

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO NEPAL
Chitwan, Koshi & Phulchowki

15 February – 01 March 2005



Leader: Mike Witherick

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A Personal Diary

Tuesday, 15 February

The party was somewhat depleted by the late withdrawal, through illness, of one couple. However, all went well with our Qatar Airways flight to Doha. It left and arrived on time; the in-flight service was also of a high standard. Perhaps the worst aspect of our outward journey to Kathmandu was having to wait for some six hours in Doha for the onward flight. However, the airport building was a splendid structure and Nigel had us booked into the eminently comfortable Oryx Lounge with drinks and snacks on the house.

Wednesday, 16 February

Our onward flight to Kathmandu left promptly at 2.40am, mainly filled with Nepalese male migrant workers returning home. As we approached Kathmandu, we could see the awesome snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas. Slowly the aircraft weaved its way through the mountains down to the airport, which is not far from the heart of the lowland-cradled city. Immigration procedures and baggage delivery were pleasantly fast, so much so that we surprised Badri, our ground agent, by the speed with which we emerged from the terminal building.

A short drive through the rather ramshackle urban area brought us to our hotel for the next two nights. Clearly, this was on the right side of the city in that we were close to the royal palace. Hem, our guide for the tour, met us in the hotel foyer whilst we relaxed over a welcome drink and a cup of tea or coffee. Soon we were settling in our rooms. Ellis and I agreed to meet for a snack lunch; Lilian and Keith opted out, but we all agreed to reassemble at 3pm for an inaugural stroll and exploration in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. It has to be said that we all succumbed to the retail temptations and made some purchases, mainly cards and books. At the largest store, we patronised the café garden at the back of the premises. The banana lassi was delicious.

Some of us met in the bar shortly after 6pm and 30 minutes later we all left with Badri and Hem for a most enjoyable Nepalese evening, starting with drinks and nibbles, then a display of tribal dances by some beautiful young ladies (not good for my blood pressure or indeed Keith's) and then a multi-dish main course, rice pudding and coffee. All in all, it was a relaxed and convivial evening - what better way to start a tour! We were in our rooms by 10am and keen to catch up on some lost sleep.

Thursday, 17 February

We breakfasted at 6am and left 30 minutes later to spend the day at Phulchowki, a mountain rising to over 8,000 feet located but a 45-minute drive to the south of Kathmandu. The appeal of this area is that the slopes are still covered by primary forest that has miraculously survived the insatiable and ever-increasing demand for fuel-wood. On the lower slopes, chestnut and alder are the dominant species, whilst towards the top oak and rhododendron is most conspicuous. Happily for us, some of the rhododendron (the Nepalese national flower) was in flower, the blooms being of an intense, rich red. The air was sweetened by the scent of flowering Daphne; at least two different varieties were spotted.

The strategy for the day was to drive to the top of the mountain and then to slowly walk down the track, with the Land Cruiser following behind to pick up any possible stragglers. It should be added that no one availed themselves of that particular service. At various points, we were able to admire the wonderful view to the north across the Kathmandu valley to the Himalayas proper. Unfortunately, the highest peaks were obscured by cloud, but we were able to pick out some of the more famous ranges, such as Langtang, Ganesh and Annapurna. Apart from this high cloud, the weather was kind to us - calm with warm, sunny intervals. After the early morning cold, it was certainly a great pleasure to feel the sun on our backs.

As for the birdlife, the Phulchowki did not disappoint and yielded us around 50 species, many of them being highly colourful and memorable. We were helped today by Som, who had recently returned from a five-month stay in the UK based at the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory. The problem here is, how does one summarise the avian riches we observed? The two most common species were Rufous Sibia and the restless Buff-barred Warbler. In one tree, Som and Hem managed to attract with their impersonation of Collared Owllet, no less than five species of tit - Great, Green-backed, Black-lored, Black-throated and Yellow-browed. At our highest point on the track, where there was still some snow patches, we observed two species of woodpecker sharing the same tree - Brown-fronted and Rufous-bellied. Nearby was a stunning Red-flanked Bluetail or Orange-flanked Bush Robin as is the now PC name. Two black species impressed us, namely the Khalij Pheasant and the smart White-collared Blackbird. Our tally included four species of Laughing thrush, three of fulvetta and two of both minla and yuhina. The only raptors seen during the day were Black Eagle and Black Kite.

We returned to the hotel a little after 5pm. We met again at 6.30pm, this time in the bar for a drink and the log call. Hem and Som joined us and stayed on to eat with us. The hotel restaurant came up trumps with a collection of Nepalese dishes. We were all done by 8.30pm and everyone hastened to their rooms for an early night to recover from the excitement of the day.

Friday, 18 February

With it being a public holiday (Democracy Day) today and with the Maoist-led general strike continuing, it was decided that we should make the transfer to Chitwan National Park by air rather than road. This allowed us the luxury of a leisurely breakfast before having to leave the hotel for our 10.45am flight by Gorkha Airlines in a Dornier to Bharatpur (NOT the Indian one!). The flight left on time and gave us a wonderful view of the terraced hills of 'lowland' Nepal and the peaks of the Himalayas to the north.

At Bharatpur, baggage delivery seemed to be one of the victims of the strike, so too the virtual absence of transport in the airport car park. However, Hem had managed to secure us an open Land Rover for our delivery to the point on the main road where we should have been met by another vehicle to take us to Chitwan Jungle Lodge. Unfortunately, there was no such vehicle waiting. Quickly an alternative way of getting to our destination was worked out. First, this involved driving back to the nearest village and hiring four pedal rickshaws to transport us, and our baggage along a rough track for nearly 2km to another village. Here we requisitioned two elephants and climbed aboard. These impressive creatures then carried us another 2km to the Lodge. Perhaps the most interesting part of this leg of the journey was crossing the wide bed of the Rapti River, one of the tributaries of the Ganges. During the crossing the dried out and gravel-strewn part of the river bed (only water-filled during the monsoon floods), we came across a number of new species, such as River Lapwing, Sand Lark and Common Hawk-cuckoo. We also saw a number of Ruddy Shelduck.

