

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

IN

SRI LANKA



JANUARY 7TH – 20TH 2018

TRIP REPORT

GROUP LEADER: Bob Buckler

TOUR GUIDE: Saman Weediabandara

Participants: Reg Cox, Dave & Vanda Owen, Mike Ambler, Pat & Kevin Jones, Dawn Buckler and Patrick Crowley.

Summary:

This was a very successful tour in search of Sri Lanka's precious wildlife. We caught up with all 33 endemic species of birds and many mammals, butterflies, dragonflies and beautiful scenery. A great group of people gelled instantly and made this trip so enjoyable and easy to lead, we had lots of laughs during our journey through this wonderful country, Sri Lanka is truly beautiful, a safe and welcoming place to visit.

Day 1 - January 7th 2018

Overnight flight – London to Colombo – transfer to Kithulgala



We had a cracking start to our wonderful tour of this beautiful country. Seven of us met up at Heathrow for our midday flight on Saturday 6th arriving in Colombo at 04:35 on Sunday 7th where we met up with the remaining two participants on the tour.

Our guide Saman was there to meet us as we emerged from the security and baggage reclaim area, the whole airport experience went smoothly and very efficiently.

Once seated on our air-conditioned bus we set off for Kithulgala where we are staying for two nights, it was just getting light as we drove

away from the airport. Our first bird sighting was of House Crow, dozens of them filled the sky as they left their overnight roost.

Before very long Saman stopped the bus in the car park of a hotel and promptly showed us a roosting Collared Scops Owl, wow! What a stunner and a brilliant bird to start the tour with! In the car park we also saw Asian Koel, White-bellied Drongo, Common Myna and Spotted Dove.

We planned to drive directly to our hotel but instead we stopped several times for quick birding sessions especially when we reached the rice paddy-fields. Birds came thick and fast; the first stop produced Crimson-fronted and Brown-headed Barbet, Black-hooded Oriole, Common & White-throated Kingfishers, Little Cormorant, Cattle & Little Egrets, Black-headed Ibis, Barn Swallow, Little Swift and our second and third stops added Scaly-breasted Munia, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Sri Lanka Swallow, Yellow-billed Babbler, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Green Imperial Pigeon and one target bird the Ashy Woodswallow.

Driving further into the hills our final stop produced some real goodies and very colourful species; Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot was very nice to see, Crested Treeswift was a real gem, the stunning Golden-fronted Leafbird and Purple-rumped Sunbird added more colour.

We finally reached our hotel at 9:30am and promptly sat down to a late breakfast, a Brahminy Kite drifted by whilst we ate and we saw Little Cormorant, Little Egret and Purple Sunbird.

After a very long break we met up at 1:30 for a birding excursion across the river, we took a small ferry and for the next few hours we enjoyed some forest birding in fairly hot and humid weather. Two nice raptors started off our afternoon listing, first we saw Rufous-bellied Eagle and within minutes an Indian Black Eagle appeared.

Bulbuls and Babblers, Sunbirds & Parakeets kept us occupied for a good many hours but the highlight by far was the discovery of a roosting Serendib Scops Owl, our second Scops Owl of the day but one of far more importance because it is an endemic species.

Butterflies and dragonflies, lizards and a couple of mammals help to keep the interest high, the impressive Birdwing Butterfly and the Forest Green Lizard drew the most attention.

We were all very hot and tired and having missed a night's sleep we were all feeling very fatigued, so we decided to call it a day. We walked back to the ferry and the last bird new for the day list flew in and landed in the river near to us, it was an Asian Openbill.



We recorded over 60 species on our first day including a few endemics, the Serendib Scops Owl was voted bird of the day.

Day 2 - January 8th 2018

Kithulgala Forest

We all slept extremely well and could have continued the slumber for another few hours but our guide Saman arranged a local early birding excursion. We met at 5:45 am and took the bus for a short drive to some small tea plantations along the riverside. Our main target was the Chestnut-backed Owlet which was calling as we disembarked from the bus. Despite a thorough search we failed to find it so we walked down towards the river where another Owlet was calling, but yet again, apart from a very brief flight sighting, we dipped on the bird.

Other species started to appear as it got light, both Black & Red-vented Bulbuls, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Purple-rumped Sunbird and Yellow-billed Babbler. As the morning wore on we had some great birding, we added several of the endemics and got great views of a number of other species. The Spot-winged Thrush was most obliging, Black-capped Babbler was seen very well, as was Sri Lanka Hill Myna and the Lesser Goldenback (woodpecker) was a real favourite.

Down by the river we stood on a raised bank where we had a wide panoramic view of the forest on either side of the river. We saw Stork-billed & White-throated Kingfishers, White-rumped Munia, Black-headed Bulbul, Orange-billed Babbler, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Tickell's & Asian Brown Flycatcher, Oriental White-eye and we had our first sighting of Sri Lankan Grey Hornbill. We also watched the endemic Purple-faced Leaf-Monkey and a couple of Palm Squirrels.

During the walk back up the hill to the bus we added Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, Greater Coucal, Brown-headed & Yellow-fronted Barbet, Common Tailorbird, Brown Shrike and a couple of

Raptors appeared over the nearest hill, first a Legg's Hawk Eagle and then an Oriental Honey Buzzard circled above us. A Western Ceylon Giant Squirrel was seen by most of the group.



Indian Pitta

It was 9:30am by the time we got back for breakfast which was well appreciated by all of the group. At 10:30am we reconvened for more birding, this time we took a leisurely walk around the hotel grounds, we saw a lot of birds most of them were already on the list but we had much better views of Grey Hornbill, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot and Yellow-fronted Barbet.

Just before our lunch break we hit a purple patch when we found Indian Pitta, Leyard's Parakeet, Oriental White-eye and Indian Grey Hornbill. Back in the garden we enjoyed great views of Brown-headed Barbet, Black Bulbul, Black-headed Oriole and several other species.

We then took a two-hour break for a leisurely lunch and some rest time and it was 2pm when we all boarded the bus for our afternoon birding extravaganza.

Just 10 minutes on the road found us at a rickety, pedestrian-only, suspension bridge which had a weight limit, so only 5 Sri Lankans or 3 Western Europeans could cross at any one time. Consequently, it took a while, but we all got across safely. We had a very similar experience as yesterday with the hot, humid conditions relenting as the afternoon wore on. But today we saw far more birds and we added some great new species to the list.

Some of the most striking birds posed well for our scopes and cameras, Crimson Minivet, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Legge's Flowerpecker, Alexandrine Parakeet and a stunning male Asian Paradise Flycatcher, what a bird. We also caught up with Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Lesser Yellownappe, Common Iora, Orange-billed Babbler, Brown-capped Babbler and Common Tailorbird.

We stayed in the area until darkness fell hoping for a glimpse of both Green-billed Coucal and/or Chestnut-backed Owlet, none of which showed. Two birds that we did see on the way back were Common Hawk Cuckoo and Asian Openbill.

Of the 90 species we have logged 15 of them are endemic to the country, leaving 18 more to find!

Day 3 - January 9th 2018

Kithulgala area – transfer to Nuwara Eliya

Our second attempt to find the Chestnut-back Owlet began at 5:40am, how lovely. It was a misty, cool morning until the sun came up. We visited the same area as yesterday in search of the, so-far, elusive Chestnut-backed Owlet. This time we put more leg work in and pursued every call we heard until finally, after about an hour we found not one but two Owlets, hooray!

