

**BIRDS, MAMMALS, AMPHIBIANS and REPTILES
seen in Thailand and Sri Lanka Jan 15 – Feb 9 2014**

Stefan Lithner



banteng

Photo © Stefan Lithner

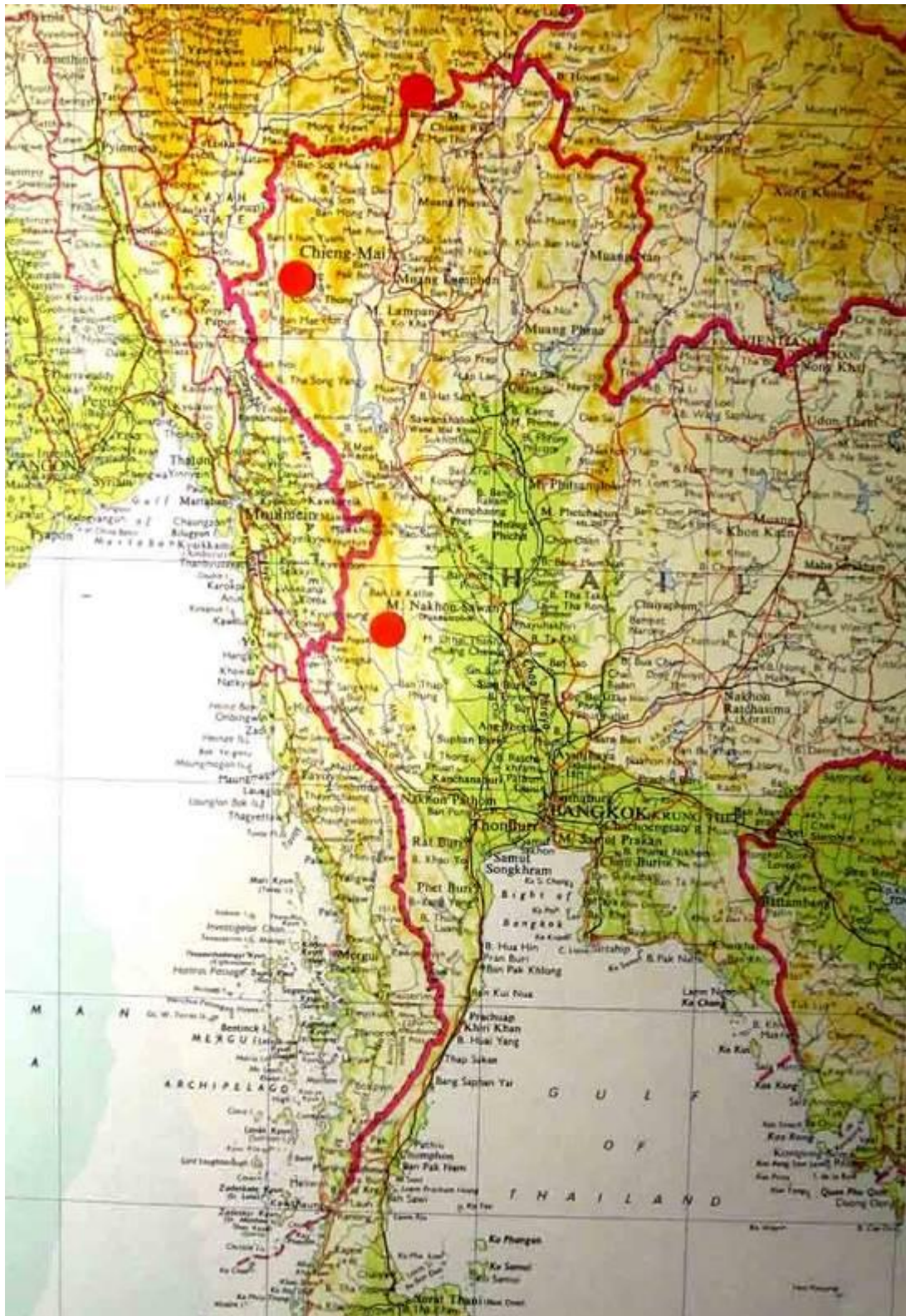
Acknowledgements

The result of this expedition I dedicate to my excellent guides: Mr Tu (Rattapon Kaichid) in Thailand and Mr Saman Weedyabandara in cooperation with Mr Malinda Ekanayake BAURS & Co Travel Ltd, Colombo Sri Lanka. I also acknowledge Mr Sampath de A Goonatilake, Programme Officer IUCN for confirming bats from my photos, and Mr Joakim Johansson, Örebro Sweden for confirming the lizards. To minimize errata I sent my typescript of this report to each of my two guides for comments or corrections on their part of the trip. I received no comments.

MAPS

These maps show approximate geographical position for the sites visited.

Thailand



Sites from north to south: Doi Lang (National Park situated on the Thai side of the border), Doi Inthanon, Huai Kha Kaeng.

Sri Lanka



Sites from north to south, and from west to east: Kalpitiya, Kihtulgala, Sinharaja, Mirissa – Weilgama, Riverston (Knuckles Forest Reserve), Nuwarraelliya - Horton Plains, Kirinda – Yala National Park.

This trip all started by an invitation to see my sister in Thailand, plus a burning ambition to see the banteng (*Bos javanicus*). One bird I long have dreamt to see was Mrs Hume's Pheasant (*Syrmaticus humiae*). Since my latest trip to Thailand and Cambodia in my opinion was very rewarding I once again contacted Tu (Rattapon Kaichid) and Jan (Pitchaya Janhom) in Thailand. As we corresponded I realized there were many more birds and mammals I wanted to try for in northern Thailand. Another mammal I also dreamt to see was the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). According to rumours southern Sri Lanka is probably the best place in the world to see this species. Since I would travel "almost half way across the world" to get to Thailand, and Sri Lanka was not that terribly far away, I started to look at the possibility to include an effort to see the blue whale in Sri Lanka. While investigating the possibilities to do this, again I learnt there was a lot to see in Sri Lanka. Despite the fact that I had been there birdwatching in 1985 there were 15 species of birds I very much wanted to see. Not all of these are endemics.

This trip was not carried out to see as many species of birds as possible. Therefore I have neither searched for, nor tried to identify each little bird we came across and also previously saw in south east Asia. Noteworthy findings are presented in my itinerary. A checklist for birds is presented without further comments.

ITINERARY

Jan 15

In the morning of Jan 15 I landed in Bangkok and met with Tu. We started by driving to a restaurant by River Chao Phraya. Here we opened the birding by picking up blue-tailed bee-eater and pied kingfisher and a few more common birds.

We then continued to our resort for the evening near village Shupatal. Before supper we saw a few birds like asian hoopoe, asian barred owl brown hawk-owl, spot-throated babbler, blue whistling-thrush, red-rumped swallow, Germain's swiftlet and lineated barbet. A northern boobok (*Ninox japonica*) was also calling.

During our planning of the trip Tu and I had discussed the possibilities to set traps for smaller animals. I did not need to bring mine since Tu had a few. Before dark, we set four traps in the edge of the forest, next to a banana-plantation.

Jan 16

About half an hour before breakfast I took a stroll along an asphalted road next to some paddocks, hoping to find some mammals. I caught a pair of eyes near the ground, which seemed to belong to a small indian mongoose (*Herpestes auropunctatus*), which according to Tu is common here. Sadly I did not see quite enough to assess the species.



red spiny maxomys

Photo © Stefan Lithner



black-headed woodpecker

Photo © Stefan Lithner

At a quarter past five Tu and I met and walked over to check and pick up the traps. One of the traps contained an animal. We walked back to our resort where we had enough light to study the animal carefully. We opened the trap and let out a large handsome long tailed rodent. A few minutes of studies revealed that this was a red spiny maxomys (*Maxomys surifer*). The animal was photo-documented then carried back to where it was caught, and released. After breakfast we spent about half an hour along the road passing our resort and added a few species to yesterdays list: large-tailed nightjar, collared scops owl and a grey-bellied squirrel. Shortly before 08:00 we arrived at the main entrance to Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. The elephant abundance in the park is not small, but lacks tuskers (males with tusks). All tuskers have been eliminated by poaching. Genes to develop tusks have this way been reduced over time, and caused a tusk-lacking population of elephants. Elephants have killed about 60 people annually in the country during later years. Due to a herd of elephants just rummaging about along the road from park entrance to visitors centre we were not allowed to enter at once. After a second check-up by the rangers we were allowed to enter. We did not find any elephants. The Sanctuary allows visitors to walk only on a few areas and a few roads within the sanctuary. The so called visitors centre hosts a small group of Eld's deer (*Rucervus eldii*) and hog deer (*Axis porcinus*).



Eld's deer

Photo © Stefan Lithner



hog deer

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Eld's deer was not uncommon in Thailand up to the early 1960-es, when it was exterminated due to excessive hunting. The last individuals were found further south in the country. When the project to re-introduce the species in Thailand started, studies were carried out. These showed that the habitat where the deer thrives in Myanmar and Cambodia is a lot more similar to the habitat in HKK than the area where it was extinguished from. For this reason the project decided to try to re-introduce the deer here in HKK. The individuals however were obtained from captivity and thus not familiar with the ways to evade attacks from tigers and leopards. Ten animals were released in HKK. Due to casualties with tigers and leopards most of the animals were eliminated. Therefore another ten animals were released during a number of years. Since only individuals staying close to the visitors centre survived, this is where you can see them today.

We walked along one of the forest roads from the visitors centre into lovely primary forest. Here we found red junglefowl, red-bellied parakeet, blue pitta (Tu), violet cuckoo, orange-breasted trogon, red-billed blue magpie, black-headed bulbul, sooty-headed bulbul, bamboo woodpecker, black-headed woodpecker, common flameback, lineated barbet, green imperial pigeon, asian barred owlet, chinese blue flycatcher, Hainan blue-flycatcher, siberian blue robin, white-rumped shama, spot-throated babbler, rufous-fronted babbler, puff-throated

babbler, asian black-hooded oriole, greater racket-tailed drongo. Among smaller mammals we saw Pallas's squirrel, indochinese ground squirrel and northern tree-shrew while white-handed gibbons were calling. A common butterfly lizard was also seen here.

After lunch it was too hot to do any serious search for birds and mammals. We spent a while along the river, where we picked up some more junglefowls, lesser necklaced laughing-thrush, little green bee-eater and blue-bearded bee-eater.



red-billed blue magpie

Photo © Stefan Lithner



lesser necklaced laughingthrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Around three o'clock we started to move towards banteng (*Bos javanicus*). On our way we found some sambar.

