



Field Guides Tour Report

Southern India 2012: Western Ghats Endemics

Nov 11, 2012 to Dec 2, 2012
Terry Stevenson

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

Our November 2012 South India tour not only found virtually all the endemic and near-endemic birds, but also had the pleasure of working with some great local guides, enjoyed fabulous weather and, perhaps most importantly, featured a wonderful group of keen, friendly, and fun-loving birders.

As usual our tour began in Bangalore with the short drive south to Kokkare Bellur, where Spot-billed Pelicans had arrived rather earlier than usual and many were already at their nests right within the village. We also enjoyed Red-naped Ibis, our first Black-rumped Flameback, and White-rumped Munias here before we continued on to the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary near the city of Mysore. And, as usual, it was a great place to see many of South India's more widespread waterbirds -- including (wandering) Asian Openbill and the elegant River Tern.

The following day found us heading south to the famous Nagarhole National Park, with several stops along the way at a local park, some flooded fields, and a couple of roadside pools. What a wonderful place India is -- where within just minutes one can see women in their colorful saris, an unbelievable variety of painted vehicles, beautifully decorated cows, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, and the endemic White-checked Barbet -- wow!

During two full days at Nagarhole we were joined by local guide Afsar, whose relaxed and pleasant guiding style led us to numerous herds of Spotted Deer, several Sambar, Gaur (the world's largest bovine), Common Langur, and some close encounters with Asian Elephant. The birding was (of course) also fabulous and varied from Jerdon's Leafbird and Indian Pitta in the garden to Gray Junglefowl and Yellow-footed Pigeon beside the seasonal pools. Crested Serpent-Eagle, Malabar Pied-Hornbill, and White-bellied Woodpecker were some of the forest highlights, while we found the endemic Malabar Lark in the farmlands, and White-rumped Needletail and Indian Swiftlets flew overhead.

We then headed to Mudumalai and a three-night stay at the 'Birder's Lodge' Jungle Hut. Accompanied by South India expert Sathyan Meppayur we soon found the extremely localized and endemic Gray-headed Bulbul, but there were also many other great birds -- from Jungle Bush-Quail and Yellow-wattled Lapwing to Malabar Parakeet, the secretive Blue-faced Malkoha, Malabar Gray Hornbill, White-naped Woodpecker, gorgeous Scarlet (Orange) Minivets, Asian Fairy-Bluebird, Indian Blue Robin, our first Malabar Whistling-Thrush and, during a late evening walk, Jerdon's Nightjar.

Continuing on, we climbed the Nilgiri Hills and based ourselves at the Taj Savoy Hotel -- and what a pleasure it was, from the comfort of this historic establishment to the nearby sholas (remnant forest patches) where endemic Rufous-breasted Laughingthrushes, Nilgiri Shortwings, and Black and Rufous Flycatchers were all easily seen.

We then went further south to the Banyan Tree Lodge at the bottom of the Anaimalai Mountains and were shocked to find the reserve at Top Slip was closed. Taking Sathyan's advice we spent the following day birding the nearby Valparai road, which turned out to be luck indeed, and we were soon adding Mountain (Legge's) Hawk-Eagle, Malabar Trogon, Crimson-fronted (Malabar) Barbet, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Crimson-backed Sunbird, and Black-throated Munia to our lists -- perhaps, though, the most exciting find was the critically endangered Liontail Macaque right along the roadside: we spent almost an hour with these rare but extremely tame monkeys.

Continuing still further south our next stop was Munnar in the Cardamom Hills, and again our main targets were the endemics and Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon (our best views ever), Gray-breasted Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Flycatcher, and White-bellied Shortwing (at least three) were all easily seen. Surprisingly difficult though was Nilgiri Pipit and it wasn't until our very last morning here that we found an obliging pair of these localized hill country birds.

We then dropped to the lower altitude country at Periyar (with a stop along the way for the localized Yellow-throated Bulbul). Periyar was once again a major highlight of this tour with just a few of the group favorites being (the not so common) Common Flameback, Malabar Woodshrike, White-bellied Treepie, the rare Wynaad Laughingthrush, Rufous Babbler, White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher, and Little Spiderhunter.

Our tour ended with a visit to Coconut Lagoon in The Backwaters and then with a fabulous shrimp and fish curry lunch as we took a private house boat to Kochi at the coast; Indian Cormorant, Black Bittern, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Stork-billed Kingfisher, and Ashy Woodswallow were the highlights -- and who would like another tiger prawn?!

--Terry

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*) – Thirty at Kokkarhally, Mysore, and then about 40 at Coconut Lagoon.

