

# Sri Lanka

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## General

This trip report contains the bird observations made during a holiday trip to Sri Lanka. The trip was set up as a family holiday trip with birding and culture in focus. The trip lasted two weeks and we spent the time mainly in the central and the southwestern parts of the island as this area contains the most important cultural sites as well as all the endemic species.

As a finish three nights were spent at the southwest coast for bathing and leisure. All arrangements in Sri Lanka were organized via a travel company, Baur & Co. (Travel) Ltd.

We can recommend Sri Lanka as a very nice holiday target, both from a birding as well as a family point of view. There are a limited number of endemics (33 in total according to Birds of South Asia by Rasmussen & Anderton) and they are all relatively easy to nail down. We managed to see all of them with the exception of Sri Lanka Spurfowl which we only heard several times, sometimes very close. Besides birds we also went on a whale watching tour where the target was the Indian Ocean race of Blue whale. We saw four animals during our excursion and this was perhaps the most exciting moment during our trip. To see the world's largest animal through all times at a close distance was humongous and a memory we will keep close to our hearts forever.



The travel party in Yala National Park, our guide Nandana holding an Indian pitta and an Indian peafowl.

## Travel

We flew with SAS from Copenhagen to Frankfurt and then to Colombo with Sri Lankan Airlines. Our tickets were bought through Nätresebyrå in Malmö and cost 7141 SEK/adult (app. € 800) including taxes and airport fees. The tickets for the children were 5814 SEK/child.

## Arrangements in Sri Lanka

There are three well known travel agencies in Sri Lanka specialized in wildlife tours; Jetwing Eco Holidays, Bird & Wildlife Team and [Baur & Co. \(Travel\) Ltd.](#) We contacted the latter due to the fact that other people seemed satisfied with them and received a very swift response upon our first request. All negotiations about the route and arrangements were thereafter handled very professionally and all practical things worked out very well during the trip. We can therefore highly recommend them.

The trip program set up through Baur included all transportation costs from arrival to departure incl. 4WD in the national parks, guide and driver, all hotel accommodation incl. breakfast and dinner and all entrance

fees. The cost was \$1550 per person with a discount of 30% for the children. We paid half in advance via bank transfer and half in cash upon our arrival in Sri Lanka.

### The bird guide

Our guide Nandana Hewa Gamage (email: [nandanactgl@yahoo.com](mailto:nandanactgl@yahoo.com), phone +94 779 669 367 or +94 712 541 093) was a very nice acquaintance. He had a great knowledge of the historical and cultural sites that we visited and was also an excellent birder, knowing calls as well as localities and general habitat preferences of the target species. He also had a good network among local guides and other important information sources at the localities that we visited, which proved to be very valuable. He was also very good at spotting and managing to point out the birds he found and without him we would have simply seen fewer birds. We are happy to give Nandana our best recommendations. Nandana is a freelancing guide, working for several travel agencies but can also be contacted for a direct deal.

### Car, roads and traffic

The Bours trip program included an eight-seated van with a driver. It would be possible to rent a car and drive yourself, but with the intensity of the traffic, lack of road signs, the multitude of crazy tuc-tuc drivers and pedestrians we cannot recommend that. Road conditions were very varying with everything from a newly built fully modern highway (the only one in Sri Lanka) to gravel roads in strong need of repair.

### Accommodation

Bours travel had pre-booked accommodation for all nights in advance with breakfast and dinner included. The first night was spent in the aircraft.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> to Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Night in aircraft</b>	
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> to Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Royal Lotus Hotel, Giritale</b>	Very nice hotel with a fantastic view of the lake. Nice warm pool and the hotel area has some good birding opportunities.
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Senani Hotel, Kandy</b>	Beautiful modern hotel with nice views overlooking Kandy and the Temple of the Tooth. The pool was cold.
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> to Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Leisure Village Hotel, Nuwara Eliya</b>	Nice and cosy hotel.
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> to Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kithulgala Rest House, Kithulgala</b>	Very picturesque and nice hotel with magnificent view of the river. A lot of bonus points for the originality. Bathing is possible in the Kelani river, warm and fun.
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> to Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja</b>	Very basic accommodation but very friendly personnel
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Wila Safari Hotel, Tissamaharama</b>	Modern hotel with a high standard. The newly built pool was very good.
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> to Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Paradise Beach Club, Mirissa</b>	Excellent rooms and fantastic setting overlooking the ocean. There is a pool if needed when the sea is too rough.

## Literature, trip reports and websites

Our main literature was “A field guide to the birds of Sri Lanka”, second edition, by John Harrison and illustrated by Tim Worfolk. Overall pictures are good and the text is good albeit sometimes a bit brief. Since our trip the new Helm guide, “Birds of Sri Lanka” by Deepal Warakagoda, Richard Grimmett, Carol & Tim Inskipp has been published, which might be a better option.

There are numerous travel guides covering Sri Lanka and none special is recommended. With the trip set-up that we had with a local guide travelling with us a guide book was almost unnecessary. We studied several bird trip reports before the trip to get a grip on what one might expect to see and where. A good selection of trip reports can be found at [www.travellingbirder.com/tripreports/default.php](http://www.travellingbirder.com/tripreports/default.php)

## Whale watching

Whale watching on the south coast has become very popular and there are several operators offering whale watching trips. The boats used are of very variable size and standard (and safety). We booked through our hotel, see <http://mirissawhalewatching.com/packages/> and we found everything to be handled very professionally. The trip was made with a rather large boat, carrying about 40 passengers and lasted from 07:00 until 12:30. Life vests were provided as well as a breakfast package and mineral water. The sea was calm but still the swell caused several people to get seasick, so take some medication if you are sensitive to seasickness. Price per person was 6500 Rupees.



Spot-billed pelican

## Red tape

With effect from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, a new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system mandatory for short term travel to Sri Lanka is in force; however there was a grace period in the beginning of 2012 as there were some bugs in the first version of the program. The ETA system works in the same way as ESTA applications for entering the US and more information can be found at <http://www.eta.gov.lk>

## Tipping

Tipping is a part of the culture in Sri Lanka. Even though our guide and driver were paid by Bours it is expected to pay extra tip for their services. Of course, if you want to pay or not and how much is up to yourself but it seems as if you are satisfied you are expected to show some appreciation. Some careful asking around will help you in finding the right level.

## Food

Lunch places vary a lot in standard, quality, price and style. The first days our guide Nandana took us to more posh places. The food was good but the same in all places. After some persuasion he took us to more local places. Those places were much more interesting and more to our liking. Price also decreased by more

than 50%. The hotel dinners normally were buffets with a good selection of local dishes, varying in strength from mild to very spicy.



Sri Lanka junglefowl and Sri Lanka small barbet.

## Itinerary

### *Friday 10th February*

The travel party gathered at Kastrup, Copenhagen in the morning to get the SAS flight to Frankfurt and then after a few hours waiting an eventless flight with Sri Lankan Airlines took us to Colombo.