We saw many other species too, but none were new for the list, birds of note include: Great Coucal, Lesser Goldenback, Oriental White-eye, Brown-headed Barbet and lots of common species.

After breakfast our two-hour drive to Nuwara started, we drove through some stunning landscapes and up into the mountains where the hillsides were covered in tea-plantations as far as the eye could see. We stopped at

one of the major tea-plantations where we were given a guided tour and tasted the ‘best tea in the world’. We recorded Hill Swallow, Crested Serpent Eagle (5) and Brown Shrike at the tea plantation, we also added House Sparrow, Green Bee-eater and Brahminy Kite during the journey.

The last hour of the journey took us through Nuwara Eliya and past the lake found just a little further on. We saw our first White-bellied Sea Eagle and more Hill Swallows as we approached our hotel. We also recorded a Pied Bushchat just outside the hotel as we gathered for our afternoon excursion.

What a birding session we had from 3-6pm and in the most unattractive site! We drove a short distance from the hotel to a wooded hillside where everyone in the village came to dump their rubbish. A ravine on one side of the road was filled with all kinds of waste, it was an awful mess and it smelled badly too.

However, the birding there was fantastic we clocked up a good number of new species including some important endemics. In fact, the smelliest part of the ‘tip’ proved to hold the best birds. I can’t remember the order in which they came but here is what we saw in a 30-minute purple patch; Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Kashmir Flycatcher, Brush Warbler, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Indian Blackbird, Blyth’s Reed Warbler, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike and some more common species such as Oriental White-eye, Great Tit, Common Tailorbird and a few common bulbuls. It was just fantastic, but it was also nice when we left and got away from the smells.



Another short journey found us at a site where Whistling Thrush is regularly seen. We were in a narrow ravine near a foot-bridge over a fast-flowing stream. It was dark and a little cold down there, but our vigilance paid off and we had excellent views of both a male and a female bird. Well, today we had seen two of the trickiest endemics and now we have seen 20 of the total of 33 to be found.

Day 4 - January 10th 2018

Nuwara Eliya – Horton Plains and Victoria Park

Another early start for the group as we gathered in the restaurant at 5:30am for a quick tea/coffee before setting off to Horton Plains with our breakfast in a bag!



It took nearly an hour to get there but we did make a couple of stops along the way, the first was near a railway station, Pattipola, which at 6,225 ft. is the highest in Sri Lanka. Saman our guide jumped off the bus and quickly found our target bird, the Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, another endemic in the bag. Next, we stopped on a steep slope near the park entrance where in very misty conditions we found a number of species.



Scarlet Minivet – taken by Kevin Jones

The fabulous looking Scimitar Babbler showed very well as several of them noisily made their way through the thick scrub. We also saw Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Great Tit (looking very different from *Parus major* at home not a hint of yellow or green can be seen on the birds here), we also saw Yellow-eared Bulbul and we tried to track down a Dusky Warbler that called, but it would not show.

At the park entrance we visited the toilet block to look for Thrushes, finding Indian Blackbird and nothing else in very misty conditions. Our first stop in the park was near some roadside pools where a good number of birds flitted about.

Next stop we found a male Scarlet Minivet that was singing from a prominent perch, we caught up with the endemic Sri Lanka White-eye, several Yellow-eared Bulebuls appeared and then a pair of Velvet-chested Nuthatches showed well. Next a Bush Warbler appeared just 2 meters from us and a Green Warbler fed in the bushes not far away. More Great Tits, Pale-billed Flowerpeckers appeared and Oriental White-eye joined the others on our list.

A Grey Wagtail was noted as we passed a pool heading deeper into park. We stopped again and saw Scimitar Babbler and more of the same species as before. Out on the open plains we started seeing a different set of birds. Blyth's Pipit was a good record whilst Pied Bushchat was very common. Our last stop produced good views of Himalayan Buzzard both in flight and perched, also Common Kestrel, lots of Barn & Hill Swallows and we finally caught up with Dull-Blue Flycatcher which is far more striking than its name suggests.

Before we left the park we made one final stop to look for warblers and before long we found a Greenish Warbler, nice one. Other species appeared but nothing of great significance or new for the list. Mammals seen in the park were Sambar, Stripe-necked Mongoose, Rhesus Monkey, Flame Striped Squirrel and Palm Squirrel.

We left the area and headed back to the hotel stopping at the "Highland Milk Factory" where we bought some yoghurt and watched a troupe of Bear Monkeys feeding in the trees and performing some extraordinary jumping feats.

Lunch was eaten at 1pm and a long siesta was taken, we met up again at 3pm when we assembled to go out for the last 3 hours of daylight. Our destination was Victoria Park on the edge of town, a beautiful landscaped area with ponds and open lawns, flowerbeds and some great areas of mature trees and rough scrub. A large stream runs through the park where many birds can be seen.

We made our way around the park in nice warm sunshine, the park was crowded with people enjoying the afternoon weather. We completed two circuits and listed some nice species, our main target the Pied Thrush remained elusive, but we were happy to get good close views of Indian Pond Heron, Little Cormorant,

Common & Green Sandpipers, Forest & Grey Wagtails, Oriental Magpie Robin, Scaly-breasted Munia, Large-billed Crows and several very common species.

It wasn't until the light began to fade that we discovered our target species, it was feeding near the waterside along the stream bed and in poor light it showed well, what a stunning bird the Pied Thrush is, click, click! We then made an effort to locate a Scaly or Sri Lanka Thrush before darkness set in, a White-fronted Waterhen was nice to see but the Thrush never showed.

Dinner was at 7:30pm so we called the bird-log at 7:15pm, we now have 120 species recorded, 25 of them endemics.

Day 5 - January 11th 2018

Nuwara Eliya – transfer to Tissa Maharama – visit to Surrey Lodge Debarawewa



Seven of the group met at 5:15am for a quick cuppa before setting off on a short birding trip to try to bag the Sri Lanka Thrush before we departed to the southwest. Saman knew of a local site which he said was pretty reliable! We arrived at the site in darkness and stood on a track very near a stream and a small bridge. Sure enough, as the light improved the bird came out exactly where Saman said it would! We had great views of this very elusive and hard to find species, fantastic.

By 8am we were breakfasted, packed and on the bus in readiness for our long trip to southwestern region for our 3 night stay at the superb Hibiscus Garden Hotel. We made a couple of planned stops along the way. First we visited Surrey Lodge, where a private woodland nature reserve forms part of the extensive grounds and where a pair of Brown Wood Owls have been seen regularly over the last few years.

Brown Wood Owl – taken by Mike Ambler

It took Saman all of five minutes to find the owl and another 10 minutes to guide us all down a winding woodland trail to see it! A magnificent site enjoyed by all of us and photographed well by Kevin Jones and Mike Ambler, see below.

Other birds seen include two rather special birds, first the Indian Pitta showed well then we had a lovely surprise when we found an Orange-headed Thrush, what a stunner, a great bird for our list. We also saw both Ringed-necked and Leyard's Parakeets, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot and several common species before we left.

The temperature rose as we descended from the highlands, the clouds cleared and the sun came out. We made a short stop at Rawana Falls just below the tourist town of Ella where we watched a few stunning butterflies as well as seeing the falls.