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) – A total of 10 were seen at a couple of pools on the way to Nagarhole, and then 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

INDIAN SPOT-BILLED DUCK (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) – Small numbers at a variety of wetlands around Mysore and Nagarhole; in all we saw about 25.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – One at Kokkare Bellur and 2 at Kokkarhally.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*) – Widespread on wetlands between Mysore and Nagarhole.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

GRAY FRANCOLIN (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) – Small numbers in open farmland and bush country; with a total of about 10.

JUNGLE BUSH-QUAIL (*Perdica asiatica*) – Two were flushed at Bandipur.

GRAY JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus sonneratii*) – Great looks at about 40 at Nagarhole, and then singles at Jungle Hut, Chinnar, and Periyar.

INDIAN PEAFOWL (*Pavo cristatus*) – Common and widespread in open country and farmland.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Twenty between Bangalore and Nagarhole, and 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

ASIAN OPENBILL (*Anastomus oscitans*) – One at Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, 2 at Nagarhole, and 4 near Coconut Lagoon.

WOOLLY-NECKED STORK (*Ciconia episcopus*) – One at Periyar.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

INDIAN CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*) – Ten in the flooded paddyfields behind Coconut Lagoon.

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Small numbers were widespread at a variety of wetlands between Bangalore and Nagarhole.

LITTLE CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax niger*) – Common at wetlands throughout the tour; with a total of about 550.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ORIENTAL DARTER (*Anhinga melanogaster*) – Ten at Ranganathittu, singles at Kokkarhally and Nagarhole, and about 100 in the Coconut Lagoon area.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

SPOT-BILLED PELICAN (*Pelecanus philippensis*) – Fantastic close looks at about 60 on their nests at Kokkare Bellur, and then 6 at Kokkarhally.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

BLACK BITTERN (*Ixobrychus flavicollis*) – One was flushed during our early morning walk at Coconut Lagoon.

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*) – Common at wetlands between Bangalore and Nagarhole; we saw a total of about 40.

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*) – Widespread in small numbers at a variety of wetlands (and especially those with reedbeds); we saw a total of about 30.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Common at wetlands throughout the tour.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Common at wetlands throughout the tour, and especially numerous in the Coconut Lagoon area.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – Common at wetlands throughout the tour.

WESTERN REEF-HERON (*Egretta gularis*) – Two or 3 singles were seen along the shore at Kochi.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Very common and widespread in both national parks and in farm country.

INDIAN POND-HERON (*Ardeola grayii*) – Very common and widespread at wetlands throughout the tour.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – Two singles near Banyan Tree Lodge.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Two at Ranganathittu, and about 30 at Kokkarhally.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Two along the way to Nagarhole, and then several huge flocks in the evening over Coconut Lagoon.

BLACK-HEADED IBIS (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) – Common around Bangalore and Mysore, then then another 10 in the Nagarhole area.

RED-NAPED IBIS (*Pseudibis papillosa*) – Great looks around Kokkare Bellur and Nagarhole; we saw a total of about 20.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – We saw a single flying flock of 15 at Nagarhole, and 2 near Coconut Lagoon.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Three singles at Nagarhole, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

BLACK BAZA (*Aviceda leuphotes*) – Two briefly and then 1 in the scope at Periyar.

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – Singles at Nagarhole, Cairn Hill, and Valparai.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Small numbers in open country; in all we saw about 7.

BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*) – Most common around Bangalore (200) and then smaller numbers at a variety of towns elsewhere.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Common (especially near water) from Bangalore to Nagarhole, and then at Periyar and Coconut Lagoon; we saw a total of about 70.

GRAY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) – Most of the group saw an adult in flight at Nagarhole.

WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE (*Gyps bengalensis*) – Good views of a flying bird

SHORT-TOED EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) – Singles at Kokkare Bellur, Bandipur, and Mudumalai.

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (*Spilornis cheela*) – Three at Nagarhole, and 3 at Mudumalai.

EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) – We saw a single male on the way to Nagarhole.

NORTHERN HARRIER (EURASIAN) (*Circus cyaneus cyaneus*) – Common in north India but very rare this far south; some of the group saw a single female during our picnic lunch near Coimbatore.

HIKRA (*Accipiter badius*) – We all saw an adult and an immature at Nagarhole, and other single adults near Banyan Tree Lodge, Munnar, and Periyar.

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malayensis*) – Great looks at 1 over the tea estates near Munnar, 1 at Eravikulam NP, and 1 at Periyar.

AWNY EAGLE (*Aquila rapax*) – Four in the Nagarhole area, and 2 at Mudumalai.

HOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*) – We saw a single white morph near Coimbatore.

RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*) – Fabulous looks at a low soaring adult at Dashadan Hill.

CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus cirrhatus cirrhatus*) – The nominate race (of the plains of India) has now been split by Rasmussen as Crested Hawk-Eagle (Himalayan birds keep the name Changeable Hawk-Eagle and become *S. limnaetus*); a total of about 15 were widespread around forest and woodland.

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (LEGGE'S) (*Nisaetus nipalensis kelaarti*) – We had excellent looks at the form 'kelaarti' near Valparai; this rare bird is now often considered a distinct species - Legge's Hawk-Eagle.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Small numbers of single birds were widespread throughout the tour.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – Small numbers were widespread at a variety of wetlands.

RUDDY-BREASTED CRAKE (*Porzana fusca*) – Some of the group saw 1 at the edge of the reeds behind Coconut Lagoon.

WATERCOCK (*Gallicrex cinerea*) – One of the group saw 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

PURPLE SWAMPHEN (GRAY-HEADED) (*Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus*) – About 50 of the form 'poliocephalus' were seen in the Mysore area, and then another 50 at Coconut Lagoon; this form is sometimes split as Grey-headed Purple Swamphen.

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – One at Kokkare Bellur, 20 at Kokarhally, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – Two hundred at Kokkare Bellur, 300 at Kokarhally, and 2 at Coconut Lagoon.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus malabaricus*) – We saw 4 of these rather localised lapwings near Jungle Hut.

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*) – Widespread in open farm country and along lake shores.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Ten at Nagarhole.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) – About 30 on some roadside pools between Mysore and Nagarhole, and then about 25 at Coconut Lagoon.

BRONZE-WINGED JACANA (*Metopidius indicus*) – Fourteen between Mysore and Nagarhole, and 7 at Coconut Lagoon.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – About 6 in the Bangalore to Nagarhole area, and 1 at Kochi.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – One at Coconut Lagoon.

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*) – Seven at Nagarhole.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) – Ten at Nagarhole, and 8 in the Coconut Lagoon area.

PIN-TAILED SNIPE (*Gallinago stenura*) – Two in the paddyfields during our boat trip on the Backwaters.

Turnicidae (Buttonquail)

YELLOW-LEGGED BUTTONQUAIL (*Turnix tanki*) – One was flushed as we took a guided walk at the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Four on the Backwaters.

LITTLE TERN (*Sternula albifrons*) – Two during our boat trip on the Backwaters.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Seen by some of the group flying by Brunton's Boatyard Hotel, Kochi.

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – About 20 at Kokkare Bellur and Ranganathittu, and 400+ at Coconut Lagoon and the Backwaters.

RIVER TERN (*Sterna aurantia*) – Three at Ranganathittu, and 3 at Nagarhole.

LESSER CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bengalensis*) – Some of the group saw a couple of singles in front of Brunton's Boatyard Hotel, Kochi.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Small numbers were widespread at towns and cities throughout the tour.

NILGIRI WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba elphinstonii*) – This shy and very localised endemic can be very difficult but we were lucky this tour and had great views of 2 (out of a total of 4) in the forest above Munnar.

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – One at Nagarhole.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – About 50 in the Nagarhole and Mudumalai areas.

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Very common and widespread.

LAUGHING DOVE (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Small numbers at Mudumalai.

EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps indica*) – Great looks at 1 next to a pool at Nagarhole, then a couple of fly-by's at Mudumalai, and heard at Periyar.

POMPADOUR GREEN-PIGEON (GRAY-FRONTED) (*Treron pompadora affinis*) – Rasmussen splits the form 'affinis' as Gray-fronted Green-Pigeon; we had good looks at about 40 at Periyar.

YELLOW-FOOTED PIGEON (*Treron phoenicopterus*) – Fantastic looks at 7 next to a muddy pool at Nagarhole, and 50 at Mudumalai.

GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula aenea*) – Three singles at Nagarhole, and 3 at Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula badia*) – It took a while, but eventually we all had good looks at Periyar.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (*Psittacula krameri*) – Common around Bangalore. Mysore, the Banyan Tree Lodge area, and at Periyar; in all we saw a total of about 150.

PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) – Many wonderful looks at this gorgeous bird at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, the Banyan Tree Lodge area, and Periyar; in all we saw about 400.

MALABAR PARAKEET (*Psittacula columboides*) – Fifteen at Nagarhole, 30 at Mudumalai, and 200 in the Periyar area.