### *Saturday 11th February*

We arrived at 5 am and got easily through customs and out in the arrival hall to meet with our guide and driver. The first bird sighting was an **Oriental magpie robin** seen through the airport windows, nice. After final payment to the local Baur's representative we packed us into the car and left for Giritale. The car was a more or less brand new Toyota minivan which suited us perfectly.

We made a first roadside stop just outside Bandaranaike to get the worst bird fever away. Here we saw the first endemics, **Sri Lanka grey hornbill** and **Orange-billed babbler** as well as **Green imperial pigeon**, **Greater coucal** and **Ashy woodswallow**. Our guide immediately proved to have a very good eye for spotting birds which proved to be useful later.

We had a nice breakfast in Kurunegala by the lake which was interrupted by **Sri Lanka small barbet**, **White-bellied fish eagle** and **Stork-billed Kingfisher**. After this we continued towards Giritale with a few stops here and there. Worth mentioning was a small roadside tank between Kurunegala and Dambulla where we saw some of the typical wetland species, e.g. **Pheasant-tailed jacana** and several herons, but more important, also a **Grey-headed fish eagle**.

After checking in at the hotel, we had a quick lunch nearby and then drove to Polonnaruwa. General sightseeing of a superb world heritage was combined with birdwatching. Worth mentioning is **Loten's sunbird** and some **Indian cuckoos**. Dinner at the hotel in the evening

### *Sunday 12th February*

A morning walk from the hotel to the lake gave some nice views of **White-bellied sea-eagle**, **Black-headed** and **White-browed bulbuls** and an excellent view of an **Indian pitta**, located by the call and responding very well to play-back. Breakfast and then departure for the rock of Sigiriya. This place is well worth a visit merely for the fascinating scenery. Just before we arrived at Sigiriya rock we stopped in the woods with some bogs. We walked along the gravel road focusing on every bird. We saw several good ones, e.g. **White-rumped shama**, **Orange-headed thrush**, **Sri Lanka woodshrike** and an **Oriental dwarf kingfisher** which flew by several times calling.

Well at the rock we walked up to the top. The climb is not too bad and even the small girls managed to walk all the way. Well on the top there are excellent views in all directions. We saw a pair of **Shaheen** falcons on the way up and at the top a **Grey-headed fish eagle** passed overhead. Otherwise few birds were seen here. We had a very good lunch buffet in a nearby town. Apart from the good food the site also gave us the only sighting of **Malabar pied hornbill**, a pair. The rest of the afternoon was spent at the hotel. Birding in the garden was quite rewarding with **Sri Lanka grey hornbill**, **Sri Lanka green pigeon** and **Green warbler**. Dinner at the hotel.



Painted stork and Asian openbill stork.

### ***Monday 13th February***

A morning walk around the hotel was eventless with more or less the same birds seen the day before. After breakfast we packed ourselves into the car and left for Kandy. The trip took several hours despite the road being in good conditions. Traffic is slow and travelling times should not be underestimated.

Along the road we passed an area where a lot of spices are grown. We stopped at the Ranweli spice garden, north of Matale, and got a guided tour. It was interesting to listen to the guide and even more so when we afterwards learnt about spice mixes and ointments, some with strange actions, e.g. hair removal.

We arrived in Kandy late afternoon. Outside the hotel there was a large flowering tree and such are always interesting as they often hold good birds. Here we saw **Southern hill myna**. After a short break we went down to the town centre to see a show with traditional dancing. This was a bit touristic but a lot of fun. The last setting was fire walking, interesting to see at close range. After the dance show, at dusk, we went outside and encountered a lot of Indian flying foxes at close range. These fairly large flying animals are quite spooky if you are not prepared, flying around the water and the parking area and around our heads.

We then went to the Temple of the tooth, which is located nearby. This is a must! It is almost indescribable and mythical. The tooth relic itself is kept inside a shrine and is of course not shown but we saw the shrine and that alone was worth waiting for. It is on display four times each day, approximately 15 minutes each time, and you have to queue up and then slowly move past. After this, we went back to the hotel for a traditional Sri Lanka buffet dinner.



From top left: Sri Lanka frogmouth, Asian brown flycatcher, Shaheen, Brown-capped babbler and lunch at local restaurant.

### ***Tuesday 14th February***

In the early morning we went to Udawattakele for a couple of hours birding. This nice forest area with a small pond near the entrance is virtually inside the city with houses all the way to the entrance. We walked around a loop trail slowly. We heard **Brown wood owl** calling from a distance and a **Brown fish owl** landed in a tree near us while watching the pond. Other highlights were **Crimson-backed flameback**, **Brown-capped babbler**, **White-rumped shama** and both **Yellow-fronted** and **Sri Lanka small barbets** were common.

We returned to the hotel for breakfast, packing and transport to the next hotel in Nuwara Eliya. While waiting outside the hotel we found a **Velvet-fronted nuthatch** on a tree branch just on the other side of the road. We left for a long trip towards Nuwara Eliya. Tea plantations were numerous and we stopped and visited one of them, the Glenloth Tea Estate. A guided tour around the tea factory was nice and so was the complimentary cup of tea. The tea factory also offered great views of **Hill swallows** that apparently resided on the factory building.

We came to Nuwara Eliya in the afternoon and the group divided into a city sightseeing group and a birding group that went to the Victoria Park. It was raining and viewing opportunities were limited but still two hours of walking in the park paid off and we saw all target species; **Kashmir flycatcher**, **Indian blue robin**, **Pied thrush** and **Forest Wagtail**. Furthermore we saw one **Indian pitta** and a couple of **Velvet-fronted nuthatches**. We finished off with a brief visit to a small creek just outside Nuwara Eliya (appr. 10 minutes by car) which is known as a good site for **Sri Lanka whistling thrush**. We had immediate success and although the rain was intense we saw a male excellently at close range. Dinner at the hotel.



From top left: Sri Lanka bush warbler, Sri Lanka scimitar babbler and Sri Lanka whistling thrush.

### ***Wednesday 15th February***

The focus for the day was to get to Horton plains. The excursion required a jeep so early in the morning (5 am) we gathered outside the hotel for a two-hour transport to the national park. The weather was a bit annoying with rain showers and grey skies. Horton plains are situated at 2000 meters above sea level and the road there is curvy and slow and not in the best condition. Just inside the entrance, at the Arranga pool, **Sri Lanka bush warbler** can be found. While waiting for this very skulky bird in sometimes quite heavy rain we saw **Sri Lanka wood pigeon**, **Dull blue flycatcher** and **Sri Lanka junglefowl**. Eventually we found the **Sri Lanka bush warbler** but it was extremely difficult to get good views. Finally we were satisfied and moved further on to the visitors centre. Interestingly enough, while walking the short distance between the parking lot and the visitors centre we found another two **Sri Lanka bush warblers** and one of them was sitting completely in the open.

