

Wildlife & History Tour Report- November 2014



Tour Leader:

Upul Wickremasinghe

Co Tour Leader / Driver:

Saman Kumara Gamage

Participants:

Pauline James
Michael Phyphers
Patrick Moloney
Sarah Harrison
Ralph Tiller
David Harthill
Elizabeth Roberts
Patricia Peters

Report Compiled by:

Upul Wickremasinghe & Saman Kumara Gamage

Day 01 Sunday 23rd November

The group arrived at 2.00 pm and before we left the Airport we see an Indian Palm Squirrel and Common Myna in the premises. We then proceed to the Talangama tank where we see Black-headed Ibis, Asian Open-bill, Indian Pond Heron, Little Egret, Red Wattled Lapwing, Barn Swallows, Blue-tailed Bee-eater and White-throated Kingfisher. After 15 minutes in Talangama we proceed to Mirissa via the Kottawa highway where we see the White-bellied Drongo, Painted Stork, Sri Lanka Swallow and House Crow. After exiting the highway in Galle we proceed to Mirissa via the Galle Road where we see Little Cormorant, Indian Flying Fox, Brahminy Kite, Rock Pigeon and Rose Ringed Parakeet. In between Galle and Mirissa we see the unique fishing technique known as Stilt Fishing mainly in the town of Weligama.

We reach our hotel at 5.15 pm and check in to our rooms and met at the restaurant at 7.30 pm for the checklist. After dinner at 8.00pm we went back to our rooms for the night.

Day 02 Monday 24th November

We started the day at 6.15 am with tea and proceeded to the Mirissa pier for the day's whale watching tour. Before we board the vessel we see the Black-rumped Flameback in the boat yard. We leave for the open ocean at 7.30am and at around 9.00am we see our first and only Blue Whale for the day. Since the sea was very rough today we didn't have much luck spotting many whales but managed to see a few Flying Fish amongst the white waves. We managed to get back to the docks by 12.00pm where we see the Large Billed Crow, Gull Billed Tern and Whiskered Tern.

We head back to the hotel and met for lunch at 1.00pm. The group was at leisure after lunch and at 4.00pm we left to the Kirala forest nearby for some bird watching. Before we reach the forest we see the Cotton Pygmy Goose in a nearby stream and the Purple-faced Leaf Monkey. We see Lesser Whistling Duck, Garganey, Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, Little Grebe, Indian Cormorant, White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-breasted Water Hen, Purple Swamp Hen, Pleasant-tailed Jacana, Green Imperial Pigeon, Black-headed Oriole, and Scaly-breasted Munia in the forest and surrounding area. We head back to the hotel at 6.30pm and meet for the checklist at 7.30pm. Lights out after dinner.

Day 03 Tuesday 25th November

We started the day once again with tea at 6.15am and proceeded to the pier to board the vessel. As we head out to the ocean we see a pod of Spinner Dolphins in a spectacular display of their ability to spin. We once again see a few Flying Fish break the waters and take flight. We managed to spot a Blue Whale travelling at rapid speed at which we gave chase until we had almost reached the town of Galle. We were lucky to have seen the Whale today as many others had missed the sighting.

We head back to the harbor at 11.00am and proceed to the hotel. We see many butterflies in the pier area of which some were Crimson Rose, Tawny Coster, Lime Butterfly and Lemmon Immigrant. We also see few dragonflies which are Variegated Flutterer and Pied Parasol. After lunch we head back to the Kirala forest at 3.00pm for more birding. We see the Stork-billed Kingfisher, Yellow Bittern, Spot-billed Pelican, Shikra, White-winged Tern, Sooty Tern, Spotted Dove, Alexandrine Parakeet, Asian Koel, Greater Coucal, Indian Swiftlet, Brown-headed Barbet, Common Iora, Red-wented Bulbul, White-browed Bulbul, Yellow-billed Babbler, Oriental Magpie Robin, Purple-rumped Sun Bird, Purple Sun Bird, Parasitic Jaeger, Purple Swamp Hen, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Common Tailor Bird and Asian Paradise Flycatcher.

We head back to the hotel at 6.30pm and do the checklist at 7.30pm before dinner.

