

Sri Lanka - Endemic Birds

Naturetrek Tour Report

27 January – 5 February 2018



Sri Lanka Blue Magpie



Green-billed Coucal



Dull-blue Flycatcher



Orange-billed Babbler

Report and images compiled by Indika Jayatissa



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Highlights

A close view of the Serendib Scops Owl and a single tree with Crimson, Yellow-fronted and Brown-headed Barbets were special sightings for most of the group, along with all 33 endemics seen on the tour. Overall we saw 159 bird species, 13 species of mammal and 10 of reptiles and amphibians, making the tour an all-round success.

Day 1

Saturday 27th January

The tour started with an overnight flight from the UK to Sri Lanka.

Day 2

Sunday 28th January

Kitulgala

The flight arrived in Sri Lanka at 1.15pm. After meeting the leaders, we left the airport at 2pm and proceeded to Kitulgala. En route we stopped at a few places for birding and encountered Asian Openbill, Indian Pond Heron, Cattle, Intermediate and Little Egrets, Little Cormorant, Rock Dove, Spotted Dove, Asian Palm Swift, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Black-rumped Flameback, Alexandrine Parakeet, Ashy Woodswallow, White-bellied Drongo, House Crow, Red-vented Bulbul and Zitting Cisticola.

After reaching the Plantation Hotel we set off to the village for some birding where we saw Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Plain Prinia, Orange-billed and Yellow-billed Babblers, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Jerdon's Leafbird, and White-rumped and Scaly-breasted Munias. We also saw Toque Macaque, Grizzled Giant Squirrel and Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard.

We returned to the hotel by 6pm and completed the checklist by 7.15pm, which was followed by dinner and a briefing about the next day's programme before calling it a night.

Day 3

Monday 28th January

Kitulgala

We had an early start at 5.15am and crossed over to Kitulgala village on a hanging bridge. We encountered Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Brahminy Kite, Common Emerald Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Malabar Trogon, Southern Hill Myna, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Lesser Yellownape, Common Iora, Black-capped, Yellow-browed and Square-tailed Bulbuls, Large Cuckooshrike, Crimson-backed Flameback, Sri Lanka Swallow and Green Imperial Pigeon. After searching for some time we were lucky enough to find a Green-Billed Coucal's nest. After waiting patiently, we saw the bird flying to its nest, which was the highlight of the morning session. We arrived back at the hotel at 9.30am for breakfast.

After breakfast we visited the Kithulgala Rainforest, crossing the river by a ferry. We encountered Legge's Flowerpecker, Sri Lanka Swallow, Oriental White-Eye, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Crimson-backed Flameback, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Purple-rumped Sunbird and Black Eagle.

We returned to the hotel for lunch at 1.30pm, and in the afternoon we went back to the village area to search for Chestnut-backed Owlet. There we encountered Layard's Parakeet, Brown-headed Barbet, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Common Emerald Dove, White-bellied Drongo, Spot-winged Thrush and Chestnut-backed Owlet. Apart from birds we saw Common Rat Snake, Green Garden Lizard, Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard, Hump-nosed Lizard, Common House Gecko, Common Skink and Indian Palm Squirrel.

We arrived back at the hotel at 7.15pm and had dinner, followed by the checklist and the plan for the next day.

Day 4

Tuesday 29th January

Nuwara Eliya

We had a pre-breakfast birding session around the village area where we encountered Yellow-browed and Black Bulbuls, Spotted Dove and Brown-capped Babbler.

After breakfast we checked out of the hotel at 9.30am and headed to Nuwara Eliya for our next two-night stay in the central mountains of the island. During our journey we encountered Shikra, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Yellow-fronted Barbet and Black Eagle. We arrived at Heavens Seven and had lunch at 1.30pm.

In the afternoon we had a birding session at Victoria Park where we saw Indian Pitta, Pied Thrush, Forest Wagtail, Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Brown-headed Barbet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Sri Lanka White-Eye, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Indian Blue Robin, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Grey Wagtail, Yellow-eared Bulbul and Common Sandpiper.

After returning to the hotel we did the checklist at 7.30pm followed by dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday 30th January

Nuwara Eliya

At 4.30am we had our tea/coffee and then left for Horton Plains with a packed breakfast. It took us an hour to reach Horton Plains. On the way to the gates of the national park we were lucky to see the elusive Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. We also saw Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, White-breasted Waterhen, Pied Bush Chat and Hill Swallow. Inside Horton Plains we spotted Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Brown Shrike, Indian Jungle Crow, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Cinereous Tit, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, Dull-Blue Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and Purple Sunbird, along with many other birds and Sambar Deer.

After a successful birding session at Horton Plains, we came back to the hotel for lunch at 1.30pm. Later we went back to Victoria Park where we saw Indian Pitta, Pied Thrush and Kashmir Flycatcher.

Back at the hotel we did the checklist at 7.30pm, followed by dinner. Then, after discussing the plan for the next day, we called it a night.

