



Field Guides Tour Report

Sri Lanka 2012

Oct 25, 2012 to Nov 12, 2012
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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).

The lovely, lush island of Sri Lanka is the perfect place to come to grips with some of the avifauna of the Indian subcontinent, with the added bonus of more than three dozen species endemic to the island itself. During our two weeks, we rambled from the thick, rampantly green rainforests of the southwest to the baking salt pans of the southeast, from the tangled brush of Yala, with its odd outcrops of "elephant rocks" to the cool, misty highlands of Horton Plains, and from the bustling cities of Nuwara Elia and Kandy to the dry forests around the amazing magma plug of Sigiriya. And, despite nearly omnipresent rain for the first half of the tour (darn those stalled cyclones!) we had some marvelous encounters with the local birds, mammals, reptiles, people, culture, and food.

Among the highlights: Ceylon Gray Hornbills played "flycatcher", leaping into the air after insects. Black Eagles soared overhead on huge broad wings. A pair of Ceylon Frogmouths blinked sleepily from a vine tangle. A Leopard sprawled atop a rock. A Scaly Thrush scratched energetically in the leaf litter. Pheasant-tailed Jacanas balanced on lily pads. A Pied Thrush peeked from his perch in a very dense tree. Ceylon Hanging-Parrots dangled from branches, nibbling on nearby fruits. Brightly colored Painted Storks strode through puddles or stretched long necks and legs in flight. Astoundingly blue Ceylon Magpies bounced across tables and along railings, searching for tasty morsels.

Clouds of shorebirds of all shapes and sizes snoozed and preened and spun and poked and flew back and forth across lagoons and salt pans. A Besra ripped a lizard to shreds, gulping down mouthfuls. A Yellow Bittern picked its way stealthily through thick reeds. Jewel-bright Indian Pittas shouted from shady perches. Asian Elephants lumbered through whacked-over fields. Little gangs of Velvet-fronted Nuthatches and Ceylon White-eyes swarmed through trees in a city park. A harried Yellow-eared Bulbul crammed berry after berry into the insistent mouth of a youngster. A trio of Ceylon Bush-Warblers led us on a merry chase before finally showing themselves, and a pair of Ceylon Whistling-Thrushes played equally coy before finally relenting.

Our kingfishers included the imposing Stork-billed, with its enormous beak, and a tiny Black-backed Kingfisher glowing against shadowy undergrowth. Among our three species of sunbird was a male Long-billed with his brilliant yellow shoulder patches flared. Our eight species of owl included a huge Brown Fish-Owl watching us over its shoulder from its perch above a forest pool, a pair of Indian Scops-Owls huddled under a shed roof, and a Chestnut-backed Owl calling from a big tree in broad daylight (cloudy afternoon daylight, but daylight none the less!) And who will soon forget the sight of that diminutive Serendib Scops-Owl clinging to his branch, his eyes huge as he whispered challenges to the darkness.

Of course, it wasn't just the critters that kept us entertained. Dancers whirled to the music of strange instruments (an alternative activity on a soaking wet afternoon) and fire walkers strode across glowing coals. Drums boomed as we filed past the fantastic golden reliquary that reputedly holds Buddha's tooth. Ancient gardens and vestiges of past splendor enthralled us at Sigiriya. A myriad curries tickled our noses and taste buds. And through it all, a delightful group of traveling companions increased the fun. Thanks for joining Udi and me for the adventure. I hope to see you all again in the field soon!

-- Megan



The spectacular, endemic Ceylon Magpie rests after gobbling up moths attracted to lights at a Sinharaja hotel. (Photo by tour participant Kristine Wallstrom.)

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*) – Scores floated on ponds and lagoons along the country's southeastern coast, and dozens took to the air over the "tanks" (reservoirs) near Tissa, filling the air with their whistling calls as the fruit bats streamed past overhead.

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) – Two pairs of these tiny geese dabbled among the water hyacinth and lily pads on the edge of a roadside pond we checked en route to Nuwara Eliya.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*) – A couple of birds preened among the rushes of a lagoon outside Bundala NP, little more than occasionally-appearing heads and necks rising out of the vegetation.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

CEYLON SPURFOWL (*Galloperdix bicalcarata*) – A female made several close approaches (standing briefly on a rock within yards of us) while her male called from a nearby tea field at Sinharaja. [E]

CEYLON JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus lafayetii*) [E]

INDIAN PEAFOWL (*Pavo cristatus*) – Yes, we've all seen hundreds in parks and zoos and neighborhoods the world over, but there's still something special about seeing (and hearing) these gorgeous creatures in the wild. The male shaking his tail feathers for two seemingly disinterested females in Yala NP was especially fun to watch.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Ciconiidae (Storks)

ASIAN OPENBILL (*Anastomus oscitans*) – Good numbers in and around the rice paddies we passed while traveling from the capital to Kitulgala -- including a grayish youngster trailing along behind its parent.

WOOLLY-NECKED STORK (*Ciconia episcopus*) – A total of four at Yala National Park -- two strolling along a scrubby flat, and two sharing a branch in the same leafless tree as a calling Changeable Hawk-Eagle.

LESSER ADJUTANT (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) – A handful in scattered locations around Bundala and Yala national parks, including one making big circles in the sky as it drifted slowly past while we searched for Clamorous Reed-Warblers.

PAINTED STORK (*Mycteria leucocephala*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

INDIAN CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*)

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

LITTLE CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax niger*) – Common across most of Sri Lanka, with good studies of the bold little birds fishing in the rapids below our Kitulgala hotel, particularly of the one drying its wings as we waited to the river on the canoe ferry.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ORIENTAL DARTER (*Anhinga melanogaster*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

SPOT-BILLED PELICAN (*Pelecanus philippensis*) – Common along the southeastern coast, including a mob that settled into the top of a rain tree -- with much squabbling and poking of neighbors with big beaks -- as dusk approached at the Tissa tank.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

YELLOW BITTERN (*Ixobrychus sinensis*) – One lurked among the cattails in Debravewa tank, moving one slow step at a time or standing spreadeagled between stems.

