

# Sri Lanka Endemic Birds Tour

15 August - 24 August 2015

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Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush – Anthony Breeze



Red-faced Malkoha – Anthony Breeze



Serendib Scops Owl – Anthony Breeze



Sri Lanka Grey Horn-bill – Anthony Breeze

Images by Anthony Breeze and Report compiled by Saman Kumara



Tour Leader: Saman Kumara

Participants: Stuart Hinton  
Anthony Breeze  
Elizabeth Hall  
Lois Gravely  
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## Highlights

After bagging 33 of the endemics in 9 days the group enjoyed a village tour amidst heavy rain and instead of running for shelter they enjoyed the warm Sri Lankan rain which was a fun sight and a memory that will be taken back with them. The elusive Whistling Thrush kept the group running in circle but at last decided to show itself in full view which was a delight for the group.

### Day 1

**Saturday 15th August**

The group met at the Airport and boarded the flight to Sri Lanka, for their 10-day endemic birdwatching tour.

### Day 2

**Sunday 16th August**

The group arrived at Colombo Airport at 12.55 pm and we left the airport at 1.55pm. En-route to Kithulgala we stopped at a nearby field where we encountered Black-headed Ibis, Asian Open-bill, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-bellied Drongo and Indian Pond Heron. As we entered the Kithulgala town we encounter Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Sri Lanka Swallow and Sri Lanka Green Pigeon.

We reached Kithulgala at 5.30pm, and were greeted with a hot cup of tea. We set out for some birding around the hotel premises and walk along the main road. Since it was a very gloomy evening it was getting very dark so we decided to head back to the hotel.

We came back to the hotel at 6pm and met for the checklist at 7pm. After the briefing for the next day, we had dinner

### Day 3

**Monday 17th August**

We started the day with tea at 5.45am, and headed out at 6am for some pre-breakfast birding, near the Kithulgala Police station. We encountered Chestnut-backed Owlet, Bar-winged Flycatcher Strike, Grey Horn-bill and Orange-billed Babbler. We returned to the hotel for breakfast, and then set out to the Kithulgala Makandawa forest, to start the rest of the day's birding.

Our journey to the forest started with a boat trip in a narrow dug-out canoe which took us across the Kelaniya River. Once on shore, we hiked through a small village which leads up to the forest entrance. After the previous night's rain the sun had come out and the humidity was very high. We were only lucky with spotting the Legge's Flower Pecker in the forest that day and returned to the hotel at 1.55pm. Although we were disappointed with the days birding we were greeted by a Brown-capped Babbler which visited us in the hotel restaurant which

instantly cheered us all. The rains came down heavily and we had to wait till 4.00pm to head out to another part of the Kithulgala village which is accessed by a suspension bridge. We only spot Layard's Parakeet before the rains started and it was a wet run back to the vehicle.

We headed back to the hotel at 5.30pm and met up for the checklist at 7pm. After dinner, the group retired to their rooms, for another early start the following day.

## Day 4

**Tuesday 18th August**

We started our day at 5.45 am with tea, and headed out for another pre-breakfast birding session. We encountered Yellow-fronted Barbet and Black-capped Bulbul.

We headed back to the hotel for breakfast, and left for Nuwara Eliya at 9.45 am. En-route we encountered Crested Hawk Eagle, Serpent Eagle and Shikra. We were enjoying the changing scenery as we headed up the winding roads to the hill country. At 1.30pm we reached the hotel and had lunch.

Our next birding session was at Bomuruella where we encountered Yellow-eared Bulbul, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, Dull Blue Flycatcher, Sri Lanka White-eye, and Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher. Our next location was Seethaeliya where we heard the Whistling Thrush call but since it was another gloomy evening we couldn't spot the well camouflaged bird.

We headed back to the hotel at 6.15pm and met up for the checklist for 7pm. After dinner, we returned to our rooms, as we would be leaving for Horton Plains at 5am.