It was 1:30pm when we pulled up outside our hotel in Tissa Maharama and after settling into our rooms we went for lunch. Our afternoon birding began at 3:30pm and consisted of a visit. To the 'Tank' (a large man-made reservoir for water storage – called a wewa) at Babarawewa.

What a superb time we had there, the 'tank' were covered in lilies, reeds and grassy islands, in places open water stretched out into large ponds. It was full of birds we were like 'kiddies in a sweetie shop' so much to look at and see. Herons, Egrets, Storks, Swampheens, Jacanas, Watercocks and both Black & Yellow Bitterns.



Kingfishers, Bee-eaters, Parakeets & Barbets all added bright colours which looked amazing in the afternoon sunlight. We added over 20 species to the trip list in no time at all, furthermore we managed to get close to most of the species.

As the light faded large groups of birds flew over us heading for their roosts, great strings of Cormorants flying in 'V' formation came over as Egrets, Storks and Herons passed over in ones and twos.

A White-naped Woodpecker, Spot-billed Pelican, Cotton Pygmy-Goose, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Brahminy Kite and Stork-billed Kingfisher were stand-out species towards the

end of our visit. A large Mugger Crocodile looked menacing as it lay next to a dead tree waiting for something to get too close.

We arrived back at the hotel just as it was getting dark, so we made an effort to find Jerdan's Nightjar and despite hearing one we could not see one in flight. A string of Flying Fox Bats flew over in good numbers as we abandoned our nightjar hunt.

Day 6 - January 12th 2018

All day at Yala National Park

If you don't mind getting up very early and sharing the park with 150 other 4x4 open-topped jeeps and being driven along bumpy tracks for hours, then this is the trip for you. Despite the obvious impact the heavy daily-influx of vehicles has on the park the wildlife there is fascinating, plentiful and easy to see.

We left the hotel at 5am arrived at the main gate into Yala at 6am, along with a lot of other people we queued to get in, but once inside the park the crowd of vehicles dispersed relatively quickly and it was easy to find quiet tracks and nice bird watching sites. Waders galore went on the list at the first pools, we saw Black-winged Stilt, Redshank, Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Lesser Sand Plover, Kentish Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Pin-tailed Snipe and Pacific Golden Plover. Also, lots of Herons, Egrets, Storks and Cormorants.

In Yala you are not allowed to leave your vehicle, so the pattern of the day was to drive to different locations and bird from the jeep, many impromptu stops were made as we spotted mammals or birds. Our day list went viral with many new species popping out or perching in prominent positions, Jerdon's Bushlark, Richards Pipit, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Robin, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Grey Bellied Cuckoo, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Roller, Sri Lanka Woodshrike (endemic), Paddyfield Pipit, White-browed Bulbul and the little gem Barred Buttonquail.

The mammal list wasn't too bad either, during this morning's session we saw Ruddy Mongoose, Sri Lanka Elephant, Small Indian Civet, Spotted Deer, Sambhur, Indian Water Buffalo, Indian Wild Pig and Palm Squirrels.



From 12 noon to 2pm all vehicles have to park-up in designated areas whilst everyone has lunch. We parked at a coastal site with brackish lagoons that held a number of waders. A flock of small waders gave us an ID problem because of plumage and behaviour characteristics, but we finally decided on Sanderling and they proved us right when they performed on the beach as they are supposed to. Other new species appeared with Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Great Thick-knee, Grey Plover, Little Tern and a Black-necked Stork flew over. Both Jungle and Grey-breasted Prinias also put in an appearance right in front of us during lunch-time.

After lunch we had four hours remaining to find as many new species as possible, we tried our best and came up with a number of 'goodies' both avian and mammalian. Indian Silverbill, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, Brahminy & Rosy Starlings, Malabar Pied Hornbill and several other bird species appeared but the best find was a mammal, **the** mammal of the park, a Leopard! This individual was draped along the bough of a tree with tail and legs dangling either side, we couldn't see much behind the leaves but it was enough! The group suggested that I got out of the vehicle to take a closer look!! Hmmmm!

The last hour produced a few more species, Eurasian Hoopoe, Black-naped Hare, Golden Jackal, Mugger Crocodile, close views of Crested Serpent Eagle and lots more Elephant sightings. The afternoon light was superb, the park looked just great as we made our way to the exit. The day had produced 44 new bird species bringing our total to 189 of which 27 are endemic to Sri Lanka.

Day 7 - January 13th 2018

Bundala National Park – the 'Tanks'

Today we visited one of my favourite places in the country, Bundala Marshes. What a place, the whole area is just dripping with birds especially the approach road which cuts through the marshes and scrub, reedbeds and pools, it is amazing. We arrived at 6am with our breakfast in tow and got off the bus just after the turning from the main road, the weather was just perfect, clear sky and no wind and a nice warm temperature.

Birds galore appeared from both sides of the road we quickly added new species to the tour list with Collared Dove (wow!), Clamorous Reed Warbler, Loten's (Long-billed) Sunbird, Tricoloured Munia, Ashy Prinia, Pied Kingfisher and we had great close-up views of many waterfowl, waders, herons and egrets.





Several Yellow Bitterns were seen, as well as Watercock, Waterhen, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Black-headed Ibis, Asian Openbill and Painted Storks, Pin-tailed Snipe and the number of egrets was just staggering.

We spent two hours walking just a couple of hundred meters! Garganey and Whistling Ducks were the only ducks seen but waders included Marsh Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwits, Black-winged Stilts, Redshank, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Red Wattle Lapwings and the strange looking Great Thick-knee.

Lesser Adjutant – taken by Kevin Jones

The delightful Green Bee-eater was everywhere and along with Blue-tailed Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher and the Munias they adorned the scrub with splashes of vibrant colour, the jewels of the marsh.

It was almost 9am when we boarded the bus to drive to the entrance to the park where we sat down to eat our picnic breakfast. Even there, birds appeared and interrupted our meal, White-browed Bulbul, Black-hooded Oriole, Green Imperial Pigeons and more sunbirds fed in the trees around us demanding our attention.

For the latter part of our morning-only visit to Bundala we drove to the Salt Pans where hundreds of waders, terns, egrets, cormorants and a few gulls awaited our attention. Along the approach track an unidentified cuckoo flew across the track and an Osprey sat in a dead tree eating, a dead fish. Whilst watching the Osprey we scanned a small pool on the other side of the track and found our first Curlew Sandpipers and a nice flock of Rosy Starlings alighted on top of a nearby bush.

The first ‘pans’ produced great views of Pied Kingfisher and good numbers of Black-tailed Godwits and Grey Plover. Further on we spent an hour walking along the length of the pans where unfortunately a great deal of work was being carried out and many workers were out there flushing the birds.

At this point we found several new species for the list, Yellow Wagtail, Small Pratincole, Oriental Skylark, Ruff, Ruddy Turnstone and a huge roost of terns held both Greater and Lesser Crested, also Caspian, Whiskered, Little and Gull-billed Terns. A few Brown-headed Gulls sat with them.

Several waders were still missing from our list and our search failed to find Temminck’s Stint, Whimbrel, Curlew and Spotted Redshank, a bit disappointing but the numbers of the other species present was overwhelming, we couldn’t search every flock in the time that we had.

We drove away from the park at 11am and returned to hotel for a long lunch and a well-deserved rest! At 3pm we met up again for our afternoon excursion which took place at the ‘tank’ near Tissa. This visit was to the eastern side where within minutes a nice selection of birds was in view.

