



Field Guides Tour Report

Bhutan 2017

Apr 8, 2017 to Apr 27, 2017

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



The excitement of arriving in Bhutan: flying into Paro on Druk Air, the high peaks of the Himalaya visible in the background, a Bhutanese monastery on a foreground ridge, and a journey birding through Bhutan starting as soon as you land. Photo by guide Richard Webster.

Bhutan in 2017 was again wonderfully rewarding for birds, rhododendrons, breathtaking vistas, and cultural richness. The tour ran smoothly and we were able to explore all the planned remote corners (Bhutan is rich in remote corners—a full exploration would take a long time and some long hikes).

Among the marquee birds, we did well, seeing such stars as Ibisbill, Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, and Ward's Trogon. We did even better with the host of birds that don't get top billing, but elicited just many raves as some of the stars. In particular, we savored our views of Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, Hoary-throated Barwing, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, Spotted Elachura, Great and Fulvous Parrotbills, Broad-billed Warbler, and Black-headed Shrike-Babbler. As always, we did miss some special birds, including the typically tough White-bellied Heron and Beautiful Nuthatch, and we would have been very pleased if Fire-tailed Myzornis and Fire-tailed Sunbird had stayed around longer.

Some other exciting encounters included the cooperative Black-tailed Crakes, the sharp Speckled Wood-Pigeons, the energized Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, such a close Collared Owlet with its false face pattern, Great Hornbills investigating that hole that was too small for them (why?), the endless chorus of cuckoos and barbets, any and all minivets, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, close views of Chestnut-headed Tisia, the visual and vocal qualities of Pale-blue Flycatcher, the 'water-redstarts' in habitat, close Collared Grosbeaks, and small groups of Scarlet Finches.

Particular mention should be made of the babblers. Although modern genetics have divided them up into multiple families now, they are still a largely cohesive assemblage, and one of the most impressive radiations in form in the bird world. Several have already been listed, and we further enjoyed

Himalayan Cutia, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Silver-eared Mesia, Red-tailed and Chestnut-tailed minlas, and Rusty-fronted Barwing. The good and bad laughingthrushes were sought, and while one remained heard only and another was fleeting, we did very well, and were particularly fortunate to have great views of the typically skulking Rufous-chinned, Gray-sided, and Scaly.

We see few mammals in Bhutan, although one of them, Golden Langur, is attractive, common, and nearly an endemic. Other mammal highlights included a close Goral, an oblivious-to-us (for a while) Himalayan Palm Civet, and a lovely Yellow-throated Marten.

One of our highlights was a good display of rhododendrons this spring, better than average on several of the passes. Bhutan has around 40 species, and many were in bloom, mostly red, but also pink and pale yellow. And not just bushes, but also some impressive rhododendron trees in full bloom on Phrumseng (Thrumshing) La.

Our weather was better than average. The first part of the trip was marked by much sunshine, which was good for mountain views and raptors (Black Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle), although suppressing the bird activity on some days. The second half had more ‘weather,’ including some rain, but we lost less birding time than normal, did not have heavy rain while camping, and were treated to a different Bhutan, one draped in clouds and often dramatically beautiful, even if no high peaks were in view.

For the second year in a row, our trip was affected by Bhutan’s binge of road construction. It seemed like much more, but in reality only three days were majorly affected, although much of those three days became a slow, bumpy ride. And one of those days was not helped by that vehicle that broke down in a one-lane section! We did enjoy our birding near Zhemgang, now on the old road, thanks to a new road already in use bypassing one of our favorite areas.

A trip to the remote Himalaya would not run smoothly were it not for the efforts of many, starting in the offices in Austin, New Delhi, and Thimphu, and continuing with all those who helped in the field, including Khandu, Chador, Kaka, Boto Namgay, and Sangay.

This checklist is based on the Clements (Cornell) list, with additional taxonomic comments and some of the host of alternative names. Anglicized Bhutanese names are not standardized, but the ones here should be close enough! Conservation status is drawn from the publications of BirdLife International.

--Richard

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

LESSER WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna javanica*) – We had good looks (twice) at one in flight around the Gelephu sewage ponds. Common on the plains of Assam, limited coverage of the limited habitat in Bhutan means that a bird like this is a rarity, potentially new to the country.

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – We saw five along the Puna Tsang Chhu near Punakha; this stretch of river was, as usual, our primary source of our typically limited set of ducks and shorebirds.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – One was along the Puna Tsang Chhu near Punakha. [b]

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*) – A handful were near Punakha, and two specks were in the rice near Gelephu. [b]

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – One near Punakha. [b]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

HILL PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila torqueola*) – A common voice from the forest floor, heard on more than half of the days of the trip. We made one effort, but did not get a glimpse; this genus is much more difficult than the pheasants. [*]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila mandellii*) – This scarce and local bird was heard regularly above Yongkola. It is considered “Vulnerable.” [*]

RUFEOUS-THROATED PARTRIDGE (*Arborophila rufogularis*) – Heard several times in the Tingtibi area. [*]

RED JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus gallus*) – We had two along the road the morning we headed from camp toward Zhemgang. Rare for the tour, but not at all rare in Bhutan. Wild birds occur in many forests, but are less often seen than, for instance, Kalij Pheasant. The two we saw looked like wild birds, and were well away from any apparent habitation.

BLOOD PHEASANT (*Ithaginis cruentus*) – We did very well with this stunning bird, starting on Chele La, and continuing on Phrumseng La, where rainy weather brought them out during the middle of the day as we were driving through the park. Great views of a bird that usually exceeds expectations.

HIMALAYAN MONAL (*Lophophorus impejanus*) – We did well but not super well with this beauty. A male on Chele La moved from the ground to a tree, providing long, distant views. Some folks had quick views of a female later that morning, running off as we walked down the road. Another male was on Pele La, but walked off fairly quickly, and an even quicker one was on Sheytang La.

SATYR TRAGOPAN (*Tragopan satyra*) – A tragopan bonanza this year, starting with two separate males on Pele La (lengthy views), three more from the bus on a cool, damp transit of Phrumseng La, and a quick female for Patricia below Sengor. Again, the guide wanted to put a couple in the bank for the future. It is considered “Vulnerable.”

KALIJ PHEASANT (*Lophura leucomelanos*) – Several good views from the bus, first along the Mo Chhu (whiter melanota), then above Yongkola and both sides of Zhemgang (blackier lathami, with white scaling on the lower back).

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – One wintering bird remained along the river near Punakha.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*) – One in alternate plumage along the Puna Tsang Chhu above Wangdi Phodrang on 12 April was a rarity for Bhutan, rarer in some ways than the White-bellied Heron for which we were looking, but much less exciting!

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Debbie and Patricia saw one flying over Gelephu's paddies.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Good views of one in a paddy outside of Gelephu; rare in Bhutan.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – Several were in the Gelephu area.

CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Debbie and others saw one near Gelephu.

INDIAN POND-HERON (*Ardeola grayii*) – Common in paddies near Gelephu; many were in lovely breeding plumage.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

RED-NAPED IBIS (*Pseudibis papillosa*) – Two were seen in flight around the rice paddies near Gelephu; good views twice. Potentially new to Bhutan (not in several books), certainly rare in Bhutan, and an uncommon, albeit widespread bird, in India. a.k.a. (Indian) Black Ibis.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – Debbie pointed out an odd, pale raptor perched below Tingtibi; our eventual impression was that it was a young honey-buzzard, an ID that David & Judy's photographs continue to support. Another was spotted by Kathy on our way back across DoChu La. A late migrant, most probably reach Bhutan after our typical tour dates.

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON (*Gyps himalayensis*) – We saw a couple dozen in flight in the Pele La area, a few of them close (this is a huge bird!), and also saw a few very distant ones on the ground in the nearby Phobjika Valley. This area is often the only place we see them. It is considered "Near Threatened."

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – We had three sightings, including excellent views of a perched bird above Yongkola.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – About eight, a good total, thanks to the sunny weather the first half of the tour, the sunny weather that was good for raptors and not so good for activity in the forests. Particularly nice was a perched bird near Zhemgang, its crest standing tall.

RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*) – This uncommon raptor was seen by part of the group near Trongsa; an immature in flight.

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) – As with Mountain Hawk-Eagle, a good total, around a dozen, including several making passes through the forest, hunting from low heights.

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – A speck was seen above Paro, in the telescope for just one or two. This is a rarity for the tour; it is resident in Bhutan, but mostly lives in the really high Himalaya beyond the roads.

CRESTED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter trivirgatus*) – One of this large accipiter was seen soaring in Phrumsengla N.P.

SHIKRA (*Accipiter badius*) – Elena spotted a perched adult and probable immature below Tingtibi. Not rare in Bhutan, but a lower elevation species of which we have seen few on our route.

BESRA (*Accipiter virgatus*) – A close, brief view of one in flight on the west side of Pele La.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) – We had a couple of good views our first day near Paro, including one perched, followed by several 'accipiter sp.' that were likely this species.

HIMALAYAN BUZZARD (*Buteo refectus*) – One was at our Sengor camp, Patricia getting many in the group caught up on it the next morning; another was on the other side of Phrumseng La as we returned. Buteos in this region are in a state of nomenclatural, taxonomic, and systematic chaos; and your guide is not expert (and wonders if anyone really is on this subject!). Clements now splits Himalayan Buzzard from Common Buzzard; Clements uses *B. refectus*, but some regard '*refectus*' as an invalid name, and use '*burmanicus*' instead. Rasmussen and Anderton do not seem to recognize the presence of '*japonicus*' Eastern Buzzard in the region, but many books do (all *burmanicus*?). Anyway, both birds we saw are typical of Himalayan.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BLACK-TAILED CRAKE (*Zapornia bicolor*) – We were delighted to find a very responsive pair near Paro, where we had repeated views at close range.

Ibidorhynchidae (Ibisbill)

IBISBILL (*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*) – Chador and Khandu spotted one along the Par Chhu as we left the airport, the fastest we have ever found this specialty. We saw several more the next day farther downstream, and a distant one near Punakha. Overall, several excellent views of this monotypic family.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

RIVER LAPWING (*Vanellus duvaucelii*) – Elena was excited to find her own lifer near Paro, and we had good looks at a few more there and then many more along the river at Punakha. It is considered "Near Threatened."

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*) – We saw a few in the rice paddies near Gelephu.

KENTISH PLOVER (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) – One along the Puna Tsang Chhu on 12 April was a scarce migrant in Bhutan. As split from Snowy Plover of the Western Hemisphere.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*) – Several were in the rocky river bed of the Puna Tsang Chhu above Wangdi Phodrang.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucus*) – Migrants were fairly common along the Puna Tsang Chhu. [b]

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – David spotted one along the Par Chhu below Paro. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – While much purer than those of our towns, this is still a feral population, not the real Rock Pigeon. [I]

SNOW PIGEON (*Columba leuconota*) – We saw a large flock feeding in a fresh field well below us on Sheytang La, then enjoyed views of the striking pattern when they flew.

SPECKLED WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba hodgsonii*) – We usually see this bird, but never know where it will be. This year it was excellent views of two that Elena pointed out at close range, joining other birds in feeding on the ground near a building on Yutong La.

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Common and widespread; seen nearly daily.

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Fairly common in disturbed areas, seen mostly at lower elevations than the turtle-dove.

BARRED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia unchall*) – We had excellent views of a half dozen feeding in a fruiting tree below DoChu La, and briefer views of a few near Tingtibi and on Darachu.

ASIAN EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*) – We saw a couple of birds in the road below our Tingtibi camp. a.k.a. Green-winged Pigeon.

PIN-TAILED PIGEON (*Treron apicauda*) – Spotted first by Marc, we ended up with several good views (more than normal) above the Mangde Chhu below Tingtibi. a.k.a. Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon.

WEDGE-TAILED PIGEON (*Treron sphenurus*) – Our first was a fantastic view before breakfast on Pele La West; perched and close. A few more were heard or seen briefly above Yongkola, near Kosha La, and above Tingtibi.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*) – Our first was perched above Tingtibi, and was followed by several more on Darachu.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

CHESTNUT-WINGED CUCKOO (*Clamator coromandus*) – A great bonus--a distant, calling bird responded in spectacular fashion, coming a long way, and arriving with a vocal torrent, erected crest, and flashing wings, showing the chestnut. A show from a bird we often don't even hear.

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) – Heard distantly at Gelephu. [[*](#)]

ASIAN EMERALD CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx maculatus*) – Debbie and Kathy spotted a perched bird that fled the moment the telescope was trained on it and Debbie spotted another below Zhemgang.

BANDED BAY CUCKOO (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) – Heard near Tingtibi. [[*](#)]

SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*) – One responded eventually, and provided telescope views. The taxonomy of these is varied, and some of the underlying facts not nailed down. The birds in Bhutan have square tails, and as treated by Clements, are "Square-tailed," but some other regional experts still lump them. a.k.a. Asian Drongo-Cuckoo.

LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx sparverioides*) – Common by voice, including during the night outside of Trogon Villa. It was nice to start the tour with a bird in the open below DoChu La, and then just listen to them, although we did end up seeing a couple more below Zhemgang.

INDIAN CUCKOO (*Cuculus micropterus*) – We heard one near Tingtibi, and had it in the telescope a long, long way away; David saw it sing, confirming our speck belonged to the voice.

HIMALAYAN CUCKOO (*Cuculus saturatus*) – Heard on a majority of days, and starting below DoChu La, we saw several birds. As split from Oriental Cuckoo, that name now used for populations breeding in NE Asia.

