

Whale & Leopard Tour Report- February 2015



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Day 01 Saturday 07th February

The group met at the Airport and boarded the flight to Sri Lanka for their 10 day Whale & Leopard watching tour.

Day 02 Sunday 08th February

The group arrived at 12.40 pm and we left the Airport at 1.15 pm. On our way to Mirissa we stop at the Talangama tank for some birding and we see Lesser Whistling Duck, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Cattle Egret, Intermediate Egret, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, Red-wattled Lapwing, Rock Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Oriental Magpie Robin, Purple-rumped Sunbird & Long-billed Sunbird. After visiting the tank we got on to the southern highway passing the Kalu River and the Bentota River before we reach our hotel at 5.30 pm and check in to our rooms. After early dinner we get back to our rooms to be ready for the next days early morning Whale watching.

Day 03 Monday 09th February

We started the day at 6.15 am with tea and proceeded to the Mirissa pier for the day's whale watching tour with picnic breakfast. At the pier we were able to see Whiskered Tern and Great Crested Tern. Our boat ride was a rather calm one as we cruised in to the Indian Ocean and we were lucky to get a close sighting of a Blue Whale before too long. When we came back to the pier we encountered more birds which are Large-billed Crow, House Crow and a Rose-ringed Parakeet and also a Lemmon Emigrant Butterfly.

After reaching the hotel at 12.00pm we had lunch and met at the lobby at 3.00pm to leave for some bird watching to a nearby forest patch where we encounter Little Greb, Little Cormorant, White-breasted Water Hen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Green Imperial Pigeon, Asian Koel, Indian Swiftlet, Little Swift, Crested Tree Swift, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, White-throat Kingfisher, Black-hooded Oriole, Barn Swallow, White-bellied Drongo, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-billed Babbler and Common Myna.

We head back to the hotel at 6.00pm and meet for the checklist at 7.30pm. After the briefing for the next day we have dinner and go to our rooms.

Day 04 Tuesday 10th February

We started the day once again with tea at 6.15am and proceeded to the pier to board the vessel. After about an hour's journey in to the ocean we spot a Bryde's Whale and stayed around to catch a good look at it. After a couple of hours in the ocean we head back to the pier and on our way in we see a pod of Spinner Dolphins cruising with us towards the shore. At the pier we see a Gull-billed Tern. We reach the hotel by 1.00pm and after lunch at around 3.00 we left for the Kirala forest. We encounter Little Egret, White-bellied Fish Eagle and House Sparrow among many other birds. We head back to the hotel by 6.00pm and meet for the checklist at 7.30pm and end the day with dinner at 8.00pm after the briefing for the next day.

Day 05 Wednesday 11th February

We once again have our tea at 6.15am before we head out to the pier for our last day of Whale watching. Today also we see the Bryde's Whale and a Pod of Spinner Dolphins but didn't see any Blue Whales but we were lucky to see a Whale Shark which stayed on the surface for some time. We reach the pier at around 12.30pm and head back to the hotel for lunch. After lunch we visit a Stilt Fishing community and watch the unique fishing style that is only seen in Sri Lanka. We encounter Northern Pintail, Common Tern, Little Tern, White-winged Tern and Brown Noddy on our way to the Galle Fort. At a nearby patch we also encounter

Indian Peafowl, Purple Heron, Great Egret, Indian Cormorant, Darter, Purple Swamphen, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Asian Palm Swift, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Brown-headed Barbet, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Indian Robin and Pale-billed Flowerpecker and a Toque Macaque and Palm Squirrel. We head back to the hotel at 6.00pm and do the checklist at 8.00pm. After dinner the group head back to their rooms for the night.

Day 06 Thursday 12th February

We left Mirissa at 8.00 am and proceeded to Yala which was our next destination. On the way we see the Grey Langur. We reach Yala in the afternoon and after lunch go for a nature walk where we encounter Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Lesser Adjutant, Eurasian Spoonbill, Grey Heron, Spot-billed Pelican, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover, Mongolian Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Red Shank, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Green Shank, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Temminck's Stint, Caspian Tern, Green Bee-eater, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Pied Kingfisher, Coppersmith Barbet, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Richar's Pipit, White-browed Bulbul, Common Tailorbird and Thick-billed Flowerpecker. After a very successful walk we returned to the hotel and did the checklist at 7.30pm and had dinner at 8.30pm after having the briefing for the next day.