The most colourful Coppersmith’s Barbet was our first new species to be seen this was quickly followed by a Thick-billed Flowerpecker then a mixed flock of Munias, both Scaly-breasted and Tri-coloured Munias were joined by a couple of Indian Silverbills.

The afternoon sunlight was perfect now, the plumage of all the birds was highlighted by the exquisite light and they all looked stunning, even the Ashy and Plain Prinias looked colourful. For the next 30 minutes we were stunned into silence by a constant stream of new arrivals. A fig tree was fruiting and that attracted a good number of birds. Green Imperial Pigeons, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Asian Koel and the delightful Malabar Pied Hornbill ate the fruit. Then a White-naped Woodpecker flew into view, I must say this species has to be the most stunning woodpecker I have ever seen, the golden wing markings are something to behold, wow!

Water birds were all around us too, a Yellow Bittern did its best to get onto our camera's memory card so we duly obliged. Waterhens, Watercocks, Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, Purple Swampheens and Red Wattled Lapwings filled the rice field below us as we walked along a raised bank.



White Naped Woodpecker – by Kevin Jones

A couple of dragonflies and several butterflies grabbed our attention for a while too, until a male Small Minivet, a Brown Headed Barbet and a Green Bee-eater lured us away, tempting us with flashes of sublime beauty and alluring poses.

We left the area with a tentative promise of seeing a Jungle Owlet at another private site close by, it turned out to be a little disappointing, the Owlet wasn't coming out to play, although, we did see both White-naped and Lesser Golden-backed Woodpeckers.

We returned to the hotel with plenty of time to relax before dinner, which I have to say was delicious, the food, service and general cleanliness of this hotel is top class, the grounds and the swimming pool are so relaxing and pleasing on the eye. Although, before they fenced off the natural lagoons in the garden a large Mugger Crocodile was once found in the

swimming pool!

Day 8 - January 14th 2018

The 'Tanks' – Transfer to Udawalawe - visit to Udawalawe National Park

One sighting of note was made from the breakfast table, two small accipiter-like raptors circled over the hotel and those that had binoculars had good views of what was ID'd as two Besras.

Our departure at 8:30am was as scheduled, and as we missed the Jungle Owlet last night we made an effort to see the bird this morning at a second site, but this was also on private land in someone's back yard. The Jungle Owlet was there in abundance and showing well. We saw two of them but five had been noted recently, job done we set off for Udawalawe and our next hotel.

It was a relatively short drive but we made several short, roadside, stops to look at ponds or perched raptors and small birds. A Black-winged Kite was added to our list, we also saw Crested Hawk Eagle, Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea Eagle. One stop produced great views of Coppersmith Barbet, there were four of them in one tree, an amazingly colourful little bird.



We arrived at our hotel around 11:30 and arranged to meet for lunch at 1pm. What a place, a beautiful hotel, lovely rooms with views over verdant countryside and a superb swimming pool.

Most of us went for a walk before lunch to a roadside spot that overlooked the huge Uda Walawe Reservoir. We spent an hour enjoying some spectacular birds, the Indian Roller is a gem and always poses nicely for our cameras, so do the Green & Blue-tailed Bee-eaters. We saw larks, pipits, wagtails, herons, egrets, storks, munias, Prinias and parakeets. Our only new bird for the trip was a Wooley-necked Stork that circled high above us as did Booted Eagle, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Crested Hawk Eagle.

After lunch we embarked on another jeep safari, this time into Udawalawe National Park, we had a fantastic three hours there enjoying the relatively quiet tracks and a host of new species. As before the group spread themselves over two jeeps. Black-winged Kites were almost common as were Crested Hawk-Eagles but we concentrated on a few species missing from our list.

Before long we found the enigmatic Sirkeer Malkoha, two or three sightings were made of this large bird, many Prinias, Zitting Cisticolas, Bush Larks and Richards Pipits lined the track sides and the Spotted-necked Dove was so ubiquitous that we renamed it the 'Corn Bunting' of Sri Lanka!

Soon we found Jacobin Cuckoo, Brown Shrike, Coppersmith Barbet, Yellow-eyed Babbler, a fly over Grey-bellied Cuckoo and a distant Plum-headed Parakeet. Several Indian Rollers were seen and around the pools we watched egrets, storks, herons and a few common waders.

Alongside the huge reservoir ('tank') we were allowed to get off the jeep and stretch our legs, we scoped the islands where huge colonies of Indian Cormorants held a few Great Cormorants, also Night Herons and egrets. Scanning the perimeter and the dead trees in the distance we found an Osprey, two Grey-headed Fish Eagles,

White-bellied Sea Eagle, a colony of Spot-billed Pelicans and several terns including Whiskered and Little Terns.



Our journey back out of the park was just as interesting and full of quick-stops as when we came in, we had much better views of Grey-bellied Cuckoo and another shot at Sirkeer Malkoha. A bit of excitement made us all pay full attention to the scrub when another jeep ahead of us and full of tourists, spotted a Jungle Cat, unfortunately it quickly disappeared. The evening sunset was a most colourful affair, dozens of small flocks of birds scored the sky, returning to their nightly roost, like squadrons of aircraft returning to base.

Sirkeer Malkoha – by Kevin Jones

Before returning to the hotel we stopped at a farm where Saman our guide knew of a place where we could see nightjars. As it got dark we walked along dirt tracks to sugar cane fields with strings of small trees along the trackside. Within minutes we saw up to five Indian Nightjars, perched on the ground and in flight. Jerdon's Nightjar failed to show despite further searching. The clear night sky was lit up by a million stars and dozens of Fire Flies flashed their way to perches on the trees, the lack of light-pollution gave us superb views of the celestial plain above us, how romantic and quite spectacular.

A superb dinner was washed down with a cold beer, our bird-log was called, the running total for the trip is now 221, we have seen 27 endemics with 6 more to go.

Transfer - Udawalawe to Magpie Rain Forest Lodge - Sinharaja National Park

We had two pieces of excitement today, one at the beginning and one right at the end, there was not much 'action' in between. There was no planned birding trip before breakfast, so the group had a lie-in until breakfast-time at 7:30am, except for some of the group, who ventured onto the roof terrace around 6:30am.

The view from the terrace was considerable you could see the distant mountains beyond Lake Udawalawe to the west and forest, agricultural farmland and open fields in all other directions. The gardens below attracted lots of morning birds. We quickly notched up a couple of trip 'ticks' in the shape of White Wagtail and the beautiful Jerdon's Leafbird. Also around the garden was Scarlet Minivet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Black Bulbul and several others.

The excitement began when Dave and Vanda found an odd-looking bird, they called me over and we decided that it was a thrush, but which one? Even Saman could not decide, he thought initially that it was a juvenile Eye-browed Thrush but we were more inclined to see it as an immature Common Rock Thrush (although the head shape and bill length didn't look quite right), which if confirmed, is a major rarity and possible 1st for Sri Lanka.

The discussion continued over a delicious breakfast and throughout our transfer journey, watch this space. We did make a stop at the marsh just 200 meters from the hotel where around 20 species were on show, however, our search for Citrine Wagtail went unrewarded. Six species were found in one tiny pool of water: Great, Little & Intermediate Egrets, Black-headed Ibis, Painted Stork and Eurasian Spoonbill.