We walked one of the trail loops towards World's end. We saw some good birds, e.g. **Sri Lanka scimitar babbler** and **Grey-headed canary flycatcher** but the prize bird was **Sri Lanka whistling thrush** of which we had stunning views close to a small creek that we passed. A bit further where the wood opened up a bit we also saw **Crimson-backed flameback**. We never walked all the way to World's end because of the

weather conditions with overcast skies and bleak weather but it should be remarkable if the conditions are right.



From top left: Yellow-eared bulbul, Sri Lanka woodpigeon, Sri Lanka white-eye and Dull blue flycatcher.

We then went back to Nuwara Eliya for some shopping and relaxing at the hotel. The hotel was lying close to Lake Gregory and on the flat swampy area below the hotel we thought there could be **Pintail snipes**. We walked around the area for an hour and found more than 10 snipes. Unfortunately we also encountered some leeches... Dinner at the hotel.

#### ***Thursday 16th February***

This day was mainly spent in the car. The flight distance between Nuwara Eliya and Kithulgala is not very long but we left the hotel at 8:30 in the morning and virtually without stops we arrived in Kithulgala at 3 pm. A few short necessary stops were made along the road for natural reasons and it paid off with **Spot-winged thrush** and **Chestnut-headed bee-eater** at the first stop. Other stops further along the road gave excellent views of **Mountain hawk eagle**, **Tawny-bellied babbler** and **Ashy prinia** but also a couple of aggressive leeches.

Arriving in Kithulgala rest house was a nice experience as it is situated just at the bank of the Kelani river. Having a rest in the garden overlooking the river is very relaxing with loads of parakeets flying past. Even

more so in front of the hotel there are a few fruit trees where it is very good to check for birds. We saw for example **Sri Lanka hanging parrot**, **Brown-capped woodpecker** and **Bar-winged flycatcher-shrike** here.



From left: Blue-faced malkoha, Green-billed coucal and Pied thrush.

As a small afternoon excursion we went a bit back towards the village from the hotel. Just before passing the bridge over the river you can turn right towards the river. Where the road ends there were some open areas. The area is well-known for **Chestnut-backed owlet** and we saw one that was quite easy to spot. Furthermore we saw some **Layard's parakeets** and several **Sri Lanka swallows** before it started to rain heavily and we retracted to the hotel. Dinner at the hotel.

#### *Friday 17th February*

The full day was spent birding and in the morning we went for a walk in a nearby urban area which was on the forest edge. The bird at stake was **Green-billed Coucal** and after about two hours search we finally found two birds that showed themselves very well. After breakfast we went over the river in a canoe made by a dug out tree trunk to walk around in the Makandawa forest reserve. We had an excellent start because just by the entrance a local person had heard **Sri Lanka frogmouths**. After a brief search our guide found two birds resting in a tree and we had very confining views. We then had a very good morning birding around some rice paddies in the forest and saw most of the birds we could wish for in the area except Serendib scops owl. Worth mentioning were **Red-faced malkoha**, **Yellownape**, **Greater racket-tailed drongo** and **Black-naped monarch**.

We came back to the hotel in the afternoon for a couple of hours of leisure and resting. The rest of the families had been away shopping, visiting a very local restaurant and the children loved the ride with a tuc-tuc. We also enjoyed bathing in the river. The river bed was graveled with small soft rocks and the temperature was nice. Dinner at the hotel.

#### *Saturday 18th February*

As we did not manage to find Serendib scops owls the previous day we decided to make another visit to the best area. We left very early (5 am) and walked in the dark to the area where the owls relatively often are found. After two hours search we decided to give up. We heard a **Drongo cuckoo**, saw **Sri Lanka crested drongo** and **Sri Lanka blue magpie** but no owl.

Coming back to the hotel we packed quickly and immediately left for Sinharaja. Again it was an unexpectedly long trip. We arrived at The Blue Magpie Lodge in the late afternoon. The accommodation here is fairly basic and the electricity was rationed and limited to between 6 and 10 pm and 7 to 9 am. Furthermore we had some (small) problems with mosquitoes here. However, an alternative is to stay further up in the hills at Martin's lodge which is very good from a birding perspective but the accommodation is even more basic, although with delicious food.

While we travelled, our guide had talked to a friend working at the forest department that he knew in Sinharaja and to our great joy, the guy called back after a few hours with the news that he had found two

**Serendib scops owls** on a day roost. Directly upon arrival we therefore walked up the hill in a high pace in order to get to the site before dark, almost ignoring a **Large cuckoo-shrike** along the road. Well up at the upper park entrance we met the guy who showed us to the owls which we saw very well at only a few meters distance. A very good repair from the days before! Dinner at the lodge.

### *Sunday 19th February*

After a small detour to the Sinharaja national park office to get tickets, we drove the very bumpy “road” up to the park entrance. Everyone was equipped with leech socks which were good but the leeches were not that many and apparently their number vary depending on the weather conditions: if it has rained there are more. We walked up to the research station, about 3 km from the gate, and birded along the road. One of the first birds we found was a **Sri Lanka scaly thrush**. It is a very shy bird but we managed to see it well along the small creek approximately 300 m after the entrance. The target species in Sinharaja are normally seen together in bird parties so the most important action is to look for the bird parties. We eventually found a couple of bird parties and managed to see all desired species except White-faced starling. Among other birds we saw **Red-faced malkoha** very well. We also managed to see **Malabar trogon, Ashy-headed laughingthrush, Large-billed warbler** and **Legge’s flowerpecker**. At one place where the creek came close to the road we found a water snake luring on some small fish.



Travel party in Sinharaja equipped with leech stockings.

We had lunch at Martin’s lodge and there was a lot of bird activity around that area. The children could also run around so that helped a bit. In the afternoon the wives and children went back with the car down to the lodge while we walked back towards the research station. In one bird party along the road we had extremely brief views of two **White-faced starlings**. However, the birds flew away before we could get any satisfying views and even though we spent the rest of the day searching for the starlings, we ended up unsuccessful. Dinner at the lodge.

### *Monday 20th February*

We had an early start for a last chance to see the starling and again returned up to the area around Martin’s lodge. After a couple of hours watching every possible bird, seeing parakeets and **Sri Lanka myna** among other things we finally found two different **White-faced starlings** close to the park entrance when we were

overlooking an open area and scanning the far-away trees. The starlings were found sitting in the tree-tops and we had excellent but distant views for about 10 minutes. Happy again we went back to the lodge for breakfast, packing and transport to Tissamaharama.

A long and uneventful drive took us closer to the south coast. We made a short stop at the entrance of the Uda Walawe National Park which is a well-known site for a roosting **Indian scops owl**. We had excellent views of the owl and other tourists had excellent views of us, astonished over our enthusiasm of the owl. Just afterwards we drove along the park boundary and saw numerous Elephants standing along the fence waiting for people to stop and feed them. We had lunch at a very interesting and very local place that looked like a bus station where we probably were the main treat of the day being photographed by the locals. We arrived at 3 pm at the hotel Wila Safari and the children (and hence the parents) were extremely happy to find that the hotel had a pool.