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*)

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*) – Regular in wetlands throughout, with especially nice looks at a few around the fringes of Tissa tank.

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*)

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Particularly common in the rice paddies of the southwest, where we had some in nice comparison with the other white egrets.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*)

CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Using livestock (especially water buffalo) as beaters and perches all across the country.

INDIAN POND-HERON (*Ardeola grayii*) – Scores crouched beside ponds and rice paddies all across Sri Lanka, including a bright-backed breeding adult seen amidst a trio of plainer nonbreeding birds in Victoria Park.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – One crouched on the concrete berm edging the main tank at Tissa, staring intently into the water.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (EURASIAN) (*Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibis and Spoonbills)

BLACK-HEADED IBIS (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) – Most common in the southeast, where big flocks of them gleaned in the rice fields and in the lagoons around Bundala.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – A line of them flew over against an impressionist painting sky as we left Uda Walawe NP, and another demonstrated its distinctive feeding style in a pond at Yala.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – Seen in flight on a handful of days, with especially good studies of one soaring over the road as we dropped down out of the mountains around Kandy. This species has a distinctively small, narrow head.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Especially nice views of several perched atop the dead snags in Uda Walawe, and one at Horton Plains. This species was formerly considered to be conspecific with North America's White-tailed Kite.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – The most widespread of the tour's raptors, seen on most days of the tour. A preening adult sitting in a treetop with a mob of egrets and Black-headed Ibis showed particularly well.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Surprisingly difficult this year, with only a single bird seen -- an adult that soared over the far end of the big tank at Thalkote, then settled into a spreading tree along the bank.

GRAY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) – Our best looks came in Sigiriya, where we found one adult perched in a roadside tree (though it took some fancy maneuvering with the bus before everybody could see it) and later spotted two on a huge stick nest beside the lake. We saw others at Uda Walawe and Bundala NPs.

CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE (CRESTED) (*Spilornis cheela spilogaster*) – An adult resting in the big tree near the dining room during our first lunch at Kitulgala gave us great opportunity for leisurely study, as did a youngster perched low in a roadside tree at Uda Walawe.

CRESTED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter trivirgatus layardi*) – One hunting along the edge of the gardens at the Sigiriya archeological site was seen well as it leapt from branch to ground and back again in pursuit of some unseen prey.

SHIKRA (*Accipiter badius*)

BESRA (*Accipiter virgatus*) – One in a roadside tree en route to the Blue Magpie Lodge ripped some hapless lizard to pieces, consuming every last morsel -- including that long, long, LONG tail, which took a bit of effort (and a lot of body pumping) to get down!!

BLACK EAGLE (*Ictinaetus malayensis*) – Super views of a low-flying bird that made several passes back and forth over the road we traveled en route to the Blue Magpie Lodge, with others in flight at Horton Plains and on our descent from Kandy. Its broad, deeply "fingered" wings (pinched at the base) make for a distinctive flight silhouette.

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*)

RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE (*Lophotriorchis kienerii*)

CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis*)

MOUNTAIN HAWK-EAGLE (*Nisaetus nipalensis*) – One soared across the valley below the Blue Magpie, seen as we birded from the dining room on a soggy afternoon, and we had scope views of another -- first soaring, then perched in a distant tree -- on our descent from Nuwara Eliya.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

PEREGRINE FALCON (EURASIAN) (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*) – A bird of this distinctively dark subspecies (sometimes known as the "Shaheen") circled with a Booted Eagle above Uda Walawe, and another perched on a ledge at Sigiriya, giving us a welcome excuse to stop and use our binoculars during the long climb up to the top of the rock.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) – Regular in wetlands and rice paddies throughout, with the tame birds at one of the tanks near Tissa passing within feet of us as they rummaged along the lake's edge.

PURPLE SWAMPHEN (GRAY-HEADED) (*Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus*) – Especially common at Bundala, where dozens wandered through the reeds and rushes edging the lagoons, flashing their red bill shields.

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – A few adults chugged across the tanks in Tissa, where a couple of preening youngsters gave us brief hopes that we'd found a Watercock. This species was recently split from North America's Common Gallinule.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – Small numbers on several ponds in the south, including a quartet mingling with our first Cotton Pygmy-Geese. Unlike American Coots, these show no white on their undertail coverts.

Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

GREAT THICK-KNEE (*Esacus recurvirostris*) – Small flocks of these big-billed thick-knees in scattered locations around Bundala, including a quartet that proved to be a useful marker for pointing out things behind them.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus malabaricus*) – Scattered pairs, including two around the puddle we birded near the entrance to Uda Walawe, and small numbers in Yala and Bundala.

RED-WATTLED LAPWING (*Vanellus indicus*)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – Two flew in and landed among the sand-plovers on the salt pans at Bundala, shortly before we left the area.

LESSER SAND-PLOVER (*Charadrius mongolus*) – Hordes pattered along the fringes of the salt pans at Bundala and the lagoons at Yala, far outnumbering the other plovers we found there.

GREATER SAND-PLOVER (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) – A single bird lurked among the Lesser Sand-Plovers at Bundala, picked out (with patience) thanks to its larger size and longer, thicker beak.