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*) – We saw a singing bird on DoChu La, part of our three-cuckoos-seen day there, and heard a few during the rest of the trip.

Strigidae (Owls)

COLLARED OWLET (*Glaucidium brodiei*) – We had been making zero progress converting distant voices into a visual, but Steve solved that problem wonderfully well by spotting one in a tree below eye level and close to the road below Zhemgang. Excellent!

ASIAN BARRED OWLET (*Glaucidium cuculoides*) – Heard above Tingtibi. [[*](#)]

HIMALAYAN OWL (*Strix nivicolum*) – Heard distantly from the Sengor camp. [[*](#)]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

GRAY NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus jotaka*) – One flushed from the road as we ascended Chele La in the dark, and landed ahead of us, staying put for a good view in the headlights. Also heard by some at Kosha La camp. As split from Jungle Nightjar.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – About ten were in high-speed flight with other swifts over the ridge just above Trogon Villa; a returning spring migrant.

HIMALAYAN SWIFLET (*Aerodramus brevirostris*) – Groups were seen foraging over the forest on several ridges, first above the Mo Chhu.

BLYTH'S SWIFT (*Apus leuconyx*) – Seen on over half of the tour days. It was most numerous above the Mo Chhu, but reasonably common throughout. Several were seen entering crevices on cliffs, presumably nesting there. This is one of the splits of Fork-tailed Swift.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

WARD'S TROGON (*Harpactes wardi*) – One of the prizes of the tour was the good views we had in forest on DoChu La. The response was slow, but it was a nice response. Having succeeded early in the tour, we did not try again, nor did we hear or see any by chance. It is considered "Near Threatened."

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Debbie found one near Paro, David pointed one out in the Phobjika Valley, and two more were at the Trongsa Dzong.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

GREAT HORNBILL (*Buceros bicornis*) – We started out with a great show as birds inspected a cavity in a tree along the road above Tingtibi, and then enjoyed the evening and morning show of 15+ moving to and from a roost near our Tingtibi camp. It is considered "Near Threatened."

RUFOUS-NECKED HORNBILL (*Aceros nipalensis*) – We saw them on five days, and heard more, and so can't complain, but we never did have one perch below us at close range, the real photo shot kind of view. This regional specialty is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of under 7,000.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – David spotted one along a backwater of the Po Chhu.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – This stunning 'land kingfisher' was seen near Punakha, below Tingtibi, and near Gelephu. a.k.a. White-breasted Kingfisher.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER (*Nyctyornis athertoni*) – A couple of pairs above Yongkola were seen well; this forest bee-eater is often less cooperative.

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*) – This lowland bee-eater was seen on our drippy afternoon birding excursion at Gelephu.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

INDIAN ROLLER (*Coracias benghalensis*) – We had one in our evening foray to the paddies near Gelephu.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

GREAT BARBET (*Psilopogon virens*) – Heard daily in the broadleaf forests, and seen regularly; many good views. a.k.a. Hill Barbet, Great Hill Barbet.

GOLDEN-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon franklinii*) – Another common barbet voice in the forests, and like Great, seen regularly, starting with the bird David pointed out working on its nest cavity on Pele La.

BLUE-THROATED BARBET (*Psilopogon asiaticus*) – A bird of the foothills, where heard daily, and seen several times.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

YELLOW-RUMPED HONEYGUIDE (*Indicator xanthocephalus*) – After missing it at one traditional spot, two other sites came through, and we had good views of birds perched near the impressive combs of Giant Rock Bees. We also had a real surprise, a single bird perching in forest canopy away from bees (though only a km or so from one of the sites). It is considered "Near Threatened," with no estimate of the population.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

WHITE-BROWED PICULET (*Sasia ochracea*) – After much fishing in the bamboo below Tingtibi, we stumbled into one by chance, and then had good views of it—a real cutie—after playback.

RUFEOUS-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*) – We had good views of several on DoChu La, and heard a couple more. Known as Rufous-bellied Sapsucker in some old Indian books, it does make sap wells in neat rows just like North American sapsuckers.

CRIMSON-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos cathpharius*) – A couple of birds were seen above Yongkola, and a couple more at Darachu.

DARJEELING WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos darjellensis*) – We saw a pair on Chele La our first full day.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus*) – Two sightings, one of a bird that flew into roadside shrubbery just a couple of meters from us.

GREATER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus flavinucha*) – Seen briefly on Pele La, then better views of one with a hole below Zhemgang.

GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Picus canus*) – Debbie located a bird that was responding to playback on Kosha La, and we had another below Zhemgang. a.k.a. Gray-faced Woodpecker.

BAY WOODPECKER (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) – A frequently-heard voice in the forest, this species can be difficult to see well. We eventually did have good looks at a responsive pair near our picnic spot above Yongkola, and some saw another near Tingtibi.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – A sprinkling across Bhutan; never common.

Eurylaimidae (Asian and Grauer's Broadbills)

LONG-TAILED BROADBILL (*Psarisomus dalhousiae*) – Frustrating! We twice heard birds vocalizing spontaneously, and could not locate them, or get them to respond. [**]

Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – Seen regularly at lower elevations, first at Kosha La, then several times in the Tingtibi-Zhemgang stretch, and then at Darachu.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

GRAY-CHINNED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus solaris*) – This minivet was fairly common in broadleaf forests at middle elevations, especially above Yongkola.

SHORT-BILLED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus brevirostris*) – Widespread in small numbers.

LONG-TAILED MINIVET (*Pericrocotus ethologus*) – Unusually scarce, with just a handful seen, usually at higher elevations than the others. Of course there were also some 'minivet sp.' as these stunning birds must be seen well to be identified.

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus speciosus*) – Although overlapping a couple of the others, this minivet is the common one at lower elevations.

BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Lalage melaschistos*) – Quite common by voice, and seen regularly in the forest canopy.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – We saw a few, generally on the lower slopes in disturbed areas.

GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius tephronotus*) – Seen almost daily at upper elevations, with a few lower around Tingtibi. One at Darachu was carrying a small Skink.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-HEADED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius rufiventer*) – One of our prizes, a bird we do not see on some tours; after only hearing one, we found a responsive bird above Yongkola, and had good views of this regional specialty.

BLYTH'S SHRIKE-BABBLER (CHESTNUT-WINGED) (*Pteruthius aeralatus validirostris*) – After hearing several, we had a series of good views of the rather different males and females. This is part of the split of White-browed Shrike-Babbler.

BLACK-EARED SHRIKE-BABBLER (*Pteruthius melanotis*) – Small numbers were seen regularly with mixed flocks or in response to Collared Owlet fuss sessions.

WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS (*Erpornis zantholeuca*) – We had good views of a pair along the Mo Chhu, and saw the species again at Kosha La and on Tama La. Genetic studies have shown that this species is not a babbler but a shrike-babbler, and hence related to the vireos. f.k.a White-bellied Yuhina.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

MAROON ORIOLE (*Oriolus traillii*) – The rich voice was frequently heard in tall forest, and birds were seen on most days.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) – One near the Lobesa, and many around lowland Gelephu.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – This is the common drongo of Bhutan, occurring to quite high elevations for a drongo, and throughout most of the broadleaf forest.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Quite common toward the foothills, especially around Tingtibi.

LESSER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus remifer*) – At least three sightings, all of which were dramatic, but brief, as the birds flew past.

HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO (*Dicrurus hottentottus*) – Numbers are quite variable year to year, and we had only a couple, and those were somewhat brief or distant.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis*) – Regular in the forest understory.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*) – This pan-Asian species tends to be quite local, and once again they were common on DoChu La, but missing most everywhere else, with just a couple others seen on Pele La.

YELLOW-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE (*Urocissa flavigularis*) – Seen on all of the high passes, with good views of the elaborate tail pattern. a.k.a. Gold-billed Magpie.

GRAY TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta formosae*) – Our first were along the Mo Chhu, and they were then common in the Zhemgang to Tingtibi region.

EURASIAN MAGPIE (BLACK-RUMPED) (*Pica pica bottanensis*) – This species is local in Bhutan, largely restricted to the Bumthang Valleys, where we saw them commonly from the bus, and at a couple of stops near Ura. As split from Black-billed Magpie of North America; note the subspecies of this isolated population.

EURASIAN NUTCRACKER (SOUTHERN) (*Nucifraga caryocatactes macella*) – Common, conspicuous (noisy), and much enjoyed on all of the high passes. a.k.a. Spotted Nutcracker.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – First seen around Paro, and then regularly in the upper elevation valleys, including around a couple of our hotels.

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – David and Judy saw them in Thimphu, and the species was common around our hotel in Gelephu.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Daily throughout Bhutan. Almost all of our 'camp followers' were *C. m. tibetosinensis* of the *macrorhynchos* group. After further review, the bird we discussed at lunch above Gelephu was *C. m. levaillantii*, Eastern Jungle Crow, treated as a separate group by Clements, and split in some other lists, as by the IOC.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A few migrants were seen along the rivers at Paro and Punakha. [b]

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A few were seen along the river at Punakha (perhaps boreal migrants) and others on Tama La after lunch (perhaps local breeders).

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – We saw several with other swallows near Punakha.

ASIAN HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon dasypus*) – We saw a flock of about 15 as we were admiring the Tiger's Nest Monastery above Paro.

NEPAL HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon nipalense*) – Seen on four days, our best came at a breeding site on the steep cliffs above Namling. Some were flying in tight squadrons of 4-6 birds, presumably some sort of courtship behavior.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

YELLOW-BELLIED FAIRY-FANTAIL (*Chelidorhynx hypoxantha*) – Scarce this year, or just running late in their upslope migration. We finally started seeing small numbers as we returned over Phrumseng La on our way back, and had some good views of this small fantail. Formerly put next to the other fantails, genetic studies have shown that it belongs in the small family of Fairy Flycatchers, with scattered species in Asia and Africa.

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Common by voice in the wet forests, and good views of this small, active flycatcher came with time (seen on six days).

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

FIRE-CAPPED TIT (*Cephaloporus flammiceps*) – Kathy spotted the small birds on the bare twigs on DoChu La and Pele La, and in both cases they vanished promptly thereafter.

YELLOW-BROWED TIT (*Sylviparus modestus*) – Uncommon this year, with just a few (though good) looks at the minimal field marks a couple of times.

SULTAN TIT (*Melanochlora sultanea*) – Distant but still plenty exciting: One pair near Zhemgang.

COAL TIT (HIMALAYAN) (*Periparus ater aemodius*) – Common in the mixed-conifer forests of all of the passes. Note the subspecies/group.

RUFOUS-VENTED TIT (*Periparus rubidiventris*) – One of the less common tits, but small numbers were seen well on four passes.

GRAY-CRESTED TIT (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – Like Rufous-vented, widespread in small numbers.

GREEN-BACKED TIT (*Parus monticolus*) – A daily pleasure.

YELLOW-CHEEKED TIT (*Machlolophus spilonotus*) – Three encounters produced good views of this striking bird.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BLACK-THROATED TIT (*Aegithalos concinnus*) – This relative of American Bushtit was seen in small numbers on most days in mid-elevation broadleaf forest.

BLACK-BROWED TIT (*Aegithalos iouschistos*) – Scarce in recent years and again this year, with just a few on Pele La and Sheytang La. a.k.a. Rufous-fronted Tit.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH (*Sitta cinnamoventris*) – We found a couple of pairs of this colorful nuthatch near Tingtibi. Note that this montane taxon has been split from Indian Nuthatch of the peninsula.

WHITE-TAILED NUTHATCH (*Sitta himalayensis*) – Fairly common at middle elevations. a.k.a. The Wretchedly Wrong Nuthatch. It was not their fault, but we were searching for Beautiful Nuthatches, and these birds kept getting in the way.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

HODGSON'S TREECREEPER (*Certhia hodgsoni mandellii*) – After missing them at our usual area, we were fortunate to find a pair on Phrumseng La. This is a recent split of Eurasian (Common) Treecreeper, *C. familiaris*.

RUSTY-FLANKED TREECREEPER (*Certhia nipalensis*) – Another save on Phrumseng La, a pair that was very responsive to fishing.

SIKKIM TREECREEPER (*Certhia discolor*) – Our most common treecreeper, seen in broadleaf forest on five days, including the one that Marc pointed out below Sengor, and including the singing bird that sounded like a nuthatch to your guide on a moving bus, who apologizes again for the dashed hopes! This is one of the splits of the former Brown-throated Treecreeper.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

BROWN DIPPER (*Cinclus pallasii*) – We all saw a pair at Chhuzom, where they were evidently nesting (Steve saw an adult carrying a fecal sac), and David saw it again along the Mo Chhu.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbs)

STRIATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus striatus*) – This species seemed especially common (or vocal); a striking bird.

BLACK-CRESTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus flaviventris*) – One pair below Tingtibi.

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – A common upward colonist of disturbed valleys.

WHITE-THROATED BULBUL (*Alophoixus flaveolus*) – We saw them several times around Tingtibi, including right in camp.

BLACK BULBUL (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*) – Common in many areas over quite a range of elevations and habitats, although oddly scarce in the Yongkola area.

ASHY BULBUL (*Hemixos flavala*) – A few were seen near Tingtibi, including, eventually, a couple well.

MOUNTAIN BULBUL (*Ixos mcclellandii*) – One of our last new birds, on our way down from Darachu.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – Steve pointed out a pair in the conifers of Sheytang La.