Day 6

Thursday 31st January

Embilipitiya

After breakfast we checked out of the hotel and journeyed towards Embilipitiya. En route we stopped at Surrey Bird Sanctuary where we saw Brown Wood Owl, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill and many other common birds.

After having lunch on our way to Udawalawa, we stopped at a tank for birding and encountered Spot-billed Pelican, Garganey, Indian Peafowl, Indian Cormorant, Black-headed Ibis, Great Egret, Common Kingfisher, Crested Honey Buzzard, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Gull-billed, Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Asian Koel, Indian Scops Owl, Crested Treeswift, Green Bee-eater, Little Swift, Coppersmith Barbet, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Orange Minivet, Streaked Weaver and Lesser Whistling Duck. At another location we saw Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Plain and Jungle Prinias and Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark. Apart from birds we saw Grey Langur, Brown Mongoose, Asian Elephant, Indian Flying Fox and Bengal (Land) Monitor.

We arrived at Hotel Centauria Lake at 5.30pm but before checking in, we were shown two Collared Scops Owls at the hotel premises. We did the check list at 7.30pm followed by dinner.

Day 7

Thursday 1st February

Udawalawe National Park - Sinharaja

Today we had an early start with a packed breakfast and left the hotel for a half-day jeep safari at Udawalawe National Park. During the safari we spotted Sirkeer Malkoha, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Brown Fish Owl, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Indian Silverbill, Indian Roller, Jacobin Cuckoo, Painted Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, Ashy and Grey-breasted Prinias, Oriental Darter, Indian Swiftlet, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Plum-headed Parakeet, Small Minivet, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Indian Robin and Paddyfield Pipit. Additionally we saw Asian Elephant, Spotted Deer, Greater Bandicoot Rat, Water Buffalo and Asian Water Monitor.

We stopped for lunch at a restaurant before starting our journey towards Sinharaja Rain. En route we saw Layard's Parakeet, Sri Lanka Myna and Crimson-fronted Barbet.

We arrived at the Blue Magpie Lodge in the evening and did the checklist at 7.30pm followed by dinner.

Day 8

Saturday 2nd February

Sinharaja Rainforest

With a packed breakfast, we left the hotel at 5.15am. We arrived at the edge of the rainforest in a jeep and waited in one of the village houses for Sri Lanka Spurfowl. While waiting we saw Sri Lanka Drongo, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Orange-billed Babbler, Spot-winged Thrush, Slaty-legged Crake and Indian Pitta. Finally we saw both male and female Sri Lanka Spurfowl.

We came back to the hotel at 9.30am and had a small break. Then, with a packed lunch, we went back into the rainforest where we saw Serendib Scops Owl on a nearby hill, not that far from the road. On our way we saw the nesting site of Sri Lanka Blue Magpie and, once inside the rainforest, we saw a mixed flock of birds which

included Sri Lanka Drongo, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Orange-billed Babbler, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Black-naped Monarch, Dark-fronted Babbler, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater and many common birds.

In the afternoon we saw Orange Minivet, Malabar Trogon, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush, Red-faced Malkoha and Indian Blue Robin. After returning from the rainforest we saw a pair of Sri Lanka Frogmouths. Apart from birds we saw Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and Ruddy Mongoose.

We returned to the hotel at 6pm and did our checklist at 7.15pm, followed by dinner.

Day 9

Sunday 3rd February

Katunayake

We had an early breakfast at 5.30am and left the hotel at 6am, heading back to the forest where we encountered Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Brown-capped Babbler, White-faced Starling, White-browed Fantail, Black-hooded Oriole, Purple Heron and Red-faced Malkoha.

We checked out of the Blue Magpie Lodge and proceeded to Katunayake for our last night's stay. En route we saw a tree full of Crimson-fronted, Yellow-fronted and Brown-headed Barbets, which became a very significant highlight for the tour. Once at the hotel we did our checklist at 7.30pm and then had dinner.

Day 10

Monday 5th February

After breakfast we checked out and headed to the airport for our flight back to the UK, where another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

Species Lists (Bold text denotes endemic or near endemic; some previous names shown in brackets)

