

# Sri Lanka

**13–23 February 2019**

## **Participants**

Jonathan Bowley

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Sally Raven

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**Chestnut-backed Owlet**

## **Leader Saman Kumara**

During our ten-day tour we scored an impressive 201 bird species, including fantastic views of Chestnut-backed Owlet, Serendib Scops-owl, Sri Lanka Blue-magpie and Sri Lanka Whistling-thrush. Many mammals were also sighted including Asian Elephant, Sloth Bear, Spotted Deer, Muntjac, Wild Boar, Water Buffalo, Ruddy Mongoose, Indian Flying Fox, Grey Langurs, Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Toque Macaque, Indian Palm Squirrel, Grizzled Giant Squirrel and Dusky Striped Squirrel. We were also very lucky to see many reptile species such as Common Rat Snake, Asian Water Monitor, Green Garden Lizard, Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard, Muggger Crocodile, and Soft-shelled Terrapin, Hard-shelled Terrapin, Common House Gecko and Common Skink.

**Day 1** Overnight flight from London to Colombo.

**Day 2** The flight arrived at the Bandaranaike International Airport Sri Lanka at 5.30 am and after meeting the Saman in the arrival lounge, we left the airport at 6.30 am and headed to our first destination Kithulgala. On the way we were able to see the Ashy Woodswallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Red-wattled Lapwing, Lesser Whistling-duck, Purple Heron, Indian Pond-heron, Little Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Great Egret, Asian Openbill, Rock Pigeon, Spotted Dove, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Barn Swallow, Red-vented Bulbul, Ashy Prinia, Yellow-billed babbler, White-bellied Drongo, Large-billed Crow, House Crow, Common Myna, Scaly-breasted Munia and White-rumped Munia. We checked into our hotel at 9.30 am and after having breakfast we set out to Kithulgala Village for a bird walk where we saw Crested Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent-eagle, Black Eagle, Asian Emerald Dove, Sri Lanka Green-pigeon, Sri Lanka Hanging-parrot, Greater Coucal, Crested Treeswift, Indian Swiftlet, Brown-backed Needletail, Asian Palm-swift, Common Kingfisher, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Black-capped Bulbul, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Square-tailed Bulbul, Common Iora, Oriental Magpie-robin, Common Tailorbird, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Indian Paradise-flycatcher, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Long-billed Sunbird and Black-hooded Oriole. We returned to the hotel at 1.00 pm, and surrounded by the scenic views from the restaurant,

we had our lunch. Later we visited the Mahabage Hindu temple where we encountered Crimson-fronted Barbet, Alexandrine Parakeet, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Small Minivet, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, White-browed Fantail, Oriental White-eye, Southern Hill Myna and Brown Shrike. We then went to the hamlet of Parawalathanna where we were able to see Black-backed Dwarf kingfisher, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Black-rumped Flameback, Scarlet Minivet, Spot-winged Thrush, Brown-breasted Flycatcher and Orange-billed Babbler. As well as the many birds we were also able to see Toque Macaque, Indian Palm Squirrel, Asian Water Monitor and a Green Garden Lizard. We came back to the hotel after a long walk at 6.30 pm and did our checklist followed by dinner at 7.30pm and called it a night.

**Day 3** We started the day early at 6.00 am for a pre-breakfast birding session and walked towards a nearby forest patch where we saw Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Brahminy Kite, White-breasted Waterhen, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Green Warbler, Brown-capped Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler and White-throated Flowerpecker. We returned to the hotel to have our breakfast, and then set out for Kithulgala rain forest arriving by crossing the Kelani river on rafts. We were able to find many birds that we have already seen before plus some new ones including Chestnut-backed Owlet, Malabar Trogon, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Asian Brown Flycatcher and Sri Lanka Drongo. We also saw Grizzled Giant Squirrel and Common Skink. We had a late afternoon lunch; however, our evening walkabout was cancelled due to the heavy rains that ensued. We met for dinner at 7.30 pm and did our checklist and called it a night.

