rann),
*Variable Wheatear – (Greater Rann – race pictata common; 2 race opistholeuca; 1 race capistrata),
*White-faced Starling (4 Singharaja),
*Malabar Starling (fairly common SW India),
Brahminy Starling (widespread), Rosy Starling (small numbers Gujarat, Yala),
Common Myna, Bank Myna (Gujarat), Jungle Myna (SW India),
*Southern Hill Myna (common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Sri Lanka Myna (several Sinharaja),
Indian Nuthatch (1 Mudumalai), Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (Thattekkad),
Great Tit (widespread),
*White-naped Tit (found at 3 sites in suitable habitat, Greater Rann),
Red-rumped Swallow (Gujarat), Barn Swallow,
*Sri Lanka Swallow (several Tissa, Sinharaja),
Dusky Crag-Martin, Wire-tailed Swallow (Greater Rann),
*Hill Swallow (race domicola split from Pacific – common SW India, Sri Lanka highlands),
*Grey-headed Bulbul (several Thattekkad),
*Flame-throated Bulbul (fairly common Thattekkad),
*Black-capped Bulbul (3 Sinharaja),
Red-whiskered Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, White-eared Bulbul (Gujarat),
*Yellow-throated Bulbul (4 Bodi Ghat),
*Yellow-eared Bulbul (common Sri Lanka highlands),
*White-browed Bulbul (small numbers Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
*Yellow-browed Bulbul (common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Square-tailed (Black) Bulbul (common SW, Sri Lanka highlands),
*Hypocolius (6-7 Greater Rann),
Rufous-fronted Prinia (Greater Rann), Plain Prinia (SW India, Sri Lanka),
Grey-breasted Prinia (Greater Rann), Ashy Prinia (Munnar),
Graceful Prinia (Greater Rann),
Zitting Cisticola (Horton Plains), Oriental White-eye (SW India),
*Sri Lanka White-eye (common Sri Lanka highlands),
*Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler (1 near Nuwara Eliya),
Paddyfield Warbler (a few Greater Rann), Thick-billed Warbler (1 Jungle Hut),
*Indian Reed-Warbler (meridionalis split from Clamorous – 2 Little Rann),
Blyth's Reed-Warbler (common SW India),
*Broad-tailed Grassbird (2 Munnar),
Booted Warbler (Mudumalai), Sykes's Warbler (common Gujarat),
Humes's Whitethroat (althaea - fairly common Gujarat, Mudumalai),
*Desert (Small) Whitethroat (minula –a few Greater Rann),
Asian Desert Warbler (1 Greater Rann),
Eastern Orphean Warbler (small numbers Gujarat),
Common Tailorbird,
Chiffchaff (race tristis Siberian Chiffchaff– 1 Lesser Rann),
Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, Large-billed Leaf-Warbler,
Greenish Warbler (fairly common SW India highlands),
*Green (Bright-green) Warbler (fairly common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Tytler's Leaf-Warbler (1 below Ooty),
*Ashy-headed Laughingthrush (several Sinharaja),