Once at the lodge, we were soon sitting down to a most welcome three-course lunch. We reassembled at 3.30pm and spent the remainder of the daylight bird-watching along part of the Lodge's perimeter. Soon we were seeing the three most vocal of the local birds - Common Hawk Cuckoo, Lineated Barbet and Indian Peafowl. Of the many birds we saw perhaps some of the most memorable were the woodpeckers, from the diminutive Grey-crowned Pygmy Woodpecker to the large Greater Flameback. In between these two extremes, the Lesser Yellownape and Grey-head impressed. Along the perimeter river channel, we saw Yellow-eyed, Chestnut-capped and Jungle Babblers, as well as 'skulkers' such as the Grey-breasted Prinia and the Aberrant and Grey-sided Bush Warblers. Rufous Treepie and Large Cuckoo-shrike posed well. Hornbills provided a wonderful finale to the field part of the day. First, five Great Hornbills flew almost overhead and minutes later we were watching five Oriental Pied Hornbills on the other side of the river channel.

We arrived back at the lodge around 6pm and some 45 minutes later, we sat down to a 30-minute slide show about the national park - each of us was given a bowl of popcorn to munch while we listened and watched. There then followed a very acceptable buffet meal. After that we did the checklist and then hastened to bed before the 9pm blackout. As it turned out, lights were not turned out until well after 9.30pm.

Saturday, 19 February

We were roused from our slumbers at 6am, got dressed, had a hot drink and biscuits and then spent the next two hours birding along the perimeter of the lodge. We covered more or less the same quadrant as yesterday afternoon. The wonderful thing this morning was the clarity of the sky, which allowed us to see some of the highest Himalayan peaks - Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna (the Fishtail could be seen particularly clearly). On the birding front, we added new species such as Hill Myna, Grey-winged Blackbird, Brown Crake, Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker and Grey-crowned Prinia (a highly endangered species). But the stars of the show for all of us were the pair of White-tailed Rubythroats - what stunners! We enjoyed good views of a perched Crested Serpent Eagle and more distantly of a Peregrine.

We arrived back at the lodge for a most welcome breakfast, after which there was a little time to sort out laundry, etc. before walking some more of the paths around the lodge. Actually, we did not have to move a step before encountering a most abundant mixed feeding party. This included White-bellied Yuhina, White-rumped Sharma, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, Striped Tit Babbler and a mix of warblers - Yellow-browed, Hume's, Greenish and Blyth's Leaf. We spent some time overlooking a pond on which there were many common Moorhens and six Mugger Crocodiles hauled out of the water basking in the warm sunshine. Here we saw four species of raptor - Osprey, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Changeable Hawk Eagle and, best of all, a rare Grey-headed Fish Eagle. We also saw Black Ibis, Woolly-necked and Black Storks, as well as the very attractive Blue-bearded Bee-eater. Many Red-rumped Swallows were busily hawking insects.

We arrived back at the lodge around midday. After lunch, there was just about time for a short siesta before assembling at 2.30pm for a talk about, and demonstration of, the Indian Elephant. Perhaps the highlight of the day was the two-hour Elephant safari that followed. This took us through three different type of habitat - sal forest, riverine forest and grassland. It was in the last of these that we came across a mother and calf Great Indian Rhinoceros, which allowed us to approach to within a matter of 15 metres. This safari was about mammals and we found three more species - two of monkey (Rhesus Macaque and Grey Langur) and Wild Boar.

Once back at the lodge, there was plenty of time for a hot shower and a cold drink before tackling another buffet meal, the main course involving mainly vegetable dishes of various kinds. The log was called at the table, plans for tomorrow were outlined and we soon dispersed to our rooms.

Sunday, 20 February

The early morning was overcast. After a hot drink, we left in the Land Rover and headed out of the forest to an extensive grassland. On the birding front, we struggled somewhat. The heavy dew and the damp ground left by unusual winter rains were not such as to persuade skulking species to surface. In the event, we glimpsed Red-rumped Grassbird and Blyth's Reed Warbler. We had distant views of a Himalayan Flameback and had repeat sightings of Streak-throated and Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers. But we were well compensated by a close encounter with two bull Gaur, and also saw our first Sambar. We returned to the lodge for a 9am breakfast.

The second field session of the day involved working our way along another forest track to as far as the river with its now largely dry, boulder-strewn bed. In the forest section, we added a number of new birds, such as Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, White-rumped Munia, Emerald Dove, Golden-fronted Leafbird and Red Collared Dove. A Red-headed Trogon was heard, but could not be persuaded to show itself. We also had some good repeat views of Grey-crowned Prinia. At the river, Som saw an Ibisbill, but by the time we caught up with him, the bird had been put to flight by an in-coming flock of Goosander. Other sightings included Black Stork, Common Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Redshank and a flock of Greenshank. We also saw more distantly a Crested Serpent Eagle.

We did not get back to base until 1.30pm. A good three-course lunch was awaiting us. Afterwards, we were at leisure until a mid-afternoon cup of tea followed by another elephant safari. We headed for the same area of grassland as yesterday and this time we found a lone female Great Indian Rhinoceros. While photographing this splendid creature, we heard the alarm call of Spotted Deer coming from the nearby riverine forest. Soon the monkeys were providing their own alarm. The evidence was that a Tiger had killed a Spotted Deer. We headed for where the monkeys were giving the alarm. Soon we saw a small herd of

frightened Spotted Deer. A little further on our elephant stopped and gave that deep growl to indicate she smelt a Tiger in the vicinity. Sadly the trail then went cold, because it was impossible to move into the more dense forest.

As we made our way, three people suddenly emerged from the forest looking distinctly shaken. They had been chased by a wild Elephant. We decided to take a detour via the river bed. The late sunlight gave the river and its mountain backdrop a magical quality. On nearing the lodge and its nearby pond, a Grey-headed Fish Eagle was spotted perched on a tree stump. It allowed us to approach quite close before flying off.

We arrived back at the lodge at 6pm with plenty of time in hand for a shower and a reviving drink before consuming another tasty buffet meal. Log was called at the table. Afterwards I sat with Hem and Som by the camp fire and learnt more about Nepal and its current challenges.

Monday, 21 February

After a cold night, we awoke to a clear-sky dawn. After a hot drink and biscuits, we boarded the Land Rover and headed to the Rapti River. The scene from the dry river bed was quite simply mind-blowing. There was steam rising from the river itself. Across the river and beyond the immediate hills, the peaks of the high Himalayas were crisply clear. In fact, our mountain panorama took in three of the world's 10 highest mountains - Dhaulagiri (no. 6), Manaslu (no. 7) and Annapurna (no.10). We could readily appreciate the first's reputation as 'the killer mountain'.