**Day 4** The day started with a pre-breakfast birding session around the Kithulgala village area where we witnessed Green-billed Coucal, Lesser Yellownape, Indian Pitta, Jerdon's Leafbird, Large-billed Leaf Warbler and Black-naped Monarch. After having breakfast we checked out of the hotel at 9.30 am and set off towards Sinharaja rainforest where we were lucky enough to see the Serendib Scops-owl, Black-headed Ibis, Shikra and Little Swift in a nearby village. We reached our hotel at 2.30 pm and had our lunch. The rest of the afternoon's plans were cancelled due to heavy rains. We met for dinner at 7.30 pm and completed the day's checklist.

**Day 5** We started the day early with tea and coffee and then proceeded into the Sinharaja rainforest in jeeps and there we were able to see Besra, Crested Hawk-eagle, Red-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Grey Wagtail, Sri Lanka Thrush, Sri Lanka Scimitar-babbler, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Sri Lanka Blue-magpie, White-faced Starling and Sri Lanka Myna. Along with the birds we were able to see two endemic butterflies, Sri Lanka Birdwing and Sri Lanka Tree Nymph. We returned to the hotel at 5.00 pm and had our dinner at 7.30 pm, we marked our checklist and said our goodnights to everyone.

**Day 6** We did a pre-breakfast birding session around the Sinharaja village area and saw Black-throated Munia and Pale-billed Flowerpecker and many other birds we have seen before. We came back to the hotel to have our breakfast, checked out of the hotel and headed to Udawalawe. We reached our next hotel, Centauria Wild, just in time for lunch and did a small birding walk around Udawalawe National Park where we saw many birds including Oriental Darter, Spot-billed Pelican, Black-crowned Night-heron, Intermediate Egret, Grey Heron, Painted Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Indian Peafowl, Barred Buttonquail, Black-winged Stilt, Indian Thick-knee, Great Thick-knee, Lesser Sandplover, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Gull-billed Tern, Whiskered Tern, Orange-breasted Pigeon, Pied Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Scops-owl, Green Bee-eater, Coppermith Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Jerdon's Bushlark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark, Sri Lanka Swallow, Oriental Pipit, Forest Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail,

Sri Lanka Woodshrike, White-browed Bulbul, Indian Robin, Plain Prinia, Jungle Prinia, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Purple Sunbird, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Oriental White-eye, Chestnut-tailed Starling, Marshall's Iora, Indian Nightjar and Jerdon's Nightjar. Apart from the many birds we also saw Grey Langur, Asian Elephant and Spotted Deer. We met for dinner at 7.30 pm and after dinner we did our check list and retired to bed.

**Day 7** With a packed breakfast we got into jeeps and headed into Udawalwe National Park for a jeep safari. We encountered Lesser Adjutant, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-winged Kite, Grey-headed Fish-eagle, Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Sirkeer Malkoha, Brown Fish-owl, Pied Kingfisher, Indian Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Grey-breasted Prinia, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Rosy Starling, Baya Weaver, Sykes's Warbler and Oriental Turtle-Dove. Apart from many birds we also saw Mugger Crocodile, Soft-shelled Terrapin, Golden Jackal and Water Buffalo. After our half day jeep safari we stopped at a nearby restaurant to have lunch before proceeding to Nuwara Eliya. On the way we stopped at Surrey Bird Sanctuary to see Brown Wood-owl, which we were able to see at close range. Upon reaching Sitha Eliya we saw the elusive Sri Lanka Whistling-thrush, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Dull-blue Flycatcher and Sri Lanka White-eye. We checked in to the hotel in the evening and followed the usual routine of dinner checklist and briefing.