We took off on foot from the main road through the park. About ten minutes later we reached a guard, who's assignment was to see that the bantengs were not disturbed here. Here is a population of about 400 animals in smaller groups. Our chances to see them were best from either one of two watchtowers. Since bantengs are very cautious we had to move like hunters, i. e. communicating sparsely and in a low voice, discretely clothed in clothes that don't rustle or make other kinds of noise while walking. When we were about two hundred meters from the watchtower Tu recommended just whispering if any communication was needed. We reached the concrete- or cement base where a watchtower in metal, with metal stairs was placed. Tu had been here many times before and seen the bantengs about half of the times, so he knew where to look for them. He soon spotted one animal. To move as quiet as possible we took off our shoes and climbed the stairs. From the watch platform we saw 13 bantengs, one big bull and 12 females in different ages. We also spotted a male green peacock and indian roller here.



banteng

Photo © Stefan Lithner



banteng

Photo © Stefan Lithner

A little while before dark I sat down by the edge of the river, hoping to see otters. I did not, but another two bantengs came out to drink. One more Pallas's squirrel was also here.

Back at the resort in Shupatal we made another night watch along the road on foot. This time we spotted a bengal slow loris.

Jan 17

Since we got our target species the day before and we had some interesting caves to search for bats about half way to Doi Inthanon National Park, we started our drive after breakfast. We reached Kao Noa after about 3 hours. Here a Buddhist temple hosted over thousand long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*). They were all over. Since they also tried to steal food from people and tried to break into the cars, we were offered to park behind a guarded net. In the entrance of the cave a monk had settled, probably to meditate in solitude. We entered the cave and rather immediately found some roosting black-bearded tomb-bats (*Taphozous melanopogon*) and long-winged tomb-bats (*Taphozous longimanus*). Tu had been here many times before, so he knew what to expect. After a while we found four medium-size bats. We recorded them with ultra-sound bat-detectors and immediately recognized the ringing sound of horseshoe bats. We managed to photograph them. Recording plus photos both helped us to determine these bats. They were acuminate horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus acuminata*). We then crawled into smaller galleries. After a little while of crawling the little bat Tu wanted to show me came flying and passed us about one decimetre from us. It then flew back and forth and perched. This was a Horsfield's myotis (*Myotis horsfieldii*). Here we also found a lesser false vampire bat (*Megaderma spasma*).

Tu had learned that the temperature in Doi Inthanon National Park at the time was quite a bit colder than usually for this time of year. We therefore made a quick stop in Chiang Mai and bought one hi-tec jumper each.

We reached the resort outside Doi Inthanon National Park after dark. We had dinner. Then we searched for nocturnal birds and animals, but were not particularly successful.



spotting goral

Photo © Stefan Lithner



chestnut thrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Jan 18

The morning was foggy and windy and the temperature was five degrees. The park holds a good number of nice and exciting birds and mammals. The species for the morning was chinese goral (*Naemorhedus caudatus*). The park holds a small population of about 30 animals. Sadly this population is disconnected from populations outside the park. People working with the goral therefore fear that inbreeding eventually will terminate the population here. The park also holds a small group of chinese serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsi*). Best chance to see these animals is to walk a loop starting at an office about 75 meters from a major parking area near the summit. The easiest way to reach the lookouts is to walk counter-clockwise to Pha -Ngam Noi Rock Outcrop. From here you can view the grassy slopes around the rock if the weather is good. The walk from the office is about one kilometre from

about 2200 meters asl to about 2400 meters asl. It took me about 30 minutes the first day but only about 20 minutes the third day. The animals come out in the open only when it is sunny in the morning. They like to come out and enjoy the warmth of the sunrays. This, I was told takes place between about 08:30 and 10:30, if it takes place at all.

The morning of Jan 18 was foggy or cloudy and rather windy. The ranger forecasted that the animals would not come out this morning, but one can never know. The weather changes very quickly in these valleys. Clouds or rain can suddenly come in and cover the whole valley, but can just as easy open up and turn sunny and warm. Therefore we walked up to the lookout this morning. We found Mrs Gould's sunbird, hill prinia, blue rock-thrush, yellow-streaked warbler, silver-eared laughingthrush, chestnut thrush yellow-browed warbler. We also heard rufous-throated partridge and mountain bamboo partridge. We saw no larger mammals this morning. On the walk back we picked up a male snowy-browed flycatcher. At the base of the trail there is a coffee service with feeders outside, one probably with rice and another with fruits. While we had a cup of coffee the feeder was visited by silver-eared laughingthrush, dark-backed sibia (*Heterophasia melanoleuca*), chestnut-tailed minla, rufous-winged fulvetta, japanese white-eye, chestnut-flanked white-eye, ashy-throated warbler, green-tailed sunbird, Mrs Gould's sunbird, but also Pallas's squirrel, red-cheeked squirrel (*Dremomys rufigensis*) and northern tree-shrew.

After coffee we took a stroll on Ang Ka Nature Trail, more or less opposite the office. Here we got lovely views of ashy-throated warbler, green-tailed sunbird, and a brief view of a white-browed shortwing.

We then drove to a small pond behind the headquarters and camp-site. This pond is well known for hosting a pair of black-tailed crake (*Porzana bicolor*). The birds come out into the open in the afternoon most sunny days. We stayed there between about quarter past four and six o'clock, but did not see any black-tailed crake. We saw a mountain bulbul and a grey-backed shrike here.

After dinner we made another effort for nocturnal life. We found two northern booboks (*Ninox japonica*) and two spotted owlets.



chestnut-tailed minla

Photo © Stefan Lithner



silver-eared laughingthrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Jan 19

I started the day spotlighting between 05:00 and about 06:00, and I picked up a Phayer's flying squirrel, which landed on the roof of our resort. The sky was pitch-dark but the roof was illuminated.

After breakfast we stopped at Ban Tong Fai, the second gate and looked at large niltava, small niltava, rufous-bellied niltava, burmese grey-cheeked fulvetta (*Akcippe fratercula*) and pale-legged leafwarbler.

At about 08:30 we arrived at the office for the loop near the summit. The weather was not good here today either, but we walked up to Pha – Ngam Noi Rock Outcrop. The weather was

not good there either. The only new birds we picked up were great barbet and rusty-cheeked scimitar-babbler. At about 11:30 we returned to the office at base of the loop.

We had some coffee and a short brake. Then we took another stroll on Ang Ka Nature Trail. Tu had regular experiences of dark-sided thrush and once a yellow-bellied weasel (*Mustela kahtiah*) along this trail. We walked the little loop twice in search for the thrush. Tu spotted it on the forest floor during our second walk, gently sneaking while foraging. Its way of moving reminded me of the way a grasshoppers warbler (*Locustella naevia*) moves in thickets. We also got some nice views of white-browed shortwing, both male and female.



dark-sided thrush Thailand

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We then returned to the pond behind the headquarters and campsite to look for the black-tailed crake. We waited between 16:00 and 18:00 but found no crake.

Jan 20

This morning the sky was clear and the temperature lower than previous mornings. We started by going to the bridge across the river at the village of Kaeng An. We waited for a while. At about 07:30 the black-backed forktail arrived. While waiting for the forktail a small indian mongoose (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) paid a visit to one of the little sand banks at the riverside. A grey wagtail was also here.

At 08:30 we once again went to the office where the loop near the summit starts. This time one of the rangers, Mr Son, who also monitors the gorals had offered to try to help us spotting the animals, joined us. He guided us to a lookout maybe hundred meters down the steep. From there we soon spotted the first goral, lazily enjoying the early sunrays. During the following hours we spotted seven chinese goral: Two of them were a female with young. Meanwhile we searched for the serov, which often enjoy the morning sunrays together with the gorals, but this morning we did not find them.



chinese goral

Photo © Stefan Lithner



chinese goral

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Among the birds we observed were silver-eared laughingthrush, chestnut thrush, spangled dronog and white-tailed warbler.

After lunch we continued to the village Fang, near the Doi Lang National Park. Here we had our best chance to see Mrs Hunes phesant. They often come out on the asphalt road about the time of sunrise and a while thereafter, to enjoy the early sunrays. The success depends largely on the weather, but to some extent also on the traffic on the road. Tu estimated our chances to see the bird to be around 50%.

Jan 21

This morning the fog laid heavy over Doi Lang. We had problems seeing anything. An indochinese ground squirrel crossed the road. Tu stopped at a stake out for ultramarine flycatcher, which we found after a little while. Meanwhile a chestnut-bellied rock-thrush had landed about 15 meters away from us. Tu heard a giant nuthatch calling, which I did not manage to pick up. After a while we continued along the road. The siberian bluetail was abundant, but we also picked up rufous-gorgeted flycatcher, siberian rubythroat and long-tailed shrike here.



scarlet-faced liocicla

Photo © Stefan Lithner



grey-winged blackbird

Photo © Stefan Lithner

At the summit there was a gate and two – three rather plain houses. Here people were feeding birds, thus giving extraordinary opportunities to see these wonderful birds well, and also take photographs. Some of these species were emerald dove, scarlet-faced liocicla (*Liocicla*

ripponi), grey-winged blackbird, chestnut thrush, black-backed sibia and siberian bluetail. A walk past the gate gave ashy bulbul, rufous-throated partridge and mountain bamboo partridge.

Then we drove a little ways to an open area, maybe two three kilometres to search for Jerdon's bush-chat. We found some greater coucal, siberian bush-chat, olive-backed pipit and a Radde's warbler (Tu) and himalayan swiftlet, but no Jerdon's bush-chat.

Another few kilometres to a bridge over a small gully gave us orange-bellied leafbird, asian house-martin, himalayan swiftlet, fork-tailed swift, blue-throated barbet, lesser yellow-naped woodpecker (Tu), while mountain bamboo-partridge was calling. A Pallas's squirrel and a himalayan striped squirrel were also here.

On our way back towards Fang we stopped at some open habitat on our one side and found black-throated sunbird, Mrs Gould's sunbird, fiery-tailed sunbird and spangled drongo. On the other side of the road the forest was dense. In some of the little openings birders had fed birds to facilitate photographing. In one of these openings a golden bush robin, brown-breasted bulbul and mountain bulbul occurred. I was particularly pleased to see the bush robin so well since my only previous observation was a bird in dense undergrowth.



golden bush robin

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Leaving the higher parts we stopped at some remaining primary clutches of trees. Here we found a stripe-breasted woodpecker, a white-browed babbler, spectacled barwing and blue-winged minla (*Minla cyanouroptera wingatei*) (Tu).

After dinner we took a ten minutes drive to the Doi Lang headquarters and campsite, where Tu knew there were Temminck's flying squirrels (*Petaurista setosus*). It took us about ten minutes of walking in the park until Tu heard it calling. It sounded like a cricket. After a while we also saw this small flying squirrel, climbing as well as gliding.