Day 07 Friday 13th February

We left the hotel at 5.20 am with picnic breakfast and lunch for our first day of Safari. The early morning start usually ensures a guaranteed sighting of the Leopard which is active during this time. Our luck was so good that as we entered the park we were able to spot a Leopard perched on a tree while Spotted Deer, Sambar and Water Buffalo stood alert for an imminent ambush attack on the ground. As we proceeded further in to the park we see the Asian Wild Elephant, Golden Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose, Water Buffalo, Wild Boar, Indian Hare and Indian Flying Fox. The number of birds we saw was also high with the encounter of Barred Buttonquail, Woolly-necked Stork, Common Kestrel, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Great Thick-knee, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Pacific Golden Plover, Green Sandpiper, Jacobin Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Sirkeer Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Indian Roller, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Oriental Sky Lark, Plain Prinia, White-browed Fantail, Asian Paradise Fly-catcher, Brahminy Starling, White-rumped Shama, Black-throated Munia, and Black-headed Munia. We had our picnic breakfast and lunch at scenic locations inside the park and returned to the hotel late evening. We did our checklist at 7.30pm and after the briefing for the next day had our dinner and head back to the room for the night.

Day 08 Saturday 14th February

Valentine's Day started for our group early at 5.15am with the love for Wildlife seen in their eyes. We once again head out to the park in search of more action and once again see the Leopard, Asian Wild Elephant, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Sambar, and Rudy Mongoose. We also see a Mugger Crocodile and a Land Monitor. The new birds we encounter today are Common Snipe, Blue-faced Malkoha, Gray Nightjar, European Bee-eater, Common Hoopoe, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Indian Pitta, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Small Minivet, Purple Sunbird and Baya Weaver. We get back to the hotel at 6.30pm and did the checklist at 8.00pm and had dinner at 8.30pm

Day 09 Sunday 15th February

We left the hotel after breakfast at 8.00am and proceeded to Colombo via Tissamaharama where we visit a few ancient temples and see the paddy fields been tendered to by farmers. We then stop at the Bundala National Park for bit of birding and site seeing. We stop at a restaurant in Udawalawe at 1.00pm while enjoying the surrounding environment which was full of birdlife. After lunch we head straight to the final hotel of our tour which is situated close to the airport.. We reach the Airport hotel by 7.00pm in the evening and had dinner after the checklist..

Day 10 Monday 16th February

We met at the restaurant at 7.30am for breakfast and did the last checklist for the tour and counted a total of 124 birds and 16 mammals. We left the hotel at 9.30am to the Airport in time to catch the flight.

Bird List

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
2	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
3	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
4	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
5	Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
6	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
7	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
8	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
9	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
10	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
11	Black -headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
12	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
13	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
14	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
15	Purpul Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
16	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
17	Great Egret	<i>casmerodius albus</i>
18	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
19	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
20	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
21	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
22	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
23	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
24	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
25	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>

26	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
27	White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
28	Gray-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Lcthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
29	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
30	Changeble Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
31	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>
32	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
33	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
34	Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
35	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
36	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
37	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
38	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
39	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrus alexandrinus</i>
40	Lesser sand Plover, Mongolian Plover	<i>charadrius mongolus</i>
41	Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>
42	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
43	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
44	Common Red shank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
45	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
46	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
47	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
48	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
50	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
51	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
52	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
53	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
54	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
55	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirunda</i>
56	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
57	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
58	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
59	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
60	Common Pigeon, Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
61	Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
62	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
63	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron (Pompadora) pompadora</i>
64	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>

65	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
66	Jacobin Cuckoo, Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
67	Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>
68	Asian Koel	<i>Endynamys scolopacerus</i>
69	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>
70	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>
71	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
72	Gray Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>
73	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</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	Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
79	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
80	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
81	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
82	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
83	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
84	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
85	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
86	Common Hoopoe, Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
87	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
88	Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
89	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
90	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
91	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
92	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
93	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis (pondicerianus) affinis</i>
94	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
95	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
96	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
97	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
98	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
99	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
100	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
101	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
102	Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
103	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>

104	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
105	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
106	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
107	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
108	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
109	Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
110	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
111	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
112	Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>
113	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
114	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
115	Indian Robin, Black-backed Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
116	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
117	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
118	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
119	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
120	Loten's Sunbird, Long-billed Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>
121	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
122	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
123	Black-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura kelaarti</i>
124	Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>

Mammals List

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
2	Grey Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>
3	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
4	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
5	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
6	Indian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
7	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
8	Spotted Deer (Chital)	<i>Cervus axis</i>
9	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
10	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>
11	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
12	Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
13	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
14	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
15	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>
16	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>

Reptiles List

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Land Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
2	Common Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
3	Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>