Although the transfer was a short distance it took a long time because the long and winding road into the mountains was very narrow. We stopped to watch a few species along the way; White-rumped Munia, Indian Black Eagle, Black-winged Kite and both Crested Hawk Eagle and Crested Serpent Eagle were seen. Our arrival at the Magpie Lodge was around 1pm just in time for lunch, perfect timing.



Lunch at Magpie Lodge

Our rooms were a far cry from luxurious but sufficient for our use, air conditioned, hot water and clean linen. All 8 rooms had access to a terrace that overlooked a feeding station, stacked with fruit it attracted; Black Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-billed Babbler, Brown-headed & Yellow-fronted Barbets, Emerald Dove, lots of Palm Squirrels and a Land Monitor.

Our afternoon birding excursion was along a nearby track, we took the bus to the beginning of the track and walked from there. It was very hot and humid, we found it very hard going. Not many birds showed up, a flock of Orange-billed Babblers, several Legg's Flowerpeckers, a couple of Velvet Nuthatches, Small Minivets, Oriental White-eye and we added another new species to our list, the Large-billed Leaf Warbler.



Brown-headed Barbet

It was just before 6pm when the last bit of excitement happened, we were sitting outside of our rooms drinking a cold beer when Saman came rushing out shouting Cuckoo. He had heard a Banded Bay Cuckoo and sure as eggs is eggs the bird flew into a dead tree and called again, we had excellent scope views of the bird before it flew off.

Dinner was served at 7:30pm and the bird-log was called an hour later. We now have 27 endemics in the bag with 6 more to find. Sinharaja Rain Forest plays host to all the endemics, we shall be visiting the forest during the next couple of days and hopefully we shall bag all of the endemics.

Day 10 - January 16th 2018

Sinharaja Rainforest National Park all day.

Up with the Lark again, but this time even before sunrise! We were loaded up onto two open-backed jeeps at 5:30am we had had tea & coffee before boarding. We drove about 7km along very bumpy tracks until we reached our destination, which was a private house and garden. The owners had been feeding birds in their back garden for years and had started to attract a number of hard-to-see species.



Grey-headed Laughing Thrush – by Kevin Jones

At 6:15 we were all assembled at various vantage points in the rear of the house and the show began with appearance of several Grey-headed Laughing-thrushes, an endemic on our 'wanted' list. These birds looked and behaved like babblers and they put on quite a show, but then our attention was drawn to a solitary figure that appeared from the shadows, it was the endemic Spot-winged Thrush.

Further down into the garden, which sloped steeply away in front of us, a Slaty-legged Crake came into view, what a colourful little chap this one was. Suddenly, the star of the show appeared, a pair of Sri Lanka Spurfowl, another endemic. These birds came right up to almost touching distance giving fantastic views, smashing! A female Junglefowl came next with two young chicks in tow, yet another endemic and the National Bird of Sri Lanka.

A group of Yellow-billed Babblers then turned up, in the meantime the cameras were clicking and the videos were being composed for various 'twitter accounts', Saman, our guide, drew our attention to calls coming

from the hedgerow at the side of the house, where, after a little patience, produced brief views of the fabulous Scimitar Babbler, which rounded up our visit to this very special place.

From there we walked further along the main track looking for our last 4 endemic species, Blue Magpie, White-faced Starling, Green-billed Coucal and Red-faced Malkoha. It was hard going in the heat and humidity, birds were few and far between but butterflies were out in full force, giving flashes of vibrant colours as they gracefully flitted by.

After a while we got glimpses of the Blue Magpie, what a bird! Over the next hour or so we had several views of this very shy but beautiful bird. The many butterflies that were on the wing were too beautiful to ignore, so we spent some time logging those and trying to photograph them.

Breakfast was eaten about 9am, stood around our jeeps and used the bonnets for tables, during breakfast we noted Lesser Goldenback Woodpecker, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Pale-billed Flowerpecker and several more species.



Blue Magpie – taken by Kevin Jones

For the rest of the morning we walked back down the track toward Sinharaja Village hoping for a sighting of the very elusive Green-billed Coucal which had called a couple of time but failed to show. We amassed quite a list of species during our search for the Coucal, with Crested and White-bellied Drongos, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Brown Headed Barbet, Oriental White-eye, Small and Scarlet Minivets, Orange-billed Babbler, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Lesser Yellownape, lots of Legg's Flowerpeckers and tons of Red-vented and Black Bulbuls.



Sri Lanka Frogmouth – the brown female is on the left

It was almost 12 noon when we finally caught up with a Green-billed Coucal, it took a lot of searching and plenty of patience for all the group to see it, but see it they did. Marvellous, we set off back to the hotel for a well-earned lunch.

For the afternoon we were taken a few kilometers up the road to a specific location to see the Sri Lanka Frogmouth, a pair sat in a tree about eye-level from the ground, we had excellent views of this strange looking bird.

Next we went back to the track we had birded this morning in the hope of more Coucal views and more Magpie sightings. We got more Magpies but not the Coucal. We only stayed an hour or so and headed back to the hotel for an early finish. Again, we sat out in front of our rooms enjoying sightings of Asian Paradise

Flycatcher, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Hooded Oriole, etc. Until, that is, a huge snake start climbing the steps towards us!! It was approx. 2.5 meters long, but it turned away once it detected our presence. Saman called it a Rat Snake, it looked as though it had just swallowed a rat with a distinctive bulge along its abdomen.

We went to dinner as usual with lots to talk about, our bird log was completed soon afterwards, it had been a good day with some interesting and hard to find birds now on our list. We have two endemics left to find, White-faced Starling and Red-faced Malkoha.

Day 11 - January 17th 2018

Goodbye to Sinharaja and Magpie Lodge – transfer to Rockview Motel.

This was our big ‘Forest-Day’, Sinharaja National Park, not only well known for harbouring most of Sri Lanka’s endemic species of birds but also as a place where general flora and fauna is so diverse, it is one of the top 25 Biodiversity Hotspots on the planet.

We had an early breakfast, loaded up the bus with our luggage (in preparation for our hotel transfer later on) and then we climbed into our jeeps for the journey to the National Park. The steep side hills were shrouded in mist and the sun, just a dull orange orb, was just breaking through the misty veil as we climbed the steep track to the park.

We made one unscheduled stop on the way up to watch a Blue Magpie which was sitting on its nest, even though we were quiet the bird flew off the nest and came over much nearer to us. We thought this was odd until the bird dropped into a garden and visited a feeding station! The bird wasn’t bothered by us at all.



Malabar Trogon - taken by Kevin Jones

Our first official stop was at the visitor’s centre where we had a good view of the surrounding hillsides it was ideal for scoping and a great place to look for the White-faced Starling, which after a short wait obliged us, how considerate of them.

First, we saw 2 birds in a very distant tree then 3 others flew into a tree much nearer to us. We observed some interesting behaviour when two of the birds began picking up ants and tucking them under their wings, it was assumed that the birds were using the ant’s formic acid to clear themselves of any parasites. A single bird was then found almost directly above us.

Before reaching the park we made one more stop near a Lodge where we searched for the Black-faced Munia which was still missing from our list. We had unsatisfactory glimpses of two birds in flight, so we left unsuccessful.

At the park we finally got out of the jeeps for a good walk, the main track from the entrance is flat and easy to walk. We had a great time walking along and finding birds every few meters, it was great birding. A local warden came with us and helped Saman to find certain species. First a Malabar Trogon was located from its call, we all saw it well a bright flash of red looking totally incongruous in the green foliage.

