

Mammals Tour Report- 11th July 2015



Saman rescues a Hawk Eagle



Sambar Deer



At the Smithsonian Research Center
Photo credits- Saman Gamage



Elephant Gathering - Minneriya
Photo credits: Perry



Black Bear- Yala
Photo credits: Perry



Water Buffalo - Yala
Photo credits: Perry

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Summary

Our tour begins with visiting the main cities of the Cultural triangle starting with Sigiriya where we encounter all the primates and the famous Grey Slender Loris. Our journey gets interesting with stops to help injured Grey Langurs and welcoming a Crested Hawk Eagle to ride with us. A close encounter with a lonely Asian Elephant and the site of a Leopard perched on a branch made the experience exciting as we travelled through ancient historic ruins and experienced different climates and terrains.

Our tour ends with the sighting of 28 mammals, 154 birds and a few reptiles and butterflies.

Day 01 Friday 10th July 2015

The group met at the Airport and boarded the flight to Sri Lanka for their 14 day Mammal Tour.

Day 02 Saturday 11th July 2015

The group arrived at 1.15 pm and we left the Airport at 1.30 pm. It was a very sunny and clear day. En-route we stopped at Kurunegala for some tea while enjoying sightings of Indian Roller, Red-wattled Lapwing Indian Palm Squirrel and a Giant Squirrel. Before reaching our hotel for the night we encounter a group of Torque Monkeys in Koskelle area making it a successful first day. We reached our hotel at 7.10 pm and had dinner at 8.00pm.

Since the group was very tired we didn't do the checklist and everyone went to their rooms after dinner.

Day 03 Sunday 12th July 2015

After a cup of coffee/tea at 6.15 we set out for a pre-breakfast mammal/birding session in the hotel garden where we witnessed a Grey Mongoose and a group of Grey Langurs. After breakfast left the hotel and set out to the Sigiriya sanctuary area but we had no luck with spotting any mammals. We returned to the hotel for lunch and thereafter had a small break before setting out to the Dambulla Arboretum to see if we can get a glimpse of the Grey Slender Loris but were not lucky with a sighting. We arrived late in the night to the hotel and went straight for dinner. Although we were disappointed with not sighting the Loris a Painted Bat decided to cheer us up when it visited our dinner table; circling right above our heads in an attempt to snatch a few flies which were attracted to the lights.

After a briefing for the next day plan the group left for their rooms as they were quite tired.

Day 04 Monday 13th July 2015

After breakfast we left to Polonnaruwa to visit the ancient city which was the 2nd Kingdom of Ancient Sri Lanka. On our journey to the ancient city we encounter Black-naped Hare and a Ruddy Mongoose. The Gal Vihara or stone temple within the ancient city intrigued the group with its intricate carving of three Buddha statues from a single granite rock. Spotted Deer were plentiful in the well maintained gardens of the once royal palace.

At 12.30pm we left Polonnaruwa and proceeded to Minneriya where we encounter two male Asian Elephants and a couple of Water Buffalos. As we kept heading towards our destination on the main road we notice a Grey Langur which had been knocked down by a vehicle. Our leaders got off to tend to the injured Langur by which time another Langur also met with an accident. The group helped with giving some water to the injured animals and we informed the park rangers to look in to the incident.

After having our lunch at the hotel we left to the Minneriya Park where we witness the gathering of over 100 Elephants which included a tusker and 6 baby elephants. After a very productive afternoon in the park we set out for the hotel while spot lighting to see for any mammals and we encounter a Purple –faced leaf monkey, Land Monitor, Rat Snake and a Common Garden Lizard. We reached the hotel at 7.30pm and went straight for dinner. After a briefing for the next day the group went to their rooms for the night.

Day 05 Tuesday 14th July 2015

The group split in to two after breakfast and half climbed the Sigiriya rock with Thushara while the rest visited the rock bed for some birding with Saman. Both the groups met at the hotel at 10.30am and discussed their sightings which included Crested Serpent Eagle, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Coppersmith Barbet and the elusive Greater

Racket-tailed Drongo. The group relaxed till lunch and set out to the Smithsonian Primate Research Centre in Polonnaruwa where they were greeted by Mr. Sunil Gunathilake; one of our leaders who went ahead to search for the Loris. The wait was long but worth it when finally we see the Grey Slender Loris. On our way back to the hotel we encounter a House Mouse and an Indian Cobra which slithered across our vehicle. Once again we went straight for dinner and after a briefing for the next day we retired to our rooms for the night.