From top left: Brown fish owl, Indian scops owl, White-bellied sea-eagle and Changeable hawk-eagle.

An afternoon excursion to a nearby tank in Debarawewa just outside Tissamaharama was nice and we saw a lot of new waterbirds there, **Black** and **Yellow bitterns** and **Watercock** just to mention some. We rounded the day off with a stop at a nearby palm grove where White-naped flameback sometimes can be found, however, we only found a number of roosting Black-backed. Dinner at the hotel.

### ***Tuesday 21st February***

The group started very early with packed breakfast for a full day excursion to Yala National Park. For this trip we had a jeep and a different driver. It took about one hour to drive to Yala. We made a short stop a couple of kilometers before the park entrance, a well-known site for the two nightjars. However, we found

none and probably the evening is safer for these birds. Two black-backed jackals were however seen running along a pool at the same site.

We came to the park entrance and waited for it to open. A family group of wild boars entertained the visitors and they were apparently used to the circus at the park entrance. At 8 am the park opened and everyone entered. We had a very rewarding morning and saw a lot of good birds, e.g. **Yellow-crowned woodpecker**, **Blue-faced malkoha** and **Jerdon's bushlark**. Furthermore, we saw Elephants (a few), Indian grey mongoose, Water buffalos, Sambars and Crocodiles.

A late morning break by the sea shore was lovely and while we waited for the driver to get our lunch, somehow delivered from the hotel, we had a nice rest in the shades. It was with mixed emotions we sat down since this also was a memorial site of the tragic tsunami 2004 which caused a lot of damage to Sri Lanka. While we were waiting we also did some birdwatching. We saw some shorebirds and we had a frustrating observation of a small falcon flying in the distance. It was remarkably hobby like, potentially an **Oriental hobby** but the view was too bad for a claim.



Yellow-wattled lapwing and Great thick-knee.

We drove another tour and came to a leopard gathering meaning stopping where one car had managed to find a leopard. However, it was sleeping/resting in between some cliffs and stones and very difficult to get a glimpse of and we only managed to see one leg, two ears and a small part of the body. Not very good views but at least we saw it. We then headed for lunch in a designated shady area. Toque macaques were lurking around and actually managed to steal some food in spite of us being very cautious. It was very interesting and amusing to watch them trying to get to the food. After a two-hour break during the mid-day heat we headed for another search of leopard and new exciting birds.

The afternoon trip was more of the same but specific highlights included superb views of **Brown fish owl**, **Grey-bellied cuckoo**, **Lesser adjutant** and good views of **Barred buttonquails**. The sun was setting quite fast and we had to drive fast to get out of the park on time. On the way back we again stopped at the nightjar site and actually managed to hear **Jerdon's nightjar** and to see **Indian nightjar**. A full and tiring but very rewarding day had come to an end. Dinner at the hotel.

### **Wednesday 22nd February**

We left the hotel at dawn for a walk in a nearby park-like residential area. It was a nice walk and some really good birds for the trip were found here. First we had excellent views of **Blue-faced malkoha**. Second we managed to get good views of two different **White-naped flamebacks**. Our guide heard the call of the first one and after a brief search we found it in a tree sitting still for 30 seconds before flying away. This species seems to be rarely seen at bird trips but is probably not rare in the right habitat, or maybe we were just lucky.

The third interesting encounter was when we found an **Indian pitta** that had got caught in a fish net hanging in a fence. We managed to get the bird out of the net and released it, obviously in good condition, after a photo orgy.



Cotton teal and Lesser whistling-duck.

After returning to the hotel, breakfast and packing we left for Mirissa. We stopped at some saltpans and tanks along the way and highlights included the only **Brown-headed gulls** of the trip. We also stopped for a shopping session in Galle and finally arrived at Paradise Beach Club in the late afternoon. We had a swim in the warm sea and the children were very happy being on the beach. Dinner at the hotel.

#### ***Thursday 23rd February***

We left the hotel before dawn to go on a whale watching trip. We were picked up at our hotel and it was only a five minute drive to the Mirissa harbor. The trip took us almost 30 km straight out to the sea. The sea was rather calm, still the swell caused several of the passengers to get seasick. Only a few birds were seen and almost all of them close to the coast. We saw a number of **Bridled terns**, **Great crested terns** and an unidentified immature **Tropicbird**. Unfortunately the view of the latter was not good enough to make a definite identification if it was a red-billed or a white-tailed. Further out at sea we saw a **Pomarine skua** as well as numerous flying fish and after a couple of hours a group of spinner dolphins. They were having show-offs and were exciting to observe, however a bit shy and we never came really close. Finally we also found a party of **Blue whales** which was one of the most exciting observations of the whole trip. We came very close to the whales and in total it was judged by the tour guides to have been four different individuals. We came back to the hotel after lunch and spent the rest of the day on the beach. Dinner at a nearby beach restaurant with excellent food.

#### ***Friday 24th February***

The whole day was at leisure and spent in and around the hotel. Our guide however managed to find a **Jungle owlet** close by, between the hotel and the harbor, a species we had not expected to see. We had good views of it and it responded well to imitations to its call. On the same spot we also saw a tree full of flying foxes. After this we had an excellent lunch at a nearby beach restaurant with fish, lobster, shrimps and crab. Dinner at the hotel.



Assorted fishes at a beach restaurant.

### ***Saturday 25th February***

We packed ourselves in the car early and left for the airport. A three hour drive along the only motorway on Sri Lanka. We took a very warm goodbye to our guide and to our driver, both excellent and especially we are grateful to Nandana, without whom we would have seen much fewer birds. Our driver Indiga should also get a special mentioning, he drove very safe and careful and also was very friendly and helpful with our children.



From top left: Spotted dove, Square-tailed black bulbul and Asian paradise-flycatcher

At the airport the booking system had broken down but after almost two hours of waiting we finally were checked-in. An eventless flight with a change in Frankfurt took us back to Copenhagen late in the evening, tired but smiling after a fantastic trip.



From left: Sri Lanka blue magpie, Rose-ringed parakeet and Lesser adjutant.

### List of species

1. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
12 along the road Colombo Airport-Giritale 11.2, 1 roadside close to Minneriya 12.2, 2 roadside Giritale-Sigiriya 13.2, 2 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
2. **Unidentified Tropicbird** *Phaeton spp.*  
1 imm. seen on the outbound leg of the whale watching trip off Mirissa 23.2. The bird was resting on the water but was unfortunately discovered a bit late and was only seen against the low morning sun.
3. **Spot-billed Pelican** *Pelecanus philippensis* NT  
4 Minneriya 12.2, 1 roadside Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 8 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 25 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
4. **Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger*  
Common at freshwater locations. Daily figures of 2-100 individuals during 11 days.
5. **Indian Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*  
1 Yala NP 21.2, 17 Werawila, Tissa 22.2, 10 along the road close to Hambatota 22.2.
6. **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
10 Giritale 11.2, 3 Giritale-Minneriya 12.2.
7. **Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* NT  
Singles around Giritale 11-12.2, c.20 daily Tissa-Yala 20-22.2.
8. **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
Rather common. 30 individuals recorded 12-22.2.
9. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*  
3 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 8 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 1 Yala NP 21.2, 4 Tissa 22.2.