A small group of Brown-capped Babblers foraged in the track-side scrub, they were a superb find, such lovely little gems. Then the park warden showed us our second pair of Sri Lanka Frogmouths sitting very close to one another low in the trees down below the track.

It wasn't too long before we found our main target bird, the Red-faced Malkoha, a small party of them were high up in the canopy, they were constantly on the move and not easy to keep track of, occasionally they would show very well and everyone got to see them. **This was our final endemic species, number 33, we had achieved our goal.**



Brown-capped Babbler – another of Kevin's collection of great photos

Our bus was waiting for us at the main ticket office, we said goodbye to our jeep drivers and boarded the bus to make the short journey to our next hotel some 20km along the valley. This was a stop-gap hotel to break our journey back to the south coast where we are spending our last two nights of the tour.

We arrived just in time for lunch followed by a long siesta, it was 4pm when the group assembled for an afternoon walk. It was still hot and humid when we set out so the pace was very slow. We took a circular route on foot, up hill and down dale, it was a little strenuous in places.

Our main target bird was the Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher which we searched for along a river but it never showed. We did see White-throated Kingfisher, several Sri Lanka Hill Mynas, lots of Crested Treeswifts, Sri Lanka Swallows, Brown Shrike, Green & Blue-tailed Bee-eaters and lots more.

It was just getting dark when we returned to the hotel, dinner was taken at 7:30pm. The bird-log was looking a little bit bereft of species but it contained a lot of quality. We have now seen 237 species including all the endemics! What we have left is the 'Whale-Watching' extension to the tour so not much birding will be done, except out at sea and a short visit to a marshland site tomorrow.

Day 12 - January 18th 2018

Transfer to the south coast near Marissa

Most of the day was spent travelling, having lunch and then a long siesta. We travelled down from the highlands between 8:30 and 12:30 noting a few species along the way, mainly birds of prey and herons, egrets and storks in the rice fields. Bee-eaters, Kingfishers, Doves and Bulbuls were seen on the power lines and telephone wires.

We had lunch at 1:30pm and then met up at 3pm for our only birding excursion of the day. It took 45 minutes to get to Kiralakale Marshland Sanctuary and it was well worth it. The place was dripping with birds all over the marshes.

We stopped at the main pool area where a concrete causeway bisects the marsh and where we had panoramic views on both sides of us, it took an hour before we moved, it was that good. Herons, Egrets, Swampheens, Watercocks, Waterhens, Ibis, Storks and plenty of small birds. Black-winged Stilts were the only waders on view and Lesser Whistling Ducks were the only duck species.



White-bellied Sea Eagles and Brahminy Kites flew over on a regular basis putting all the ducks and stilts up in the air. Just before we left the causeway some of the group saw an Indian Thick-knee and a Shikra flew right over the top of us.

Our next stop produced a new bird for the trip, as we sighted a Peregrine Falcon that sat near the top of a pylon, nice one. Further stops failed to produce more new birds but we enjoyed listing a good number of other species. Four species of Kingfishers, Pied, Common, Stork-billed and White-throated

were all very nice to see, so were Richards Pipits, Plain Prinia, Common Tailorbird and Zitting Cisticola.

We had to leave at 6pm just as the light was getting too bad to see much and the mosquitos helped us make our decision to leave.

We got back to the hotel at 7pm and met up for a delicious dinner at 8pm. An early night was called for as we are meeting up at 5:15am tomorrow in preparation for our Whale-Watching pelagic.

Day 13 - January 19th 2018

Whale- watching Pelagic from Marissa

This pelagic would round off our tour as we do not plan to go birding afterwards today and there will be no time tomorrow, so this is it!



Spinner Dolphin in action – captured by Kevin Jones

It was another early start, we met at 5:15 am in the foyer where we collected our picnic breakfast before boarding the bus for the 30-minute ride to Marissa.

All went well at the reception area of the Whale-watching offices in Marissa we were giving tea and coffee before we boarded our boat with about 20 other people, about 20 other boats were also making ready to depart. In the harbour we noted many terns, mainly Gull-billed and Whiskered, we even notched up another species for the list in the shape of a Striated Heron which flew in and perched on a jetty nearby.

The weather was just perfect, a calm sea, a hazy sky and no wind! We had only been sailing for 15 minutes when we saw our first BLUE WHALE! It was about 50 meters to our right and it blew twice before submerging never to be seen again.

A pair of Green Turtles then grabbed our attention, they were mating on the surface of the water not far from where the whale was sighted, they were having a whale of a time!

From then on we had a series of distant sightings of 'blows' and a couple of good views of BLUE WHALES but it was a pod of SPINNER DOLPHINS that entertained us for the next hour. They were terrific, about 50 all told and they performed their spinning jumps for our cameras, if you were quick enough. What a lovely experience. We also saw Flying Fish in small numbers and large Jelly Fish in big numbers but it was whales that we were after.



The back of a Blue Whale – photo by Kevin Jones

The sea and sky were devoid of birds so all we had to look for was whales and over the next 2-3 hours we caught up with another 4-5 animals, all were BLUE WHALES. A pattern of behaviour developed, we would see a 'blow' and approach it, the beast would surface a couple of times and then a final show before it dived. Blue Whales do not flip up their tails when diving you just see them arch a little higher before submerging. Well, we were out there for 6 hours and everyone was completely satisfied, it had been a great trip, the nice weather helped tremendously.

Back at the hotel for a late lunch we all then relaxed for the rest of the day before meeting for dinner at 7pm. The tour was over, we had seen all of our target birds and amassed a total of 240 species, 19 species of mammals and a host of butterflies which we are still working on.

Sri Lanka is a magical place to visit, the scenery is outstanding, the people are lovely and the wildlife is both diverse and plentiful.

Come and join us next year. January 13th – 26th 2019

LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED BETWEEN:

10TH – 26TH JANUARY 2016 = COLUMN A 7TH – 20TH JANUARY 2018 = COLUMN B

SPECIES MARKED IN GREEN = ENDEMIC

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	A	B		
1.	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	X	X		
2.	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>	X	X		
3.	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayettii</i>	X	X		
4.	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	X	X		
5.	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	X	X		
6.	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	X	X		
7.	Northern Pintail	<i>Anus acuta</i>	X			
8.	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	X	X		
9.	Painted Stork	<i>Mcyteria leucocephala</i>	X	X		
10.	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	X	X		
11.	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	X	X		
12.	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	X	X		
13.	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>		X		
14.	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	X	X		
15.	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	X	X		
16.	Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	X	X		
17.	Black Bittern	<i>Dupetor flavicollis</i>	X	X		
18.	Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	X	X		
19.	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	X	X		
20.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	X	X		
21.	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	X	X		
22.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X	X		
23.	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	X	X		
24.	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	X	X		
25.	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	X	X		
26.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	X	X		
27.	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	X	X		
28.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	X	X		
29.	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	X	X		
30.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	X	X		
31.	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	X	X		
32.	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	X	X		
33.	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnuculus</i>	X	X		
34.	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Peregrino</i>	X	X		
35.	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	X	X		
36.	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	X	X		
37.	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	X	X		
38.	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	X	X		
39.	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	X	X		
40.	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	X	X		
41.	Besra	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>	X	X		