Jan 22

The morning was clear. We drove up to the first gate. Since we wanted to go up in optimal time we waited a while before we started our drive for the pheasants. We found a group of three mountain bamboo partridges peacefully foraging on the road. Two olive-backed pipits kept them company, which gave us an excellent opportunity to revise this species. We made several stops along the road, where we saw yellow-fronted barbet, collared laughingthrush, rufous-bellied rockthrush, white-tailed robin, Tickell's flycatcher, rufous-bellied niltava, pale blue flycatcher, chestnut-vented nuthatch, velvet-fronted nuthatch and yellow-browed tit, while large scimitar-babbler, grey treepie and giant huthatch were calling. Tu got a quick sighting of the nuthatch.



mountain bamboo partridge

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Tickell's blue flycatcher

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We made another effort to find the pheasants, but the estimated 50% chance was not in my favour this time.

After lunch we left for Chiang Mai. At about two hours before take off from Chiang Mai Airport for Suwanaboumi International Airport outside Bangkok, I said farewell to Tu. At Suwanaboumi International Airport I transferred to Srilankan Airlines and took off for Colombo. At about 23 hrs my Sri Lankan guide Mr Saman Weediabandara appointed by BAUR's Travel Ltd met me at the airport. He had also hired a driver Mr Sampeh. They drove me to a nearby hotel.

Jan 23

We first went to Agawimandawa Ramsah where we started our warming up with some more common birds, like indian roller, blue-tailed bee-eater, red-wattled lapwing, black-headed ibis, about ten spot-billed pelican, asian open-billed stork, lesser whistling-duck, two pygmy cottontails, brahmyn kite, brown-headed barbet, common sandpiper, wood sandpiper and grey plover. But we also picked up an asian golden plover, and paddyfield pipit here. We saw the first toque macaque and a heard of domestic water buffalo for the trip.

After lunch we started by trying to find a new head-lamp for me, since my old one broke during my last day in Thailand. It proved not to be easy, but persistent efforts eventually paid off. Then we took off for Kalpitiya. Along the road we saw a few birds like shikra and white-bellied sea-eagle, and also two or three indian grey mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsii*). We arrived at Dolphin Beach Hotel about lunchtime. The bungalows were situated only about 100 meters from the waterfront. I asked whether you could see dolphins or whales from the shore, but staff members said it was very uncommon. On the other hand it was good to watch gulls and terns passing. About 1½ hours before sunset many gull-billed terns, some caspian terns, great crested terns, lesser crested terns, one common/roseate tern, at least one little tern and

two Saunder's terns among about 15 small terns. Also two Heuglin's gull and a brown-headed gull passed.

Before dusk we went to some mangrove pans to look for birds and serpents. Saman caught a glimpse of one serpent which rather quickly disappeared in a hole in the ground. I missed it. At dusk we started a spotlighting for crepuscular and nocturnal animals. Around Norochhole Village we saw about 15 indian flying fox. We also stopped at private homes where Saman knows the owners. At the first house the lady of the house fed bats with bananas. As the night was setting we saw at least two species of bats, but none of them wanted to perch for foraging. At the second house the owners had just put some sprigs in the openings where the bats used to fly in and out of the house, where they obviously used to roost. We could see two different kinds of bats. Both were rather reddish brown above and slightly paler and more orange or yellow pale below. One was a rather big bat and the smaller one was about the size of *Eptesicus nilssoni* which I know from Sweden, or maybe slightly bigger. We didn't see any of these at roost. We stood and watched the opening for a while. The larger bats were much more numerous around this opening than the smaller ones. We don't know what species these bats were. Combining size, shape, colour, habitat and behaviour makes us guess they were greater and lesser house bats. When we left the site a collared scops owl was calling.

Jan 24

At 07:00 we could buy permission from Wildlife Authorities, to enter the dugong grazing areas. Ten minutes later we took off in a fishing-boat from the beach at the hotel. Saman had contacted the most knowledgeable man in the area for dugongs (*Dugong dugon*). We first went about one and a half to two hours off the beach crossing the bay and then headed towards the continental shelf. Here we saw our first spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*). About five minutes later we saw lots of dolphins. The vast majority were Indo-Pacific bottle-nosed dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*). About fifteen minutes later we were surrounded by dolphins. The sea was boiling with dolphins. This heard is well known among the scientists here. Efforts to estimate their numbers say here are between 4000 and 10000 individuals. The proportion between bottle-nosed and spinners is estimated to around 80% bottle-nosed and 20% spinners. In addition there sometimes are pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*) in this heard. One photo from this trip shows two animals that may be two juvenile individuals of this species, but hitherto I have not found anyone who is prepared to say.



indochinese bottlenosed dolphin

Photo © Stefan Lithner



spinner dolphin

Photo © Stefan Lithner

There are also between eight and fifteen Indo-Pacific hump-backed dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) in the bay. According to Saman and the local dugong-expert they sometimes

appear in these huge gatherings. When the dugong was more common than today they also used to feed together with the dolphins in shallow waters closer to the coast. The depth where this huge herd of dolphins was feeding was estimated to be about 60 meters. I learned that dugongs rest in deep waters. Our local expert had seen dugongs here among the dolphins. After my inquiries we turned to shallower water near the coast. When we reached the area where the dugongs used to graze we turned the motor off and drifted over the former grazing areas for dugong. Saman and the local dugong-expert told me that something happened to the dugongs during or after the tsunami Dec 26 2004. Before then there was a steady population holding 50 to 80 animals. The water was clear and the sea-grass on which the dugongs were grazing covered all of the bottom. Right after the tsunami the population had dropped dramatically. Locals believe it was reduced by about 50%. It then steadily continued to drop. The water today was not clear despite a moderate turbulence in the water. Yet it was easy to see that the sea-grass had withdrawn considerably. Today it covers only about 50% of the former grazing-areas for dugongs. The remaining about 50% was naked sand. Our local dugong-expert had seen only one dugong in 2014. Neither Saman nor our local expert or scientists knows what has happened. The general belief is that the tsunami stirred up poisonous substances from the bottom somewhere, and this poison has drifted into these areas. Our local expert also admitted that during later years local fishermen have speared sleeping/resting dugongs because their meat is highly prized on the black “bush-meat-market”.

During this marine mammals trip we saw the same terns as I did the evening before, with one addition, a sandwich tern.

In the afternoon Saman and I went to Tateville Church Area. We found long-billed sunbird scarlet-rumped sunbird, Alexander parakeet, blue-tailed bee-eater and palm swift.. While searching for bats Saman found a house rat (*Rattus rattus rattus*).



indian flying fox Photo © Stefan Lithner



indian palm squirrel Photo © Stefan Lithner

In this area there is a sacred building (church or Buddhist temple, probably the prior). On the platform of this building there is a circular opening, measuring maybe 1½ meter in diameter, and no stairs or latter to get down. We looked down and saw many bats flying back and forth. There were at least two species. One was a bit larger, darker and more long-winged than the other. It was almost black above, while the smaller species was dark brown. The first described one looked like long-winged tomb bat (*Taphozous longimanus*). This species often

occurs together with black-bearded tomb bat (*Taphozous melanopogon*) on roosting-sites. The size and colour of the latter does not exclude this alternative. Sadly they were not identified. At sunset we returned to Norochhole Village and surroundings. At dusk a large, above brownish, below orange-brown with paler throat, insectivorous bat showed up hunting around street-lights, houses and solitary trees. Studying body-size, wing-proportions, ear-size, shape of nose, colours and habitat does not leave many alternatives. I can not find any other than greater asian house bat (*Scotophilus heathi*).

Jan 25

In the morning before breakfast I walked along the beach about one kilometre north to a spit where I saw many terns. Over 50 of them were gull-billed terns. All of the previous mentioned except the probable common tern were here. Rather promptly my eyes caught a dark grey *Sterna*- tern, with a striking upper part. It was a white-cheeked tern (*Sterna repressa*) adult winter plumage, patrolling along the beach.

Of course I have compared my tern with photos. On the internet I was not satisfied with the photos I found. A perfect match is available in Larsson: Birds of the World version II images no 1 and 9. A black tern was also present at the spit this morning. After departure from the Beach Hotel we did some birding near the Kalpitiya Wildlife office. Here we saw lesser yellow-naped woodpecker, white naped woodpecker (Saman), crimson-backed woodpecker, a few ashy woodswallows, indian roller and my first crimson rose (*Pachliopta hector*), a large handsome butterfly.

Leaving Kalpitiya we made a short stop at a dam where we saw two cotton pygmy goose, pheasant-tailed jacana, white-breasted waterhen, little grebe, common gallinule, and red-wattled lapwing. A bird that puzzles us a little bit was a juvenile watercock, that looked like it was swimming while foraging.

We also made a stop at Tabbore Tank. Here we found seven spot-billed pelicans and a large number of little cormorant and indian shag. I made an effort to estimate the size of the flock, and counted about 1070. About 90% were indian cormorants.

Along the road to Sigiriya we saw a black eagle among other birds. We arrived to Hotel Sigiriya at lunchtime. In the afternoon we went to the Pidurangala Temples to look for bats. We looked in the shallow caves and recesses and we looked behind the Buddha. We only saw single bats as they took off. While moving between the cave-openings and old buildings Saman found a rocky day gecko (*Cnemaspis scalpensis*). A little while later we found a Wiegmann's kangaroo lizard (*Otocryptis wiegmanni*).



Wiedmann's kangaroo lizard

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Jerdon's nightjar

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We eventually found an old brick-hose where some bats were roosting. Here we identified a few Cantor's roundleaf bat (*Hipposiderus galeritus*). Another species was also here, which we did not see well enough. Outside the house there was a Sri Lanka/grizzled giant squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*).

We then moved to a tank to look for water-birds and rodents. We saw white-bellied sea-eagle, grey-headed sea-eagle, lesser whistling duck, common kingfisher and a few more common waterbirds, but no rodents.

About 15 minutes after sunset at Hotel Sigiriya a Jerdon's nightjar started displaying. After dinner Saman and I went mammal-spotting in the hotel garden. I saw an indian field mouse and Saman saw an asian house shrew.

Between 20:10 and 22:20 we took a night-drive to the mort and back. Here we found some feral cats, three jungle cats one rusty-spotted cat and an indian gerbil. While studying the gerbil a shrew crossed the road in front of the car, too close to be seen from the back seat. Before leaving Sweden I carried the aspiration to see and hopefully also identify at least one species of shrews in the Sri Lankan lowlands. The shrew passing in front of the car I could not identify.

Jan 26

About an hour before dawn I went out in the hotel-garden with the ambition to record some bats with my Petterson 240X ultrasound bat detector and then transfer them to my Roland R09-HR-recorder.



lesser false vampire bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner



land monitor

Photo © Stefan Lithner

I also spotlighted around the hotel garden. I found one Blainford's rat. I also heard brown fish-owl and indian nightjar. After sunrise we also saw grey langurs.