10. **Great Egret** *Egretta alba*  
Rather common.
11. **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*  
Common.
12. **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
Common.
13. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
Abundant.
14. **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
15. **Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*  
Abundant.
16. **Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
3 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
17. **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
1 Kelani River, Kithulgala 17.2, 4 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2.
18. **Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis*  
3 Deberawewa, Tissa, 20.2.
19. **Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* NT  
Rather common in the dry zone. Totally 38 individuals recorded 11-12 and 20-22.2.
20. **Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*  
Common, especially in the dry zone. Totally 135 individuals recorded 11-22.2.
21. **Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*  
4 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 1 Giritale 12.2.
22. **Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus* VU  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
23. **Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* NT  
Common in the dry zone. Totally 235 individuals recorded 11-22.2.
24. **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
1 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 10 Giritale 12.2, c.30 Yala NP 21.2.
25. **Lesser Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*  
10 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 30 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 15 Yala NP 21.2, 10 Tissa 22.2.
26. **Cotton Teal** *Nettapus coromandelianus*  
8 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
27. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
1 Kurunegala 11.2.
28. **Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
2 roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Kithulgala 18.2.
29. **Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*  
Rather common. Totally 19 individuals recorded 11-23.2.

30. **White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*  
1 Kurunegala 11.2, 3 Giritale-Polonnaruwa 11.2, 1 Giritale 12.2. and 13.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2 and 18.2, 1 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 2 Yala NP 21.2, 1 Werawila, Tissa 22.2, 1 Mirissa 23.2.
31. **Grey-headed Fish Eagle** *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* NT  
1 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 1 Sigiriya 12.2.
32. **Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*  
2 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 2 Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 2 Kithulgala 16.2, 4 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
33. **Besra** *Accipiter virgatus*  
1 Kithulgala 18.2.
34. **Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*  
1 Horton Plains 15.2.
35. **Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis*  
2 Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Kithulgala-Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja-Werawila 20.2, 1 Yala NP 21.2.
36. **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*  
1 dark morph roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2.
37. **Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus cirrhatus*  
1 Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
38. **Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis kelaarti*  
1 Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 1 ad Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2.
39. **Peregrine (Shaheen) Falcon** *Falco peregrinus peregrinator*  
2 adults Sigiriya Rock 12.2.
40. **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
1 Horton Plains 15.2.
41. **Sri Lanka Spurfowl** *Galloperdix bicalcarata* [Endemic]  
1 heard Horton Plains 15.2, 3 heard Kithulgala 17.2, 2 heard Kithulgala 18.2, 1 heard Sinharaja 18.2, 2 heard Sinharaja 19.2, 2 heard Sinharaja 20.2.
42. **Sri Lanka Junglefowl** *Gallus lafayetii* [Endemic]  
3 Horton Plains 15.2, 2 Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Kithulgala 16.2, 5 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Kithulgala 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 roadside Kithulgala-Sinharaja 18.2, 4 Sinharaja 19.2, 4 Sinharaja 20.2, 7 Yala NP 21.2.
43. **Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*  
Common in the dry zone, especially in the south. Highest count c.50 Yala NP 21.2.
44. **Barred Buttonquail** *Turnix suscitator*  
3 Yala NP 21.2.
45. **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*  
Common. At least 40 birds recorded 11-22.2.
46. **Watercock** *Gallixrex cinerea*  
1 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2.
47. **Grey-headed Swamphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus*  
3 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, c.20 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 8 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
48. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
2 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2.

49. **Great Thick-knee** *Esacus recurvirostris*  
2 Werawila 20.2, 4 Yala NP 21.2.
50. **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*  
Rather common in the dry zone.
51. **Yellow-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus malabaricus*  
3 Yala NP 21.2.
52. **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*  
Common.
53. **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*  
8 Yala NP 21.2.
54. **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
55. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*  
3 Yala NP 21.2.
56. **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*  
c.10 Yala NP 21.2.
57. **Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*  
5 Yala NP 21.2.
58. **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*  
10 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 2 Giritale-Sigiriya 12.2, c.20 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2,  
2 Yala NP 21.2, 3 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
59. **Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*  
At least 10 Lake Gregory, Nuwara Eliya 15.2, 2 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2.
60. **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* NT  
13 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, c.10 Yala NP 21.2.
61. **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*  
8 Werawila, Tissa 20.2, 5 Yala NP 21.2, 10 roadside salt pans Hambatota 22.2.
62. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*  
3 Yala NP 21.2.
63. **Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*  
2 Yala NP 21.2.
64. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
65. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*  
1 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 2 Yala NP 21.2.
66. **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*  
Totally 12 birds recorded 12-21.2.
67. **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*  
15 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Tissa 22.2.
68. **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*  
3 Yala NP 21.2, 2 roadside salt pans Hambatota 22.2.
69. **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*  
1 whale watching trip off Mirissa 23.2.

70. **Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*  
2 roadside saltpans Hambatota 22.2.
71. **Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus*  
4 whale watching trip off Mirissa 23.2.
72. **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*  
Common in the dry zone in the south. Totally 38 birds recorded 20-24.2.
73. **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*  
1 Werawila, Tissa 20.2, 1 Tissa Lake 22.2.
74. **Lesser Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bengalensis*  
c.10 roadside saltpans Hambatota 22.2.
75. **Great Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii*  
3 whale watching trip off Mirissa 23.2.
76. **Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*  
2 Werawila, Tissa 22.2, 3 whale watching trip off Mirissa 23.2.
77. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*  
Common in the dry zone. Totally 195 birds recorded 11-23.2.
78. **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*  
Totally 17 birds recorded in the south 20-22.2.
79. **Rock Dove (domest.)** *Columba livia*  
Abundant.
80. **Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon** *Columba torringtoniae* VU [Endemic]  
5 Horton Plains 15.2.
81. **Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis*  
Abundant.
82. **Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*  
9 Kithulgala 17.2, 8 Kithulgala 18.2, 5 Sinharaja 18.2, 6 Sinharaja 19.2, 1 Sinharaja 20.2.
83. **Orange-breasted Green Pigeon** *Treron bicinctus leggei*  
c. 25 Yala NP 21.2, 3 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
84. **Sri Lanka Green Pigeon** *Treron pompadora* [Endemic]  
10 Giritale 12.2, 2 Giritale 13.2, 4 Kithulgala 16.2, 15 Kithulgala 17.2, 3 Sinharaja 19.2, 4 Sinharaja 20.2, 1 Yala NP 21.2.
85. **Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea*  
Common. Totally 110 birds recorded 11-22.2. Highest count c. 30 Kithulgala 17.2.
86. **Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus beryllinus* [Endemic]  
1 Kandy 13.2, 2 Kandy 14.2, common in Kithulgala and Sigiriya 16-20.2.
87. **Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*  
c.50 Giritale 12.2, c.10 Giritale 13.2, c.20 Kithulgala 16.2 and 17.2.
88. **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*  
Common in the dry zone.
89. **Layard's Parakeet** *Psittacula calthropae* [Endemic]  
2 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 2 Kithulgala 16.2, 4 Kithulgala 18.2, c.20 Sinharaja 18.2 and 19.2, 7 Sinharaja 20.2.