**Day 8** We left to Horton Plains National Park at 5.30 am with packed breakfasts. Here we encountered many birds such as Booted Eagle, Sri Lanka Wood-pigeon, Crimson-backed Woodpecker, Hill Swallow, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Pied Bushchat, Sri Lanka Whistling-thrush, Indian Blackbird, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, Kashmir Flycatcher, Cinereous Tit and House Sparrow. We came back to the hotel for lunch and later in the evening we visited Victoria Park and was able to see Alpine Swift, Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher and Indian Blue Robin. Later that evening we all gathered in the restaurant to do our checklist followed by our dinner.

**Day 9** We did a pre-breakfast birding session in Victoria Park and were able to see Indian Pitta, Kashmir Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher and Pied Thrush. We came back to the hotel for our breakfast and checked out at 9.00 am to go to Kandy our next destination. We were able to reach our hotel at 1.00 pm and soon after having our lunch we set out to a nearby forest patch called Udawatta Kelle Sanctuary and there we were able to see Chestnut-backed Owlet, White-rumped Shama, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Spot-winged Thrush and Southern Hill Myna. We also found Muntjac and Wild Boar. We came back to the hotel had our dinner at 7.30 and did our checklist afterwards.

**Day 10** We did an early pre-breakfast birding session at Hanthana mountain range and were able to see Indian Cormorant, Black-crowned Night-heron, Little Egret and Great Egret. We checked out of our hotel and proceeded towards Katunayake with picnic lunch. On the way near the airport we were able to see Yellow Bittern, Black Bittern, Watercock and Grey-headed Swamphen. The group left at 4.40 pm ending a very successful Birdfinders' birdwatching holiday.

## Species List (Birds)

- Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*
- Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
- Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
- Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*
- Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*
- Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*
- Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
- Indian Pond-heron *Ardeola grayii*
- Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
- Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
- Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*
- Great Egret *Ardea alba*
- Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
- Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
- Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*
- Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*
- Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*
- Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*
- Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
- Lesser Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna javanica*
- Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
- Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
- Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*
- White-bellied Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
- Grey-headed Fish-eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaeus*
- Crested Serpent-eagle *Spilornis cheela*
- Shikra *Accipiter badius*
- Besra *Accipiter virgatus*
- Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*
- Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*
- Crested Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylonensis*
- Sri Lanka Junglefowl *Gallus lafayettii*
- Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
- Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*
- White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
- Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*
- Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*
- Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
- Indian Thick-knee *Burhinus indicus*
- Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris*

- Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
- Lesser Sand-plover *Charadrius mongolus*
- Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*
- Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*
- Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
- Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
- Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
- Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
- Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
- Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
- Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
- Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
- Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*
- Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
- Sri Lanka Wood-pigeon *Columba torringtoniae*
- Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
- Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
- Asian Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
- Orange-breasted Pigeon *Treron bicincta*
- Sri Lanka Green-pigeon *Treron pompadora*
- Green Imperial-pigeon *Ducula aenea*
- Sri Lanka Hanging-parrot *Loriculus beryllinus*
- Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
- Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
- Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*
- Layard's Parakeet *Psittacula calthropae*
- Pied Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*
- Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*
- Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*
- Blue-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*
- Red-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*
- Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultii*
- Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchus*
- Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*
- Indian Scops-owl *Otus bakkamoena*
- Serendib Scops-owl *Otus thilohoffmanni*
- Brown Fish-owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*
- Chestnut-backed Owlet *Glaucidium castanotum*
- Brown Wood-owl *Strix leptogrammica*
- Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*
- Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus*
- Jerdon's Nightjar *Caprimulgus atripennis*
- Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*