We spent the morning driving up the dry river bed of the Harda River, a tributary of the Rapti draining the hills that form the southern part of the national park. It is difficult to know where to begin in highlighting the wonderful avian riches that we were privileged to see. Birds familiar to us from Europe included Wallcreeper, Blue Rock Thrush and Black Stork. Of the more striking and colourful species, one could not omit mention of the Red-capped Trogon (we saw three pairs), the incredibly diminutive Collared Falconet and the Green-billed Malkoha. By the stream edge, there were Plumbeous and White-capped Water Redstarts, the eminently smart Black-backed Forktail and White-browed Wagtail. A Brown Fish Owl showed well - both perched and in flight. Perhaps the rarest bird we saw was the Black-chinned Yuhina. This was a first for Harka, our lodge guide, and for Hem this was his first sighting in 10 years and only his fourth. Another unusual sighting was of a perched Crested Tree Swift - we could see every detail including the rarely seen crest.

We did not get back to the lodge until after 1.30pm, so lunch was taken straight away. We agreed to meet up at 4 pm for a final spell of birding in the immediate vicinity of the lodge. During the next 90 minutes, we saw two species of owl - Jungle and Asian Barred Owlets. With a little patience, we managed some reasonable views of a pair of Tickell's Thrush. As I was about to take a shower, I spotted an Indian Robin from my window and hastily summonsed Keith and Lilian.

The rest of the day followed a now familiar pattern, the only difference being that tonight one of the guides was presented with a copy of Inskipp, Birds of Indian Subcontinent translated into Nepali by Hem and a team of workers. Plans for our transit to Koshi, via Kathmandu were outlined. It was hoped that these would enable us to cope with the General Strike situation now in its eleventh day.

Tuesday, 22 February

We began our transit to Koshi with a 6am wake-up call followed 30 minutes later by a full breakfast. Soon our baggage was loaded aboard a Land Rover and we started the first leg of our journey - a 45-minute drive through the national park to another lodge, this one overlooking the Rapti River. Here we had an hour's break, which allowed us to bird-watch from the veranda. Two new species were recorded: Black-crested Bulbul and White-throated Fantail. A pair of Golden-fronted Leafbirds gave some excellent photo opportunities for Keith. We also saw a Jackal. Several cups of massala tea were consumed before moving on.

The next leg of the journey involved boarding a large ex-army truck, which transported us across the Rapti River to the main road. During the crossing, we saw Small Pratincole and Temminck's Stint, along with other wetland species including Ruddy Shelduck. At the main road, we transferred to a 20-seater bus, which

drove us some 30km to the airport at Bharatpur. The only traffic on the road was people and rickshaws. The General Strike was continuing to paralyse the country on this side of Khatmandu.

Our flight from Bharatpur to Kathmandu left a little early and 20 minutes later we were touching down in the capital. We then made a transfer to another domestic airline, this one taking us to Biratnagar close to the Indian border in East Nepal. The 25-minute flight was in a Fokker jet belonging to Cosmic Air. It left slightly late, but by 3pm we were aboard a Land Rover and starting the 90-minute drive to Koshi Camp. The roads were much busier here, so clearly the bite of the General Strike was less. On the way, we saw six Himalayan Griffon Vultures, a Hoopoe, Bank Myna, Black-shouldered Kite and Pied Harrier.

We arrived at the camp at 4.30pm and after a welcome cup of tea or coffee and biscuits we settled in our well-furnished tents. After a shower, popcorn and a drink outside the bar were the order of the day. There followed an excellent three-course dinner, during which there were some spectacular lightning flashes. The log was called and we hurried to our tents before the anticipated rain started.

Wednesday, 23 February

There were thunderstorms overnight and some rain. It was still rather cloudy when we emerged from our tents shortly after 6am. After a hot drink we started our exploration of the camp grounds with its two fishponds and reedbeds. What a birdwatcher's paradise! At the fishponds, most remarkable was seeing three species of bittern - Yellow, Cinnamon and Black - in as many minutes. There were large numbers of Lesser Whistling-duck; Ferruginous Duck and Mallard were also present.

Eventually, we left the camp and climbed up onto the embankment that marks the boundary of the huge Koshi Nature Reserve. As we did so, the skies began to clear and soon I was realising a life's ambition. But not only was I seeing Mount Everest, also visible were the world's fourth (Lhotse) and fifth (Makalu) highest mountains in the same field of view - all part of the Mahalangur Range. Great white plumes spilling out from their western flanks were the product of ferocious winds blowing recently fallen snow.

We did not do at all badly on the bird front. Appropriately for Ornitholidays in its 40th year, and bearing in mind the cover of the current brochure, we saw a fine Siberian Rubythroat. Our list of new birds for the tour ranged from Thick-billed and Paddyfield Warblers to Stork-billed Kingfisher and Green Bee-eater. Perhaps our rarest sighting was of a pair of Swamp Francolin - a species found only in Nepal and part of India. Immediately behind my tent, we saw the three Spotted Owlets that had called and squabbled throughout much of the night. Other additions to the tour list included Black-winged Cuckooshrike and Red Avadavat.

Breakfast was a most welcome meal - fruit juice, porridge, a fry-up and toast. Afterwards we called a 45-minute time-out before continuing our explorations of the camp and its environs. During this break, there was a summoning call from Hem - the peak of Kanchenjunga (the third highest) had just become visible. So this now meant that during the tour we had no less than 7 of the world's 10 highest peaks. No sooner had I returned to my tent, when Som came rushing up to point out two passing eagles - Great Spotted and Steppe. What a morning this was proving to be!

In the two-hour session that took us through to midday, again raptors were to the fore with sightings of Booted and Imperial Eagles. The latter was spotted spiralling in what was one of the most heartening sights of the tour - a flock of some 50 vultures, most of them Himalayan Griffon, but a few White-rumped mixed in with them. The vulture population of this part of the world has been decimated by Diclofenac poisoning. Our warbler list was swollen by the addition of Thick-billed and Tickell's Leaf.

After a relaxed three-course lunch, we met up at 3pm and were driven some two miles west of the camp, passing through fascinating linear settlements, which contained the occasional large and surprisingly prosperous farmhouse. Having been dropped, we walked to the boundary embankment and started walking back towards the camp. At the start of the walk, owls were very much to the fore. We enjoyed sightings of a Brown Wood Owl, a pair of Brown Fish Owls and a pair of Jungle Owlets involved in an intimate moment. White-bellied and Ashy were two new species of drongo. Perhaps the bird to generate the greatest excitement was the eminently smart Little Pied Flycatcher - only the second record for the Koshi area. Other notable species included Black-naped Oriole and Coppersmith Barbet.