VERNAL HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus vernalis*) – Six at Nagarhole, 2 below Valparai, and 20 at Periyar.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO (*Hierococcyx varius*) – Many heard, and 2 seen well at Mudumalai.

ASIAN DRONGO-CUCKOO (*Surniculus lugubris*) – Great looks at 1 eating a large caterpillar at Periyar.

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour; in all we saw a total of about 45.

BLUE-FACED MALKOHA (*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*) – Can be very difficult, but we all had excellent scope views at Jungle Hut, and then 3 fly-by's below Top Slip.

GREATER COUCAL (*Centropus sinensis*) – Small numbers were widespread throughout the tour.

Strigidae (Owls)

INDIAN SCOPS-OWL (*Otus bakkamoena*) – Good looks at 1 at Banyan Tree Lodge.

JUNGLE OWLET (*Glaucidium radiatum*) – One during our last afternoon walk near Banyan Tree Lodge, 1 at Periyar, and several more heard there.

SPOTTED OWLET (*Athene brama*) – Three at Mudumalai.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

JERDON'S NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus atripennis*) – Two shortly after dark as we climbed a hill near Jungle Hut.

SAVANNA NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus affinis*) – Excellent looks at a female during the day near Jungle Hut.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-RUMPED NEEDLETAIL (*Zoonavena sylvatica*) – Three singles at Nagarhole.

BROWN-BACKED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus giganteus*) – Some of the group saw 1 over the lake at Periyar.

INDIAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus unicolor*) – Common at Nagarhole, a few at Mudumalai, and then singles at Valparai, Eravikulam, and Periyar.

ALPINE SWIFT (*Apus melba*) – About a dozen high over the forest above Munnar.

ASIAN PALM-SWIFT (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*) – Two at Nagarhole, 20 below Top Slip, and about 40 in the Coconut Lagoon area.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

MALABAR TROGON (*Harpactes fasciatus*) – Fantastic close scope views of a male below Valparai, and then a male and female at Periyar.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – Small numbers at a variety of widespread wetlands.

STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – Two singles in the Top Slip area, and 4 around Coconut Lagoon.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

PIED KINGFISHER (*Ceryle rudis*) – Two at Kokkare Bellur, 1 at Nagarhole, and 2 at Periyar.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

GREEN BEE-EATER (*Merops orientalis*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and Chinnar; in all we saw about 20.

BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER (*Merops philippinus*) – Four near Kokkare Bellur, and about 100 at Coconut Lagoon.

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*) – Great looks at this beautiful bee-eater below Ooty, and in the Top Slip area.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

INDIAN ROLLER (*Coracias benghalensis*) – Widespread in open farm country.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Six at Nagarhole.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

MALABAR GRAY HORNBILL (*Ocyrceros griseus*) – Singles or pairs at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, near Valparai, and at Periyar; in all we saw about a dozen.

INDIAN GRAY HORNBILL (*Ocyrceros birostris*) – Singles at Ranganathittu and Mysore.

MALABAR PIED-HORNBILL (*Anthracoceros coronatus*) – Brief but good looks at 2 in the canopy at Nagarhole.

GREAT HORNBILL (*Buceros bicornis*) – Four flying over the forest behind Banyan Tree Lodge.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

BROWN-HEADED BARBET (*Megalaima zeylanica*) – Three behind Banyan Tree Lodge.

WHITE-CHEEKED BARBET (*Megalaima viridis*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour; with a total in excess of 100.

CRIMSON-FRONTED BARBET (MALABAR) (*Megalaima rubricapillus malabarica*) – Several authorities now split this form as Malabar Barbet; we had great looks at 1 in the forest near Valparai and 2 at Periyar (where several others were heard).

COPPERSMITH BARBET (*Megalaima haemacephala*) – Very common and widespread with a total of about 100.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

BROWN-CAPPED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos moluccensis*) – Four at Nagarhole, 1 at Bandipur, and 2 at Periyar.

RUFIOUS WOODPECKER (*Celeus brachyurus*) – Some of the group saw 1 at Periyar.

WHITE-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus javensis*) – We saw a pair of these striking large woodpeckers at Nagarhole.

COMMON FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium javanense*) – Generally not so common, so we were lucky to get great close views of a pair and then a single bird at Periyar.

BLACK-RUMPED FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium benghalense*) – The most common and widespread woodpecker; in all we saw 16.

GREATER FLAMEBACK (*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*) – Heard at Valparai, and then 3 were seen nicely at Periyar.

WHITE-NAPED WOODPECKER (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) – Another gorgeous woodpecker; we all had great looks at this localised species near Jungle Hut.