90. **Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*  
2 Polonnaruwa 11.2.
91. **Grey-bellied Cuckoo** *Cacomantis passerinus*  
2 Yala NP 21.2.
92. **Drongo Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*  
1 heard Kithulgala rice paddies 18.2.
93. **Asian Koel** *Eudynamys scolopaceus*  
1 roadside Colombo Airport-Kurunegala 11.2, 3 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Sinharaja 20.2, 4 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2, 1 Werawila, Tissa 22.2.
94. **Blue-faced Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris* [RR]  
3 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
95. **Red-faced Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* [Endemic]  
1 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Sinharaja 19.2.
96. **Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis parroti*  
Rather common. Totally 21 birds recorded 11-24.2.
97. **Green-billed Coucal** *Centropus chlororhynchus* VU [Endemic]  
2 Kithulgala 17.2.
98. **Serendib Scops Owl** *Otus thilohoffmanni* EN [Endemic]  
2 on day-roost Sinharaja 18.2.
99. **Indian Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena bakkamoena*  
1 on day-roost Uda Walawe entrance 20.2.
100. **Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis zeylonensis*  
1 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 2 Yala NP 21.2.
101. **Brown Wood Owl** *Strix leptogrammica ochrogenys*  
1 heard Uda Wattakele 14.2.
102. **Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum*  
1 Mirissa 24.2.
103. **Chestnut-backed Owlet** *Glaucidium castanonotum* NT [Endemic]  
1 Kithulgala 16.2, 1 heard Kithulgala 17.2.
104. **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** *Batrachostomus moniliger* [RR]  
2 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 heard Kithulgala 18.2.
105. **Jerdon's Nightjar** *Caprimulgus atripennis aequabilis* [RR]  
1 heard Yala Entrance Road 21.2.
106. **Indian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos*  
1 heard and seen Yala Entrance Road 21.2.
107. **Indian Swiftlet** *Aerodramus unicolor*  
Common in the wet zone. Totally 48 birds recorded 15-20.2.
108. **Brown-backed Needletail** *Hirundapus giganteus*  
5 Sinharaja 18.2, 6 Sinharaja 19.2, 3 Sinharaja 20.2.
109. **Asian Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis*  
Totally 73 birds recorded 11-22.2. Most common in the north.
110. **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*  
1 roadside Horton Plains-Nuwara Eliya 15.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2.

111. **Little Swift** *Apus affinis*  
Common. Recorded during 13 out of 15 days 11-24.2.
112. **Crested Treeswift** *Hemiprocne coronata*  
2 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 Kithulgala each on 16.2, 17.2 and 18.2, c.40 Yala NP 21.2, 5 roadside Tissa-Mirissa 22.2.
113. **Malabar Trogon** *Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus* [RR]  
1 heard Kithulgala 17.2, 5 Sinharaja 19.2.
114. **Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*  
2 along the road Colombo Airport-Giritale 11.2, 1 Giritale-Sigiriya 12.2, 4 Sinharaja-Werawila, Tissa 20.2.
115. **Stork-billed Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis capensis*  
1 Kurunegala 11.2, 1 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 1 Kithulgala 16.2, 2 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2, 1 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 1 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2, 1 Werawila, Tissa 22.2.
116. **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
Common. Daily counts of 1-20 birds during 11 days 11-22.2.
117. **Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx erithaca*  
1 heard Sigiriya 12.2.
118. **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*  
Totally 9 birds recorded 11-21.2.
119. **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*  
5 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, 3 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Werawila Lake, Tissa 22.2.
120. **Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis orientalis*  
2 Giritale-Sigiriya 12.2, 5 Deberawewa, Tissa 20.2, numerous (50+) Yala NP 21.2.
121. **Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*  
2 Horton Plains 15.2, common in the dry zone in the south. Highest count c.40 Yala NP 21.2.
122. **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater** *Merops leschenaultia*  
2 Ramboda 16.2, 4 Kithulgala 16.2, 2 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 roadside Sinharaja-Werawila 20.2.
123. **Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upopa epops*  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
124. **Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill** *Ocyrceros gingalensis* [Endemic]  
3 along the road Colombo Airport-Kurunegala 11.2, 2 Giritale 11.2, 4 Sigiriya 12.2, 6 Giritale 12.2, 2 Kithulgala 16.2, 8 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Kithulgala 18.2.
125. **Malabar Pied Hornbill** *Anthracoceros coronatus* NT [RR]  
2 Giritale-Sigiriya 12.2.
126. **Brown-headed Barbet** *Megalaima zeylanica*  
Common. Totally 28 birds recorded 11-24.2.
127. **Yellow-fronted Barbet** *Megalaima flavifrons* [Endemic]  
Common in the wet zone. Totally 40 birds recorded 14-20.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
128. **Sri Lanka Small Barbet** *Megalaima rubricapillus* [Endemic]  
1 Kurunegala 11.2, 2 Sigiriya 12.2, totally 5 Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 5 Uda Wattakele 14.2, totally 7 Kandy-Nuwara Eliya 14.2, 3 Ramboda 16.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2.
129. **Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala*  
2 Giritale 11.2, 2 Polonnaruwa 11.2, 2 Giritale 12.2, 1 Giritale 13.2.

130. **Brown-capped Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos nanus gymnophthalmus*  
1 Kithulgala 16.2 and 17.2.
131. **Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos mahrattensis*  
1 Yala NP 21.2.
132. **Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus wellsi*  
1 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 heard Sinharaja 19.2.
133. **Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium benghalense psarodes*  
Rather common. Totally 17 birds recorded 16-24.2.
134. **Crimson-backed Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* [Endemic]  
1 heard Uda Wattakele 14.2, 1 Horton Plains 15.2, 1 Kithulgala 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
135. **White-naped flameback** *Chrysocolaptes festivus*  
2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
136. **Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyura*  
1 seen+1 heard Giritale 12.2, 1 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2, 1 heard Yala NP 21.2, 1 released from a fish net where it was found stuck, Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
137. **Jerdon's Bushlark** *Mirafra affinis* [RR]  
c.10 Yala NP 21.2.
138. **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*  
1 Yala NP 21.2, 1 Werawila Lake 22.2.
139. **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark** *Eremopterix griseus*  
c.10 roadside close to Uda Walawe NP 20, 6 Yala NP 21.2.
140. **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*  
2 roadside close to Uda Walawe NP 20.2.
141. **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Common, especially in the dry zone.
142. **Hill Swallow** *Hirundo domicola*  
5 Glenloth Tea Estate 14.2, 2 Nuwara Eliya 14.2, c.10 Horton Plains 15.2.
143. **Sri Lanka Swallow** *Hirundo hyperythra* [Endemic]  
11 Kithulgala 16.2, 6 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 roadside Kithulgala-Sinharaja 18.2, 2 roadside Sinharaja-Werawila 20.2, 2 Yala NP 21.2.
144. **Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus*  
1 Sigiriya 12.2, 8 Horton Plains 15.2, c.10 Yala NP 21.2, 3 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
145. **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus*  
3 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2.
146. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*  
Totally 7 birds recorded in the wet zone 14-17.2, 1 roadside along the fence Uda Walawe NP 20.2.
147. **Large Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina macei layardi*  
1 Sinharaja 18.2.
148. **Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina melanoptera melanoptera*  
1 male roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 1 male roadside Kithulgala-Sinharaja 18.2.
149. **Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*  
5 Sigiriya 12.2.