KENTISH PLOVER (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) – Small numbers rummaged among the sand-plovers at Bundala and Yala. This species was recently split from North America's Snowy Plover.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – A couple in the big plover flock at Bundala were easy to pick out, thanks to their orange legs and darker backs.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Dozens strode around ponds and lagoons in Yala, Bundala and Tissa.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

TEREK SANDPIPER (*Xenus cinereus*)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucus*) – One trundled along the edge of the pond behind our airport hotel, not far from a little gang of Red-wattled Lapwings, and we saw others at Bundala. Like its congener the Spotted Sandpiper, this one regularly bobs its back end as it walks.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – One wading in a puddle at Yala showed us its black underwings briefly as it skipped away from the vehicles.

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*)

MARSH SANDPIPER (*Tringa stagnatilis*) – Small numbers scattered across the ponds and salt pans of Yala and Bundala. The very slim, sharp beak and pale plumage of this species makes it quite distinctive.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*)

COMMON REDSHANK (*Tringa totanus*) – Scattered across the salt pans and lagoons of Bundala and Yala, where the wide white trailing edges to their upperwings helped us to quickly pick them out in flight.

EURASIAN CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*) – One strode along the grassy edge of a pond at Yala, occasionally probing at the ground with its very long beak.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*) – A little group of four flew past -- showing those distinctive black tails and white rumps -- while we birded the lagoon just outside the entrance to Bundala.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – A compact flock of 30 or so dropped in among the sand-plovers at Bundala, resting for only a few minutes before flashing off somewhere else.

LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*)

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*)

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*) – A couple of these pot-bellied shorebirds, showing the rucked-up back feathers that this species often sports, fed busily along the shallow edge of one of the salt pans at Bundala.

PIN-TAILED SNIPE (*Gallinago stenura*) – One paused under a waterside tree in Bundala, showing nicely when we stopped; it couldn't decide whether or not to flee, and so froze for long minutes in plain site.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – A few paddled on one of the salt pans at Bundala, occasionally doing a half-hearted spin or two.

Turnicidae (Buttonquail)

BARRED BUTTONQUAIL (*Turnix suscitator leggei*) – A few scurried off the track at Uda Walawe -- including a singing female that crept stealthily ever closer -- but our best views came at Yala, where one bold bird dust-bathed right beside the vehicles.

Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

SMALL PRATINCOLE (*Glareola lactea*) – One stood in the middle of the track through the Bundala salt pans, giving us all great views, and a second rested among the terns and shorebirds on one of the cross dikes there.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BROWN-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*) – Scores, all in their winter plumage (and thus missing their distinctive brown heads), over salt pans near the entrance to Bundala.

LITTLE TERN (*Sternula albifrons*)

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

WHITE-WINGED TERN (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Easily the most numerous of the tour's terns, flickering over rice paddies and tanks throughout the country.

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bergii*) – The more common of the two crested terns, seen in good numbers on and over the salt pans at Bundala.

LESSER CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bengalensis*) – A conveniently mixed flock of this and the previous species rested on a cross dike in the salt pans at Bundala.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

CEYLON WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba torringtoni*) – A cooperative pair in a little mountain village on our drive back down from Horton Plains sat first in a nearly leafless tree and then in a huge pine, allowing fine scope studies. And I think we entertained the local populace while we ogled the birds! [E]

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

EMERALD DOVE (COMMON) (*Chalcophaps indica robinsoni*) – A couple of handsome birds trundled around under the tea plants just down the hill from the dining room at the Blue Magpie Lodge.

ORANGE-BREASTED PIGEON (*Treron bicinctus leggei*) – Best seen at Bundala, where a pair perched in a trackside tree allowed long looks. We had others at Uda Walawe and Yala.

POMPADOUR GREEN-PIGEON (*Treron pompadoura*) – A dead tree along the route between Sinharaja and Embilipitiya held several dozen, allowing us to study them from every conceivable angle.

GREEN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula aenea*) – A couple of these big pigeons sulked in a soggy treetop one morning, seen as we walked near the Kitulgala police station, and a trio preened atop a palm tree near the start of the main trail at Sinharaja.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET (*Psittacula eupatria*) – Common throughout, with particularly nice views of one sitting in the very top of a tree on our final morning at Sigiriya -- conveniently where we could see that distinctive maroon shoulder patch. This is the largest of Sri Lanka's parakeets.

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (*Psittacula krameri*)

PLUM-HEADED PARAKEET (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) – Several pairs showed well as they checked out potential nest holes in dead trees at Uda Walawe.

LAYARD'S PARAKEET (*Psittacula calthropae*) – Our best views came en route to Kitulgala, where we found one nibbling fruits (clutched firmly in its left foot) in a roadside tree. [E]

CEYLON HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus beryllinus*) – A little gang nibbling flower petals (or drinking nectar) from the African tulip tree outside the Kitulgala hotel's dining room gave us wonderful views as they demonstrated just why they're called HANGING-parrots. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

PIED CUCKOO (*Clamator jacobinus*) – Several at Yala, including one that flashed past us to perch in a treetop, and another that clambered around in a roadside bush.

PLAINTIVE CUCKOO (*Cacomantis merulinus*) – Unfortunately brief views of one low in a bush at Uda Walawe.

ASIAN DRONGO-CUCKOO (FORK-TAILED) (*Surniculus lugubris dicruroides*) – One singing from a treetop near our Sigiriya hotel interrupted breakfast one morning -- thanks to Udi's always-tuned ear!

ASIAN KOEL (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) – A coal black male peered around from a perch in a tree right outside our Kitulgala hotel, his red eyes glowing.