HEART-SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Hemicircus canente*) – We saw 4 of these charming little woodpeckers at Periyar.

Pittidae (Pittas)

INDIAN PITTA (*Pitta brachyura*) – Great scope views at Nagarhole, and then even more amazing looks at 1 on the open lawn at Jungle Hut, and several heard at Periyar.

Prionopidae (Helmetshrikes and Allies)

MALABAR WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis sylvicola*) – Recently split from Large Woodshrike in NE India; we saw 7 at Periyar.

COMMON WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis pondicerianus*) – Singles at Mudumalai, Valparai, and Chinnar WS.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

ASHY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus fuscus*) – About 6 at Coconut Lagoon.

Aegithinidae (Ioras)

COMMON IORA (*Aegithina tiphia*) – Widespread in small numbers throughout the tour; we saw a total of about a dozen.

Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)

LARGE CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina macei*) – Six at Nagarhole.

BLACK-HEADED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina melanoptera*) – We saw single females at Nagarhole and Mudumalai, males at Mudumalai and Chinnar, and both a male and female at Periyar.

SMALL MINIVET (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*) – Most common at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and Chinnar, and a few others elsewhere.

SCARLET MINIVET (ORANGE) (*Pericrocotus flammeus flammeus*) – Some authorities now split the nominate form of SW India as Orange Minivet; we saw a total of about 30 between Jungle Hut and Periyar.

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus*) – A few of the group saw 1 in the forest high above Munnar.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

BROWN SHRIKE (*Lanius cristatus*) – Singles in the Nagarhole to Mudumalai area, and then near Banyan Tree Lodge, and at Periyar.

BAY-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius vittatus*) – About 20 at Mudumalai, and 1 at Chinnar WS.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach*) – Small numbers were widespread in open farm country throughout the tour; in all we saw about 20.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

INDIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE (*Oriolus kundoo*) – Recently split from Eurasian Golden Oriole, they were common in forested areas throughout the tour.

BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE (*Oriolus xanthornus*) – Singles were seen (and others heard) at Nagarhole, Mudumalai, and Periyar.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

BLACK DRONGO (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) – Very common and widespread in open country.

ASHY DRONGO (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) – Very common and widespread in forested areas.

WHITE-BELLIED DRONGO (*Dicrurus caerulescens*) – One at Nagarhole, 7 at Mudumalai, and 2 at Chinnar WS.

BRONZED DRONGO (*Dicrurus aeneus*) – Three singles at Mudumalai, 1 near Banyan Tree Lodge, about about 6 at Periyar.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) – Common at Nagarhole (15), near Jungle Hut (6) and Periyar (50).

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albicollis albicollis*) – The nominate form (with a black and white spotted band across the upper breast) is sometimes split as White-spotted Fantail; we saw 2 at Mysore, 2 at Nagarhole, and 1 at Mudumalai.

WHITE-BROWED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura aureola*) – Seven in the Mudumalai area.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea*) – One amongst a mixed species flock at Mudumalai.

ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – Widespread in small numbers, with a total of about 20.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

RUFIOUS TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*) – Fairly common in open woodland and forest edge throughout the tour.

WHITE-BELLIED TREEPIE (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*) – We saw about 20 of these striking endemics at Periyar.

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

Alaudidae (Larks)

JERDON'S BUSHLARK (*Mirafra affinis*) – Three at Mudumalai, and 1 near Banyan Tree Lodge.

MALABAR LARK (*Galerida malabarica*) – Great looks at 3 in the farmland near Nagarhole.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

DUSKY CRAG-MARTIN (*Ptyonoprogne concolor*) – About 40 in the Munnar area.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Common from Bangalore to Mudumalai and then around Coconut Lagoon, but only a few elsewhere.

WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW (*Hirundo smithii*) – One at Ranganathittu.

PACIFIC SWALLOW (HILL) (*Hirundo tahitica domicola*) – The form 'domicola' is often split as Hill Swallow; we saw about 20 in the Mudumalai area, 2 at Eravikulam NP, and 10 near Munnar.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – Eight in the Mudumalai area.

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Small numbers at Mudumalai, near Ooty, and in forest patches around Munnar; we saw a total of about 10.

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*) – Widespread in small numbers throughout the tour.

INDIAN TIT (*Parus aplonotus*) – Recently split from Black-lored Tit; we saw singles near Ooty, Munnar, and Periyar.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH (INDIAN) (*Sitta castanea castanea*) – Some authorities now split this as Indian Nuthatch; we saw 1 at Nagarhole and 2 at Mudumalai.

VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta frontalis*) – Singles at Nagarhole and Cairn Hill, 4 in the forest above Munnar, and 6 at Periyar.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

GRAY-HEADED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus priocephalus*) – After some effort we all finally saw this very localised endemic in the forest above Jungle Hut.

FLAME-THROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus gularis*) – We saw these attractive bulbuls in the forest on the way to Valparai, and at Periyar.

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

RED-WHISKERED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) – Very common and widespread throughout the tour.

YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*) – It seemed like an age as we waited for this species to appear on the escarpment near Bodi Mett, but then we were all rewarded with great close looks at this localised species.

WHITE-BROWED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus luteolus*) – One at Mudumalai, and 4 others during our stay at Banyan Tree Lodge.

YELLOW-BROWED BULBUL (*Iole indica*) – We saw this forest species at Mudumalai (10), Valparai (6), and Periyar (6).

SQUARE-TAILED BULBUL (*Hypsipetes ganeesa*) – Recently split from Black Bulbul, we saw these birds in the highland forest canopy at Ooty, Valparai, and above Munnar.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

TICKELL'S LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus affinis*) – Small numbers were widespread at a variety of scattered forest edge sites; with a total of 8.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – Very common and widespread.

LARGE-BILLED LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – Singles near Jungle Hut, at Cairn Hill, and several heard at Periyar.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

SYKES'S WARBLER (*Hippolais rama*) – Four at Mudumalai.

BLYTH'S REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) – Small numbers were widespread throughout the tour.

CLAMOROUS REED-WARBLER (INDIAN) (*Acrocephalus stentoreus brunnescens*) – We saw about 10 of the form 'brunnescens' in the tall reeds at Coconut Lagoon; these are sometimes split as Indian Reed-Warbler.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

COMMON GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER (*Locustella naevia*) – Good looks at 1 in the reeds behind Coconut Lagoon.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

ZITTING CISTICOLA (*Cisticola juncidis*) – One near Mysore.

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – Widespread in small numbers; with a total of about 20.

GRAY-BREASTED PRINIA (*Prinia hodgsonii*) – Nice looks at 1 in the Bandipur area (on the way to Jungle Hut).

JUNGLE PRINIA (*Prinia sylvatica*) – One at Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

ASHY PRINIA (*Prinia socialis*) – Widespread in small numbers.

PLAIN PRINIA (*Prinia inornata*) – Four at Eravikulam NP, and about a dozen at Coconut Lagoon.

Sylviidae (Old World Warblers)

YELLOW-EYED BABBLER (*Chrysomma sinense*) – Two in the farmland near Mudumalai, and 1 at Chinnar WS.

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) – Common at forested areas throughout the tour.

Pellorneidae (Fulvettas and Ground Babblers)

BROWN-CHEEKED FULVETTA (*Alcippe poioicephala*) – About a dozen in the forest above Jungle Hut, and heard at Periyar.

PUFF-THROATED BABBLER (*Pellorneum ruficeps*) – Far more commonly heard than seen, but we had excellent looks at Nagarhole.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes)

WYNAAD LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax delesserti*) – We had great looks at a flock of about 15 of these rare endemic laughingthrushes at Periyar.

RUFOUS-BREASTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax cachinnans*) – We saw this attractive laughingthrush around the food stalls near Ooty.

GRAY-BREASTED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax jerdoni*) – Small numbers in the highlands around Munnar.

LARGE GRAY BABBLER (*Turdoides malcolmi*) – One briefly at Bandipur, and then 3 seen well at Mudumalai.

RUFOUS BABBLER (*Turdoides subrufa*) – Extremely shy, but we all managed to see at least 1 or 2 at Periyar.

JUNGLE BABBLER (*Turdoides striata*) – Flocks were fairly common and widespread in and around a variety of forests.

YELLOW-BILLED BABBLER (*Turdoides affinis*) – Common in farm country and at forest edge in the lowlands.

Timaliidae (Babblers)

TAWNY-BELLIED BABBLER (*Dumetia hyperythra*) – One at Mudumalai, and then 4 in the grasslands high above Munnar town.

DARK-FRONTED BABBLER (*Rhopocichla atriceps*) – We saw about a dozen of these rather shy babblers at Periyar.

INDIAN SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*) – Great looks at 2 at Nagarhole, and about 6 at Periyar.

Irenidae (Fairy-bluebirds)

ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD (*Irena puella*) – About 7 in the Jungle Hut area, 1 at Chinnar WS, and 5 at Periyar.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa dauurica*) – Five at Nagarhole, and 1 near Banyan Tree Lodge.