Day 06 Wednesday 15th July 2015

After breakfast we set out to Kandy for our next two days stay. En-route we encounter a Bicolored Leaf-nosed Bat, Sri Lanka Swallow and White-bellied Sea Eagles. At 9.45am we visited the Dambulla Ancient rock temple which is famous for its numerous statues and paintings. The day was rather warm and sunny as we had lunch at a nearby Spice Garden. We reached Kandy early in the afternoon and visited the Kandy Temple of the Tooth which is the most revered site for Buddhist the world over. Today we were able to get back to the hotel much earlier than the other days and met for dinner at 8.00pm. After dinner we celebrated a guest's birthday with some cake chatted till a while till we got ready for our night walk by foot to spot a few nocturnal species which included an Indian Flying Fox. We returned to the hotel at 11.00pm and after a briefing for the next day we went to our rooms for the night.

Day 07 Thursday 16th July 2015

Two guests joins us for a pre-breakfast birding session around the hotel premises where we encounter Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Oriental White-eye and Scarlet Minivet. After the group had breakfast at 7.00am we left to the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens where we see many of the plants species and a few birds. After lunch we proceed to Udawatthakelle which was once the royal forest of the Kandian Kings. Here we encounter Wild Boar and Muntjac along with many birds. Our next mammal on focus was the Flying Squirrel which is frequently seen this forest but after almost 2 hours waiting we were unlucky with a sighting. We head back to the hotel for the night and after the briefing for the next day have dinner and go to our rooms for the night.

Day 08 Friday 17th July 2015

At 7.30am we had breakfast and checked out of the hotel to our next destination in Nuwara Eliya. We stopped at a Tea Factory to witness the process of manufacturing and packing of the world's finest Ceylon Tea. After reaching our hotel we had lunch and relaxed before setting out to the Hakgala Flower gardens where we encounter a sub species of Purple-faced Leaf Monkey which is also called Bear Monkey. It started raining hard and we took shelter in one of the glass houses which housed different types of Orchids and Cactuses. Once the rains had ceased we visited the Nuwara Eliya town, market place and the colonial style post office. After dinner and the briefing for the next day the group departed to their rooms for the night. It was a very chilly and windy night with temperature dropping to 5C.

Day 09 Saturday 18th July 2015

We stepped out of the hotel in to the chilly morning at 4.30am after a hot cup of coffee/tea and left for Horton Plains national park and reached the park entrance quite early. It was very cold and raining throughout the whole

walk. We encounter Sambhar Deer, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Sri Lanka White-eye, Dull-blue Flycatcher and Pied Bushchat.

We return to the hotel at 1.00pm for lunch and after a small break we leave for Bomuruella where we encounter Dusky Squirrel, Rhino-horned Lizard and more birds which included Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher and Hill Swallow. We reached the hotel at 6.00pm and did the checklist before having dinner at 7.30pm. After the briefing for the next day the group went to their rooms for the night.

Day 10 Sunday 19th July 2015

We checked out of the hotel after breakfast and proceeded to Yala for our next stay. En-route to Yala we stop to view the Seetha Eliya Hindu temple and witness the ceremonies and worshipers doing their rituals. Before we reached our lunch stop in Kataragama we encounter a Stripe-necked Mongoose. En-route to the Sithulpawua monastery we spot a Crested Hawk Eagle which was lying on the middle of the road and once again we went to check up on the condition of the bird. Although it was alive it was in shock so Saman took the bird in to the bus so that we can hand it over to the wildlife rangers. However after some water was given to it, it fully regained and was released to go to a nearby tree where it sat a few minutes before disappearing in to the background. At Sithulpawua we encounter more Wild Boars along with birds. On our way out of the monastery we encounter a lonely tusker which leaned against our bus and excited all of us. We had to quickly take off as it was getting aggressive and posed a threat. Next we encounter two Golden Jackals and Spotted Deer.

After reaching our hotel in Yala we met at the restaurant at 8.00pm for dinner and retired to the rooms for the night after the briefing for the next day.

Day 11 Monday 20th July 2015

We have our tea at 5.15am and head out for our full day safari in Yala with picnic breakfast and lunch. During tea we spot a Common Palm Civet running on the beams of the restaurant roof. Golden Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose and Sloth Bear were the first to be seen as we entered the Yala National Park. The group enjoyed their picnic breakfast near a beach area before heading out further in to the park to encounter many birds and another Sloth Bear. Since it was getting very hot we stopped for lunch in a restaurant by the Manik River and relax there till 3.00pm before heading in to the park again. Our afternoon drive was not very productive with the sighting of the Leopard and we left for the hotel at 6.00pm. After dinner the group was ready for our night safari around the National Park and we immediately spot a Black-naped Hare.

As we get back in to the Jeeps from spotting the Hare a Wildlife Ranger team comes and advise us that night safaris are prohibited now since there were increased poaching activity happening and we had to return to the hotel. We had a small briefing for the next day and went to our rooms for the night.