After breakfast we started birding in Sigiriya. We saw crested serpent-eagle, changeable hawk-eagle, grey-headed fish-eagle, yellow-fronted barbet, crimson-faced barbet, coppersmith barbet, chestnut-winged cuckoo, black-headed cuckooshrike, bar-winged flycatcher-shrike, brown shrike, Jerdon's leafbird, brown-breasted flycatcher, plain prinia, crested tree-swallow, pale-billed flowerpecker, Sri Lankan swallow, asian paradise flycatcher, common iora, common tailorbird, white-rumped shama, indian blue robin and white-browed bulbul. Saman also pointed out common jesabel (*Delias eucharis*), a butterfly to me.

When the temperature started to drop in the afternoon Saman took me to some wood and palm-leave houses in the forest, where he had seen smaller bats before. We did not find any bats, but found a Brook's house gecko (*Hemidactylus brookii*) resting on a vine. An indian pitta was calling and eventually located on a branch at about eye-level.

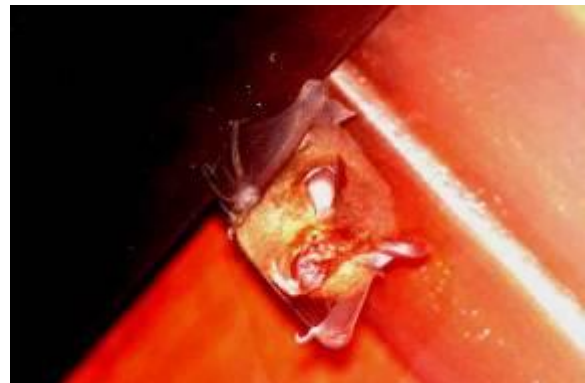
We then drove to Sam Popomi Arborethrum, mainly to get permission to come back in the evening to look for loris. Here a PhD student showed us two greater false vampire bats (*Megaderma lyra*) in one of the houses, while a land monitor (*Varanus bengal*) was waddling about near the office.

Saman had spread the word that I wished to look at bats. When we returned to Hotel Sigiriya we were informed that there were bats hanging from the roof of the little chapel in the hotels garden. We were invited and found at least three species of bats: rufous horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus rouxii*), Schneider's roundleaf bat (*Hipposideros speoris*) and little woolly horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus beddomei*). After we had photographed and recorded them, the staff wanted to show me some really small bats. On either side of the main entrance to the hotel there are lamps for outdoor lightening. The man took a broomstick and pushed the lightening aside. Then some tiny bats became visible. Before I had time to do anything, one of the bats fell out and thudded down on the stone floor. It did not look good for the bat in the beginning, but it seemed to recover. I put my camera-lid beside the bat and took a few photos. This way I could get a fair estimation of the length of the wing. I calculated the length of the forearm to be about 29 mm. This was obviously the least pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus tenuis*). During lunch new tips about bats had come in. Saman told me about it. We agreed to go there. It was some caves next to Seralelle Waterfall. We took the gravel road, Ralacichinga Boukuna Road. On our way there a stripe-necked Mongoose (*Herpestes vitticollis*) appeared on the road, and trotted in front of us for a little while. The stripe on the side of neck is difficult to see. Saman pointed out the fact that this is a very long-legged mongoose.



Schneider's roundleaf bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner



rufous horseshoe bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Once you have seen it this is probably the easiest way to pick up this species.

We arrived at the bridge over the stream where the waterfall is situated. From there you take stairs about 150 meters down to the waterfall. There were caves. Here we found droppings from bats and the odour from the excrements told us that the roosting-site had been used not long ago, but we did not find any roosting bats during our visit. On our walk back to the road Saman showed me a Knuckles bent-toed lizard (*Cyrtodactylus srilankensis*). It was squeezed so far into a crack in the mountain, that either he or the local guide must have known it was dwelling there.

Shortly after that we walked from the Archaeological Reservation Land-office about 20 minutes up to some caves. During our walk Saman saw a Blainford's rat, which I missed. Inside one of the caves we found about 13 – 15 horseshoe bats, which were making ecolocation-sounds between 74 and 76 kHz. However darkness was falling. Saman and the local guide expressed a desire to get down to the office before the elephants started to come out for the night and move around. We therefore cut our visit a little bit short.

Before it turned completely dark we stopped at Kaludiyabakoura Tank, where we saw some more waterbirds and also our first swamp crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*). Then it was time for us to go to Sam Popomi Arborethrum for our night walk with the PhD-student. A few kilometres before we reached the arborethrum a trinked snake (*Elaphe helena*) crossed the road. We stopped and studied it. At the arborethrum we equipped ourselves with headlamps emitting red light in order to minimize the disturbance. It took only about 10 or 15 minutes before we spotted the first grey slender lori (*Loris lydekkerianus*). During the next two hours we wandered along the numerous tracks and saw altogether three grey slender lorises, several white-spotted chevrotains (*Mosciola meminna*), keelback (*Xenochrophis piscator*) and an indian pitta at roost. A brown wood owl was calling close to us.

Jan 27

After breakfast we started our drive to Riverston, the Knuckles Forest Reserve. On our way we stopped at Bakamuna. Here we saw our first asian open-billed stork, a little group of Sri Lanka green pigeon (*Treron pompadora*). Two indian grey mongoose were also seen here. By the Knuckles Ridge foothills Saman picked up a Marshall's iora. We also saw another black eagle here.

While climbing the Knuckles Ridge we entered dense fog or possibly clouds. We reached Sir John's Bungalow at about lunchtime, and were welcomed with a pot of lovely Sri Lankan Broken Orange Pekoe tea. The bungalow was an old tea-farm in English colonial style, at a hillside which probably would have offered a lovely view, if we had seen it. After our lunch-break we walked on the drive up to the main road, maybe 150 meters. In a few minutes we picked up Sri Lanka myna, Sri Lanka mountain white-eye, yellow-eared bulbul, yellow-fronted barbet, forest wagtail and hill swallow.



horns evenly curved

Photo © Stefan Lithner



horns curved in one plane,
concave above hump between eyes

Photo © Stefan Lithner



horns starting straight

Photo © Stefan Lithner



horns evenly curved but deviating backwards
hump not so clear, concavity doubtful

Photo © Stefan Lithner

While driving up to Sir John's, earlier during the day we saw some water buffaloes. Whether the wild buffalo is native to Sri Lanka is frequently discussed. Ellerman and Morrison-Scott (1951), Gee (1964), and Maia (1970) thought that "the Sri Lankan buffaloes were descended from introduced domestic stock." Gurung & Singh (1996) states that wild buffalo has been introduced, while Corbet and Hill (1992) included Sri Lanka within the historical range of wild buffalo.

We immediately started the discussion about how to assess wild water buffaloes (*Bubalus arnee*) from domestic water buffaloes (*Bubalus bubalis*) and hybrids. The discussion later continued in Yala National Park. Using the descriptions in Gurung & Singh (1996) and photos of buffaloes from wild populations (wildcattleconservation.org, iuncredlist.org, and Swedish version Fauna: Sydasiens 2 (1974) originally by Rodriguez de la Fuente) I later decided I should be satisfied if the buffalo showed a convex hump between the eyes and a concave outline from this hump up to the beginning of the crown, best seen in profile. The horns should be evenly curved from where it left the head onto the tip. Thus not starting with a straight five to 20 centimetres before it started to curve. I wanted the horns to be curved in the same plane when seen in profile, thus neither starting by deviating backwards, and particularly not deviating unevenly. The animals should be dark brownish black, thus not with any pale or medium brown parts. Of course I am aware that these criteria do not assess the wild water buffalo with 100% reliability. In other words: I am not saying this is the definition of wild water buffalo. I am saying these are the criteria I used to pick out what I believe could be wild water buffaloes based on external features. Using these criteria I concluded that there was a continuous variation from what I mean were buffaloes showing 100% external wild water buffalo criteria, to buffaloes showing 100% domestic water buffalo criteria. This was more obvious in Yala National Park than it was here in Riverston. In Riverston we saw only a few buffaloes (< 10) but maybe 50% matched my criteria for the wild species.

The afternoon of Jan 27 remained foggy. I spent a few hours enjoying Sri Lankan Broken Orange Pekoe fresh from the bush.

After dinner we went for a night-drive between 20:10 and 22:20. It is not uncommon that nocturnal animals are even less careful in fog or rain than they are in clear weather. We found about ten water buffalo, a golden palm civet (*Paradoxurus zeylanicus*) standing at the side of



water buffalo

Photo © Stefan Lithner

the road, a ring-tailed civet (*Vervicula indica*) crossing the road, an Ohiya rat crossing the road at rather close range, indian hares, two Indian bush-rats running back and forth on the road, great bandicoot rat at least on three occasions, and an indian pitta at roost.

Jan 28

Before our morning drive starting at 04:30 I took a walk from the bungalow to the main road. There I saw a small mammal I did not manage to recognize at the time.

Between 04:30 and 06:30 we drove on the roads looking for mammals. Again we found water buffalos, some looking wild, some doubtful and some domestic buffaloes, two black-necked hares, two greater bandicoot rats, a spotted chevrotain and another indian pitta roosting.

We had a quick breakfast and then drove to Wildlife Office turnoff. In the rather dense fog several birds were quite unshy. A Sri Lanka junglefowl came walking on the asphalt road. A Sri Lanka spurfowl also took a walk on the asphalt road. A Sri Lanka arrenga, or rather Sri Lanka whistling-thrush came leaping on the asphalt road up to about ten meters from us. Dull-blue flycatchers, yellow-eared bulbuls and a grey-headed canary flycatcher came out. Sri Lanka spot-winged thrush were singing and greater coucals were calling. Here we also heard two species of: *Pseudopilatus* frogs calling. One was numerous and the other we heard only once. Saman recognized their calls but could not remember their names at the moment.

On our drive back to Sir John's we saw a crested goshawk, and at the lodge several of the birds mentioned from the morning were singing. Purple-faced langurs of the mountain subspecies (*Trachypitecus vetulus monticola*) were calling.

On our next loop we met with two magnificent wild boar next to the road.



wild boar

Photo © Stefan Lithner

In the evening again we went for a night-drive. The fog was even denser than in the morning, and after about one hour it also started to rain. During almost two hours of driving we saw only a greater bandicoot rat and a crab.

Jan 29

After midnight I woke up two – three times just to find out it was raining. About 04:30 I woke up again. This time it was not raining, so I put my clothes on and walked the drive out to the main road and a little ways on the main road, but found nothing. It started to rain again why I walked back to the lodge. A little while before dawn it stopped raining again. I went out again. Once again I saw one more of this little mouse taking off from the road leaping into the ditch. I had the haunch it was th Mayor's mouse, but could not identify the animal at the time. Maybe 15 or 20 minutes later I caught a view of an untidy looking little animal moving among weeds in the ditch. It was unmistakably a Sri Lankan Shrew (*Suncus montanus*). This proved to be a good experience when it came to identify the previous little animal. Together with another observation of the same species of mouse and one more indian field mouse, plus some photos of Mayor's mouse I realized the two little quickly moving mice were Mayor's mouse (*Mus mayori*).