RED-FACED MALKOHA (*Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*) – Two with a big mixed flock in trees far upslope from the trail at Sinharaja Forest Preserve showed "the full monty" to some and only a dark silhouette to others. [E]

GREATER COUCAL (*Centropus sinensis*)

GREEN-BILLED COUCAL (*Centropus chlororhynchos*) – They made us work for it, but we finally got looks at a couple drying out and calling (their rusty wings and long tails fanned) in a high treetop near the Makandawa Forest Park. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

SERENDIB SCOPS-OWL (*Otus thilohoffmanni*) – Wow -- this one was truly an 11th-hour save! Some fine work by Sinharaja guide Tandula brought us right to the magic spot: a quiet garden where one of these recently-discovered owls called softly from a tangle of trees. With some patience, some luck and the steadfast ignoring of the threatening leeches, we all had fantastic views of one little owl as it stared at us from its vertical perch. [E]

INDIAN SCOPS-OWL (*Otus bakkamoena*)

ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL (*Otus sunia leggei*) – A pair called quietly from the forest around the massif at Sigiriya as dusk fell. With patience, we managed to track one down, and had great scope views of it peering around as it called.

BROWN FISH-OWL (*Ketupa zeylonensis*) – One peered around from its perch high in a tree overlooking one of the ponds at Uda Wattakele, still awake (and preening) as we finished our pre-breakfast ramble at the park.

JUNGLE OWLET (*Glaucidium radiatum*) – Two birds called from a tree near where we found our White-naped Woodpeckers, then one departed while the other peered down (as ferociously as possible for a small owl) at us.

CHESTNUT-BACKED OWLET (*Glaucidium castanopterum*) – One tooting (in the daytime!) from the forest near the Kitulgala police station led us right to him -- after we scurried down the lane, through a gate and across a wet field, that is! We had excellent scope views of this handsome little endemic. [E]

BROWN WOOD-OWL (*Strix leptogrammica ochrogenys*) – A quick walk through a hill town, a slither down an overgrown former park path, and a scramble up a leafy hillside brought us a "stand on your head" scope look at a pair of these big owls snoozing in a densely leafed tree high overhead. How Udi ever spotted them remains a mystery!

BROWN HAWK-OWL (*Ninox scutulata*) – We heard one calling from the dark forest at Uda Wattakele, while we waited for the park gates to open. [*]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

CEYLON FROGMOUTH (*Batrachostomus moniliger*) – A gray male and a rufous female huddled together in a tangle of tree ferns and rattan vines at Sinharaja, showing those very wide beaks to perfection. What long eyelashes!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

GRAY NIGHTJAR (JUNGLE) (*Caprimulgus indicus kelaarti*) – A pre-dawn visit to the Elephant Corridor proved exceptionally fortuitous, when we found first this species, then the next, in quick succession right in the middle of the road.

JERDON'S NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus atripennis aequabilis*)

INDIAN NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos*) – An early morning outing to the outskirts of Yala netted us scope views of several on the flat plains among the cow patties, and we heard many more chirring from the darkness all around us.

Apodidae (Swifts)

INDIAN SWIFLET (*Aerodramus unicolor*) – Easily the tour's most widespread swift, including dozens quartering the sky over the Blue Magpie Lodge, flying even during the cloudbursts.

LITTLE SWIFT (*Apus affinis*)

ASIAN PALM-SWIFT (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*) – The long, pointed tail feathers of this small species made them easy to pick out from the other swifts.

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

GRAY-RUMPED TREESWIFT (*Hemiprocne longipennis*) – Several soggy birds (quite literally dripping wet) rested on a high tension wire, seen on our rainy drive from the coast to Kitulgala. At least the weather enabled us to get some fine scope views of a species that's otherwise typically in flight!

Trogonidae (Trogons)

MALABAR TROGON (*Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus*)

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – Fine views of one perched on a stick in the fallow rice paddies below the dining room at the Blue Magpie Lodge. What a gorgeous blue!

BLACK-BACKED KINGFISHER (*Ceyx erithaca*) – Fabulous views of one of these tiny kingfishers, perched in the wet woods near Sigiriya before breakfast one morning.

STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Pelargopsis capensis*) – One sat on a wire over a rice paddy along the road between the coast and Kitulgala, showing its enormous beak to perfection. We had another serenading us from a fence post behind our Tissa hotel as we ate our final breakfast there.

WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) – Easily the most common kingfisher of the trip, seen in numbers on most days -- including one flashing its colors from the fence right outside the dining room of our Kitulgala hotel and another hunting the rice paddies below the Blue Magpie's dining room.

PIED KINGFISHER (*Ceryle rudis*) – A couple flashed like animated crossword puzzles over the salt pans at Bundala, and others did the same over the lagoons at Yala.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

GREEN BEE-EATER (*Merops orientalis*) – Especially nice views of several flashing low over the wetlands of the southeast, with others around Sigiriya.

BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER (*Merops philippinus*)

CHESTNUT-HEADED BEE-EATER (*Merops leschenaulti*) – One along the road between the coast and Kitulgala sallied repeatedly after insects, returning again and again to the same wire perch -- conveniently right below a couple of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters we could use as markers.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

INDIAN ROLLER (*Coracias benghalensis*) – A pair perched atop a tree near the entrance gate to Uda Walawe interrupted our departure from the park. We had others on the drive to Kitulgala, at Bundala and at a tank near Tissa.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Those in Megan's van in Yala spotted one briefly fanning its head plumes in a tree near where the Wooly-necked Storks and the young Changeable Hawk-Eagle were interacting. Unfortunately, those in Udi's van were blocked by an intervening tree!

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

CEYLON GRAY HORNBILL (*Ocyceros gingalensis*) – A pair of Ceylon Gray Hornbills fly-catching (or rather Rain Ant catching) from a tree right outside the front doors of our Kitulgala hotel put on quite the show. Apparently, ant wings aren't very tasty, since the birds carefully removed them before swallowing the rest. [E]

MALABAR PIED-HORNBILL (*Anthracoceros coronatus*) – Our first were a quartet assembled in a treetop at Yala, but our best views came near Kimbassa, where we found one perched in a tree right over the road.