*Wynaad Laughingthrush (1 Thattekkad),
*Nilgiri (Rufous-breasted) Laughingthrush (common Ooty),
*Grey-breasted (Kerrala) Laughingthrush (common Munnar),
Puff-throated Babbler (Chinnar),
*Brown-capped Babbler (1 Surrey plantation),
*Indian Scimitar-Babbler (a few Thattekkad),
*Sri Lanka Scimitar-Babbler (a few Surrey plantation, Sinharaja),
Yellow-eyed Babbler (Jungle Hut), Tawny-bellied Babbler (below Ooty),
*Dark-fronted Babbler (small numbers Thattekkad, Sinharaja),
Common Babbler (Gujarat),
*Rufous Babbler (a few Thattekkad, 1 below Ooty),
Jungle Babbler (common Thattekkad),
*Yellow-billed Babbler (common Mudumalai, Sri Lanka),
*Orange-billed (Sri Lanka Rufous) Babbler (common Sinharaja)
*Brown-cheeked Fulvetta (4 Thattekkad),
Indian Bushlark (common Gujarat),
*Jerdon's Bushlark (small numbers Mudumalai, Yala),
Ashy-crowned Sparrowlark (Greater Rann), Greater Short-toed Lark (Gujarat),
Rufous-tailed Lark (common Greater Rann),
Crested Lark (Gujarat), Bimaculated Lark (Gujarat),
*Sykes's Lark (3 Greater Rann),
*Malabar Lark (2 Mudumalai),
*White-throated (Legge's) Flowerpecker (2 Kithulgala),
Pale-billed Flowerpecker (a few Sri Lanka),
*Nilgiri Flowerpecker (several Thattekkad, Munnar),
*Purple-rumped Sunbird (common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Long-billed (Loten's) Sunbird (common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Crimson-backed (Small) Sunbird (common Thattekkad),
Little Spiderhunter (1 Thattekkad),
House Sparrow, Chesnut-shouldered Petronia (Gujarat, Mudumalai),
Forest Wagtail (2 Jungle Hut), White Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail,
Citrine Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, White-browed Wagtail (widespread),
Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipit (widespread), Long-billed Pipit (Greater Rann),
Blyth's Pipit (Greater Rann), Tree Pipit, Tawny Pipit (Gujarat),
*Nilgiri Pipit (several Munnar),
Baya Weaver (Tissa), Indian Silverbill (Greater Rann),
White-rumped Munia (Sinharaja), Nutmeg Munia,
*Black-throated Munia (small flock Thattekkad),
*Tricoloured (Black-headed) Munia (fairly common Sri Lanka),
*Grey-necked (Grey-hooded) Bunting (1 Greater Rann; flock Lesser Rann),
Black-headed Bunting (a few Lesser Rann),
House (Striolated) Bunting (several Greater Rann),
Common Rosefinch (Ooty).

TOTAL – 413 species (125 lifers)

MAMMALS

*Bonnet Macaque (common SW India),
*Toque Macaque (common Sri Lanka),
Rhesus Macaque (Agra), Grey Langur (Mudumalai, Tissa),
*Purple-faced Langur [Leaf-Monkey] (several Sinharaja),
Sambar (common Horton Plains, Thattekkad),
Spotted Deer (common Mudumalai, Yala),
*Indian Muntjac (1 Chinnar),
Blackbuck (a small herd, Little Rann), Nilgai (several Greater Rann),
Indian Gazelle (a few Greater Rann),
*Nilgiri Tahr (common Eravilulam),
*Gaur (2 Mudumalai),
Wild Pig (common Mudumalai, Yala),
Indian Elephant (group of three – adult female, sub-adult female, calf – Mudumalai; 2 including a close, large tusker at Yala; others heard Thattekkad, Mudumalai),
*Asiatic Wild Ass (common Little Rann),
Golden Jackal (small numbers Greater Rann, Yala),
*Dhole [Asian Wild Dog] (1 Thattekkad),
Wolf (1 Lesser Rann),
*Indian Fox (2 Greater Rann),
Leopard (1 Yala),
Jungle Cat (2 Greater Rann),
Ruddy Mongoose (common SW India, Sri Lanka), Grey Mongoose (Gujurat),
*Brown Mongoose (1 Hortons Plains),
*Indian Giant Flying-Squirrel (2 unusually in daylight, Thattekkad),
*Malabar Giant-Squirrel (indica fairly common SW India),
*Sri Lankan Giant-Squirrel (macroura, 2 Sinharaja),
Five-striped Palm-Squirrel (pennanti common Gujarat),
*Three-striped Palm-Squirrel (palmarum common SW India, Sri Lanka),
*Layard's Palm-Squirrel (layardi 1 Sinharaja),
*Dusky Striped Squirrel (sublinneatus – 2 Munnar),
Black-naped Hare,
*Indian Flying-Fox (common Sri Lanka),
*Blue Whale (5 of Mirissa, Sri Lanka).

34 species (18 lifers)