RUSTY-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa ruficauda*) – Two singles at Periyar.

BROWN-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa muttui*) – One along a river to the south of Jungle Hut, and 1 near Banyan Tree Lodge.

INDIAN ROBIN (*Copsychus fulicatus*) – About 20 at Mudumalai, and 1 at Chinnar WS.

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*) – Common and widespread.

WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA (*Copsychus malabaricus*) – Two in the forest behind Jungle Hut.

WHITE-BELLIED BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis pallipes*) – A male and female were seen very briefly near Jungle Hut, and then we all had good long looks at a male at Periyar.

BLUE-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) – Two females along the canal behind Banyan Tree Lodge.

TICKELL'S BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis tickelliae*) – Small numbers were fairly common and widespread in the early part of the tour; we saw a total of about 16.

NILGIRI FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias albicaudatus*) – Two below Ooty, and 2 at Dashadan Hill near Munnar.

VERDITER FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias thalassinus*) – Six singles in the Nagarhole and Jungle Hut areas.

NILGIRI SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx major*) – Also known as Nilgiri Blue Robin; we all saw this extremely shy endemic at the Dodda Betta shola.

WHITE-BELLIED SHORTWING (*Brachypteryx albiventris*) – Also known as White-bellied Blue Robin; this is another very shy endemic which we all had great looks at, with at least 3 in Eravikulam NP.

INDIAN BLUE ROBIN (*Larvivora brunnea*) – At Jungle Hut we saw a singing bird (in female-type plumage) and then a great looking male, and finally another female-type near Munnar.

MALABAR WHISTLING-THRUSH (*Myophonus horsfieldii*) – We saw a very extrovert bird at the Tea County Hotel, Munnar, and about another dozen more typically shy birds in widespread forested areas elsewhere.

TAIGA FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula albicilla*) – Two of the group saw 1 at Jungle Hut.

BLACK-AND-RUFOUS FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula nigrorufa*) – We saw these gorgeous endemics in several sholas including Dodda Betta, Cairn Hill, and near Munnar.

STONECHAT (*Saxicola torquatus*) – We saw a single bird (probably of the race 'indicus') at Bandipur.

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Common and widespread in open country.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH (*Zoothera citrina cyanota*) – The white-throated form 'cyanota' is sometimes split as White-throated Thrush; some of the group saw 1 at Jungle Hut, and we all had excellent close looks at Periyar.

INDIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus simillimus*) – One briefly at Jungle Hut, and then good looks for everyone at Dodda Betta.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

SOUTHERN HILL MYNA (*Gracula indica*) – One at Nagarhole, and about 70 at Periyar.

JUNGLE MYNA (*Acridotheres fuscus*) – Very common and widespread.

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Very common and widespread.

CHESTNUT-TAILED STARLING (*Sturnia malabarica*) – Some confusion with the following species, but we undoubtedly saw many gray-headed birds at Nagarhole, near Jungle Hut, and at Periyar.

MALABAR STARLING (*Sturnia blythii*) – Some confusion with the previous species but some of the group saw white-headed birds at Nagarhole and Periyar.

BRAHMINY STARLING (*Temenuchus pagodarum*) – We saw a total of about 200 between Nagarhole and the Jungle Hut area.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

JERDON'S LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis jerdoni*) – Three at Nagarhole.

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis aurifrons*) – Small numbers were widespread at forest edge.

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

PALE-BILLED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*) – Singles at Mysore, Jungle Hut, and Banyan Tree Lodge, and we saw about 8 at Periyar.

NILGIRI FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum concolor*) – Formerly lumped with Plain Flowerpecker; we saw small numbers near Jungle Hut, Valparai, Banyan Tree Lodge, and near Munnar.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma zeylonica*) – Very common and widespread.

CRIMSON-BACKED SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma minima*) – Two in the forest near Valparai.

PURPLE SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) – Common and widespread around villages and farms in the low country.

LONG-BILLED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris lotenius*) – Three in the Banyan Tree Lodge area.

LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER (*Arachnothera longirostra*) – One at Periyar.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla flava*) – Six at Nagarhole, and about 30 at Periyar.

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Widespread in small numbers throughout the tour.

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – Eight along the shore at Nagarhole.

WHITE-BROWED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla madaraspatensis*) – About a dozen between Nagarhole and Jungle Hut, 2 at Munnar, and 8 at Periyar.

ORIENTAL PIPIT (*Anthus rufulus*) – Also known as Paddyfield Pipit; we saw 4 at Nagarhole, 8 near Jungle Hut, and 6 at Periyar.