Megalaimidae (Asian Barbets)

BROWN-HEADED BARBET (*Megalaima zeylanica*) – Probably the most widespread of the tour's barbets, with dozens heard "tonking" and good numbers seen scouring the trees for fruits.

YELLOW-FRONTED BARBET (*Megalaima flavigrons*) – Common in the wet rainforests of the country's southwest, with especially nice looks at several feeding on round yellow fruits near the track down from Sinharaja, and another preening in the trees right outside our Kitulgala hotel. [E]

CRIMSON-FRONTED BARBET (CRIMSON-FRONTED) (*Megalaima rubricapillus rubricapillus*) – One of these little stunners preened atop a fruiting tree for long minutes (after chomping on a juicy yellow fruit for a bit), seen during a break from our jeep ride up the mountain to Sinharaja, and we saw some three dozen in a tree at our Sigiriya hotel.

COPPERSMITH BARBET (*Megalaima haemacephala*) – Fabulous comparisons between this species and the previous one in a dead tree poking over the roof of our Sigiriya hotel. We sometimes had the side by side on the same branch!

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

BROWN-CAPPED WOODPECKER (BROWN-CAPPED) (*Dendrocopos moluccensis gymnophthalmus*) – One of these tiny woodpeckers played hard to get in some huge dying trees along the road near Kimbassa, bounding back and forth and eventually disappearing before everybody got a chance to look through the scope.

YELLOW-CROWNED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos mahrattensis*) – Superb scope views of one pecking away on a tree at Yala, with another at Uda Walawe.

LESSER YELLOWNAPE (*Picus chlorolophus wellsi*) – One clung for long minutes to the trunk of a tree near the Kitulgala police station, giving us all multiple scope views.

BLACK-RUMPED FLAMEBACK (*Dinopium benghalense*)

CRIMSON-BACKED FLAMEBACK (*Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*) – A trio cavorted and preened in a dead tree near where we started our search for Ceylon Spurfowl. This species is larger than the last, with a pale, rather than dark, throat.

WHITE-NAPED WOODPECKER (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) – A pair showed wonderfully well as they posed on palm trunks in a grove near the Tissa tank.

Pittidae (Pittas)

INDIAN PITTA (*Pitta brachyura*) – Quite common throughout -- though heard far more frequently than seen -- with especially nice views of one perched low in a tree near the track at Bundala, and of another singing from a small bush near the tank at Thalkote.

Prionopidae (Helmetshrikes and Allies)

SRI LANKA WOODSHRIKE (*Tephrodornis affinis*)

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

ASHY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus fuscus*) – A little gang of them huddled -- like peas in a pod, or a line of beads on a string -- on a long dead palm frond near the Blue Magpie Lodge, pressed up so close together that they barely looked like birds!

Aegithinidae (Ioras)

COMMON IORA (*Aegithina tiphia*)

WHITE-TAILED IORA (*Aegithina nigrolutea*) – Our best views came in Yala, when a territorial bird made several singing passes through the trees over the parking lot. Those in Udi's jeep in Uda Walawe saw another near where we turned around.

Campyloptidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)

LARGE CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina macei*) – Udi spotted one in a palm tree near our Sigiriya hotel after breakfast one morning, and followed it around until we had all reassembled and got a chance to see it.

SMALL MINIVET (*Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*) – Best seen in the village of Thalkote, where a little gang of them worked their way through big trees over the road.

SCARLET MINIVET (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)

BAR-WINGED FLYCATCHER-SHRIKE (*Hemipus picatus leggei*) – One preened on a succession of branches below the veranda at Martin's Forest View Lodge, showing its striking wing pattern, white rump and pinkish chest nicely.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

BROWN SHRIKE (*Lanius cristatus*) – One hunting over the fallow paddies below the dining room at the Blue Magpie Lodge allowed multiple nice scope studies.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

BLACK-HOODED ORIOLE (*Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*) – Regular throughout, including one dancing through the trees over the parking lot at our airport hotel and two males having a bit of a scrap in the little village of Thalkote on our last morning.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

WHITE-BELLIED DRONGO (*Dicrurus caerulescens insularis*) – Common and widespread throughout the tour, including one hunting from wires right beside the road in the rubber plantation en route to Kitulgala and another flashing after insects from a wire at the Grenloch tea factory.

WHITE-BELLIED DRONGO (*Dicrurus caerulescens leucopygialis*) – This, the erstwhile "White-vented Drongo", was by far the less common of the two White-bellied Drongo subspecies, found only in the village of Thalkote on our final morning. The white on its stomach is far more restricted than is the white of the previous subspecies.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO (*Dicrurus paradiseus ceylonicus*) – A couple of loudly calling birds, trailing their fabulously long, curly tail feathers, entertained us near the ruins at Sigiriya before breakfast one morning. This and the next species were just recently split.

SRI LANKA DRONGO (*Dicrurus lophorinus*) **[E]**

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

WHITE-BROWED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura aureola*) – One flashed back and forth after insects from a wire near the road, seen on our journey from the coast to Kitulgala. When it moved into a taller leafless tree, we could see it flirting its tail as it hunted, behaving much like an American Redstart might.

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH (*Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*) – A couple of furtive birds moving through some bushes near the shed where we had our picnic lunch in Sinharaja ALMOST lured us out into the rain.

ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) – Single birds seen on scattered days throughout the tour, including one long-tailed rufous male flicking through the trees beside the road in Yala (not far from where we saw our Leopard) and a black and white male at Sinharaja.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

CEYLON MAGPIE (*Urocissa ornata*) – A colorful trio arrived just after first light at Martin's, and proceeded to strip the balcony and hotel walls of moths -- often flashing in to seize them just yards from where we sat watching. **[E]**

HOUSE CROW (*Corvus splendens*) – Abundant throughout, with almost uncountable numbers swarming along the road through some salt pans near Bundala.