Birds:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
2	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
3	Sri Lanka Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i>
4	Sri Lanka Junglefowl	<i>Gallus lafayettii</i>
5	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</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-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
10	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
11	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
12	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
13	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
14	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
15	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
16	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
17	Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>
18	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
19	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
20	Oriental Darter (Darter)	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
21	Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental Honey-buzzard)	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
22	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
23	Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatu</i>
24	Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>
25	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
26	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
27	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyae</i>
28	Slaty-legged Crake	<i>Rallina eurizonoides</i>
29	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
30	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
31	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
32	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
33	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
34	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
35	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
36	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
37	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
38	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
39	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
40	Rock Dove (Common Pigeon)	<i>Columba livia</i>
41	Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba torringtoniae</i>
42	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
43	Common Emerald Dove (Emerald Dove)	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
44	Orange-breasted Green Pigeon	<i>Treron bicinctus</i>
45	Sri Lanka Green Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
46	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>
47	Green-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus chlororhynchus</i>
48	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
49	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>
50	Red-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
51 Jacobin Cuckoo (Pied Cuckoo)	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
52 Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
53 Serendib Scops Owl	<i>Otus thilohoffmanni</i>
54 Indian Scops Owl (Collared Scops Owl)	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>
55 Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>
56 Brown Wood Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>
57 Chestnut backed Owlet	<i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>
58 Sri Lanka Frogmouth	<i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i>
59 Jungle Nightjar (Grey Nightjar)	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>
60 Crested Treeswift (Gray-rumped Treeswift)	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>
61 Indian Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus unicolor</i>
62 Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>
63 Little Swift (House Swift)	<i>Apus affinis</i>
64 Malabar Trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>
65 Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
66 White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
67 Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
68 Green Bee-eater (Little Green Bee-eater)	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
69 Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
70 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
71 Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros gingalensis</i>
72 Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
73 Yellow-fronted Barbet	<i>Psilopogon flavifrons</i>
74 Crimson-fronted Barbet	<i>Psilopogon rubricapillus</i>
75 Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
76 Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
77 Black-rumped Flameback (Lesser Goldenback)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
78 Crimson-backed Flameback (Goldenback)	<i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i>
79 Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
80 Layard's Parakeet	<i>Psittacula calthrapae</i>
81 Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>
82 Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
83 Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>
84 Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
85 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
86 Sri Lanka Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis affinis</i>
87 Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
88 Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
89 Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>
90 Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
91 Orange Minivet (Scarlet/Flame Minivet)	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
92 Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
93 Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
94 White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
95 Sri Lanka Drongo (Sri Lanka Crested Drongo)	<i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i>
96 White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
97 Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
98 Indian Paradise Flycatcher (Asian Paradise Flycatcher)	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
99 Sri Lanka Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa ornata</i>
100 House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
101 Indian Jungle Crow (Large-billed Crow)	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>
102 Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
103 Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>

	Common name	Scientific name
104	Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
105	Jerdon's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafraga affinis</i>
106	Black-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
107	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
108	Yellow-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i>
109	Yellow-browed Bulbul	<i>Acritillas indica</i>
110	Square-tailed Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes ganeesa humii</i>
111	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
112	Hill Swallow	<i>Hirundo domicola</i>
113	Sri Lanka Swallow	<i>Cecropis hyperythra</i>
114	Sri Lanka Bush Warbler	<i>Elaphornis palliseri</i>
115	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
116	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
117	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
118	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
119	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
120	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
121	Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus melanurus</i>
122	Dark-fronted Babbler	<i>Rhopocichla atriceps</i>
123	Brown-capped Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuscicapillus</i>
124	Orange-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides rufescens</i>
125	Yellow-billed Babbler	<i>Turdoides affinis</i>
126	Ashy-headed Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i>
127	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
128	Oriental White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
129	Sri Lanka White-Eye	<i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i>
130	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
131	Sri Lanka Hill Myna (Sri Lanka Myna)	<i>Gracula ptilogenys</i>
132	Southern Hill Myna (Lesser Hill Myna)	<i>Gracula indica</i>
133	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
134	White-faced Starling	<i>Sturnornis albofrontatus</i>
135	Spot-winged Thrush	<i>Geokichla spiloptera</i>
136	Sri Lanka Thrush (Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush)	<i>Zoothera imbricata</i>
137	Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulvicatus</i>
138	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
139	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
140	Brown-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa muttui</i>
141	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>
142	Dull-blue Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias sordidus</i>
143	Indian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora brunnea</i>
144	Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus blighi</i>
145	Kashmir Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula subrubra</i>
146	Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
147	Jerdon's Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
148	Legge's Flowerpecker (White-throated Flowerpecker)	<i>Dicaeum vincens</i>
149	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
150	Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>
151	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
152	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
153	Streaked Weaver	<i>Ploceus manyar</i>
154	Indian Silverbill (White-throated Silverbill)	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>
155	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
156	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>

	Common name	Scientific name
157	Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>
158	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
159	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>

Mammals:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>
2	Grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus (Presbytis) entellus</i>
3	Purple-faced Leaf Monkey	<i>Trachypithecus (Presbytis) vetulus</i>
4	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
5	Brown Mongoose	<i>Herpestes fuscus</i>
6	Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>
7	Spotted Deer	<i>Cervus axis</i>
8	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
9	Water Buffalo	<i>Bubalus Bubalis</i>
10	Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
11	Grizzled Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>
12	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus gigantea</i>
13	Greater Bandicoot Rat	<i>Bandicota indica</i>

Reptiles & Amphibians:

	Common name	Scientific name
1	Green Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla nasuta</i>
2	Common Rat Snake	<i>Ptyas mucosus maximus</i>
3	Bengal (Land) Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>
4	Asian Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>
5	Oriental (Common) Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
6	Green Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes calotes</i>
7	Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard	<i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i>
8	Hump-nosed Lizard	<i>Lyriocephalus scutatus</i>
9	Common House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>
10	Common Skink	<i>Eutropis carinata</i>