## Day 5

**Wednesday 19th August**

After tea at 4.45am, we left for Horton Plains. By 6am we reached the entrance and proceeded to an area outside the National Park, to see the elusive Whistling Thrush which eluded us once again. We spot Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Scimitar Babbler and Sri Lanka Bush Warbler before entering the park. As we started the cold journey in to the plains we witness Pied Bushchat, Paddy field Pipit, Hill Swallow and Jerdon's Bushlark.

We reached the hotel at 1.30pm for lunch, and set out again to Victoria Park at 3.00pm, where we see many birds we encountered before. It was raining heavily so we decided to go to Bomuruella where we see another Wood Pigeon. Once again we go back to Seethaeliya and had a very good sighting of the Whistling Thrush. We came back to the hotel at 6pm and, after the checklist, we had dinner and went to bed.

## Day 6

**Thursday 20th August**

We started the day early with a pre-breakfast birding session to Bomuruella and returned to the hotel for breakfast at 8am. After breakfast, we checked out of the hotel and proceeded to Embilipitiya, en-route stopping at the Surrey Estate for some birding. We encountered 2 adult Brown Wood Owls with two chicks here. Our next stop was in Ella at 1pm for lunch and a little birding from the picturesque garden of the Ella Motel.

After lunch we proceeded to Embilipitiya and encountered the Collared Scops Owl in the hotel premises. The hotel welcomed the guests with lighting of the traditional oil lamp where each guest had to light the lamp. We did the checklist at 7.30pm, met at the restaurant at 8pm for dinner and headed back to our rooms.

## Day 7

Friday 21st August

With picnic breakfast we left the Centauria Hotel and proceeded to Udawalawe National Park for a Jeep Safari. We encountered Sri Lank Wood Shrike, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Lesser Yellow-nape, Grey Heron, Intermediate Egret, Darter, Black-winged Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Plum-headed Parakeet, Layard's Parakeet, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Roller, Green Bee-eater, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Yellow Wagtail, Jerdon's Bushlark, Jungle Prinia, Plain Prinia, White-browed Fantail, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Indian Robin and Thick-billed Flowerpecker.

Lunch was in a restaurant in Udawalawe and we left for Singharaja at 2.30pm. By 5.30pm we reached Singharaja and were greeted with a hot cup of tea. After checking in to the hotel we did a little birding around the hotel before meeting up for the checklist at 7pm and concluded the day with dinner.

## Day 8

Saturday 22nd August

We left for the Singharaja Rainforest, with a picnic lunch after an early breakfast. On our way we encountered Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Legge's Flower Pecker and White-faced Starling. Once inside the Singharaja Rainforest we encountered Ashy-headed Laughing Thrush, Red-faced Malkoha, Crimson-backed Flame-back Woodpecker, Malabar Trojan, Sri Lanka Frog Mouth, Blue Magpie, Crested Drongo and Scaly Thrush. Our next aim was the Serendib Scops Owl which we encounter at the Kethalapatha area. By the end of the day we had seen 32 out of the 33 endemic bird species of Sri Lanka.

We returned to the hotel at 6.30pm, and met for the checklist at 7pm which was followed by dinner.

## Day 9

Sunday 23rd August

After having tea at 5.30am we headed out to the Kethalapatha area once again and see our final endemic the Green-billed Coucal to complete the 33. Since we had completed the list the clients wanted to see the Scimitar Babbler once again so we went towards the rainforest area where we spot it again. We returned to the hotel at 8.30am for breakfast. Since we had a lot of free time we decided to tour the Singharaja village and see the people. Before long the rains came down very hard but the group still decided to walk in the rain and enjoy their sightseeing. We came back to the hotel for lunch and checked out at 12 noon.

We reached our final hotel at 5.00pm and did a little birding in the hotel garden. Dinner was at 8pm after which we retired to our rooms.

## Day 10

Monday 24th August

We did a bit of pre-breakfast birding in the hotel garden where we encountered a Common Sand Piper and many other birds. After breakfast, the group checked out in time to reach the airport for their flight.