150. **Orange Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus* [RR]  
Totally 26 birds recorded, mainly in the wet zone, 11-20.2.
151. **Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike** *Hemipus picatus leggei*  
1 Kithulgala 16.2.
152. **Sri Lanka Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis affinis* [Endemic]  
1 Sigiriya 12.2.
153. **Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*  
2 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
154. **Asian Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi paradisi + ceylonensis*  
Totally 15 birds recorded 12-24.2. White morph seen in Kandy and Sinharaja.
155. **White-browed Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*  
1 Sigiriya 12.2, 7 Yala NP 21.2, 5 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
156. **Black-capped Bulbul** *Pycnonotus melanicterus* [Endemic]  
2 Giritale 12.2, 2 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 5 Kithulgala 16.2, 5 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Kithulgala 18.2,  
4 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 20.2.
157. **Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*  
Common.
158. **Yellow-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus penicillatus* NT [Endemic]  
4 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2, 5 Horton Plains 15.2.
159. **White-browed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus luteolus* [RR]  
1 Giritale 11.2, c.10 Giritale 12.2, 5 Giritale 13.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 6 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
160. **Yellow-browed Bulbul** *Iole indica* [RR]  
10 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 2 Kithulgala 16.2, 7 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Kithulgala 18.2, 2 Sinharaja 18.2,  
4 Sinharaja 19.2, 2 Sinharaja 20.2.
161. **Square-tailed Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes ganeesa* [RR]  
8 Kandy 14.2, Common at Kithulgala and Sinharaja 16-20.2.
162. **Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia*  
Rather common. Totally 23 birds recorded 11-24.2.
163. **Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*  
1 Sinharaja 18.2, 2 Sinharaja 20.2.
164. **Jerdon's Leafbird** *Chloropsis jerdoni* [RR]  
3 Giritale 11.2, 4 Polonnaruwa 11.2, 1 Giritale 12.2, 1 Kandy 13.2, 2 Kandy 14.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
165. **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*  
1 Giritale 12.2, 1 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 4 Horton Plains 15.2, 2 roadside Kithulgala-  
Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja-Werawila, Tissa 20.2, c.15 Yala NP 21.2, 2 Akurugoda,  
Tissa 22.2.
166. **Pied Thrush** *Zoothera wardii*  
1 male Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2.
167. **Orange-headed Thrush** *Zoothera citrina citrina*  
1 Sigiriya 12.2.
168. **Spot-winged Thrush** *Zoothera spiloptera* NT [Endemic]  
1 Ramboda 16.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2.
169. **Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush** *Zoothera imbricata* NT [Endemic]  
2 Sinharaja 19.2.

170. **Indian Blackbird** *Turdus simillimus kinnisii*  
1 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2, c.15 Horton Plains 15.2.
171. **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus blighi* EN [Endemic]  
1 along a small stream close to Nuwara Eliya 14.2, 1 Horton Plains 15.2.
172. **Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*  
1 Giritale 13.2, 2 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
173. **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui*  
1 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 1 Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.
174. **Kashmir Flycatcher** *Ficedula subrubra* VU  
1 male Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2.
175. **Dull Blue Flycatcher** *Eumyias sordidus* NT [Endemic]  
6 Horton Plains 15.2.
176. **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae*  
5 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 1 Ramboda 16.2, 4 Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2.
177. **Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*  
1 Horton Plains 15.2.
178. **Indian Blue Robin** *Erithacus brunnea*  
3 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2.
179. **Oriental Magpie-robin** *Copsychus saularis*  
Common. Totally 94 birds recorded 11-22.2.
180. **White-rumped Shama** *Copsychus malabaricus leggei*  
1 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 Uda Wattakele 14.2.
181. **Indian Robin** *Saxicoloides fulicatus leucoptera*  
Common in the dry zone. Highest count: c.25 Yala NP 21.2.
182. **Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata atratus*  
1 Nuwara Eliya 14.2, c.20 Horton Plains 15.2, 2 Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2.
183. **Ashy-headed Laughingthrush** *Garrulax cinereifrons* VU [Endemic]  
c.15 Sinharaja 19.2.
184. **Brown-capped Babbler** *Pellorneum fuscocapillus* [Endemic]  
1 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2, 1 Sinharaja 20.2.
185. **Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus melanurus* [Endemic]  
5 Horton Plains 15.2, 3 Ramboda 16.2, 4 Sinharaja 19.2.
186. **Tawny-bellied Babbler** *Dumetia hyperythra* [RR]  
5 roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 3 Akurugoda, Tissa 22.2.
187. **Dark-fronted Babbler** *Rhopocichla atriceps* [RR]  
3 Uda Wattakele 14.2, 2 Horton Plains 15.2, 1 Ramboda 16.2, 6 Kithulgala 17.2, 12 Sinharaja 19.2.
188. **Orange-billed Babbler** *Turdoides rufescens* NT [Endemic]  
1 roadside Colombo Airport-Kurunegala 11.2, 5 Horton Plains 15.2, c.10 Kithulgala 16.2, c.30 Sinharaja 19.2.
189. **Yellow-billed Babbler** *Turdoides affinis taprobanus* [RR]  
Common. Totally 77 birds recorded during 9 days 12-22.2.