NILGIRI PIPIT (*Anthus nilghiriensis*) – Difficult this year, but eventually we all had great looks on a rocky slope to the south of Munnar.

FOREST WAGTAIL (*Dendronanthus indicus*) – Two at Nagarhole, and 1 at Coconut Lagoon.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common and widespread.

CHESTNUT-SHOULDERED PETRONIA (*Petronia xanthocollis*) – Small numbers at Nagarhole, near Jungle Hut, and at Chinnar WS.

Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

BAYA WEAVER (*Ploceus philippinus*) – Three at Kokkare Bellur, 5 at Ranganathittu, and about 60 at Periyar.

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

RED AVADAVAT (*Amandava amandava*) – Great looks at 2 (including a good looking male) at Nagarhole.

INDIAN SILVERBILL (*Euodice malabarica*) – One in the farmlands near Jungle Hut.

WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA (*Lonchura striata*) – Four at Kokkare Bellur, and 3 near Jungle Hut.

BLACK-THROATED MUNIA (*Lonchura kelaarti*) – Two below Ooty, and 2 along the road to Valparai.

NUTMEG MANNIKIN (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Also known as Scaly-breasted Munia; we saw small numbers around Jungle Hut.

TRICOLORED MUNIA (*Lonchura malacca*) – Also known as Black-headed Munia; these striking munias were seen at several widespread scattered wetlands.

MAMMALS

INDIAN FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus giganteus*) – Several hundred were seen flying to the east of Bangalore, about 400 at Ranganathittu, 150 at Nagarhole, and 1 at Periyar.

LIONTAIL MACAQUE (*Macaca silenus*) – Due to an unexpected change in the itinerary we had excellent close views of about 60 of these critically endangered monkeys near Valparai.

BONNET MACAQUE (*Macaca radiata*) – Very common and widespread.

COMMON LANGUR (*Presbytis entellus*) – About 50 between Nagarhole and the Jungle Hut area, 10 on the way to Valparai, and 12 at Chinnar WS.

NILGIRI LANGUR (*Presbytis johni*) – Twenty on the way to Valparai, and 30+ at Periyar.

INDIAN HARE (*Lepus nigricollis*) – Singles near Jungle Hut and Chinnar WS.

INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL (*Funambulus palmarum*) – Common and widespread in towns, farmland, and at forest edge.

DUSKY PALM SQUIRREL (*Funambulus sublineatus*) – Two in the highland forest above Munnar, and about 10 at Periyar.

INDIAN GIANT SQUIRREL (*Ratufa indica*) – Common and widespread in forests throughout the tour; in all we saw about 40.

COMMON JACKAL (*Canis aureus*) – Rather rare in this part of India, we saw 2 at Nagarhole.

EUROPEAN RIVER OTTER (*Lutra lutra*) – At the moment otter taxonomy is of some debate, with various authorities splitting and lumping in a variety of ways. It seems the large (rather rough coated) otters we saw at Coconut Lagoon were the Indian form of this species.

INDIAN GRAY MONGOOSE (*Herpestes edwardsi*) – Good looks at 3 at Chinnar WS.

STRIPE-NECKED MONGOOSE (*Herpestes vitticollis*) – Two at Nagarhole.

TIGER (*Panthera tigris*) – Heard calling from within the forest above Jungle Hut.

INDIAN ELEPHANT (*Elephas maximus*) – Several great encounters with family groups, babies and single large bulls at Nagarhole; really excellent looks this year.

WILD BOAR (*Sus scrofa*) – About 20 at Nagarhole, 3 babies near Valparai, and 2 at Chinnar WS.

MUNTJAC (BARKING DEER) (*Muntiacus muntjak*) – One at Nagarhole.

SPOTTED DEER (*Axis axis*) – About 1000 at Nagarhole, and then perhaps another 400 at Bandipur, Mudumalai, and Jungle Hut.

SAMBAR (*Cervus unicolor*) – About 20 at Nagarhole.

NILGIRI TAHR (*Hemitragus hylocrius*) – Six on the escarpment below Valparai, and then about 30 at Eravikulam NP.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reptiles seen on the tour included:

Marsh Mugger -- about 6 (including some really huge ones) at Ranganathittu Wildlife Sanctuary

Legless Lizard sp. -- one at Pettimundi

Green Vine Snake -- one at Eravikulam National Park

'Chickles' Keelback -- this was the name our local guide gave to the boldly marked swimming snake at Coconut Lagoon.

Totals for the tour: 259 bird taxa and 20 mammal taxa