Pnoepygidae (Cupwings)

SCALY-BREASTED CUPWING (*Pnoepyga albiventer*) – One of Elena's highlights, her first Cupwing. We had a really good look below Sengor, even in the telescope, at a very responsive bird. Genetic studies of the babblers showed that overall the babblers were a cohesive group, but there were a half dozen big exceptions, and the wren-babblers were one--two families have been split out from the wren-babblers, one of them the Pnoepygidae, or Cupwings (named for the rounded, 'cup-shaped' wings).

Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

GRAY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia cyaniventer*) – Below Namling. [★]

SLATY-BELLIED TESIA (*Tesia olivea*) – Several heard, and one seen by part of the group above Yongkola.

CHESTNUT-HEADED TESIA (*Cettia castaneocoronata*) – Our best Tesia, a very responsive individual of this skulker, and a lovely one, that gave repeated views below Namling. Genetic studies have shown that this Tesia belongs in a different genus than the others.

YELLOW-BELLIED WARBLER (*Abroscopus superciliaris*) – This warbler with a lovely song was seen well in the bamboo below Tingtibi.

RUFOUS-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus albogularis*) – Grrr--perhaps the first time we haven't seen it; heard well below Tingtibi. [★]

BLACK-FACED WARBLER (*Abroscopus schisticeps*) – This attractive, tiny warbler, is a regional specialty, and was seen regularly in the cool broadleaf forests.

MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD (*Phylloscopus cucullatus*) – We had good views below Namling as a bird responded nicely; more were heard nearby. Another re-organized species thanks to modern genetics: Shaped like a tailorbird, but not a tailorbird, it has been moved a couple families away from the real tailorbirds.

BROAD-BILLED WARBLER (*Tickellia hodgsoni*) – This was a good encounter, as a very responsive bird gave a fine showing. This is a local specialty and a monotypic genus that we do not see every year.

BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis fortipes*) – After several partial successes, a very responsive bird that emerged for all.

HUME'S BUSH-WARBLER (*Horornis brunneascens*) – We were perhaps a little early for birds singing back on the breeding grounds (none heard); a few folks saw one briefly on Phrumseng La, one that was responding to a general mob scene. As split from Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – Small numbers were seen periodically, perhaps working their way upslope toward the breeding grounds.

BUFF-BARRED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus pulcher*) – Good views of a few on several of the high passes, several with rhododendron pollen on their throats. a.k.a. Orange-barred Warbler.

ASHY-THROATED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maculipennis*) – Regular on all of the passes. One of the easier Phylloscopus to identify. As with the others, the common name has at times been "_____ Leaf-Warbler."

PALE-RUMPED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*) – Somewhat local, but common enough on Sheytang La and nearby Phrumseng La. As split from Pallas's Warbler and formerly known as Lemon-rumped Warbler.

HUME'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus humei*) – Elena saw this species on Chele La. Various small warblers of the Yellow-browed/Hume's type were seen in several areas, but were not seen well enough (or heard at all), to separate these migrants/winterers.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – One or two above Tingtibi and on Tama La.

BLYTH'S LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus reguloides*) – One of the most common (and vocal, establishing territories on the breeding grounds) leaf-warblers.

YELLOW-VENTED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus cantator*) – This somewhat local bird is usually a lifebird for everyone. After missing them along the Mo Chhu, we had good looks a couple of times below Zhemgang and near Tingtibi.

GRAY-HOODED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*) – Another common breeding warbler, seen or heard on a majority of days.

GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus burkii*) – Seen well along the Mo Chhu, on Pele La W, and above Yongkola. The original Golden-spectacled was split five ways, also including Whistler's in Bhutan. This one breeds in broadleaf forest below Whistler's habitat of treeline scrub. a.k.a. Green-crowned Warbler.

WHISTLER'S WARBLER (*Seicercus whistleri*) – The upper elevation breeding species of the Golden-spectacled group, we saw our first on DoChu La, with more on Pele La and Phrumseng La.

WHITE-SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Seicercus affinis*) – We had good looks at one in broadleaf forest on the wet (eastern) side of DoChu La.

GRAY-CHEEKED WARBLER (*Seicercus poliocephalus*) – There were several encounters between Namling and Yongkola in Phrumsengla N.P., and the species was seen again on Tama La.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED WARBLER (*Seicercus castaniceps*) – This little beauty was widespread in broadleaf forests, although never numerically common.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – One near Kosha La.

STRIATED PRINIA (*Prinia crinigera*) – We worked on one in the scrub below Trongsa (remember, the ultimate bush stop!).

BLACK-THROATED PRINIA (*Prinia atrogularis*) – A responsive bird had very good views of us, too, above Yongkola!

Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrentit, and Allies)

FIRE-TAILED MYZORNIS (*Myzornis pyrrhoura*) – Glass half full, glass half empty, as at least we found this erratic, unpredictable species, but unfortunately they did not stay long enough to be savored by all on Yutong La.

GOLDEN-BREASTED FULVETTA (*Lioparus chrysotis*) – This uncommon beauty was savored at length, as we enjoyed a very responsive pair near Namling. Note that the fulvettas are now to be found in several genera in three different families.

WHITE-BROWED FULVETTA (*Fulvetta vinipectus*) – Common, tame, and confiding on the higher passes; a much enjoyed species.

GREAT PARROTBILL (*Conostoma aemodium*) – Heard only as a first encounter, we returned to do better, and were rewarded with an excellent look at this large denizen of the bamboo.

BROWN PARROTBILL (*Cholornis unicolor*) – The bamboo on DoChu La had seeded and died, but we still manage to find a flock of about ten, and have repeated good looks.

PALE-BILLED PARROTBILL (*Chleuasicus atrosuperciliaris*) – We eventually did find this parrotbill in the bamboo near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill.

FULVOUS PARROTBILL (*Suthora fulvifrons*) – One of our prizes was a responsive troop in bamboo, with good views from close approaches. We have seen this parrotbill on less than a third of the tours.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

STRIATED YUHINA (*Yuhina castaniceps*) – Several encounters with small groups below Tingtibi were generally fleeting.

WHITE-NAPED YUHINA (*Yuhina bakeri*) – This species can be uncommon, but this year we bumped into more than normal, with sightings on four days below Zhemgang and on Tama La. It took a while, but good looks were had by all of this regional specialty.

WHISKERED YUHINA (*Yuhina flavicollis*) – Common, seen on a majority of days, with many more heard.

STRIPE-THROATED YUHINA (*Yuhina gularis*) – Fewer than in the good old days (but why?), but still a series of sightings on the high passes, many showing a dusting of rhododendron pollen on the head.

RUFOUS-VENTED YUHINA (*Yuhina occipitalis*) – Also scarcer than normal on the high passes, but also seen on all of them, with repeated good looks at the bird most of us want to call 'Rufous-naped' Yuhina.