At daybreak we found the same birds here that we did the previous morning.

We then took off for the Horton Plains. I hade expressed a desire to get two dusks there. Since we moved along rather well we got some time to pay a short visit to Glenloth Tea Factory, but did not have enough time to take the detour down to Spice Garden No One, to look for Hasselt's myotis. Saman knew the place but it was too far off our course.



tea-plucking

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Before reaching the tea factory I told Saman what I knew about Golden Tea and Silver Tea. I also told him I had been to a tea factory near Nuwarraelliya in January 1985 but was not sure which one. When we arrived he asked me if this was the factory. I looked around and asked if they had moved the driveway and entrance from the other side. When this was confirmed I recognized the place. We walked inside. Saman talked to the personnel. After about ten minutes I was served one cup of Golden Flush Tea and one cup of Silver Tea. While I tasted the two teas one of the mistresses explained the procedure of making these two teas: Golden Flush is made from the Pekoe bush. The tea-plant is pruned every four years. The first harvest after six months of re-growth is used. The leaves are sun-dried. The tea is not fermented. The price from the factory is 5000 rupies/150 grams (~ 170 SEK/100g).

White Tea I was not aware of. Both White Tea and Silver Tea are harvested from a special quality of Pekoe-bush: *Camellia sinensis*. When the bud is ready and plucked it is possible to divide the bud into two layers. The inner bud is used for White Tea. Silver Tea is made from a mixture of leaves from the inner bud and the outer layer of the bud. These two qualities of leaves are prepared separately. They are both sun-dried and they are not fermented. The cost for Silver Tea is 2500 rupies for 50 grams (~ 250 kr/100g), while the cost for White Tea is 4000 rupies for 30 grams (~ 670 kr/100g).

Since I have heard in Sweden a young probably self-appointed tea-expert talking about “Tah” or “Shah” meaning this is green tea, I asked about that. The mistress smiled and replied: The words Tha, Ta, Tah, Shah, Shai, Tea etc, all mean just tea. This name does not reveal any distinction between green/non-fermented teas and black/fermented teas.



Sri Lanka junglefowl

Photo © Stefan Lithner



emerald dove

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Since I explicitly had asked to get two dusks at Horton Plains we got there in time. The national park however is divided into a central park and an outer zone. You are obliged to get out of the outer zone by the latest at 18:00. This did not allow us to see anything of the most interesting habitat after dark. When we had entered the outer zone we saw some Sri Lanka wood pigeons, emerald dove, Sri Lanka junglefowl, great tit and a purple-faced langur.

Jan 30

We started with a night-drive from Nuwarraelliya up to the entrance for Horton Plains National Park. We saw one jungle cat, four wild boar, two buffaloes, six indian hares. At one road-curve we stopped for a moment. Here Saman discovered a Nilu rat fully exposed about three meters up a tree trunk. It was one of the most awesome sightings during my Sri Lanka visit. As we were studying this rodent Saman also caught sight of a Sri Lanka shrew (*Suncus montanus*). I missed it.

Saman had previously participated in transect monitoring of smaller mammals on Horton Plains for two years and eight months, so he was well informed about where to look for the different species of shrews. At dawn we started to look in some old bushy garden-like habitat with lots of hollow trunks and roots. This place was good for particularly Sri Lanka highland shrew (*Suncus montanus*) and Sri Lanka long-tailed shrew (*Crocidura miya*). Here we found Sri Lanka bush-warbler, Sri Lanka scaly thrush and indian blackbird (*Turdus simillimus*).

After about half an hour without finding any shrews we left that project.

We then turned to the open grasslands. However you are not allowed to walk in the grasslands, so we were compelled to search along roads and tracks. Since the park this morning quickly became filled up with hikers, mainly along the loop taking them to the famous lookout Worlds End, we instead followed the ditches along the road towards Ohiya.

Some parts of the ditches were covered with low tussocks, only about a decimetre high and sometimes with small rivulets. The area looked good for some of the species. We searched carefully. We moved some distances on foot while the driver moved the car, and sometimes we moved shorter distances by car. On such occasion I got a rather short view of a small, medium buffy-brown shrew quickly running in under the low tussocks. I preliminarily identified it as a Sri Lanka shrew (*Suncus fellowesgordoni*). Since I had read in one of the reports that the compiler had encountered this species on a track leading into the forest. I asked Saman about the habits and habitat-choice of this species. Saman said that he had encountered it fairly regularly during his transect works in the grassland, but never in the forest. Later studies support the determination *S. fellowesgordoni*.

While moving a short distance by car, a pipit was found standing on the asphalt at the roadside. We both expected buffy pipit (*Anthus godlewski*), but as it reluctantly slowly walked away from us in front of the car, and we saw the faintly streaked upper back we realized this was not this species. As soon as it turned its side to us, it revealed its identity as an olive-backed pipit (*A. hodgsoni*). On the plains we also found a long-legged buzzard, Sri Lanka wood pigeon, dull blue flycatcher and thick-billed flowerpecker.

During our search we also saw a dusky palm squirrel (*Funambulus sublineatus*), and a leopard was heard growling.



olive-backed pipit

Photo © Stefan Lithner



dusky palm squirrel

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Before my departure from Sweden I studied a number of trip reports on birds and mammals in Sri Lanka. I came across one report where the compiler claims he had seen four species of shrews in one day. This information considerably raised my aspirations to actually see some of them. I know how difficult they are to see in Sweden, so my aspirations prior to reading this report were focused on finding one species. Naturally I am aware that shrews in Sweden are *Sorex*, while shrews in Sri Lanka are *Suncus*, *Solisorex*, *Feroculus* and *Crocidura*. I was hoping this fact as well as their relative abundance could have an impact on their approachability.

Three hours later with only one sighting of a shrew, I asked Saman for his opinion about seeing four species of shrews in one day. He replied telling me that he had never met any researcher or ranger who had seen more than one species in a day, maybe once he had met a researcher or ranger who had seen two in one day. We met rangers also participating in monitoring smaller mammals up here and asked them about it as well. He said that more than two, is just not possible, no matter what time of year you are searching and no matter how much you violate the restrictions of the national park. Having received this information plus experiencing the clouds and rain putting a lid over the plains, we decided to try for some other creatures.

As we passed the entrance we heard some montane frogs (*Fejervaria/Zakerana greenii*) displaying. Just entering Nuwarraeliya we stopped at a patch where Saman knew there were some Sri Lanka black-tongued lizard (*Callotes negrogularis*). We found it here. This species is also fairly easy to see around the visitors centre at Horton Plains, provided the sun is shining.



Sri Lanka black-tongued lizard



trinked snake

Photo © Stefan Lithner

After that we went to Nuwarraelliya Victoria Park, where one or two pied thrush are known to winter. We arrived just before sunset. We walked there for about one and a half hour but did not find the thrush. We found a handsome male Kashmir flycatcher, a grey wagtail and another dusky palm squirrel here.

After dinner we drove to Bomuruella Forest Reserve to look for red slender lori (*Loris tarfigradus*). On our way out of Nuwarraelliya we saw a Jerdon's bullfrog on the road. To enter the forest reserve at night you need permission. Saman knew one of the highest ranked officers in the staff, so he managed to get permission to drive through the forest, but not get out of the car. In the forest reserve we did not have to search more than about ten minutes before we found a red slender lori. During our drive in the reserve we found another one. We then continued to search for nocturnal animals in the outskirts of Nuwarraelliya. In the village of Seephaelliya we found a common palm civet, a house rat of the subspecies *R. rattus montanus* as it left the road, and another Jerdon's bullfrog.

Jan 31

Saman knew another sight for pied thrush about an hour's ride by car from Nuwarraelliya; Surrey Bird Sanctuary. Since this was private property and the sanctuary did not open until ten o'clock, we were a bit early. After obtaining permission we sneaked around in the sanctuary a little bit before we found the thrush. Eventually we saw two of them, and also two brown wood-owls. Meanwhile a red muntjac moved around us and barked.

Shortly after leaving the sanctuary another brown mongoose crossed the road.

In the afternoon we arrived at Tissamaharama Tank.

In Sigiriya I looked for the two species of short-nosed fruit bats (*Cynopterus*) but didn't find any. Then I was told that there were short-nosed fruit bats among the indian flying foxes at Tizza Tank, so I was quite anxious to get there to look for them. At the roosting-site there were between 3000 and 5000 bats hanging in big trees. Saman and I looked carefully through a large part of the flock, but did not find any *Cynopterus* -bats.

In the tank we found about 150 spot-billed pelicans, stork-billed kingfisher, asian open-billed stork, yellow bittern, but also a good number of commoner waterbirds. Saman also spotted a black bittern here. When it was getting dark we saw two ruddy-breasted crakes and Saman got a quick view of a slaty-legged crake which was about to settle for the night in a small tree

about 2 – 3 decimetres above the ground. A moment later it was disturbed and went down again. According to Saman this species regularly winters here.

After dinner at Kirinda Beach Resort we did some night driving on a gravel road on the eastern side of Yala National Park. This time of the evening there was too much human activity. We found only one ring-tailed civet and an asian elephant.



asian elephant

Photo © Stefan Lithner

After night-drive I made some bat-recordings on the resort area with my ultra-sound bat-detector. At least five species of bats were active in the airspace above the hotel-area.

Feb 1

Before sunrise we drove to meet our jeep driver with his jeep. We entered the jeep, an old Landrover, probably from the time of the second world war, and drove the 12 kilometres up to Yala National Park's main entrance. The ticket office opened at 06:00, and you must buy your entrance fee the same day you are going to enter.