	SPECIES	Scientific name	A	B		
42.	Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	X	X		
43.	Himalayan Buzzard	<i>Buteo burmanicus</i>		X		
44.	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	X	X		
45.	Indian Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	X	X		
46.	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	X	X		
47.	Rufous-bellied Eagle	<i>Laphotriorchis kienerii</i>	X	X		
48.	Crested Hawk Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>	X	X		
49.	Legg's (Mountain) Hawk	<i>Nisaetus kelaati</i>		X		
50.	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	X	X		
51.	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	X	X		
52.	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	X	X		
53.	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	X	X		
54.	Watercock	<i>Gallicrex cinera</i>	X	X		
55.	Indian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oedinemus indicus</i>	X	X		
56.	Great Stone Curlew	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>	X	X		
57.	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	X	X		
58.	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	X	X		
59.	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	X	X		
60.	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	X	X		
61.	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	X	X		
62.	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	X	X		
63.	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	X	X		
64.	Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	X	X		
65.	Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	X	X		
66.	Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	X	X		
67.	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	X	X		
68.	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	X			
69.	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	X			
70.	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	X			
71.	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	X	X		
72.	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	X	X		
73.	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	X	X		
74.	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	X	X		
75.	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	X	X		
76.	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	X	X		
77.	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	X	X		
78.	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	X			
79.	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	X			
80.	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>		X		
81.	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	X	X		
82.	Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola lactea</i>	X	X		
83.	Brown-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus</i>	X	X		
84.	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	X	X		
85.	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	X	X		
86.	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	X	X		
87.	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandwicensis</i>	X	X		
88.	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	X	X		
89.	Common Tern	<i>Sternula hirundo</i>	X			
90.	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	X	X		
91.	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	X	X		
92.	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopteryx</i>	X	X		
93.	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	X	X		

	SPECIES	Scientific name	A	B		
94.	Sri Lanka Woodpigeon	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>	X	X		
95.	Spotted-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia torringtoniae</i>	X	X		
96.	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decacoa</i>		X		
97.	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	X	X		
98.	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>	X	X		
99.	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>	X	X		
100.	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>	X	X		
101.	Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot		X	X		
102.	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	X	X		
103.	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	X	X		
104.	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	X	X		
105.	Layard's Parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthorpae</i>	X	X		
106.	Banded Bay Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i>		X		
107.	Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	X	X		
108.	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>	X			
109.	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>	X	X		
110.	Grey-bellied Cuckoo	<i>Cacaomantis passerinus</i>	X	X		
111.	Drongo Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>		X		
112.	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	X	X		
113.	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>	X	X		
114.	Red-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>	X	X		
115.	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>		X		
116.	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	X	X		
117.	Green-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus chlororhynchos</i>	X	X		
118.	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>	X	X		
119.	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	X	X		
120.	Serendib Scops-Owl	<i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>	X	X		
121.	Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	X	X		
122.	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	X	X		
123.	Chestnut-backed Owlet	<i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>	X	X		
124.	Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>	X			
125.	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	X	X		
126.	Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	X	X		
127.	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>	X	X		
128.	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	X	X		
129.	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	X	X		
130.	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronate</i>	X	X		
131.	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	X	X		
132.	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	X	X		
133.	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	X	X		
134.	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaultia</i>	X	X		
135.	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	X	X		
136.	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	X	X		
137.	Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx erthaca</i>	X			
138.	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	X	X		
139.	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	X	X		
140.	Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>	X	X		
141.	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	X	X		
142.	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	X	X		
143.	Yellow-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>	X	X		
144.	Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>	X	X		
145.	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	X	X		

	SPECIES	Scientific name	A	B		
146.	Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>	X	X		
147.	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracosceros coronatus</i>	X	X		
148.	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>	X	X		
149.	Lesser Yellow-nape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	X	X		
150.	Lesser Goldenback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	X	X		
151.	Crimson-backed Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>	X	X		
152.	White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>	X	X		
153.	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta Bracyura</i>	X	X		
154.	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>	X	X		
155.	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	X	X		
156.	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	X	X		
157.	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>	X	X		
158.	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	X	X		
159.	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	X	X		
160.	Marshall's Iora	<i>Aegithina nigrolutea</i>	X			
161.	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>	X	X		
162.	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	X	X		
163.	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	X	X		
164.	Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa ornate</i>	X	X		
165.	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	X	X		
166.	Large-billed Crow/Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	X	X		
167.	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	X	X		
168.	Barn Swallow	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	X	X		
169.	Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo (tahitica) domicola</i>	X	X		
170.	Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis (daurica) hyperythra</i>	X	X		
171.	Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	X	X		
172.	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	X	X		
173.	Sri Lanka Drongo	<i>Dicrurus lophorhinus</i>	X	X		
174.	Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>	X	X		
175.	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		X		
176.	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	X	X		
177.	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	X			
178.	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	X	X		
179.	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	X	X		
180.	Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godleswkii</i>		X		
181.	Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>		X		
182.	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafr affinis</i>	X	X		
183.	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	X	X		
184.	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>	X	X		
185.	Black-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>	X	X		
186.	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	X	X		
187.	Yellow-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>	X	X		
188.	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	X	X		
189.	Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>	X	X		
190.	Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	X	X		
191.	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	X	X		
192.	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>	X	X		
193.	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>	X	X		
194.	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	X	X		
195.	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	X	X		
196.	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	X	X		
197.	Sri Lanka Bush Warbler	<i>Elaphornis palliseri</i>	X	X		

	SPECIES	Scientific name	A	B		
198.	Clamorous Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>	X	X		
199.	Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus</i>	X	X		
200.	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>		X		
201.	Large-billed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>	X	X		
202.	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	X	X		
203.	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	X	X		
204.	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone</i>	X	X		
205.	Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>	X	X		
206.	Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>	X	X		
207.	Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>	X	X		
208.	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>	X			
209.	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>	X	X		
210.	Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>	X	X		
211.	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	X	X		
212.	Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>	X	X		
213.	Sri Lanka Hill Myna	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>	X	X		
214.	Lesser Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	X	X		
215.	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	X	X		
216.	White-faced Starling	<i>Sturnus albofrontatus</i>	X	X		
217.	Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	X	X		
218.	Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	X	X		
219.	Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>	X	X		
220.	Pied Thrush	<i>Zoothera wardii</i>	X	X		
221.	Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>		X		
222.	Spot-winged Thrush	<i>Zoothera spiloptera</i>	X	X		
223.	Sri Lanka Thrush	<i>Zoothera (dauma) imbricata</i>	X	X		
224.	*Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>		X		
225.	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>	X	X		
226.	Indian Blue Robin	<i>Luscinia brunnea</i>		X		
227.	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	X	X		
228.	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	X	X		
229.	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>	X	X		
230.	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	X	X		
231.	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	X	X		
232.	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>	X	X		
233.	Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula subrubra</i>	X	X		
234.	Dull-blue Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>	X	X		
235.	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	X	X		
236.	Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	X	X		
237.	Legg's Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>	X	X		
238.	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	X	X		
239.	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	X	X		
240.	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	X	X		
241.	Loten's Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	X	X		
242.	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	X	X		
243.	Sri Lanka White-eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>	X	X		
244.	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	X	X		
245.	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	X	X		
246.	Streaked Weaver	<i>Ploceus manyar</i>	X			
247.	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	X	X		
248.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X	X		
249.	Indian Silverbill	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	X	X		