BLACK-CHINNED YUHINA (*Yuhina nigrimenta*) – Uncommon, with small groups seen on four days, perhaps best above Tingtibi.

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Scattered sightings of small numbers.

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

GOLDEN BABBLER (*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*) – Probably fairly common based on voice, with regular sightings in the undergrowth of wet forest, with some excellent views above Yongkola and on Tama La.

RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER (*Cyanoderma ruficeps*) – Regularly heard and periodically seen, overlapping with Golden, but occurring higher as well.

RUFOUS-THROATED WREN-BABBLER (*Spelaeornis caudatus*) – We had a responsive bird above Yongkola, and Khandu spotted it on its song perch, giving everyone a chance for a lengthy, good look at the singing bird. It is considered "Near Threatened."

SLENDER-BILLED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus superciliaris*) – One of several birds that seem to be scarcer as Bhutan's bamboo dies or thins (Black-throated Parrotbill is another). Despite much fishing, none except the one David and Judy saw at our lodging below Punakha, a bird still in its wintering habitat.

STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus ruficollis*) – We had good views of this attractive babbler on DoChu La and saw another one near Namling; others were heard.

RUSTY-CHEEKED SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Megapomatorhinus erythrogenys*) – We had good views, even in the telescope, of one in scrub below Trongsa, and heard them regularly, often in the evening, near several of our hotels.

GRAY-THROATED BABBLER (*Stachyris nigriceps*) – Our second attempt produced a responsive bird that was seen well below Zhemgang.

Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

WHITE-HOODED BABBLED (*Gampsorhynchus rufulus*) – Chador called our attention to a small group of adults with juveniles in the large bamboo near Tingtibi. As split from Collared Babbler of SE Asia; a.k.a. Indian White-hooded Babbler.

YELLOW-THROATED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus cinereus*) – These distinctive little birds were fairly common in the shrubbery along the roadsides above Yongkola and below Zhemgang; several close studies.

RUFOUS-WINGED FULVETTA (*Schoeniparus castaneiceps*) – Another species that seems scarcer of late; only about four seen, one of them finally providing good views.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

NEPAL FULVETTA (*Alcippe nipalensis*) – This fulveta was fairly common in the understory of broadleaf forest at three sites.

STRIATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Grammatoptila striata*) – A very different laughingthrush and one of the "good" ones. This jay-like bird occurred in small groups in the sub-canopy, and was heard frequently and seen regularly throughout the middle elevations.

HIMALAYAN CUTIA (*Cutia nipalensis*) – Our first ones got away rapidly, but we then had several fine encounters with this great bird, which looks and acts like a lovely, large nuthatch (Yongkola, Zhemgang, and Tama La).

JUNGLE BABBLED (*Turdoides striata*) – We saw a couple of small groups in disturbed areas around Gelephu (a bird of the plains of India).

WHITE-CRESTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax leucolophus*) – Somewhat arboreal, these are fairly good laughingthrushes; seen both sides of Zhemgang.

LESSER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax monileger*) – Something of a heard only--we saw them crossing a small valley, but the ID was mostly on voice. These are so similar to Greater, that a good look is needed.

RUFOUS-CHINNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla rufogularis*) – One of the potentially bad laughingthrushes, we had perhaps our best set of views ever, first along the Mo Chhu, then at an amazing bird that hopped out to the road edge on evening above Yongkola.

SPOTTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ocellata*) – Another potentially bad laughingthrush, this magnificent bird was seen well our first full day on Chele La, even in the telescope (albeit with a few twigs in front of it).

GREATER NECKLACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla pectoralis*) – We saw them around Tingtibi, even right by camp. Although so similar to Lesser, genetic studies have placed them in different genera (some type of mimicry??).

WHITE-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla albogularis*) – One of the very best of laughingthrushes, occurring in flocks at this time of year, and happily coming out into the open.

RUFOUS-NECKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla ruficollis*) – These can be awful, and they were not easy, but most managed to get a decent to good look on the several occasions that we saw them.

GRAY-SIDED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Ianthocincla caeruleata*) – Another potentially bad laughingthrush, we were very fortunate to have a surprisingly cooperative little group on the west side of Pele La.

BHUTAN LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron imbricatum*) – One of the not-too-bad laughingthrushes, we saw them four or five times, including a very cooperative one that David pointed out above Namling. A split from Streaked Laughingthrush; a.k.a. Bhutan Streaked Laughingthrush, perhaps the closest thing that Bhutan has to an endemic.

SCALY LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron subunicolor*) – A bad one we don't see every year, but a star this year. The first encounter was with bad ones that provided quick views for some, but our second was with a bird that ended up calling from a sapling, providing lengthy views above Namling. Excellent!

BLUE-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron squamatum*) – Reality took over with this one, a bad one, heard only on a couple of occasions. [*]

BLACK-FACED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron affine*) – If you pursue them, they can be bad, but they are common enough that with time one simply ends up with some good views, as we did on several high passes.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*) – Likewise, bad tendencies, but common enough and with patience good views occur several times during the tour, for us including our last morning of birding on Darachu. This species has been split several ways, with the one we saw retaining the old name, while others from SE Asia have new names.

RUFOUS SIBIA (*Heterophasia capistrata*) – A common bird of the broadleaf forests, often heard and frequently seen.

SILVER-EARED MESIA (*Leiothrix argentauris*) – A lovely bird, one of the prettiest babblers; seen by all after several encounters in the Zhemgang area.

RED-BILLED LEIOTHRIX (*Leiothrix lutea*) – Again, several encounters, with several chances for good views, e.g., our last morning on Darachu.

RED-TAILED MINLA (*Minla ignotincta*) – This species was still in winter flocks near Yongkola and on Tama La, meaning that finding them was a boom or bust cycle. Good views in the end.

RED-FACED LIOCICHLA (*Liocichla phoenicea*) – A bad laughingthrush in shape and behavior, we had a couple of encounters with varying views, while hearing the lovely song at length.

HOARY-THROATED BARWING (*Actinodura nipalensis*) – Fortunately we had good views early on, because after that we heard them and did not see them, at least well, again, despite some effort.

RUSTY-FRONTED BARWING (*Actinodura egertoni*) – This barwing was more numerous than Hoary-throated, and we had a half dozen good encounters.

BLUE-WINGED MINLA (*Actinodura cyanouroptera*) – Many of our views were of birds in the canopy and they looked pretty dull (and are somewhat dull), but late in the trip we had a couple in shrubbery on a steep bank, and realized that there are some nice features.

CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA (*Actinodura strigula*) – This is a fancy bird, and after a several less than optimal encounters, we had several looks that showed off the many intricate plumage details. a.k.a. Bar-throated Siva.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – Migrants were headed north, and we had several small waves of birds, first along the Mo Chhu, then several times in Phrumseengla N.P. a.k.a. Siberian Flycatcher.

FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa ferruginea*) – Another migrant, of which we had one as we dropped down Darachu the last full day.

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*) – A sprinkling of sightings of this widespread lowland bird that has colonized many settled valleys, e.g., around Trogon Villa.

PALE BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis unicolor*) – Judy got us on a singing bird near Zhemgang, one of the most beautiful in Bhutan for a combination of song and plumage.

BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – We had good views of one below Tingtibi. a.k.a Blue-throated Blue-Flycatcher.

LARGE NILTAVA (*Niltava grandis*) – After a series of birds that were seen by some or heard by all, we had excellent views of a singing bird above Yongkola.

SMALL NILTAVA (*Niltava macgrigoriae*) – We had a couple above the Mo Chhu, and then had an excellent look and listen (well, for those who still have high-range hearing!) above Yongkola and again near Tingtibi.

RUFOUS-BELLIED NILTAVA (*Niltava sundara*) – We had great views of several below DoChu La and had a couple of quicker encounters near Namling.

VERDITER FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – A common and conspicuous beauty, seen on most days, usually on a high, exposed perch, singing away.

LESSER SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx leucophrys*) [*]

BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH (*Myophonus caeruleus*) – Almost daily, the big, bounding birds bouncing off the road in front of the bus. With time, many good views of the subtle patterns. This species seems to sing before first light, and was heard singing only from our rooms at Gongkhar Lodge and in Paro.

LITTLE FORKTAIL (*Enicurus scouleri*) – Several historical spots came up dry, but then another one was wet (well, they all were!--they like waterfalls and torrents) and productive--Yeshev Zam. After quick views by the lunch table, David refound them below the bridge, and we had long views of a pair feeding along the edge of the waterfall.

SPOTTED FORKTAIL (*Enicurus maculatus*) – Views were brief off the left side of the bus, but one was seen by some along a forest rivulet.

SLATY-BACKED FORKTAIL (*Enicurus schistaceus*) – With patience, good views along a tributary of the Mo Chhu.

BLUE-FRONTED ROBIN (*Cinclidium frontale*) – We heard its beautiful song, but this master skulker was not seen at all near Namling. [*]

HIMALAYAN BLUETAIL (*Tarsiger rufilatus*) – Breeders had returned to the high passes, and we had good views of a couple on Chele La, and heard a few more, e.g., Sheytang La.

WHITE-BROWED BUSH-ROBIN (*Tarsiger indicus*) – Some of our best views ever of a bird that is less than annual; one below Phrumseng La that ended up standing on the road.

SLATY-BLUE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula tricolor*) – A female was watched foraging in shrubbery below the road above Yongkola; an altitudinal migrant still on the wintering grounds.

PYGMY BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hodgsoni*) – Both male and female of this small flycatcher were seen with a mob in the canopy of forest below DoChu La.

RUFOUS-GORGETED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula strophiata*) – This flycatcher was working its way from the wintering grounds to the breeding grounds, with small numbers daily on the higher passes, and we also encountered one little push of migrants above Namling.

LITTLE PIED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula westermanni*) – Small numbers were seen regularly on the lower slopes--above Yongkola, near Tingtibi.

ULTRAMARINE FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula superciliaris*) – Fairly common in broadleaf forest at middle elevations, averaging higher on the slopes than Little Pied.

BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – Some had returned to the breeding grounds around treeline, including our first morning on Chele La, with a few still on the wintering grounds, such as clearings lower down.

PLUMBEOUS REDSTART (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Common along rushing rivers, primarily in the first half of the tour. a.k.a. Plumbeous Water-Redstart.

WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Less numerous than Plumbeous, but equally (or more) widespread. A striking bird that was much enjoyed. a.k.a. White-capped Water-Redstart, River Chat.

HODGSON'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – A common winterer, most had apparently departed; we only saw a couple, the best a male along the Par Chhu below Paro.

CHESTNUT-BELLIED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola rufiventris*) – Many were back on the breeding grounds in upper elevation forest; we had good looks at both the showy male and the striking (and very different) female.

BLUE-CAPPED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) – Our first was on Pele La at our breakfast spot, and then as we reached lower elevations we found them to be fairly common in the Tingtibi area.

SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN) (*Saxicola maurus maurus*) – One male, a migrant, was seen on Yutong La. One of several species resulting from the split of Common Stonechat. [b]

GRAY BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola ferreus*) – Always in small numbers, but regularly seen.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

TICKELL'S THRUSH (*Turdus unicolor*) – Brief views for one or two of a male at Darachu; an uncommon migrant.

WHITE-COLLARED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus albocinctus*) – Regularly encountered on the higher passes.

GRAY-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Turdus boulboul*) – A few were seen in broadleaf forest at middle elevations, first at the Queens' Botanic Garden, also near Zhemgang and on Darachu.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus atrogularis*) – It was probably our coldest morning, but as we shivered a little on Chele La we managed views of both this and the next, a wintering flock feeding in junipers. Depending on your list, "Dark-throated" Thrush has been split into Black-throated and Red-throated (the two hybridize a little in Siberia). [b]

RED-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus ruficollis*) – We also had telescope views of a couple of this taxon on Chele La. [b]

Sturnidae (Starlings)

ASIAN PIED STARLING (*Gracupica contra*) – A few were in the rice paddies outside Gelephu; a bird of the plains.

CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING (*Sturnia malabarica*) – We stopped to view a small group above Wangdi Phodrang.

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Common at lower elevations in the disturbed valleys.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis hardwickii*) – In small numbers, but regular in broadleaf forest, e.g., near Tingtibi and above Yongkola.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

PLAIN FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum minullum*) – A couple seen below Tingtibi matched their name quite well.

FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum ignipectus*) – Fairly common in the forest canopy; with time, more views and better views were obtained.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

FIRE-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga ignicauda*) – A disappointment as our only encounter (on Phrumseng La) was very brief, a pair that melted away.

BLACK-THROATED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga saturata*) – Common at low and middle elevations. This species often just looks dark, but in the right light or at the best angle there are some lovely purple and maroon highlights.

GOULD'S SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga gouldiae*) – Fewer than in some years, but enough to enjoy repeat views of this beauty. Named for the long-suffering Elizabeth Gould, John Gould's spouse; hence, a.k.a., Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, or Ms. Gould's Sunbird by us.

GREEN-TAILED SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga nipalensis*) – Common, seen on most days of the tour; another beauty.

CRIMSON SUNBIRD (*Aethopyga siparaja*) – Short (but vivid) views of a couple near Tingtibi.