Yala National Park is divided into six zones. Yala Wildlife Authorities have issued permissions for 600 drivers equipped with vehicles to guide tourists within Section One. To get into any of the other sections you need a special permission. This morning the estimated number of vehicles exceeded 500. It took about twenty minutes to get the tickets. Meanwhile I made two recordings, later proved to be the same species of bat. An indian nightjar was also calling well audible from where we were standing. When the tickets were ready we drove like a procession into the park, as well as the first kilometre inside the park. For most tourists big animals are most attractive, and target species is usually leopard. Sloth bear is sometimes also seen. If a driver or people travelling in a vehicle find one of these two species, the driver usually calls other drivers to let them know. This way leopard-jams are caused. When jeeps

come to the site where the leopard is seen, or was seen long queues are quickly formed. It happened twice during my visit. The first time we were rather close by. We drove over there to see what it looked like. After about five minutes about 30 vehicles were queuing. I asked Saman and the jeep driver how long it would take to get up to the leopard, if we decided to get in line. They estimated the time to be about one and a half hour. This I was not interested in.



kewing for tickets

Photo © Stefan Lithner



leopard

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We eventually were few enough to do some bird- and mammalwatching. Many of the birds were what we call “Tourist Birds”, large, handsome, easy to photograph and not too difficult to find: painted stork, asian open-billed stork, lesser adjutant stork, black-headed ibis, red-wattled lapwing, yellow-wattled lapwing, Malabar pied hornbill and bee-eaters. The spot-billed pelican was also easy to find here, but that species today is a NT (near threatened) species. Among mammals some well-known old male elephants hang around here. Water buffaloes were found in large numbers, but less than half a dozen passed our private definition of wild water buffalo. The remaining animals were either doubtful, or definitely hybrids with domestic water buffalo. Wild boar were seen a few times, toque macaque and ruddy mongoose were common. The beautiful chital (*Axis axis*) was not uncommon.



yellow-wattled lapwing

Photo © Stefan Lithner



greater thick-knee

Photo © Stefan Lithner

There are only two sites inside the park where tourists are allowed to get out of the vehicle. These are usually used for having breakfast and lunch. If you proceed with a fairly normal curiosity and anxiety to see the wildlife in the park you reach one of those two areas in about two hours. At the first site bordering the coastline, we had our breakfast. Here the Department of the Wildlife Conservation has raised a monument and a memory stone over the 47 lives taken in Yala by the tsunami Dec 26 2004. Nineteen of these were Japanese visitors. When we arrived there were maybe hundred persons. Maybe 80% of them were from east Asia. I believe the vast majority was from Japan.



chital

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Photo © Stefan Lithner



Photo © Stefan Lithner

From the memory monument it is probably between 100 and 200 meters to the waterfront, depending on the water level. Here you are allowed to go down to the water. I did so and searched for shorebirds. I found two greater sand plover, 6 – 8 lesser sand plover, about ten kentish plover, a few sanderlings, two curlew sandpipers and a little stint.

Between breakfast and lunch we did not add many species. We got a nice view of jacobin cuckoo, hoopoe, little green- and chestnut-headed bee-eaters.

During lunch, while eating we were observed by toque macaque and wild boar. After lunch we continued to search for birds and mammals. The leopard I had ignored. I asked about chances to see sloth bear. Our driver told us that last sighting in Section One was six days ago. Nevertheless we took a loop, which has the reputation of being the best for sloth bear. We did not find any bear but some nice birds like indian pitta, a pair of barred button-quail, yellow-wattled lapwing and among the native bee-eaters we also found a european bee-ester. Oriental skylark, Jerdon's bushlark and scaly-breasted munia were also here.

The elephants we met were with one exception, old males habituated to intrusive tourist vehicles. Most of those we met were too close to get full body in my normal camera. On one occasion a rather big elephant, maybe 3 – 3½ tons, came out of the bush and headed straight towards us. At a distance of 12 – 15 meters I came to think of the six ton male savannah elephant in Samburu-Isiolo National Park in Kenya 1989, when it only about 5 – 7 meters away from us started an attack. Then we were ready with the motor on and the foot on the pedal. Here the motor was off and the driver did not even look at the elephant.

I pushed the driver gently on the shoulder. Saman saw my move and told me that the driver has been working in this park for 20 years. He knows each elephant inside out. This is a gentle old fellow. He will not attack.



asian elephant

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We left the park at 18:00. On our way out we drove slowly and looked for crepuscular animals. Besides elephants we found a starred tortoise (*Gelochelidon elegans*), while cricket frogs (*Fejervarya limnocharis*) were calling.

After dinner I did a few bat recordings at the resort. Then we went for a night-drive. A few hundred meters from the resort we found a Parker's hard-shelled terrapin (*Melanochelys trijuga thermalis*) about to cross the sandy road. We also saw an indian gerbil here. Along the

road up to Yala National Park entrance I recorded a number of bats. We also saw ring-tailed civet, indian hares and six indian gerbils.



ruddy mongoose

Photo © Stefan Lithner



orange-breasted green pigeon

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Feb 2

We went back to Yala National Park and got a number of birds we didn't see the day before, like orange-breasted green pigeon, european spoonbill, marsh sandpiper, pintail snipe, rufous woodpecker, black-necked stork and white-rumped munia. Saman also picked up a black-crowned sparrow-lark, which I missed. Several good size swamp crocodiles were here too. Among the mammals we saw were two golden jackals, grey langur, sambar, and most of the species we saw the day before.

The population of elephants in Yala National Park is estimated to between 360 and 380 individuals. Thirty to 33 of these are adult males. Only three to four of these are "tuskers" (= carrying tusks). One of these wanders back and forth in corridors between Yala National Park and an adjacent wildlife reserve.

The tuskers are said to be more ill-tempered than those without tusks. On our way out of the park a tusker had just been discovered walking on the road in front of us. Two lines of vehicles with about seven or eight in each were already there. Our driver knows the park. He managed to pass most of the vehicles swiftly. The tusker was nothing like Kala Nag in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, nor anything like Raja Gaj in at the foothills of the Himalayas in north-western Nepal, but he was at least a little tusker.

After this rendez-vous we drove to the coast nearby. There we saw a group of spot-billed pelicans and another one with painted storks, kentish- and ringed plovers and a little stint. Saman also saw a little ringed plover here.

When we left Yala National Park I felt very strongly an anxiety that the attraction of this section of the park will not last many more years if the pressure from tourists, i. e. vehicles is maintained the way it is today. I asked Saman about his opinion. He replied that the Wildlife Authorities are so anxious to bring in money for the conservation, that they can not think of reducing the income. I asked if they have considered the alternative to reduce the ratio of vehicles per day in the park to 300 and double the prize for the tickets. Saman did not know, but doubted that the Wildlife Authorities were prepared to consider such alternative. Later we left Kirinda Beach Resort to return to Tissamaharama Tank at about 18:00, we found another starred tortoise. At the tank we saw most "easy-to-see-waterbirds" We also saw a



tusker-jam



the actual tusker

Photo © Stefan Lithner

white-throated silverbill. Saman saw a rusty-breasted crake, and we heard the slaty-legged crake calling.

After dinner we made another night drive on the road leading to Yala National Park's entrance. We stopped at two places where I made some bat-recordings. During the drive we found a fishing cat, a golden jackal and four indian gerbils. We also saw a mouse running back and forth in front of the car and eventually leaving the asphalt road. The colours were wrong for asian house mouse as well as indian field mouse. It was bright white underneath with a clear contrast to the sides. The pelage of back was rough (at least some of it) At first sight I suspected Mayor's mouse. However this species is not known from this habitat, nor has it hitherto been confirmed below 165 meters asl. Further studies of literature immediately confirmed it was not a Major's mouse. Estimated size and proportions, habitat and geographical position (Yala National Park) correspond well with those of Sri Lanka spiny mouse (*Mus fernandoni*). I have not yet found any colour illustration of this species, but written descriptions of pelage and tail colour also agree with this species.

Feb 3

I started with a while of sea-birdwatching. The only new species for the trip was a group of ruddy turnstones. There were also probably about 90 terns and a brown-headed gull. Saman had got information about a house with bats at Tissamaharama Tank. Two schoolboys, 13 and 14 years old, members of the Tissamaharama Environment Protection Society knew about this house where bats were roosting. We picked up the two boys in the morning and drove along the tank to this house. It was a group of six lesser false vampire bats. Along the road to Sinharaja, we stopped in the village Godakawele. Here is a magnificent roost for indian flying fox, roosting in their favourite species of tree: *Samania saman*. We tried to count the bats in one tree. There were more than thousand. The number of trees was between ten and 20, in other words probably between 10000 and 20000 indian flying fox.

At about lunchtime we arrived at Blue Magpie Lodge in Sinharaja. We started to bird looking for black-throated munia and black-headed munia in the rice-field and nearby vegetation next to the dining room. We found only white-rumped- and scaly-breasted munias. After lunch we continued to bird in the garden and around the houses. Here we saw several Layard's hanging parrot, a pair of golden-fronted leafbird, square-tailed bulbul, black-headed bulbul, yellow-browed bulbul, purple-rumped sunbird, Malabar pied hornbill, pale-billed flowerpecker. At dusk a large-tailed nightjar called for about three minutes, and a common hawk-cuckoo was also calling. Corrugated water frog (*Lankanectes corrugatus*) was also heard from the stream.

Feb 4

Saman had engaged a local guide. We went into the national park as soon as they opened. Right after the bridge we got contact with green-billed coucal, but it was quite illusive. It took a while before I saw it. We then walked up to a lookout. Here Saman usually sees the white-faced starling. It took a while before we found two individuals. Meanwhile a blue magpie had presented itself. After a while we continued our walk towards the research-station. Our local guide had started to carefully study the semi-dense vegetation. A few hundred meters later I saw an obvious path leading down into the densest vegetation. My immediate thought was: "This must lead to the roosting-sight for Sri Lanka frogmouth." Saman and I walked another hundred meters while our local guide sneaked down on the path to localize a frogmouth. Saman and I started with studying a group of ashy-headed laughingthrush. Shortly thereafter it was time for the Sri Lanka frogmouth, which our local guide had localized.



ashy-headed laughingthrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Sri Lanka frogmouth

Photo © Stefan Lithner

We then continued our search for red-faced malkoha. It took a while before we spotted one at a distant. During our walk we also found the orange-billed babbler and lesser yellow-naped woodpecker. We heard a chestnut-backed owlet calling but could not localize it. In Sinaraja we also encountered the Sinharaja race of purple-faced langur. Saman also pointed out a few

grand butterflies; common indian crowe (*Euploea core*) and blue glassy tiger (*Ideopsis vulgaris*).

As I went to my room to prepare myself for lunch Saman called me. He had spotted a black-throated munia in the rice-field. When I reached the dining room it was still there.



scaly-breasted munia

Photo © Stefan Lithner



black-throated munia

Photo © Stefan Lithner

After studying and documenting the munia I sat down to have lunch. Then one of the people working at the lodge called us. An indian cobra (*Naja naja*), a little over 1½ meter long was gently crossing the parking yard. When it reached the stairs up to the upper row of rooms, it took the stairs. When it had disappeared I asked Saman what the people at the lodge were going to do with the serpent. Saman told me that the cobra, unlike vipers, is a very gentle nature. It makes its surveys in different directions and it will not harm anyone unless people disturb it or frighten it. So the staff was not going to do anything at all with the serpent.



indian cobra

Photo © Stefan Lithner

At dusk we went to another rice field to look for black-headed munia and also to see the chestnut-backed owlet. Another one of Samans volunteers showed up and said he knew where there was a chestnut-backed owlet. We walked there. We found no owl, but a black-naped monarch-flycatcher. Our driver Sampeh spotted a spot-winged thrush.



spot-winged thrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner

At dinner Saman told me he had heard the indian hawk-cuckoo. I then told him that I heard it yesterday evening and also the large-tailed nightjar (*Caprimulgus macrurus*). Saman did not hear it. However he informed me there is only one sighting of this species.