	SPECIES	Scientific name	A	B		
250.	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	X	X		
251.	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	X	X		
252.	Black-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>	X	X		
253.	Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	X	X		
			238	240		
	<i>*Common Rock Thrush – pending verification from the Sri Lanka rarities committee this is a potential first for the country, found by Vanda and Dave Owen at the Centauria Hotel, Udawalawe on January 14th.</i>					

	BUTTERFLIES		A	B		
1.	Plain Tiger	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	X	X		
2.	Common Indian Crow	<i>Euploea core asela</i>		X		
3.	Ceylon Tree Nymph	<i>Idea iasonia</i>		X		
4.	Dark Evening Brown	<i>Melanitis phedima tambra</i>		X		
5.	Common Palmfly	<i>Elymnias hypermnestra fraternal</i>		X		
6.	Common Bushbrown	<i>Mycalesis perseus typhlus</i>		X		
7.	Medus Brown	<i>Orsotriaena medus mendata</i>		X		
8.	White Four-Ring	<i>Ypthima ceylonica</i>		X		
9.	Chocolate Soldier	<i>Junonia iphita pluvialis</i>		X		
10.	Lemon Pansy	<i>Junonia lemonias vaisya</i>		X		
11.	Peacock Pansy	<i>Junonia almana almana</i>		X		
12.	Grey Pansy	<i>Junonia atlites</i>		X		
13.	Common Sailor	<i>Neptis hylas varmona</i>		X		
14.	Common Lascar	<i>Pantoporia hordonia sinuata</i>	X	X		
15.	Clipper	<i>Parthenos sylvia cyaneus</i>		X		
16.	Pale Four Lineblue	<i>Nacaduba hermus sidoma</i>		X		
17.	Common Lineblue	<i>Prosotas nora ardates</i>		X		
18.	Dark Cerrulean	<i>Jamides bochus bochus</i>		X		
19.	Common Cerrulean	<i>Jamides celeno tissama</i>	X	X		
20.	Hampson's Hedge Blue	<i>Acytolepis lilacea moorei</i>		X		
21.	Lime Blue	<i>Chilades lajus lajus</i>		X		
22.	Psyche	<i>Leptosia nina nina</i>		X		
23.	Lemon Emigrant	<i>Catopsilia pomona</i>	X	X		
24.	Blue Mormon	<i>Papilio polymnestor parinda</i>		X		
25.	Common Banded Peacock	<i>Papilio crino</i>		X		
26.	Crimson Rose	<i>Pachliopta hector</i>		X		
27.	Common Birdwing	<i>Troides darsius</i>	X	X		
28.	Hedge Hopper	<i>Baracus vittatus vittatus</i>		X		
29.	Plain Orange-tip	<i>Colotis eucharis</i>	X			
30.	Common Emmigrant	<i>Catopsilla crocale</i>	X	X		
31.	Pea Blue	<i>Lampides boeticus</i>	X			
32.	Common Grass Yellow	<i>Eurema hecabe</i>	X	X		
33.	Small Grass Yellow	<i>Eurema briaitta</i>	X	X		
34.	Chestnut Streaked Sailor	<i>Neptis iumbah</i>	X			
35.	Cruiser	<i>Vindula erota</i>	X			
36.	Nigger	<i>Orsotriaena medus</i>	X			
37.	Lime Butterfly	<i>Papilio clyria</i>	X			
38.	Crimson Rose	<i>Atrophaneura hector</i>	X			
39.	Common Mormon	<i>Papilio polytes</i>	X			
40.	Tree Nymph	<i>Idea lynceus</i>	X	X		
41.						

DAMSELFLIES recorded in Jan 2018					
42.	English Name	Scientific Name			
43.	Shining Gossamerwing	<i>Euphaea splendens</i>			
DRAGONFLIES					
44.	English Name	Scientific Name			
45.	Asian Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum glaucum</i>			
46.	Asian Pintail	<i>Acisoma panorpoides</i>			
47.	Orange-Winged Groundling	<i>Brachythemis contaminata</i>			
48.	Oriental Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis servilia servilia</i>			
49.	Plain Tiger	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>			
50.	Common Indian Crow	<i>Euploea core asela</i>			
51.	Ceylon Tree Nymph	<i>Idea iasonia</i>			
52.	Dark Evening Brown	<i>Melanitis phedima tambda</i>			
53.	Common Palmfly	<i>Elymnias hypermnestra fraternal</i>			
54.	Common Bushbrown	<i>Mycalopsis perseus typhlus</i>			
55.	Medus Brown	<i>Orsotriaena medus mendata</i>			
56.	White Four-Ring	<i>Ypthima ceylonica</i>			
57.	Chocolate Soldier	<i>Junonia iphita pluvialis</i>			
58.	Lemon Pansy	<i>Junonia lemonias vaisya</i>			
59.					
60.					
61.					

MAMMALS			A B			
1.	Common flying fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus giganteus</i>	X	X		
2.	Ceylon fruit bat	<i>Rousettus seminudus</i>	X	X		
3.	Ceylon Grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus priam thersites</i>	X	X		
4.	Purple-Faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Trachypithecus vetulus vetulus</i>	X	X		
5.	Bear Monkey	<i>Trachypithecus vetulus monticola</i>	X	X		
6.	Toque Monkey	<i>Macaca sinica sinica</i>	X	X		
7.	Mountain Toque Monkey	<i>Macaca sinica pithomelas</i>	X	X		
8.	Ceylon Black-Naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis singhala</i>	X	X		
9.	Western Ceylon Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum favonicus</i>	X	X		
10.	Ceylon Dusky-Stripped jungle Squirrel	<i>Funambulus sublineatus obscurus</i>	X	X		
11.	Highland Ceylon Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura macroura</i>	X	X		
12.	Western Ceylon Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura melanochra</i>	X	X		
13.	Highland Ceylon Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum olympius</i>	X	X		
14.	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>	X	X		
15.	Ceylon Jackal	<i>Canis aureus lanka</i>	X	X		
16.	Ceylon Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus inornatus</i>	X			
17.	Common Ceylon Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsi lanka</i>	X			
18.	Ceylon Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithi zeylanicus</i>	X	X		
19.	Striped-Necked Mongoose	<i>Herpestes vitticollis</i>	X	X		
20.	Ceylon Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus kelaarti</i>	X			
21.	Ceylon Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus lankae</i>	X	X		
22.	Ceylon Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus maximus</i>	X	X		
23.	Indian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa cristatus</i>	X	X		
24.	Ceylon Spotted Deer	<i>Axis axis ceylonensis</i>	X	X		
25.	Sambhur	<i>Cervus unicolor unicolor</i>	X	X		
26.	Indian Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus bubalis bubalis</i>	X	X		
27.	Small Indian Civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>		X		
28.						

REPTILES

1.	Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>	X	X		
2.	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	X	X		
3.	Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>	X	X		
4.	Land Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>	X	X		
5.	Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard	<i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i>	X			
6.	Indian Golden Gecko	<i>Calodactylodes aureus</i>	X			
7.	Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	X			
8.	Black-lipped Lizard	<i>Calotes nigrilabris</i>	X			
9.	Sri Lanka Green Pit Viper	<i>Trimeresurus trigonocephalus</i>	X			
10.	Green Forest Lizard	<i>Calotes calotes</i>		X		
11.	Oriental Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>		X		
12.	Common Rat Snake	<i>Ptyas mucosa</i>		X		