We reached the camp at 6pm very much in need of a hot shower and a reviving drink at the bar. Bowls of prawn crackers were presented to help us with our drinking. There then followed another of Krishna's excellent three-course dinners. The checklist call took some time tonight as we had seen 107 species today. We all went to our tents feeling content, comfortable and eagerly anticipating beds warmed by hot water bottles.

Thursday 24 February

Wake-up call at 6am, breakfast at 6.30am and a 7am departure aboard a long-based Land Rover. Just before we left a Jungle Cat showed well - what a beautifully marked creature! There was a misty start to the day as we drove some 6km north of the camp. An inflatable Zodiac was awaiting us and for the next four hours our helmsman skilfully guided us as we literally drifted down the main channel of the Koshi River. We made a number of landings, mainly on islands defined by the river's braided channel. Clearly, this was to be a morning for 'water' birds broadly defined. As for ducks, there were large numbers of Mallard, Teal, Gadwall and Pintail, but in amongst them we saw small numbers of Spot-billed Duck. All were particularly impressed by the huge Black-necked Storks, which strutted across the sandbanks. We also did well for raptors, with a Pallas' Fish Eagle flying close by, whilst a Steppe Eagle was seen dealing with a carcass, with a Greater Spotted Eagle waiting nearby for its turn. A number of Himalayan Griffons were seen and a lone White-rumped Vulture. Three species of tern were seen well - Little, River and Black-bellied - the last an increasingly rare species. A huge wild Water Buffalo was seen wallowing in the shallow waters, and a little later we saw a herd of at least a half dozen. But the highlight for Hem and Som was the Desert Wheatear that Lilian spotted during one of our landings. This was a first for the Koshi Nature Reserve.

Having covered a distance of some 10km, we eventually made our final landfall, with the Land Rover waiting to carry us back to the camp. On the way north, we saw one of the species that Keith particularly sought - Striated Babbler. Lesser Adjutant and Eurasian Tree Pipit were new for the list. Two Indian Mongoose were observed on the track ahead of us. We reached base just before 1pm. Soon we were sitting down to another of Krishna's fine lunches.

After an early afternoon break, we reassembled at 3pm for another excursion outside the campus. This took us in a southerly direction. During the next three hours, new birds for the trip came in a steady stream. We started with Grey-headed Lapwing, which was shortly followed by Striated Grassbird and Marsh Harrier. In fact, we saw two males of the former in quite vocal mood. The furthest point of our southward drive proved particularly productive. On a pond, there were Shoveler and Red-crested Pochard out on the water around the margins, we found Rufous-breasted Crake, Bluethroat, Clamorous and Smoky Warblers, the last entertaining us with its rather bouncy behaviour. There were sightings of Siberian Rubythroat, two species of Green Pigeon - Orange-fronted and Yellow-footed - and at least two Hog-Deer. Several ring-tail Pied Harriers were seen heading for their roosting area as the light began to fail.

We arrived back at the camp just after 6pm. This left us with a reasonable amount of time for a shower and a chat over a drink and popcorn. The meal tonight was a most tasty Nepalese affair. The log call followed and revealed a day total of 116.

Friday, 25 February

The first part of the day followed the now well-established timetable. At 7.15am we left the camp and headed south towards the Koshi Barrage. The theme of the morning's birding was to be grassland and wetland species. As regards the former, the less cultivated parts of the fertile Terai lowlands provide good habitat. We recorded three species of pipit (Rosy, Richards and Paddyfield); three of lark (Rufous-winged, Greater Short-toed and Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark) and two of prinia (Plain and Yellow-bellied); Zitting Cisticola was heard rather more than seen. As for the wetland birds, we added Pacific Golden Plover, Northern Lapwing and Wood Sandpiper. At the barrage - a remarkable feat of engineering of some 45 years ago - there was a great richness of waterfowl. From the dam itself, we saw no less than 11 species of duck, Wigeon and Common Pochard being new. Nearby we recorded Cotton Pygmy Goose and Garganey, as well as Black-headed Ibis and Pheasant-tailed Janaca. A Wryneck suddenly popped out onto a small tree and, along with Bluethroats, showed well.

We arrived back at base a little after midday. On entering the morning's haul of birds on my checklist, it was found that our tally for the tour now stood at exactly 301. Much relief amongst the leaders! The lunch that followed was yet another excellent one. Krishna maintained his reputation as a talented soup-maker. The cross-cultural combination of chicken a la king and spicy vegetables was inspired!

We reassembled at 3pm for a stroll around the campus and its immediate environs. We started by looking at the embryonic education centre, the organic vegetable garden and the would-be forest. A Verditer Flycatcher gave brief views. During the next two hours, we added four new species to the list - Barn Swallow, Hume's Short-toed Lark, Hen Harrier and Yellow-breasted Bunting. Other notable sightings included a Collared Falconet and a fine male Pied Harrier.

After some preliminary packing and a hot shower, we gradually gathered outside the bar for a drink or two plus a bowl of popcorn or two. We then sat down to a fine Chinese-style meal rounded off by a not-so-Chinese carrot semolina sweet (by popular request, a repeated dish). Afterwards we did the checklist and then settled our tent accounts before retiring.

Saturday, 26 February

Breakfast was at 6.30am and preceded by some last minute packing. After the meal, we planted four trees in the area designated forest area to mark the occasion of Ornitholidays' stay at the camp. Soon we had to say farewell to Som (staying on to act as Rob's guide) and the super staff of the camp. The drive to Biratnagar took about 90 minutes, but once in the city we made a slight detour to a locality renowned as a roosting area for 'flying foxes' (i.e. large fruit bats). Whilst watching the huge and often noisy creatures, we added yet another bird to the tour list - House Swift.

We arrived at the airport a little early and once we had checked in spent some time sitting in the gardens opposite the terminal building. Eventually, we were summonsed, said farewell to Krishna (waiting to pick up someone on the incoming flight) and then cleared the security checks. When the flight was eventually called, we all managed to secure seats on the starboard side of the Beech aircraft. At first, it seemed as if we would never rise above the hazy pall loitering over the lowlands. Then suddenly we were seeing, in perfectly clear air, Kanchenjunga slightly behind us, Manaku abreast of us and slightly ahead Lhotse and Everest. Whow! Four 8,000 metre peaks in view at the same time. Thanks to a panoramic diagram offered by the stewardess, we were able to note the various spectacular peaks we passed as we flew towards Katmandu. As we approached the capital, through the open door to the cockpit we were able to see Manaslu and Annapurna - two more 8,000 metre peaks.