Day 12 Tuesday 21st July 2015

Once again after tea at 5.15am and another sighting of the Common Palm Civet on the roof we leave for another full day jeep Safari in the Yala National Park. At 11.00am we spot a Leopard perched on a distant tree. Since we had clear views of the Leopard from that spot we decided to have lunch here and stayed until the Leopard jumped off the tree and disappeared in to the vegetation. We left the park at 6.00pm and meet at the restaurant at 8.00pm for dinner. After dinner we leave to another location for a night safari where we encounter a Fishing Cat. We returned to the hotel at 1.30am with no other sightings.

Day 13 Wednesday 22nd July 2015

We had breakfast at 8.00am and checked out at 9.30am. En-route to Singharaja we stopped at Ratnapura for lunch. After lunch 3 guests left with Saman to Singharaja for their extension while the rest of us headed to Colombo for our last night stay.

Day 14 Thursday 23rd July 2015

In the morning after breakfast we left for the Airport in time to catch the flight back.

Mammal List

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Slender Loris	<i>Loris tardigradus</i>
2	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
3	Grey Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>
4	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Presbytis vetulus</i>
5	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
6	Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>
7	Common Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroitus</i>
8	Small Indian Civet	<i>Veverrucula indica</i>
9	Indian Grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
10	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
11	Stripe-necked Mongoose	<i>Herpestes vitticollis</i>
12	Fishing Cat	<i>Felis viverrina</i>
13	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
14	Indian Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
15	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
16	Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjac</i>
17	Spotted Deer (Chital)	<i>Cervus axis</i>
18	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
19	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>
20	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
21	Grizzled Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>
22	Dusky Squirrel	<i>Funambulus sublineatus</i>
23	Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
24	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
25	House Mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>
26	Common Musk Shrew	<i>Suncus murinus</i>
27	False Vampire Bat	<i>Megaderma lyra</i>
28	Painted Bat	<i>Kerivoula picta</i>
29	Asiatic Long-tailed mouse	<i>Vandeleuria oleracea</i>

Bird List

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
2	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
3	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
4	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
5	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
6	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
7	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
8	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
9	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>
10	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
11	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
12	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
13	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
14	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
15	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
16	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
17	Purpul Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
18	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
19	Great Egret	<i>casmerodius albus</i>
20	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
21	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
22	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
23	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
24	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
25	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
26	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
27	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
28	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
29	White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
30	Gray-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Lcthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
31	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
32	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
33	Changeble Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
34	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
35	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
36	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
37	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
38	Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
39	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>

40	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
41	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
42	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
43	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
44	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
45	Lesser sand Plover, Mongolian Plover	<i>charadrius mongolus</i>
46	Common Red shank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
47	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
48	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
50	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
51	Common Pigeon, Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
52	Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>
53	Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
54	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
55	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
56	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron (Pompadora) pompadora</i>
57	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
58	Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
59	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
60	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
61	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
62	Layard's Parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthropae</i>
63	Drongo Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>
64	Asian Koel	<i>Endynamys scolopacerus</i>
65	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>
66	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>
67	Red-fased Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
68	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
69	Green-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus chlororhynchos</i>
70	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
71	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>
72	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
73	Brown-backed Needletail	<i>Hirundapus giganteus</i>
74	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
75	House Swift, Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
76	Crested Treeswift , Gray-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
77	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
78	Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
79	Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
80	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>

81	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
82	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
83	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
84	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
85	Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
86	Common Hoopoe, Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
87	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
88	Yellow-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>
89	Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
90	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
91	Sri lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros gingalensis</i>
92	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
93	Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorophus</i>
94	Crimson-backed Goldenback, Crimson-back Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes(lucidus) stricklandi</i>
95	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis (pondicerianus) affinis</i>
96	Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>
97	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
98	Scarlet Minivet,Flame Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
99	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
100	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
101	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
102	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
103	Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>
104	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
105	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
106	Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo(tahitica) domicola</i>
107	Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis (daurica) hyperythra</i>
108	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
109	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
110	Sri Lanka Drongo, Sri Lanka Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus (paradiseus) lophorhinus</i>
111	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
112	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
113	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
114	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
115	Black-capped Bulbul, Black-headedeed Yellow Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
116	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
117	Yellow-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
118	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
119	Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
120	Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
121	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>

122	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
123	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
124	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
125	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
126	Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
127	Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
128	Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
129	Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
130	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
131	Ashy-headed Lughingthrush	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
132	Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Sri Lanka Myna	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
133	Lesser Hill Myna	<i>Gracula (religioosa) indica</i>
134	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
135	White-faced Starling	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
136	Spot-winged Thrush	<i>Zoothera spiloptera</i>
137	Sri Lanka Thrush, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>
138	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus (merula) simillimus</i>
139	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
140	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
141	Indian Robin, Black-backed Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
142	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
143	Dull-blue Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>
144	Gray-headed Canary Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
145	Legge's Flowerpecker, White-throated Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
146	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
147	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
148	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
149	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
150	Sri Lanka White-eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
151	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
152	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
153	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
154	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>