Day 04 Wednesday 26th November

We once again have our tea at 6.15am before we head out to the pier to board the vessel. We manage to see a another Blue Whale today and in the distance saw a turtle which disappeared as soon as we got close to it. We head back to the hotel at 11.00am and the group is told to meet for lunch at 12.30pm. During this time a group member had gone to the beach for some surfing and had an accidental fall where he had to be rushed to the hospital. The tour leader Upul and the spouse had to take the mini bus to the hospital and the rest of the day's activity was cancelled. Saman was given in charge of the rest of the group until Upul got back from the hospital. The group was at leisure since there was not much to do. Upul came back to the hotel by 4.30pm with news that the guest had to be transferred to Colombo. The group did the checklist at 7.30pm and had there dinner before going to bed.

Day 05 Thursday 27th November

After breakfast we head out to Yala stopping at the Galle fort for some birding and as we proceed we see Black Crowned Night Heron, Grey Heron, Black Winged Stilt, Marsh Sand Piper, Little Stint, Crested Tree Swift, Green Bee-eater, Plain Prinia, Indian Robin and House Sparrow.

We reached the Yala hotel in time for lunch and did a bit of birding around the hotel gardens.

The checklist was done at 7.30pm followed by dinner.

Day 06 Friday 28th November

We started the day at 5.15am after tea and head out to the Yala National Park with a picnic lunch for a jeep safari. We reached the entrance at 6.00am and encounter Lesser Sand Plover, Little-ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Common Red Shank, Common Sand Piper, Jungle Fowl, Woolly-necked Stork, Great Egret, Darter, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Greater Thick-knee, Yellow Wattled Lapwing, Jacobin Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Roller, Pied Kingfisher, Common Hoopoe, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Indian Pitta, Brown Shriek, Paddy Field Pipit, Jerdon's Bushlark, White Browed Fang-tail, Brahminy Starling, Baya Weaver and Ashy-headed Sparrow Lark. We also see the Grey Langur, Ruddy Mongose, Leopard, Indian Elephant, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Sambar, Water Buffalo and Indian Hare.

Day 07 Saturday 29th November

After tea we head out from the hotel with picnic breakfast and lunch for another day of jeep safari in the Yala National Park. We encounter Bard Button Quail, Eurasian Spoonbill, Striated Heron, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Pin-tailed Snipe, Common Green Shank, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Blue-faced Malkoha, Sirkeer Malkoha, House Swift, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Small Minivet, Jungle Prinia and Tawny-bellied Babbler. We also see the Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Painted Lip Lizard and Bark Gecko.

We head back to the hotel at 5.00pm and meet for the checklist at 7.30pm before dinner.

Day 08 Sunday 30th November

We left the hotel after breakfast at 9.00am and proceeded to Colombo via Tissamaharama where we stop to see a few temples in the area. We once again see many birds on the way before we stop for lunch in Udawalawe at 1.00pm. We reach Kuruvita at 4.00pm in the evening and stop for tea at a way by shop. We reach the Airport hotel by 7.00pm in the evening and had dinner soon after.

Day 09 Monday 1st December

We met at the restaurant at 7.30am for breakfast and did the last checklist for the tour and counted a total of 119 birds and 17 mammals. We left the hotel at 9.00am to the Airport in time to catch the flight.

Bird List

Common name	Scientific name
Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>
Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Black -headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Yellow Bittern	<i>Lxobrychus sinensis</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purpul Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Great Egret	<i>casmerodius albus</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
Gray-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Lcthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
Changeble Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>

Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrus alexandrinus</i>
Lesser sand Plover, Mongolian Plover	<i>charadrius mongolus</i>
Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>
Common Red shank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirunda</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>
Common Pigeon, Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Jacobin Cuckoo, Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Plaintive Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>
Asian Koel	<i>Endynamys scolopacerus</i>
Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>
Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
Indian Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</i>
House Swift, Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Crested Treeswift , Gray-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Common Hoopoe, Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>

Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>
Lesser Goldenback, Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis (daurica) hyperythra</i>
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>
Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
Indian Robin, Black-backed Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>

Mammals List

Common name	Scientific name
Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Presbytis vetulus</i>
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
Indian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
Spotted Deer (Chital)	<i>Cervus axis</i>
Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>
Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
Grizzled Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>
Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>