Once landed, we soon reclaimed our baggage and, after a slight glitch with transport, hired two small taxis to convey us to our hotel, arriving there around 12.30pm. After a light lunch, we were given a tour of the city focused on two particular areas - both World Heritage sites. First, there was the Hanuman-shoka Durbar Square, which contains a royal palace and many temples of the ancient city. Then we drove to Bouddhanath where the biggest stupa in Nepal is to be found. This part of the city is now known as 'Little Tibet' in that a large number of refugees from Tibet have settled in this area, presumably because of its strong Buddhist associations.

We returned to the hotel around 5.30pm and met in the bar an hour later where we were joined by Hem and some of his colleagues. Dinner followed and that, in turn, by an early night.

Sunday, 27 February

It seemed a little optimistic to be offering buffet breakfast out in the garden at 6.30am. There was a distinct chill in the air, so we decided to opt for a table indoors. Ellis decided to have a quiet day in the city.

We left the hotel at 7am and spent much of the day birding up in the hills at Phulchowki. Our first stop at the start of the track produced two new species in the form of Great Barbet and Black-chinned Babbler. Two Asian Barred Owlets were spotted in the same vicinity. Driving further up, we encountered a number of mixed feeding parties. In a flock of largely White-chinned Babblers we spotted a Grey-sided Laughingthrush. In another instance, a Chestnut-capped Warbler was seen keeping company with Grey-

hooded and Buff-bar Warblers. A male Black-throated Sunbird showed briefly. Speckled Wood Pigeon was seen for the first time.

As we started our downward walk (the vehicle following obediently behind as before) we came across a party of children from the school at the base of the mountain collecting the tons of rubbish dropped by Valley people when they came here a month or so ago to see the snow that had fallen at an unusually low altitude. For our part, we continued our diligent search for *Cutia*, but in the end the best we could claim was that we heard three calls. Birding became much quieter and shortly after midday we found a sunny spot at which to consume our picnic lunch.

After the break, the avian quietness persisted, save for hearing the distant calls of Collared Owlet and Striated Bulbul. In fact, we were to come across only three new species for the tour. First, we saw a pair of White-browed Shrike Babblers, a splendid Spotted Forktail and finally a pair of Grey Bushchats. Having seen the last, we decided to call it a day and head back for the hotel, arriving there around 4pm. This left time for some relaxing and shopping.

We met in the bar at 6.30pm for a drink and log call. We then were driven to a Nepali restaurant for our farewell dinner. This one, like our welcome dinner, was a traditional Nepali meal. During which, we were entertained to some dancing from the different regions of the country.

Monday, 28 February

We were allowed the luxury of an extra half-hour in bed, so breakfasted at 7am and left the hotel 30 minutes later. Our destination this morning was Nagarjun Royal Forest, just to the north west of Kathmandu. During the next four hours, we gently bird-watched along a 3km stretch of track running through the lower slopes of the forested hillside. Much to our delight, Pem produced still more new birds for the tour list. We started with the skulking but fast-moving Grey-bellied Tesia. Above our heads there were plenty of Lemon-rumped Warblers mixed in a flock along with Grey-hooded and Blyth's Leaf Warblers as well as Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers. Also in amongst them, we spotted a Speckled Piculet and several Yellow-bellied Fantails. Subsequently, we did well with flycatchers, seeing Rufous-gorgeted, Slaty-backed and Rufous-bellied Niltava. Strange that there should be this run of birds partially differentiated by belly colour! We glimpsed a Blue-fronted Redstart and did rather better with a White-tailed Robin. Perhaps not so exciting, we also saw our first Common Buzzard. Grey Treepie was also new. This was seen along with other long-tailed birds such as the Red-billed Blue Magpie, the Green-billed Malkoha. On the mammal front, we saw several Orange-bellied Squirrels and our first Assamese Macaque.

We arrived back at the hotel just after midday and then opted to have lunch in the garden. Afterwards, there was plenty of time for packing before settling our room accounts and leaving for the airport at 4 pm. We dropped off Hem on the way. The check-in, although quiet, seemed to take ages, but eventually we had passed through security checks and emigration. This left us with two hours to kill before boarding our Qatar Airways flight for Doha.

Tuesday, 01 March

We arrived in Doha on schedule, so this meant that we had nearly three hours to wait for our onward flight to London. Fortunately, Keith and Lilian were able to relax in the Business Class Lounge, whilst Ellis and I enjoyed the facilities of the Oryx Lounge. We left Doha at 1.40am and arrived into a cold and snowy Gatwick at 6.30am. As luck would have it, my case was the second item to be delivered to the baggage claim, and Ellis did not have to wait for more than a few minutes.

Acknowledgements

The group may have been small, but it proved to be a friendly and cohesive one. Good humour was very much to the fore. Special thanks must go to Hem for his excellent organisation, sharp bird-watching skills and impressive command of the nuances of the English language. We all enjoyed his company and that of his most considerate compatriot, Som. We could not have wished for a warmer welcome wherever we went in this fascinating country.

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March 2005

Itinerary and Weather

Tuesday, 15 February	London Gatwick > Doha
Wednesday, 16 February	Doha > Kathmandu Hazy sunshine 20°C
Thursday, 17 February	Phulchowki Mainly sunny & warm 21°C
Friday, 18 February	Kathmandu > Chitwan via Bharatpur Mainly sunny & warm 23°C
Saturday, 19 February	Chitwan Mainly sunny and warm 25°C
Sunday, 20 February	Chitwan Overcast 18°C
Monday, 21 February	Chitwan Fine morning, becoming overcast 26°C
Tuesday, 22 February	Chitwan > Koshi via Bharatpur, Kathmandu & Biratnagar Mainly overcast 24°C
Wednesday, 23 February	Koshi Camp & environs Overnight thunderstorms, becoming clear & sunny 26°C
Thursday, 24 February	am Koshi River cruise pm South end of Nature Reserve Hazy but warm 28°C
Friday, 25 February	am Koshi Barrage pm Camp & environs Hazy but warm 25°C
Saturday, 26 February	am Kathmandu via Biratnagar pm City tour Fine & sunny 28°C
Sunday, 27 February	Phulchowki Fine & sunny 23°C
Monday, 28 February	am Nagarjun Royal Forest pm Kathmandu > Doha Hazy sunshine 21°C
Tuesday, 01 March	Doha > London Gatwick Snow 0°C

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale (max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	C = Chitwan K = Koshi N = Nagarjun Forest P = Phulchowki	1 = > 5 individuals 2 = 5 - 9 3 = 10 - 99 4 = > 100 - 999

The order of families and nomenclature follows *A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* by K.Kazmierczak (2000).