LARGE-BILLED CROW (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – Regular throughout, with the mob trundling over a garbage heap at one of our stops (that fabulous fruiting tree) between the coast and Kitulgala allowing especially nice study.

Alaudidae (Larks)

JERDON'S BUSHLARK (*Mirafra affinis*)

ASHY-CROWNED SPARROW-LARK (*Eremopterix griseus*) – A pair scratched in the dust around one of the ponds near the entrance to Uda Walawe, and those in Udi's jeep saw others at Yala.

ORIENTAL SKYLARK (*Alauda gulgula*) – A handful seen at Bundala, including one in an impressively long display flight high over the salt pans.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – A few zipped back and forth over a pond (and some water buffalo) at Yala. Despite what Harrison's book shows, it is this species and NOT the Pale Sand Martin, that occurs in Sri Lanka.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

PACIFIC SWALLOW (HILL) (*Hirundo tahitica domicola*) – Great studies of several perched on wires right outside the Grenloch tea factory, where we stopped for a tour, with others zooming around over the parking lot at Horton Plains NP.

SRI LANKA SWALLOW (*Cecropis hyperythra*) – Fairly common and widespread, with our best views coming at Sigiriya, where numbers of these long-tailed swallows zipped over the lakes and "Lion Rock". This was formerly considered to be a subspecies of the Red-rumped Swallow. **[E]**

Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)

GRAY-HEADED CANARY-FLYCATCHER (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*) – Scattered individuals seen in the highlands, including one busy bird hanging around with the Velvet-fronted Nuthatches in Victoria Park, and a very close bird foraging along the edge of the road at Horton Plains.

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

GREAT TIT (CINEREOUS) (*Parus major mahdattarum*) – Another highland species, with the duo feeding low in trees at Victoria Park giving us our best views. This very drab subspecies would become part of the Cinereous Tit if the species is split.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

VELVET-FRONTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta frontalis*) – Though we saw them on several occasions, the pair creeping headfirst down the trunk of a nearby tree in Victoria Park -- amid the swarming mob of Ceylon White-eyes -- definitely gave us the best views.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

BLACK-CAPPED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*) – A few small groups, including a few in a fruiting bush right beside the road at one spot we stopped on our drive to Kitulgala. [E]

RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer cafer*) – Common throughout, including a pair huddled endearingly close together in a roadside bush, seen as we started our first afternoon's walk from the Blue Magpie Lodge.

YELLOW-EARED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus penicillatus*) – We had to work a bit to get our first views on Horton Plains, but then the sightings came thick and fast, including a recently-fledged youngster being fed berries by a busy parent. [E]

WHITE-BROWED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus luteolus insulae*) – One foraged low in some bushes around the fruiting trees we visited on our drive up the hill to Sinharaja, but our best views came at Bundala, where several perched up atop trees near the road.

YELLOW-BROWED BULBUL (*Iole indica*) – Seen well on several days, with particularly nice studies of a pair periodically twitching through trees near our picnic shelter in Sinharaja.

SQUARE-TAILED BULBUL (SRI LANKA) (*Hypsipetes ganeesa humii*) – Very common along the main trail at Sinharaja, with dozens flashing overhead in little flocks, calling and flycatching from the tops of trees.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

GREEN WARBLER (*Phylloscopus nitidus*)

LARGE-BILLED LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus magnirostris*) – One twitched through some trees just off the trail at Sinharaja, looking vaguely vireo-like.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

BLYTH'S REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*)

CLAMOROUS REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) – One shouting from a reed bed at Bundala proved rather furtive -- a situation that wasn't helped by the equally furtive Brown Shrike that was also hunting in the same area! The subspecies in Sri Lanka (*meridionalis*) is endemic.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

CEYLON BUSH-WARBLER (*Bradypterus palliseri*) – Three singing birds skulked back and forth through bushes right beside the road in Horton Plains, and clearly showed us that sometimes, it's all about where you stand! Eventually, everybody got a look... [E]

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

ZITTING CISTICOLA (*Cisticola juncidis*)

COMMON TAILORBIRD (*Orthotomus sutorius*) – Regular throughout, with spectacularly close looks at one in a papaya tree right beside the dining room at the Blue Magpie Lodge; the only way it could have been closer would have been to have landed on one of us! The jaunty cocked tail of this tiny bird makes it look almost wren-like.

GRAY-BREASTED PRINIA (*Prinia hodgsonii*) – A couple of territorial birds showed nicely as they bounced around in roadside trees near the turnoff to the Sigiriya archeological site.

JUNGLE PRINIA (*Prinia sylvatica*) – Several of these big billed prinias seen well as they sang from bush tops in Bundala and Yala.

ASHY PRINIA (*Prinia socialis*)

PLAIN PRINIA (*Prinia inornata*)

Sylviidae (Old World Warblers)

YELLOW-EYED BABBLER (*Chrysomma sinense nasale*)

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

CEYLON WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops ceylonensis*) – Plentiful at Horton Plains, where dozens flicked through the stunted trees, and at Victoria Park, where another mob swarmed over the flowers on a bottlebrush tree. This species is larger and darker than the next -- and has a call remarkably like that of a House Sparrow. [E]

ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops palpebrosus*)

Pellorneidae (Fulvettas and Ground Babblers)

BROWN-CAPPED BABBLER (*Pellorneum fuscocapillus*) – One danced all around us in a tea plantation near the Makandawa Forest Park, giving us spectacularly close views. [E]

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes)

ASHY-HEADED LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax cinereifrons*) – A noisy little gang bounced back and forth across the trail -- and on the trail -- at Sinharaja on our first visit. [E]

ORANGE-BILLED BABBLER (*Turdoides rufescens*) – Several little gangs swarmed through the bushes near the police station at Kitulgala. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED BABBLER (*Turdoides affinis taprobana*) – Gangs of these social babblers bounced along the grounds of many of our hotels, or gathered on roadside wires or swarmed along fence tops. This subspecies is endemic to Sri Lanka. [E]

Timaliidae (Babblers)

TAWNY-BELLIED BABBLER (*Dumetia hyperythra phillipsi*) – After our first frustrating encounter with them along the road near Kitulgala, we came up trumps with a confiding family group near the turnoff to Sigiriya.