- Indian Swiftlet *Aerodramus unicolor*
- Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*
- Alpine Swift *Apus melba*
- Little Swift *Apus affinis*
- Asian Palm-swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*
- Malabar Trogon *Harpactes fasciatus*
- Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*
- White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*
- Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
- Black-backed Dwarf-kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca*
- Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
- Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*
- Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*
- Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*
- Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*
- Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
- Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill *Ocyceros gingalensis*
- Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus*
- Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica zeylanica*
- Yellow-fronted Barbet *Megalaima flavifrons*
- Crimson-fronted Barbet *Megalaima rubricapillus*
- Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemocephala indica*
- Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Leiopicus mahrattensis*
- Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*
- Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense psarodes*
- Crimson-backed Flameback *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*
- Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*
- Jerdon's Bushlark *Mirafraga affinis*
- Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark *Eremopterix grisea*
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
- Hill Swallow *Hirundo domicola*
- Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*
- Sri Lanka Swallow *Cecropis hyperythra*
- Oriental Pipit *Anthus rufulus*
- Forest Wagtail *Dendronathus indicus*
- Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
- Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
- Sri Lanka Woodshrike *Tephrodornis affinis*
- Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*
- Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*
- Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus*
- Black-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*
- Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

- Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus*
- White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*
- Yellow-browed Bulbul *Hypsipetes indicus*
- Square-tailed Bulbul *Hypsipetes ganeesa*
- Jerdon's Leafbird *Chloropsis jerdoni*
- Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*
- Common Iora *Aegithinia tiphia*
- White-tailed (Marshall's) Iora *Aegithina nigrolutea*
- Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunea*
- Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis*
- White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabarichus*
- Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*
- Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*
- Sri Lanka Whistling-thrush *Myophonus blighi*
- Pied Thrush *Geokichla wardii*
- Spot-winged Thrush *Geokichla spiloptera*
- Sri Lanka Thrush *Zoothera imbricata*
- Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus kinnisii*
- Sri Lanka Bush Warbler *Elaphrornis palliseri*
- Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*
- Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*
- Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*
- Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica*
- Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius sutorius*
- Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
- Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*
- Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*
- Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama*
- Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*
- Dull-blue Flycatcher *Eumyias sordida*
- Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*
- Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris*
- Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra*
- Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
- White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*
- Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*
- Indian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi ceylonensis*
- Brown-capped Babbler *Pellornium fuscicapillus*
- Sri Lanka Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus melanurus*
- Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra*
- Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps*
- Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*
- Orange-billed Babbler *Turdoides rufescens*

- Yellow-billed Babbler *Turdoides affinis*
- Ashy-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax cinereifrons*
- Cinereous Tit *Parus mahrattarum*
- Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*
- Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica*
- Long-billed Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenius*
- Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*
- Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*
- White-throated Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens*
- Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*
- Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosa*
- Sri Lanka White-eye *Zosterops ceylonensis*
- Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*
- Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
- White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*
- Sri Lanka Drongo *Dicrurus lophorinus*
- Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*
- Sri Lanka Blue-magpie *Urocissa ornata*
- House Crow *Corvus splendens*
- Large-billed (Indian Jungle) Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
- White-faced Starling *Sturnornis albofrontatus*
- Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*
- Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus*
- Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*
- Sri Lanka Myna *Gracula ptilogenys*
- Southern Hill Myna *Gracula indica*
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
- Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*
- White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*
- Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*
- Black-throated Munia *Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti*

## **Mammals**

- Toque Macaque *Macaca sinica*
- Grey Langur *Semnopithecus (Presbytis) entellus*
- Purple-faced Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus (Presbytis) vetulus*
- Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*
- Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*
- Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*
- Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*
- Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac*
- Spotted Deer *Cervus axis*
- Water Buffalo *Bubalus Bubalis*



- Indian Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum*
- Grizzled Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura*
- Dusky Striped Squirrel *Funambulus sublineatus*
- Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus gigantea*

## **Reptiles**

- Common Rat Snake *Ptyas mucosus maximus*
- Asian Water Monitor *Varanus salvator*
- Green Garden Lizard *Calotes calotes*
- Sri Lanka Kangaroo Lizard *Otocryptis wiegmanni*
- Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris*
- Soft-shelled Terrapin *Lissemys punctata*
- Hard-shelled Terrapin *Melanochelys trijuga parkeri*
- Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*
- Common Skink *Eutropis carinata*