190. **Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*  
1 roadside Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 3 Horton Plains 15.2, 2 roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2,  
3 roadside Tissa-Mirissa 22.2.
191. **Grey-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii*  
2 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2.
192. **Ashy Prinia** *Prinia socialis*  
1 roadside Nuwara Eliya 16.2.
193. **Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata*  
Recorded during 4 days in the dry zone 11-12.2 and 20-22.2.
194. **Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*  
Common. Totally 43 birds recorded 11-21.2.
195. **Sri Lanka Bush Warbler** *Elaphrornis palliseri* NT [Endemic]  
1 Arranga Pool, Horton Plains 15.2, 2 Visitors Centre, Horton Plains 15.2.
196. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
2 Horton Plains 15.2, 1 Lake Gregory, Nuwara Eliya 15.2.
197. **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*  
1 Giritale 12.2. Additionally 5 Green/Greenish Warblers heard.
198. **Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris*  
1 Sinharaja 19.2.
199. **Great Tit** *Parus major mahrattarum*  
1 Kandy 14.2, 4 Glenloth Tea Estate 14.2, 2 Horton Plains 15.2, 3 roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala  
16.2.
200. **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis*  
1 Kandy 14.2, 2 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2, 4 Sinharaja 19.2.
201. **Legge's Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum vincens* NT [Endemic]  
1 Kithulgala 17.2, 5 Kithulgala 18.2, 3 Sinharaja 19.2, 3 Sinharaja 20.2.
202. **Pale-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*  
1 Horton Plains 15.2, 2 Sinharaja 19.2.
203. **Thick-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum agile zeylonicum*  
1 Giritale 13.2, 3 Sinharaja 19.2.
204. **Purple-rumped Sunbird** *Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*  
Common, especially in the dry zone. Totally 61 birds recorded 11-24.2.
205. **Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiatica*  
Rather common in the dry zone. Totally 20 birds recorded 12-13.2 and 20-22.2.
206. **Loten's Sunbird** *Cinnyris lotenius* [RR]  
2 Polonnaruwa 11.2, 1 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Kithulgala 18.2.
207. **Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*  
Rather common. Totally 11 birds recorded 14-22.2.
208. **Sri Lanka White-eye** *Zosterops ceylonensis* [Endemic]  
2 Victoria park, Nuwara Eliya 14.2, c.30 Horton Plains 15.2.
209. **White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata*  
5 roadside Giritale-Kandy 13.2, 1 Ranweli Spice Garden, north of Matale, 14.2, 4 Kithulgala 16.2,  
c.10 Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja 18.2, c.10 roadside Sinharaja-Werawila, Tissa 20.2.

210. **Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*  
2 roadside lake Kurunegala-Dambulla 11.2, 1 Giritale 11-12.2, 4 Glenloth Tea Estate 14.2,  
c.10 roadside Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2, 8 Yala NP 21.2.
211. **Black-throated Munia** *Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti* [RR]  
2 Kithulgala 18.2, c.10 Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja 18.2.
212. **Tricoloured Munia** *Lonchura malacca*  
c.50 Horton Plains-Nuwara Eliya 15.2, 1 roadside Sinharaja-Werawila, Tissa 20.2.
213. **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
Recorded during 7 days.
214. **White-faced Starling** *Sturnia albobfrontata* VU [Endemic]  
2 Sinharaja 19.2, 2 Sinharaja 20.2.
215. **Sri Lanka Myna** *Gracula ptilogenys* NT [Endemic]  
2 Kithulgala 17.2, 2 Kithulgala 18.2, 6 Sinharaja 18.2, 5 Sinharaja 19.2, 9 Sinharaja 20.2.
216. **Southern Hill Myna** *Gracula indica* [RR]  
3 Kandy 13.2, c.10 Uda Wattakele-Kandy 14.2, 1 Nuwara Eliya-Kithulgala 16.2.
217. **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*  
Common. Counts of 5-50 birds during 11 days 11-24.2.
218. **Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*  
Common. Totally 32 birds recorded 11-22.2.
219. **White-bellied Drongo** *Dicrurus caerulescens leucopygialis*  
Common. Totally 41 birds recorded 11-24.2.
220. **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus*  
1 Kithulgala 17.2.
221. **Sri Lanka Crested Drongo** *Dicrurus lophorinus* [Endemic]  
2 Kithulgala 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 5 Sinharaja 19.2, 3 Sinharaja 20.2.
222. **Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*  
1 roadside Colombo Airport-Kurunegala 11.2, 1 roadside Kithulgala-Sinharaja 18.2.
223. **Sri Lanka Blue Magpie** *Urocissa ornata* VU [Endemic]  
1 Kithulgala 18.2, 3 Sinharaja 18.2, 6 Sinharaja 19.2.
224. **House Crow** *Corvus splendens protegatus*  
Common.
225. **Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus*  
Common.

## Mammals

### **Indian Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus*

c.30 Kandy 13.2, c.30 Mirissa 23.2.

### **Toque Macaque** *Macaca sinica* [Endemic]

c.40 Polonnaruwa 11.2, c.50 Sigiriya 12.2, c.50 roadside Giritale-Kandy 13.2, c.40 roadside Kandy-Nuwara Eliya 14.2, c.40 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Hanuman Langur** *Presbytis priam thersites*

10 Giritale 11.2, c.30 Giritale 12.2, c.10 Sigiriya 13.2, c.10 Kithulgala 16.2, 5 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Purple-faced Leaf-monkey** *Presbytis vetulus* [Endemic]

1-5 seen and a few heard daily Sinharaja 18-20.2.

### **Black-backed Jackal** *Canis aureus lankae*

2 Yala NP Entrance Road 21.2.

### **Indian Grey Mongoose** *Herpestes edwardsii*

2 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 roadside Giritale-Kandy 13.2.

### **Ruddy Mongoose** *Herpestes smithii zeylanicus*

1 Sinharaja 18.2, c.10 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Leopard** *Panthera pardus kotiya*

1 Yala NP 21.2. The Leopard was resting in a rock crevice and unfortunately only parts of the animal were visible.

### **Asian (Sri Lankan) Elephant** *Elephas maximus maximus*

c.30 along the border fence of the Uda Walawe NP 20.2, 6 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa*

1 Horton Plains NP 15.2, c.40 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Spotted Deer** *Cervus axis*

c.90 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Sambar** *Cervus unicolor*

15 Horton Plains NP 15.2, 2 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Water Buffalo** *Bubalus bubalis*

10 Debarawewa, Tissa 20.2, >100 Yala NP 21.2, 10 along the road Tissamaharama-Mirissa 22.2.

### **Common Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus palmarum*

Common. 1-10 recorded daily.

### **Layard's Squirrel** *Funambulus layardi* [Endemic]

1 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.

### **Giant Squirrel** *Ratufa macroura*

3 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 Kithulgala 16.2, 1 Sinharaja 18.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.

### **Black-naped Hare** *Lepus nigricollis sinhala*

1 Sigiriya 12.2, 1 Horton Plains NP 15.2, 3 Yala NP 21.2.

### **Blue Whale** *Balaenoptera musculus*

4 on a boat trip from Mirissa 23.2.

### **Spinner Dolphin** *Stenella longirostris*

c. 30 on a boat trip from Mirissa 23.2.

## Reptiles and Amphibians

**Marsh Crocodile** *Crocodylus palustris*  
7 Yala NP 21.2.

**Land Monitor** *Varanus bengalensis*  
4 along the road Uda Walawe-Tissamaharama 20.2, 1 Tissamaharama 22.2.

**Water Monitor** *Varanus salvator*  
1 Sinharaja 19-20.2.

**Sri Lankan Keelback Water Snake** *Xenochrophis asperrimus*  
1 Sinharaja 19.2

**Kangaroo Lizard** *Otocryptis weigmanni*  
1 Sinharaja 19.2.

**Green Garden Lizard** *Calotes calotes*  
1 Kithulgala 17.2, 1 Sinharaja 19.2.



Toque macaque and Giant squirrel.