STREAKED SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera magna*) – A handful were seen, first below Zhemgang, later near Tingtibi and on Tama La; definitely a crowd favorite.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

RUFOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR (*Prunella strophiata*) – Our one accentor; wintering birds were still fairly common and we had some good looks. (A couple of other species we sometimes see may already have departed.) [b]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

CITRINE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla citreola*) – Debbie got us on one along the Par Chhu and then there was another, a stunning bird in breeding plumage, right next to it. This is an uncommon to rare migrant in Bhutan. [b]

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Small numbers, as usual mostly in culverts along the road below Zhemgang and on other outer ridges. [b]

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – Most numerous along the Par Chhu and Puna Tsang Chhu; we saw the local breeding subspecies *albooides* (one migrant bird of another subspecies was too far off to resolve).

WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) – A bird of the plains, a few move up Bhutan's rivers, and we were lucky to find a couple along the Puna Tsang Chhu.

ROSY PIPIT (*Anthus roseatus*) – At this time of year wintering birds are headed for higher territory. We had a couple, the first a quick, close bird near Paro, the second briefly on Chele La.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Breeding birds had returned to the high passes where we saw them perched on the top of prayer flags poles, doing flight songs, and so forth. Small groups of migrant or wintering birds were also along forested roads on the outer ridges.

Elachuridae (Spotted Elachura)

SPOTTED ELACHURA (*Elachura formosa*) – We have had trouble with this bird in a few years, so it was great to have several singing spontaneously, and to get gradually better (ultimately excellent) looks. One of the more startling revelations of modern genetic research on birds is that this species, long treated as a wren-babbler, is (as a simple metric) four or more pages beyond the other wren-babblers (and cupwings). It is a monotypic family without close relatives.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

LITTLE BUNTING (*Emberiza pusilla*) – We saw a couple of remaining wintering birds above Paro. [b]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte nemoricola*) – This species was in good numbers this year, as usual often in traveling flocks that disappear around the corner, but also some that stayed put, including a small flock that fed near our picnic table on Phrumseng La.

BROWN BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula nipalensis*) – Our only encounter was 'briefly for a few' above Namling.

RED-HEADED BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*) – Several sightings (Pele La, Phrumseng La), with good views of both female and male plumages.

HIMALAYAN BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus pulcherrimus*) – Generally uncommon and not seen every year, we were pleased to find a flock of about ten on Sheytang La, including one nicely pink male.

DARK-RUMPED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus edwardsii*) – We found two females on our way down into the Phobjika Valley.

HIMALAYAN WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus thura*) – We saw a female on Chele La and a male and a female on Yutong La. As with the Himalayan Bluetail, now split into a Himalayan and Chinese species.

SCARLET FINCH (*Haematothraupis sipahi*) – After a few brief or distant females, our best spot was near Zhemgang, where we had good looks at both sexes.

YELLOW-BREASTED GREENFINCH (*Chloris spinoides*) – David and Judy saw this species outside their room at the Lobesa Hotel.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*) – Generally missed on this tour, we had several large flocks on Sheytang La and a couple more in flight on Phrumseng La.

TIBETAN SERIN (*Serinus thibetanus*) – Patricia found a couple below Zhemgang, and shortly thereafter a flock appeared only to vanish moments later.

COLLARED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas affinis*) – This beauty got away quickly on Chele La and Sheytang La, but luckily we had yet one more encounter on Phrumseng La, and had good looks.

SPOT-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas melanozanthos*) – We saw a foraging flock on Pele La West.

WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas carnipes*) – Typically the easiest of these grosbeaks, and it was again this year, with some good views on several of the high passes.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

RUSSET SPARROW (*Passer rutilans*) – Common in the higher agricultural areas.

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Common, mostly at lower and middle elevations, but also overlapping some with Russet Sparrow.

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA (*Lonchura striata*) – A small flock landed on the road shoulder below Tingtibi; good views, but there was much else going on at the time!

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Steve and Debbie saw them at the Lobesa.

MAMMALS

ASSAMESE MACAQUE (*Macaca assamensis*) – Widespread, seen every few days, often right along the road.

GOLDEN LANGUR (*Presbytis geei*) – The specialty mammal of the tour, not quite an endemic (just gets into India), but almost one, and fortunately common and easily viewed in the Tingtibi-Zhemgang region. We had multiple fine encounters this year.

LEAF MONKEY SP. (*Presbytis pileata*) – Capped Langur. We found one troop above Yongkola, and had some nice looks.

PIKA SP. (*Ochotona roylei*) – Royle's Pika. Pikas were seen regularly, generally near or at treeline. Multiple species of pika occur in Bhutan; this is the most common and widespread species and is typical of where we saw them, but we can't be sure of what we had.

IRAWADDY SQUIRREL (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) – We saw a half dozen or so near Tingtibi. a.k.a. Hoary-bellied Squirrel.

HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL (*Tamiops mcclellandii*) – Like a speedy chipmunk, we saw a number dashing along the limbs of forest trees.

HIMALAYAN GROUND-SQUIRREL (*Dremomys lokriah*) – A regularly seen squirrel, this name seems a poor one, because they are usually in trees. The alternative, Orange-bellied Squirrel, is only somewhat better; the belly does not seem especially orange!

HODGSON'S GIANT FLYING SQUIRREL (*Petaurista magnificus*) – Good job, Debbie! Too bad we don't really know what it was! What Debbie spotted was a mammal sleeping in a hole near Yongkola, and we reached a general comfort level it was a large flying squirrel, but it was hard to tell

what body parts we were seeing and what the exact pattern was. We have identified this species before, and it is described as having a black stripe down the upperparts and a black tip to the tail, but others, such as Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel, *P. nobilis*, have not been excluded.

YELLOW-THROATED MARTEN (*Martes flavigula*) – David got our attention as one of this striking marten made a quick appearance as it crossed the road near Zhemgang.

MASKED PALM CIVET (*Paguma larvata*) – We have seen this species a couple of times before, but not like this! It started out as a challenge to see on the bank of a rushing river, but by the time it was running across a Bailey Bridge toward us, it was getting ridiculous (when it finally did become aware of us, that was the end of the show). Great views, but a challenge to photograph.

MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER) (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – Often just a "heard only," this year part of the group saw one dash across a track on Pele La, and we all had views from the bus of two on a steep bank above us.

COMMON GORAL (*Nemorhaedus goral*) – One on Pele La on a roadcut cliff was about as close as we have ever been, although it remedied that fairly quickly.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

There is far more than we can list adequately, from orchids to beautiful butterflies like Paris Peacocks.

Mention will be made of:

bat spp.

Yaks, domestic only

Karma, the rehab Black-necked Crane

Cows and more cows, but particularly the herd going past lunch on their 25-day journey from Zhemgang to Bumthang! Note that the Mithun Khandu identified in some places (Gayal; *Bos frontalis*) is a separate lineage from most "cattle," semi-domesticated in this region.

Totals for the tour: 299 bird taxa and 12 mammal taxa