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Great Crested Grebe	2	K	1	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Little Grebe	3	K	3	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Cormorant	5	C, K	3	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Little Cormorant	3	C, K	3	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
Oriental Darter	1	K	2	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
Great Egret	4	C, K	3	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Intermediate Egret	2	K	4	<i>Mesophox intermedia</i>
Little Egret	4	K	3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Cattle Egret	9	C, K	4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Grey Heron	3	K	1	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	1	K	1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Little (Striated) Heron	1	K	1	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Indian Pond Heron	6	C, K	3	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Cinnamon Bittern	1	K	1	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>
Yellow Bittern	1	K	1	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>
Black Bittern	1	K	1	<i>Dupetor flavicollis</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	2	C	1	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Black Stork	5	C, K	3	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Lesser Adjutant	2	K	3	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
Asian Openbill	5	C, K	2	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
Black-necked Stork	1	K	2	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>
Black-headed Ibis	3	KC	3	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
Black Ibis	1	K	4	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>
Lesser Whistling Duck	3	K	4	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	4	C, K	3	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Northern Pintail	3	K	4	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Common Teal	2	K	4	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Spot-billed Duck	1	K	3	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
Mallard	3	K	4	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Gadwall	3	K	4	<i>Anas strepera</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	1	K	3	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Garganey	1	K	3	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Northern Shoveler	2	K	3	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Cotton Pygmy Goose	1	K	1	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
Red-crested Pochard	2	K	3	<i>Rhodonessa rufina</i>
Common Pochard	1	K	3	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Ferruginous Pochard	3	K	4	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>
Goosander (Common Merganser)	2	C	3	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	2	K	1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Oriental Honey Buzzard	3	C	1	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
Black Kite	6	C, K, N, P	3	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Shikra	6	C, K	1	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	2	C, K	1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>

Common Buzzard	1	N	1	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
White-eyed Buzzard	3	K	1	<i>Butastur teesa</i>
Changeable Hawk Eagle	2	C	1	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
Booted Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>
Imperial Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
Steppe Eagle	3	K, P	1	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Greater Spotted Eagle	2	K	1	<i>Aquila clanga</i>
Black Eagle	1	P	1	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>
Osprey	3	C, K	1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Pallas's Fish Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	2	C	1	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
Egyptian Vulture	3	C	2	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
White-rumped Vulture	2	K	2	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>
Himalayan Griffon	3	K	3	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
Hen Harrier	1	K	1	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Pied Harrier	3	K	2	<i>Circus melanoleucos</i>
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	2	K	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Crested Serpent Eagle	4	C, K	1	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
Peregrine	2	C, K	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Common Kestrel	5	C, K	1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Collared Falconet	2	C, K	1	<i>Microhierax caerulescens</i>
Swamp Francolin	2	1h K	2	<i>Francolinus gularis</i>
Black Francolin	1	C	1	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>
Kalij Pheasant	2	P	2	<i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>
Indian Peafowl	4	1h C	2	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Red Junglefowl	3	C	2	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
White-breasted Waterhen	4	K	2	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
Brown Crake	1	C	1	<i>Amaurornis akool</i>
Ruddy-breasted Crake	1	K	1	<i>Porzana fusca</i>
Common Moorhen	5	C, K	3	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Purple Swamphen	3	K	3	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Common Coot	3	K	2	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	1	K	1	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
Bronze-winged Jacana	3	K	2	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>
Eurasian Thick-knee	2	C	1	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
Great Thick-knee	1	K	1	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
Small Pratincole	3	C, K	3	<i>Glareola lactea</i>
Northern Lapwing	1	K	3	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Grey-headed Lapwing	1	K	1	<i>Vanellus cinereus</i>
River Lapwing	4	C	2	<i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>
Red-wattled Lapwing	5	C, K	2	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
Little Ringed Plover	2	C, K	1	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kentish Plover	1	K	2	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
Pacific Golden Plover	1	K	1	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
Eurasian Curlew	2	K	3	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Common Redshank	2	C	1	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Common Greenshank	6	1h C, K	3	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Green Sandpiper	4	C, K	2	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Wood Sandpiper	1	K	1	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Dunlin	1	K	2	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Temminck's Stint	3	C, K	2	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
Common Sandpiper	4	C, K	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Common Snipe	1	C	1	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Pallas's Gull	1	K	1	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>
River Tern	2	K	1	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>
Black-bellied Tern	1	K	1	<i>Sterna acuticauda</i>
Little Tern	1	K	1	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Oriental Turtle Dove	6	K, N, P	3	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	5	C, K	2	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Red Collared Dove	3	C, K	2	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
Spotted Dove	8	C, K	2	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>

Emerald Dove	2		C	1	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	2		K	1	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>
Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	3		C, K	2	<i>Treron bicincta</i>
Feral Pigeon	10		C, K, N, P	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Wood Pigeon	1		N	1	<i>Columba hodgsonii</i>
Red-breasted Parakeet	3		C	3	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
Plum-headed Parakeet	5	1h	C, K	2	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	4	1h	C, K	3	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Common Hawk-Cuckoo	2	6h	C, K	2	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>
Green-billed Malkoha	2		C, N	1	<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>
Greater Coucal	5		C, K	1	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
Lesser Coucal	3		C	1	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>
Brown Wood Owl	1	4h	C, K	1	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
Brown Fish Owl	2		C, K	1	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
Collared Owlet	-	2h	C, P	1	<i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>
Jungle Owlet	4	3h	KCB	1	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>
Asian Barred Owlet	2		C, P	1	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>
Spotted Owlet	4		C, K	2	<i>Athene brama</i>
White-rumped Needletail	1		C	1	<i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>
House Swift	23		K, P	1	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>
Crested Tree Swift	3		C	2	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
Indian Roller	2	1h	K	1	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
Red-headed Trogon	1	1h	C	2	<i>Harpactes erythrocephalus</i>
Pied Kingfisher	5		C, K	2	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Common Kingfisher	7		C, K	2	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Stork-billed Kingfisher	2		K	1	<i>Halcyon capensis</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	6		C, K	2	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Green Bee-eater	3		K	3	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
Blue-bearded Bee-eater	1		C	1	<i>Nyctyornis athertoni</i>
Common Hoopoe	4		K	1	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Great Barbet	2		N, P	1	<i>Megalaima virens</i>
Lineated Barbet	3		C	2	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
Blue-throated Barbet	4		C, K, N	1	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>
Coppersmith Barbet	1		K	1	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
Oriental Pied Hornbill	2		C	2	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
Great Hornbill	1		C	2	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>
Streak-throated Woodpecker	2		C	1	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	4		C	2	<i>Picus canus</i>
Greater Yellownape	1		C	1	<i>Picus flavinucha</i>
Lesser Yellownape	4		C, N	1	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
Black-rumped Flameback	3		K	2	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
Himalayan Flameback	1		C	1	<i>Dinopium shorii</i>
Greater Flameback	4		C	2	<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>
Brown-fronted Woodpecker	1		P	1	<i>Dendrocopos auriceps</i>
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	3		C, K	2	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	2		C	1	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker	2		P	1	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>
Speckled Piculet	1		N	1	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>
Eurasian Wryneck	1		K	1	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Common Iora	4		C, K	1	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
Orange-bellied Leafbird	1		P	1	<i>Chloropsis hardwickii</i>
Golden-fronted Leafbird	2		C	1	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
Black-naped Oriole	1		K	1	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
Black-hooded Oriole	4		C, K	2	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
Maroon Oriole	4		C, N, P	1	<i>Oriolus traillii</i>
Rufous-winged (Bengal) Bushlark	1		K	2	<i>Mirafra assamica</i>
Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	2		K	2	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>
Greater Short-toed Lark	1		K	1	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
Sand Lark	2		C, K	2	<i>Calandrella raytal</i>
Hume's Short-toed Lark	1		K	3	<i>Calandrella acutirostris</i>
Plain Martin	4		C, K	3	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>