DARK-FRONTED BABBLER (*Rhopocichla atriceps*) – Super views of a pair investigating twigs, dead leaf clusters and more as they crept along a bank beside the trail at Sinharaja on our first morning there.

SRI LANKA SCIMITAR-BABBLER (*Pomatorhinus melanurus*) – It took some work, but we all finally got good looks at this new Sri Lankan endemic as a mob of them booted through the trees (thank goodness those pitcher plants made such great "you're in the right tree" identifiers!). Some

even got to study that distinctively shaped yellow bill in the scope.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa dauurica*) – Especially nice views of one flycatching below the eating deck at Martin's -- the place we stopped for tea on our way down from Sinharaja. This species is separated from the next by its small dark bill, its thin white eyering and its slightly streaky breast.

BROWN-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa muttui*)

INDIAN ROBIN (*Copsychus fulicatus leucopterus*)

ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN (*Copsychus saularis*) – Common throughout, including two singing from street lights in the parking lot of our airport hotel, another hunting from the grassy strip right outside the Kitulgala hotel's dining room and an unusually plumaged bird (with a solidly white tail) below the grassy sward where we had our tea en route to Nuwara Eliya.

WHITE-RUMPED SHAMA (WHITE-RUMPED) (*Copsychus malabaricus leggei*) – Fantastic up-close studies of one singing softly near the entrance to Uda Watta Kele Royal Park very early one morning, with another along the road near our Sigiriya hotel one hot afternoon.

TICKELL'S BLUE-FLYCATCHER (*Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni*)

DULL-BLUE FLYCATCHER (*Eumyias sordidus*) – A male shouting from tree tops along the road through Horton Plains gave us very nice views. [E]

INDIAN BLUE ROBIN (*Larvivora brunnea*)

CEYLON WHISTLING-THRUSH (*Myophonus blighi*) – Yahoo! A female, showing a blue tinge to some of those brown feathers, flicked through the ferns and bamboos beyond a little lake in Horton Plains, giving us fits before finally venturing out into the open branches of a tree. Her mate, though far more elusive, did peek out of the bushes beside the road a bit later on -- until an unfortunately timed passing car chased him out of sight. [E]

KASHMIR FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula subrubra*) – One red-breasted little male hunted in a garden refuse pile at Victoria Park, making short flashing sallies after insects.

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata atratus*) – A half dozen pairs or more were scattered across the grassy tussocks at Horton Plains.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

PIED THRUSH (*Zoothera wardii*) – A second visit to Victoria Park did the trick: after dipping on our first try, we managed to find at least three of these migrants from India roosting in a dense tree near the middle of the park -- including a male that perched in an open enough spot that we could get a scope on him.

SPOT-WINGED THRUSH (*Zoothera spiloptera*) – Our first was a near-dusk experience with a singing bird by the Kitulgala police station. Fortunately, our second (bounding along through the leaf litter and posing on downed logs in the Makandawa Forest Park) provided a lot more color -- and wasn't nearly as much strain on the eyes or neck! [E]

SCALY THRUSH (SRI LANKA) (*Zoothera dauma imbricata*) – Wow! It's not often that you get this skulker (another potential Sri Lankan subspecies) in the scope! We had a nicely cooperating bird along the main trail at Sinharaja -- a silver lining for our rainy day, as drier weather would have brought out loads of noisy tourists.

INDIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus simillimus kinnisi*) – Great views of one rummaging in the grass beside the road while we waited for the gates at Horton Plains to open.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

SOUTHERN HILL MYNA (*Gracula indica*) – Nice views of several noisy birds calling from the big trees at Uda Watta Kele, and of others near the tree full of Pompadour Green-Pigeons along a busy back road.

CEYLON MYNA (*Gracula religiosa*) – Particularly common around Sinharaja, including a handful in the fruiting trees we visited on our drive up the hill, and dozens in the treetops along the ridges above the main trail in the park. [E]

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*)

WHITE-FACED STARLING (*Sturnia albofrontata*) – A few lurked among a noisy mob of Ceylon Mynas near the start of the trail at Sinharaja. [E]

BRAHMINY STARLING (*Temenuchus pagodarum*) – A handful at the start of our Yala jeep tour, including one that worked its way through a short tree not far from the vehicles.

ROSY STARLING (*Pastor roseus*) – A group of a dozen or so youngsters -- all pale brown rather than a more distinctive pink -- rummaged among the cow pies at Bundala.

Chloropseidae (Leafbirds)

JERDON'S LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis jerdoni*) – Those in my jeep at Yala spotted a male foraging in a tree beside the track (while the front jeep contended with a track-blocking mob of langurs). Fortunately, we found another male singing from a tree in a roadside marsh near Kimbassa.

GOLDEN-FRONTED LEAFBIRD (*Chloropsis aurifrons*)

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

THICK-BILLED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum agile zeylonicum*)

WHITE-THROATED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum vincens*) – Multiple fine views of this handsome flowerpecker along the main trail at Sinharaja, including one feeding in the same flowering tree as a couple of far drabber Pale-billed Flowerpeckers. [E]

PALE-BILLED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*)

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

PURPLE-RUMPED SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*) – Easily the most common of the tour's sunbirds, seen on many days. When seen in good light, the males really glowed -- how about those turquoise highlights?!