## Species Lists

Birds (Bold text is endemic or near endemic)

1	<b>Sri Lanka Spurfowl</b>	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
2	<b>Sri Lanka Junglefowl</b>	<i>Gallus lafayetii</i>
3	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
4	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
5	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
6	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
7	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
8	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
9	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
10	Purpul Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
11	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
12	Great Egret	<i>casmerodius albus</i>
13	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
14	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
15	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
16	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
17	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
18	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
19	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
20	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
21	White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-bellied Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
22	Gray-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Lcthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
23	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
24	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
25	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
26	Black Eagle	<i>Lctinaetus malayensis</i>
27	Changeble Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>
28	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
29	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
30	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
31	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
32	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
33	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
34	Common Pigeon, Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
35	<b>Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>
36	Spotted Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia chinensis</i>
37	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
38	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron (Pompadora) pompadora</i>
39	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
40	<b>Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot</b>	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
41	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
42	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
43	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>

44	<b>Layard's Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacula calthropae</i>
45	Asian Koel	<i>Endynamys scolopacerus</i>
46	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Rhopodytes viridirostris</i>
47	<b>Red-fased Malkoha</b>	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>
48	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
49	<b>Green-billed Coucal</b>	<i>Centropus chlororhynchos</i>
50	Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
51	<b>Serendib Scops Owl</b>	<i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>
52	Collared Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>
53	<b>Chestnut backed Owlet</b>	<i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>
54	Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
55	Indian Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</i>
56	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
57	House Swift, Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
58	Crested Treeswift , Gray-rumped Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
59	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
60	Green Bee-eater, Little Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
61	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
62	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
63	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
64	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
65	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
66	Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
67	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
68	<b>Yellow-fronted Barbet</b>	<i>Megalaima flavifrons</i>
69	<b>Crimson-fronted Barbet</b>	<i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i>
70	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
71	<b>Sri lanka Grey Hornbill</b>	<i>Ocyrceros gingalensis</i>
72	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>
73	Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorophus</i>
74	Lesser Goldenback, Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
75	Crimson-backed Goldenback, Crimson-back Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes(lucidus) stricklandi</i>
76	Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis (pondicerianus) affinis</i>
77	Scarlet Minivet,Flame Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
78	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
79	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
80	Marshall's Iora	<i>Aegithina nigrolutea</i>
81	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
82	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
83	<b>Sri Lanka Blue Magpie</b>	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>
84	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
85	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
86	Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo( tahitica) domicola</i>
87	Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis (daurica) hyperythra</i>
88	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
89	Sri Lanka Drongo, Sri Lanka Crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ( paradiseus ) lophorhinus</i>
90	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>

91	Jerdon's Bushlark	<i>Mirafra affinis</i>
92	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
93	Black-capped Bulbul, Black-headed Yellow Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
94	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
95	<b>Yellow-eared Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
96	White-browed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>
97	Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
98	Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
99	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
100	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
101	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
102	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
103	<b>Sri Lanka Bush Warbler</b>	<i>Bradypterus palliseri</i>
104	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
105	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
106	<b>Brown-capped Babbler</b>	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
107	<b>Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler</b>	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
108	Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
109	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
110	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
111	<b>Orange-billed Babbler</b>	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
112	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
113	<b>Ashy-headed Lughingthrush</b>	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
114	<b>Sri Lanka Hill Myna, Sri Lanka Myna</b>	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
115	Lesser Hill Myna	<i>Gracula (religioosa) indica</i>
116	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
117	<b>White-faced Starling</b>	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
118	<b>Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush</b>	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>
119	<b>Spot-winged Thrush</b>	<i>Zoothera spiloptera</i>
120	<b>Sri Lanka Thrush, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush</b>	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>
121	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus (merula) simillimus</i>
122	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
123	Indian Robin, Black-backed Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
124	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
125	<b>Dull-blue Flycatcher</b>	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>
126	Gray-headed Canary Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
127	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
128	<b>Legge's Flowerpecker, White-throated Flowerpecker</b>	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
129	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
130	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
131	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>
132	Loten's Sunbird, Long-billed Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>
133	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
134	<b>Sri Lanka White-eye</b>	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
135	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
136	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
137	Streaked Weaver	<i>Ploceus manyar</i>



138	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
139	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
140	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
141	Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>