Barn Swallow	2	K, P	1	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	2	C	3	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
Ashy Woodswallow	1	K	1	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
Black Drongo	7	C, K	3	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	2	C, K	1	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
Spangled Drongo	9	C, K	3	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	1	C	1	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>
Ashy Drongo	1	K	1	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
White-bellied Drongo	1	K	1	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
Bronzed Drongo	1	C	1	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	4	C	2	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
Grey-backed Shrike	2	C, K	1	<i>Lanius tephronotus</i>
Brown Shrike	3	K	1	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
Long-tailed Shrike	4	C, K	1	<i>Lanius schach</i>
Chestnut-tailed Starling	5	C, K	2	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>
Asian Pied Starling	6	C, K	3	<i>Sturnus contra</i>
Bank Myna	1	K	1	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
Common Myna	7	C, K	4	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Jungle Myna	9	C, K, P	3	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>
Common Hill Myna	2	C	1	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
Eurasian Jay	2	P	1	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Red-billed Blue Magpie	5	C, K, N	2	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
Rufous Treepie	7	C, K	2	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
Grey Treepie	1	N	1	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>
House Crow	7	C, K, P	5	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Large-billed Crow	8	C, K	3	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Large Cuckooshrike	5	C, K, N	2	<i>Coracina macei</i>
Black-winged Cuckooshrike	2	K, P	1	<i>Coracina melaschistos</i>
Long-tailed Minivet	2	P	1	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>
Scarlet Minivet	3	C, N	1	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
Black Bulbul	6	C, P	3	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
Mountain Bulbul	2	P	2	<i>Hypsipetes mccllellandii</i>
Striated Bulbul	-	1h P	1	<i>Pycnonotus striatus</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	11	C, K, N, P	3	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
Red-whiskered Bulbul	7	C, K	3	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
Himalayan Bulbul	6	C, N, P	1	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>
Black-crested Bulbul	1	C	1	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
Puff-throated Babbler	2	C	1	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler	2	P	1	<i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i>
Rusty-cheeked Babbler	1	P	1	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrogeneris</i>
Black-chinned Babbler	2	N, P	3	<i>Stachyris pyrrhops</i>
Striped Tit Babbler	3	C	2	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
Yellow-eyed Babbler	4	C	2	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
Jungle Babbler	6	C, K	3	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>
Striated Babbler	2	K	2	<i>Turdoides earlei</i>
Cutia	-	1h P	1	<i>Cutia nipalensis</i>
White-browed Shrike Babbler	1	P	1	<i>Pteruthius flaviscapis</i>
Rufous-winged Fulvetta	1	P	1	<i>Alcippe castaneiceps</i>
White-browed Fulvetta	2	P	2	<i>Alcippe vinipectus</i>
Nepal Fulvetta	2	P	1	<i>Alcippe nipalensis</i>
Chestnut-tailed Minla	1	P	1	<i>Minla strigula</i>
Blue-winged Minla	1	P	1	<i>Minla cyanouroptera</i>
Rufous Sibia	2	P	3	<i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>
Whiskered Yuhina	2	P	2	<i>Yuhina flavicollis</i>
Stripe-throated Yuhina	1	P	1	<i>Yuhina gularis</i>
Black-chinned Yuhina	1	K	1	<i>Yuhina nigrimenta</i>
Chestnut-capped Babbler	3	C	2	<i>Timalia pileata</i>
Hoary-throated Barwing	1	P	1	<i>Actinodura nipalensis</i>
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	1	P	2	<i>Garrulax erythrocephalus</i>
Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush	1	C	2	<i>Garrulax monileger</i>
Striated Laughingthrush	2	P	1	<i>Garrulax striatus</i>