I have heard this species in Vietnam 1995, Thailand 2010, Cambodia 2010 and in Thailand 2014, about two weeks earlier. I checked with Xeno-canto.org. all species of *Caprimulgus* known to occur on the Indian Subcontinent as well as in South-East Asia. The only one similar to this rather heavily pounding nightjar is indian jungle nightjar (*C. indicus*), but the call from the latter is usually faster and not so heavy. Apart from large-tailed nightjar I am out of suggestions.

After sunset I recorded a rather big brown bat over the yard. It came back another two or three times, but on those occasions I heard no sound from it.

Feb 5

Shortly prior to, as well as during our visit to Sinharaja neither Saman, nor any of his volunteers had any notion of any oriental bay-owl (*Phodius badius*) calling in the area.

After breakfast we drove to another site for chestnut-backed owlet. It took maybe 20 minutes before one of Samans volunteers found the owl. Meanwhile Saman spotted another green-billed coucal, which I saw much better than the first one.

We reached Kithulgala at about lunchtime. Around 14:30 we started to walk from the Rafters Retreat up into the forest to look for Serendib scops owl (*Otus thilohiffmannii*). Saman uses volunteers scouting for him before he takes guests to the site. This time five or six volunteers had been scouting for about a week. They had seen no Serendib scops owl for six days when we arrived. When dusk approached we decided that Saman should scout the known roosting-sites for the owl on his own, while I was waiting at a hut, probably used for hunting long ago. Shortly before dark Saman returned. He had found no Serendib scops owl, while chestnut-backed owlet and brown hawk-owls were calling. He tried to explain it by saying that the owls probably had moved because of the drought that had been going on for quite some time. While I was waiting at the hut, a common soft-furred rat (*Millardia meltada*) came out of the forest undergrowth next to a rice-field.

Feb 6

When we were about to take off from Ceylon Adventure Eco Lodge outside Kithulgala and I walked towards my room an asian house shrew (*Suncus murinus*) crossed my walkway. Meanwhile Saman went down under my bungalow to look for small bats, and found a lesser (wolly) horseshoe bat.

After breakfast we walked another way from the lodge to the main road. This road went through secondary forest with houses and gardens on both sides. The Sri Lanka grey hornbill was abundant here. We also saw white-bellied drongo, red-rumped swallow, house swift and several munias. Among those were also found a black-headed munia.

On our way through Kithulgala we stopped at Rafters Retreat since one of the reports I had read prior to my journey told about Tickell's bat living in the dining terrace roof. Due mainly to misunderstandings it took a little while to get in, and when we did, we learned that this roof is made of palm-leaves and is re-made every two – three months. We did not find any bats here.

We arrived to Mirissa at lunchtime and checked in on Paradise Beach Club. The hotel is situated next to a residential district with plenty of old houses, and beyond that conurbation. At dusk here were plenty of bats hunting around, street-lights, houses and solitary trees. I made about 20 recordings. When later analyzing the sounds I got intensity maxima (FmaxE) for only one species, with FmaxE between 45,7 and 48,2. FmaxE is known for lesser asian yellow bat (*Scotophilus kuhlii*) between 43 and 48 kHz, however recorded elsewhere in Asia.



blue whale

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Feb 7

At 05:45 I picked up my breakfast package. Shortly before 06:00 we left for Mirissa. At Paradise Hotel the whalewatchers gathered. At about fifteen minutes before seven we entered a bus and were transported to the harbour where we entered a whale-safari ship. At 07:00 sharp we left the harbour together with a number of safari-boats. After about one hour maybe ten boats maybe 500 meters apart were heading towards the continental shelf. Personnel on the

ships kept each other updated. About one hour from Mirissa harbour we discovered a Bryde's whale (*Balaenoptera brydei*). Sadly it did not stay in sight long enough to be photographed. About another hour our crew spotted the first blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). During the next two hours I saw at least five individuals. According to the staff there were seven: two couples and three singles.

According to Shirihai & Jarrett: Whales Dolphins and Seals – A Field Guide to the Marine Mammals of the World, it is *B. m. indica* that occurs here. According to this source this taxon has a distinctly shorter body length than nominate race, probably 15 –20 meters at maturity, (some perhaps reach 24 m, but probably exceptional). One of these specimen here today was a giant, much bigger than the others. The staff with considerable experience of these animals estimated the length of this specimen to be 22 – 24 maybe 25 meters. This raised the question whether the larger subspecies sometimes occur in these waters. The staff did not know. Nor have I found any information about this in literature.



blue whale

Photo © Stefan Lithner



blue whale

Photo © Stefan Lithner

On this sea-trip we saw the same terns I have mentioned before, with the exception for white-cheeked- and black terns. We returned to the harbour shortly before lunch.

Feb 8

Since blue whale was the prime reason why I included Sri Lanka in this trip I was informed that the chance to see blue whales this time of year is about 90%. To be on the safe side, I was recommended to spend two days whale watching. Since the trips often find other species of marine mammals, and different species from one day to another, it seemed to be a good idea. I therefore did the same thing today. Before we left the harbour a flock of about 500 indian flying fox were circling above the village. This time the blue whales were even more numerous than yesterday. Larger gatherings of these large animals are not easy to survey. Sometimes one individual might stay under water for quite some time, and even if they don't, they might show up quite far from where they were last seen. The staff estimated the group to consist of ten or twelve individuals. I also saw a dorsal fin of a cetacean, probably a dolphin. During the trip we also saw some terns. On our way back to harbour an adult bridled tern passed us no further than about 25 meters from the boat. An adult winter black tern was also seen.

Due to stomach-problems Saman stayed ashore during this trip. When I returned to the harbour he was all right. He had also got information about some old houses where smaller bats were roosting. The property was private. The owner was a retired army general, living in Colombo. I found his telephone-number and called him to ask his permission to visit these old houses. Regardless of whether he was going to give me permission or not, I expected a retired army general to behave like an officer. In this aspect I was utterly mistaken.

During the evening I recorded some more bats. They were the same kind as the bats on Feb 6.

Feb 9

Because we didn't know how long the whale safari boats were going to be on the ocean looking for whales it was a bit hazardous to book my flight back to Sweden already on Feb 8. Regarding what happened it would have been fine. Today the only program in my itinerary was to get back to the airport in Colombo. About 15:00 I said Good Bye to Saman and Sampeh.

BIRDS

Genera presented in order as in Robson: A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia



blue peacock

Photo © Stefan Lithner

barred buttonquail
 Sri Lanka Spurfowl
 red junglefow
 Sri Lanka Junglefow
 rufous throated partridge
 mountain bamboo partridge
 Indian peafowl
 green peafowl
 lesser whistling duck

Turnix suscitator
Galloperdix bicalcarata
Gallus gallusi
Gallus lafayetii
Arborophila rufogularis
Bambusicola fytchii
Pavo cristatus
Pavo muticus
Dendrocygna. javanica



Malabar pied hornbillk

Photo © Stefan Lithner

cotton pygmy goose
 little grebe
 black-headed woodpecker
 grey-headed woodpecker
 yellow-crowned woodpecker
 bamboo woodpecker
 stripe-breasted woodpecker
 rufous woodpecker
 lesser yellownape
 black-rumped flameback
 crimson-backed flameback
 white-naped woodpecker
 great barbet
 blue-throated barbet
 brown-headed barbet
 lineated barbet
 yellow-fronted barbet
 crimson-fronted barbet
 coppersmith barbet
 Sri Lanka grey hornbill
 Malabar pied hornbill

Nettapus coromandelianus
Tachybaptus ruficollis
Picus erythropygius
Picus canus
Dendrocopos mahrattensis
Gcinulus viridis
Dendrocopos atratus
Micropternus brachyurus
Picus chlorolophus
Dinopium benghalense
Chrysocolaptes. stricklandi
Chrysocolaptes festivus
Megalaima virens
Megalaima asiaticnsa
Megalaima zeylanica
Megalaima lineata
Megalaima f. flavifrons
Megalaima rubricapillus
Megalaima haemacephala
Ocyceros gingalensis
Anthracoceros coronatus

orange-breasted trogon
 Malabar trogon
 blue-bearded bee-eater
 green bee-eater
 blue-tailed bee-eater
 chestnut-headed bee-eater
 Stork-billed Kingfisher
 white-throated kingfisher
 common kingfisher
 pied kingfisher

Harpactes oreskios
Harpactes fasciatus
Nyctornis albertoni
Merops orientalis
Merops. philippinus
Merops. leschenaulti
Pelargopsis. capensis
Halcyon smyrnensis
Alcedo atthis
Ceryle rudis



chestnut-headed bee-

Photo © Stefan Lithner

grey-bellied cuckoo
 asian koel
 red-faced malkoha
 greater coucal
 lesser coucal
 green-billed coucal
 eurasian hoopoe
 indian roller
 alexandrine parakeet
 rose-ringed parakeet
 Layard's parakeet
 Sri Lanka hanging parrot
 himalayan swiftlet
 Germain's swiftlet
 indian swiftlet
 asian palm swift
 fork-tailed swift
 little swift
 crested treeswift

Cacomantis passerinus
Eudynamys. scolopaceus
Chaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus
Centropus sinensis
Centropus bengalensis
Centropus. chlororhynchos
Upupa epops
Coracias benghalensis
Psittacula eupatria
Psittacula krameri
Psittacula calthropae
Loriculus beryllinus
Collocalia brevistris
Collocalia germaini
Aerodramus unicolor
Cypsiurus balasiensis
Apus pacificus
Apus affinis
Hemiprocne coronata

brown fish owl
 brown wood owl
 brown boobok
 northern boobok
 Oriental scops owl
 collared scops owl
 spotted owlet
 jungle owlet
 chestnut-backed owlet
 Sri Lanka frogmouth
 Jerdon's nightjar
 indian nightjar

Ketupa zeylonensis
Strix leptogrammica
Ninox scutulata
Ninox japonica
Otus sunia
Otus bakkamoena
Athene brama
Glaucidium radiatum
Glaucidium castanonotum
Batrachostomus moniliger
Caprimulgus atripennis
Caprimulgus asiaticus



Hainan blue flycatcher

Photo © Stefan Lithner

large-tailed nightjar
 rock pigeon
 green imperial pigeon
 Sri Lanka wood pigeon
 orange-breasted green pigeon
 pompadour green pigeon
 eurasian collared dove
 spotted dove
 common emerald dove
 pheasant-tailed jacana
 slaty-legged crake
 ruddy-breasted crake
 white-breasted waterhen
 watercock
 common moorhen
 purple swampphen