PURPLE SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris asiaticus*)

LONG-BILLED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris lotenius lotenius*) – Superb views of a male in a tree outside our Kitulgala hotel; we even got to see his bright yellow shoulder tufts.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (GRAY-HEADED) (Motacilla flava thunbergi)

GRAY WAGTAIL (Motacilla cinerea) – One waggled its way back and forth along some of the little rice paddy dividers near the Makandawa Forest Park, providing welcome distraction as we waited for Udi to check out the scops-owl roost. This is among the longest-tailed of the wagtails.

RICHARD'S PIPIT (Anthus richardi) – A scattering at Yala and Bundala, close enough that we could clearly see the very long hind claw that helps to separate them from the next species.

ORIENTAL PIPIT (Anthus rufulus) – Regular in the country's southeastern lowlands.

BLYTH'S PIPIT (Anthus godlewskii)

FOREST WAGTAIL (Dendronanthus indicus) – Our best views came at Victoria Park, where one preened in a dark pine tree along the edge of the river.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (Passer domesticus)

Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

STREAKED WEAVER (Ploceus manyar) – It's always nice when you can get two similar species to sit side by side, like the weavers did for us on the marshy edges of Tissa tank. This species, as we saw well, is very aptly named.

BAYA WEAVER (Ploceus philippinus)

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

INDIAN SILVERBILL (Eudice malabarica)

WHITE-RUMPED MUNIA (Lonchura striata) – Very common throughout, including a few bathing with the next species in Makandawa, and a handful sitting on a wire over the fallow rice paddies at the Blue Magpie Lodge.

BLACK-THROATED MUNIA (Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti) – Superb views of a few bathing in and preening above a little stream in the village of Makandawa.

NUTMEG MANNIKIN (Lonchura punctulata)

TRICOLORED MUNIA (Lonchura malacca) – Some great looks at these fabulous little birds around the tanks at Tissa.

MAMMALS

INDIAN FLYING-FOX (Pteropus giganteus) – Thousands and thousands and THOUSANDS hung from the branches of the massive rain trees edging Tissa tank -- and then flew off in a slow-flapping river of bats as darkness approached. This bat's wingspan is larger than that of the Black-crowned Night-Heron!

WOOLY HORSESHOE BAT (Rhinolophus luctus) – A few of these medium-sized bats whizzed past as we waited for it to get dark enough to try for Indian Scops-Owls near the Tissa tank.

INDIAN PIPISTRELLE (Pipistrellus coromandra)

TOQUE MACAQUE (Macaca sinica) – Widespread, sometimes even in suburban areas. Particularly entertaining was the vast mob that streamed past us on the trails at Uda Watta Kele, and the troop using roadside wires as a "highway", skillfully hand-over-handing down the road. [E]

TUFTED GRAY LANGUR (Semnopithecus priam)

PURPLE-FACED LEAF MONKEY (Trachypithecus vetulus) [E]

INDIAN HARE (Lepus nigricollis)

INDIAN PALM SQUIRREL (Funambulus palmarum)

LAYARD'S PALM SQUIRREL (Funambulus layardi) [E]

DUSKY PALM SQUIRREL (Funambulus sublineatus)

SRI LANKAN (=GRIZZLED) GIANT SQUIRREL (Ratufa macroura) – Our best views came at the base of Lion Rock, where a local lured one into view using a Oreo. Another wilder individual mixed it up with a troop of leaf monkeys in Sinharaja; it lost, despite being nearly as big!

BLACK RAT (Rattus rattus)

INDIAN GRAY MONGOOSE (Herpestes edwardsi)

COMMON MONGOOSE (Herpestes smithi) – One followed its nose along a path just below the dining room at the Blue Magpie, ignoring the cries of delight from those who spotted it. This is also known as the Ruddy Mongoose.

INDIAN BROWN MONGOOSE (Herpestes fuscus)

LEOPARD (Panthera pardus)

INDIAN ELEPHANT (Elephas maximus) – One, which apparently swam across the reservoir to get to the "good" grass, wandered along the edge of the road across the dam at Uda Walawe (since it definitely hadn't gotten through the electric fence), and several others foraged in the park itself.

WILD BOAR (Sus scrofa)

SPOTTED DEER (Axis axis) – Several large herds grazed or snoozed on the flats at Yala, including a few males with impressive racks of antlers.

SAMBAR (Cervus unicolor)

ASIAN WATER BUFFALO (Bubalus bubalis)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Here's a list of the various reptiles and amphibians Udi identified for us during the tour:

Green Forest Lizard (Calotes calotes)

Common Garden Lizard (Calotes versicolor)

Black-lipped Lizard (*Calotes nigrilabris*)

Kangaroo Lizard (*Otocypritis wiegmanni*)

Hump-nosed Lizard (*Lyriocephalus scutatus*)

Common Skink (*Eutropis carinata*)

Water Monitor (*Varanus salvator*)

Land Monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*)

Daygecko -- There are at least 21 species of daygeckos. I'm not sure which one we saw.

Mugger Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*)

Oriental Ratsnake (*Ptyas mucosus*)

Green Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus trigonocephalus*)

Buff-striped Keelback (*Amphiesma stolatum*)

Cope's Rough-side (*Aspidura copei*)

Common House Toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*)

Ceylon Rock Frog (*Nannophrys ceylonensis*)

Paddyfield Frog (*Fejervarya greenii*)

Six-toed Frog (*Euphlyctis hexadactylus*)

Black Turtle (*Melanochelys trijuga*)

Soft-shelled Terrapin (*Lissemys punctata*)

Totals for the tour: 243 bird taxa and 21 mammal taxa