Streaked Laughingthrush	1	P	1	<i>Garrulax lineatus</i>
Grey-sided Laughingthrush	1	P	1	<i>Garrulax caerulatus</i>
White-throated Laughingthrush	2	P	2	<i>Garrulax albogularis</i>
White-crested Laughingthrush	-	1h C	1	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>
Red-throated Flycatcher	4	C, K	1	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>
Little Pied Flycatcher	1	K	1	<i>Ficedula westermanni</i>
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	1	N	1	<i>Ficedula strophciata</i>
Slaty-backed Flycatcher	1	N	1	<i>Ficedula hodgsonii</i>
Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	7	1h C, K, N, P	2	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
Rufous-bellied Niltava	1	N	1	<i>Niltava sundara</i>
Verditer Flycatcher	2	K	1	<i>Eumyias thalassina</i>
White-throated Fantail	3	C, K, P	1	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>
Yellow-bellied Fantail	1	N	1	<i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i>
Black-faced Warbler	2	P	1	<i>Abroscopus schisticeps</i>
Grey-hooded Warbler	4	C, N, P	3	<i>Seicercus xanthoschistos</i>
Golden-spectacled Warbler	1	N	1	<i>Seicercus burkii</i>
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	2	N, P	1	<i>Seicercus castaniceps</i>
Grey-bellied Tesia	1	N	1	<i>Tesia cyaniventer</i>
Aberrant Bush Warbler	1	C	1	<i>Cettia flavolivacea</i>
Grey-sided Bush Warbler	2	C	1	<i>Cettia brunnifrons</i>
Grey-breasted Prinia	2	C	1	<i>Prinia hodgsoni</i>
Grey-crowned Prinia	2	C	1	<i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i>
Ashy Prinia	1	C	1	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
Plain Prinia	1	K	1	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
Yellow-bellied Prinia	1	K	1	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>
Rufous-rumped Grassbird	1	C	1	<i>Graminicola bengalensis</i>
Striated Grassbird	1	K	1	<i>Megalurus palustris</i>
Zitting Cisticola	1	K	1	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Thick-billed Warbler	1	K	1	<i>Acrocephalus aedon</i>
Clamorous Reed Warbler	1	K	1	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>
Blyth's Reed Warbler	4	C, K	1	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
Paddyfield Warbler	1	K	1	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>
Common Tailorbird	8	C, K, N	1	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
Common Chiffchaff	3	K	1	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Dusky Warbler	2	K	1	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
Smoky Warbler	1	K	1	<i>Phylloscopus fulgiventor</i>
Tickell's Leaf Warbler	1	K	1	<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i>
Greenish Warbler	7	C, K	2	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	C	1	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
Hume's Warbler	2	C, K	1	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>
Blyth's Leaf Warbler	4	C, P	2	<i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>
Lemon-rumped Warbler	1	N	3	<i>Phylloscopus chloronotus</i>
Buff-barred Leaf Warbler	2	P	3	<i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>
Siberian Rubythroat	2	K	1	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>
White-tailed Rubythroat	1	C	1	<i>Luscinia pectoralis</i>
Bluethroat	2	K	1	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Orange-flanked Bush Robin	1	P	1	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
Black Redstart	4	K	1	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Blue-fronted Redstart	1	N	1	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
White-tailed Robin	1	N	1	<i>Myiomela leucura</i>
White-rumped Shama	3	C	1	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
Oriental Magpie Robin	5	C, K	1	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
Indian Robin	1	C	1	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>
White-capped Water Redstart	1	C	1	<i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>
Plumbeous Water Redstart	2	C, P	1	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>
Black-backed Forktail	1	C	1	<i>Enicurus immaculatus</i>
Spotted Forktail	1	P	1	<i>Enicurus maculatus</i>
Desert Wheatear	1	K	1	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>
Siberian Stonechat	5	C, K	2	<i>Saxicola maura</i>
White-tailed Stonechat	2	C	1	<i>Saxicola leucura</i>
Grey Bushchat	1	P	1	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>

Blue Rock Thrush	1	C	1	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Blue Whistling Thrush	5	C, N, P	2	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
Tickell's Thrush	2	C	1	<i>Turdus unicolor</i>
White-collared Blackbird	1	P	1	<i>Turdus albocinctus</i>
Grey-winged Blackbird	2	C, K	1	<i>Turdus boulboul</i>
Great Tit	5	C, P	2	<i>Parus major</i>
Green-backed Tit	2	P	1	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
Black-lored Tit	3	N, P	2	<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>
Black-throated Tit	2	P	2	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
Yellow-browed Tit	2	P	2	<i>Sylviparus modestus</i>
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	3	C, N	1	<i>Sitta castanea</i>
White-tailed Nuthatch	2	P	2	<i>Sitta himalayensis</i>
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	2	C	1	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
Wallcreeper	1	C	1	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
Olive-backed Pipit	4	C, K, P	1	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
Eurasian Tree Pipit	1	K	1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Paddyfield Pipit	1	C	1	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
Richard's Pipit	2	C, K	1	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
Rosy Pipit	1	K	1	<i>Anthus roseatus</i>
White-browed Wagtail	3	C	2	<i>Motacilla madaraspatensis</i>
Grey Wagtail	3	C	1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	8	C, K	3	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Citrine Wagtail	3	C, K	1	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
Oriental White-eye	5	C, K, P	1	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
Purple Sunbird	5	C, K	1	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
Black-throated Sunbird	1	P	1	<i>Aethopyga saturata</i>
Green-tailed Sunbird	2	P	2	<i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i>
Fire-tailed Sunbird	2	P	2	<i>Aethopyga ignicauda</i>
Crimson Sunbird	1	C	1	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	3	N, P	1	<i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>
Red Avadavat	2	K	2	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
Indian Silverbill	3	K	2	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>
White-rumped Munia	1	C	2	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
Scaly-breasted Munia	3	K	3	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
House Sparrow	6	C, K, P	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	1	P	1	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	1	C	1	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>
Baya Weaver	1	K	3	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
Black-breasted Weaver	1	K	2	<i>Ploceus benghalensis</i>
Rufous-breasted Accentor	1	P	1	<i>Prunella strophiatea</i>
Crested Bunting	6	C, K	2	<i>Melophus lathami</i>
Black-headed Bunting	1	K	2	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>
Yellow-breasted Bunting	1	K	2	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>

MAMMALS

Rhesus Macaque	8	C, K, P	2	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>
Assamese Macaque	1	N	1	<i>Macaca</i>
Grey Langur	6	C	3	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>
Jungle Cat	2	K	1	<i>Felis chaus</i>
Common (Grey) Mongoose	3	K	1	<i>Herpestes edwardsi</i>
Asiatic Jackal	1	3h K	1	<i>Canis aureus</i>
Great Indian Rhinoceros	21	C	1	<i>Rhinoceros unicornis</i>
Sambar	1	C	1	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
Spotted Deer (Chital)	1	C	2	<i>Axis axis</i>
Hog-Deer	1	1h C, K	1	<i>Axis porcinus</i>
Water Buffalo	1	K	3	<i>Bubalis bubalis</i>
Gaur	1	C	1	<i>Bos gaurus</i>
Wild Boar	32	C	1	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel	1	N, P	2	<i>Dremomys lokriah</i>
Indian Flying-fox	1	K	3	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>

Gangetic River Dolphin 1 K 1 *Platanista gangetica*

Various insectivorous bats were also seen.

OTHER ANIMALS included Marsh Mugger, Indian Mud Turtle, lizards (*Calotes sp*), and House Gecko (*Hemidactylus sp*).

This list represents those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.

Mountain views



Great Indian Rhinoceros

Teatime



Local travel

Front cover: Golden-fronted Leafbird
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