Caprimulgus macrurus
Columba livia
Ducula aeneaa
Columba. torringtoniae
Treron bicinctus
Treron pompadora
Streptopelia decaocto
Stigmatopelia chinensis
Chalcophaps indica
Hydrophasianus chirurgus
Rallina eurizonoides
Porzana fusca
Amaurornis phoenicurus
Gallicrex cinerea
Galinula chloropus
Porphyrio porphyrio

pintail snipe
 black-tailed godwit
 common sandpiper
 common redshank
 spotted edshank
 marsh sandpiper
 wood sandpiper
 green sandpiper
 ruddy turnstone
 little stint
 sanderling
 curlew sandpiper

Gallinago stenura
Limosa limosa
Actitis hypoleucos
Tringa totanus
Tringa erythropus
Tringa stagnatilis
Tringa glareola
Tringa ochropus
Arenaria interpres
Calidris minuta
Calidris alba
Calidris ferruginea



pintail snipe

Photo © Stefan Lithner

great stone-curlew
 black-winged stilt
 common ringed plover
 little ringed plover
 Kentish plover
 lesser sand plover
 greater sand plover
 pacific golden plover
 grey plover
 yellow-wattled lapwing
 red-wattled lapwing
 Heuglin's gull
 brown-headed gull
 bridled tern
 little tern

Esacus. recurvirostris
Himantopus himantopus
Charadrius hiaticula
Charadrius dubiusi
Charadrius alexandrinus
Charadrius mongolus
Charadrius leschenaultii
Pluvialis. fulva
Pluvialis squatarola
Vanellus malabaricus
Vanellus indicus
Larus heuglini
Larus brunnicephalus
Onychoprion anaethetus
Sternula albifrons



red-wattled lapwing

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Saunders's tern
gull-billed tern
caspian tern
black tern
common tern
whiskered tern
white-cheeked tern
great crested tern
lesser crested tern
crested honey buzzard
crested serpent eagle
crested goshawk
shikra
brahminy kite
white-bellied sea eagle
grey-headed fish eagle
long-legged buzzard
black eagle
common kestrel
peregrine falcon
grey heron
purple heron
great egret
yellow-billed egret
little egret
cattle egret
Indian pond heron
striated heron
black-crowned night heron
yellow bittern

Sternula saundersi
Gelochelidon nilotica
Hydroprogne c. caspia
Chlidonias niger
Sterna hirundo
Chlidonias hybrida
Sterna repressa
Thalasseus bergii
Thalasseus bengalensis
Pernis ptilorhyncus
Spilornis cheela
Accipiter trivirgatus
Accipiter badius
Haliastur. indus
Haliaeetus leucogaster
Ichthyophaga. ichthyaetus
Buteo. rufinus
Ictinaetus malayensis
Falco tinnunculu
Falco peregrinus
Ardea cinerea
Ardea purpurea
Casmerodius albus
Mesophoyx intermedius
Egretta garzetta
Bubulcus ibis
Ardeola. grayii
Butorides striata
Nycticorax nycticorax
Ixobrychus. sinensis

black bittern
 black-headed ibis
 painted stork
 asian openbilled stork
 woolly-necked stork
 black-necked stork
 lesser adjutant
 eurasian spoonbill
 great cormorant
 indian cormorant
 little cormorant
 oriental darter
 spot-billed pelican

Dupetor flavicollis
Threskiornis. melanocephalus
Mycteria leucocephala
Anastomus oscitans
Ciconia e. episcopus
Ephipporhynchus
Leptoptilos. javanicus
Platalea. leucorodia
Phalacrocorax carbo
Phalacrocorax fuscicollis
Phalacrocorax niger
Anhinga melanogaste
Pelecanus philippensis



painted stork

Photo © Stefan Lithner

indian pitta
 blue pitta
 long-tailed broadbill
 Jerdon's leafbird
 golden-fronted leafbird
 orange-bellied leafbird
 brown shrike
 long-tailed shrike
 grey-backed shrike
 black drongo
 crested drongo
 spangled drongo
 grey treepie
 greater racket-tailed drongo

Pitta brachyura
Pitta cyanea
Psarisomus dalhousiae
Chloropsis cochinchinensis
Chloropsis aurifrons
Chloropsis hardwickii
Lanius vristatus
Lanius schach
Lanius tephronotus
Dicrurus macrocerus
Dicrurus lophorinus
Dicrurus hottentottus
Dendrocitta formosae
Dicrurus paradiseus

white-bellied drongo
red-billed blue magpie

Dicrurus caerulesce
Urocissa erythrorhyncha



(yellow-billed) blue whistling thrush

Photo © Stefan Lithner

blue magpie
house crow
large-billed crow
asian black-headed oriole
black-headed cuckooshrike
bar-winged flycatcher-shrike
Sri Lanka woodshrike
ashy woodswallow
common iora

Urocissa o. ornata
Corvus splendens
Corvus culminatus
Oriolus xanthornus
Coracina melanoptera
Hemipus picatus
Tephrodornis affinis
Artamus. fuscus
Aegithina tiphia

Marshall's iora
black-headed cuckooshrike
orange minivet
white-browed fantail
black-naped monarch
asian paradise flycatcher
blue rock-thrush
chestnut-bellied rock-thrush
pie thrush
spot-winged thrush
Sri Lanka thrush
dark-sided thrush
Sri Lanka whistling thrush
blue whistling thrush
Indan blackbird
chestnut thrush
grey-winged blackbird

Aegithina nigrolutea
Coracina melanoptera
Pericrocotus f. flammeus
Rhipidura aureola
Hypothymis azurea
Terpsiphone paradisi
Monticola solitarius
Monticola rufiventris
Zoothera wardii
Zoothera spiloptera
Zoothera imbricata
Zoothera marginata
Myophonus blighi
Myophonus caerukeus
Turdus simillimus
Turdus rubrocanus
Turdus boulboul

brown-breasted flycatcher

Muscicapa muttui



Siberian blue robin

Photo © Stefan Lithner

dull blue flycatcher
grey-headed canary flycatcher
rufous-gorgeted flycatcher
snowy-browed flycatcher
ultramarine flycatcher
Kashmir flycatcher
large niltava
small niltava
rufous-bellied niltava
chinese blue flycatcher
Hainan blue flycatcher
Tickell's blue flycatcher
lesser shortwing
siberian rubythroat

Eumyias sordidus
Culicicapa ceylonensis
Ficedula strophilata
Ficedula hyperythra
Ficedula supercilialis
Ficedula subrubra
Niltava grandis
Niltava macgrigoriae
Niltava sundara
Cyornis glaucicomans
Cyornis hainanus
Cyornis tickelliae
Brachypteryx leucophryx
Luscinia calliope

siberian blue robin
white-tailed robin
siberian bluetail
golden bush robin
Indian blue robin
oriental magpie-robin
black-backed robin
white-rumped shama
black-backed forktail
pied bush chat
siberian stonechat
grey bushchat
white-faced starling
Sri Lanka hill myna

Luscinia cyane
Myiomela leucura
Tarsiger cyanus
Tarsiger chrysaeus
Luscinia brunnea
Copsychus saularis ceylonensis
Saxicoloides fulicatus
Copsychus malabaricus
Enicurus immaculatus
Saxicola caprata
Saxicola maura
Saxicola ferrea
Sturnus albofrontatus
Gracula ptilogenys

common myna
velvet-fronted nuthatch
chestnut-vented nuthatch
giant nuthatch
great tit
yellow-browed tit
asian house martin
barn swallow
hill swallow
red-rumped wallow
Sri Lanka swallow
Jerdon's bushlark
black-headed bulbul

Acridotheres tristis
Sitta frontalis
Sitta nagaensis
Sitta magna
Parus major
Sylviparus modestus
Delicon dasypus
Hirundo rustica
Hirundo domicola
Cecropis daurica
Cecropis hyperythra
Mirafra affinis
Pycnonotus atriceps



Burmese grey-cheeked fulvetta

Photo © Stefan Lithner

sooty-headed bulbul
black-headed bulbul
red-vented bulbul
yellow-eared bulbul
white-browed bulbul
brown-breasted bulbul
yellow-browed bulbul
square-tailed black bulbul
mountain bulbul

Pycnonotus aurigaster
Pycnonotus melanicterus
Pycnonotus cafer
Pycnonotus penicillatus
Pycnonotus luteolus
Pycnonotus nthorhous
Acritillas indica
Hypsipetes ganeesa
Hypsipetes maclellandii



dark-backed sibia

Photo © Stefan Lithner

ashy bulbul
 Jerdon's bushlark
 oriental skylark
 ashy-crowned sparrow-lark
 common tailorbird
 plain prinia
 hill prinia
 zitting cisticola
 Sri Lanka bush warbler
 green warbler
 yellow-streaked warbler
 yellow-browed warbler
 white-tailed leaf-warbler
 pale-legged leaf-warbler
 Radde's warbler
 ashy-throated warbler
 oriental white-eye
 Sri Lanka white-eye
 japanese white-eye
 chestnut-flanked white-eye
 ashy-headed laughingthrush
 lesser necklaced laughingthrush
 silver-eared laughingthrush
 collared laughingthrush
 scarlet-faced liocicla
 white-browed scimitar babbler
 Sri Lankan scimitar babbler
 large scimitar babbler

Hemixos flavala
Mirafra affinis
Alauda gulgula
Eremopterix griseus
Orthotomus sutorius
Prinia inornata
Prinia atrogularis
Cisticola juncidis
Elaphrornis palliseri
Phylloscopus nitidus
Phylloscopus armandii
Phylloscopus inornatus
Phylloscopus davisoni
Phylloscopus tenellipes
Phylloscopus schwarzi
Phylloscopus maculipennis
Zosterops palpebrosus
Zosterops ceylonensis
Zosterop japonicuss
Zosterops erythropleurus
Garrulax. cinereifrons
Garrulax monileger
Tremella fuciformis
Garrulax yersini
Liocicla ripponi
Pomatorhinus schisticeps
Pomatorhinus elanurus
Pomatorhinus hypoleucos



white-rumped munia

Photo © Stefan Lithner

rusty-cheeked scimitar babbler
 brown-capped babbler
 spot-throated babbler
 puff-throated babbler
 orange-billed babbler
 yellow-billed babbler
 rufous-fronted babbler
 chestnut-tailed minla
 blue-winged minla
 burmese grey-cheeked fukvetta
 rufous-winged fulvetta
 spectacled barwing
 dark-backed sibia
 thick-billed flowerpecker
 Legge's flowerpecker
 pale-billed flowerpecker
 purple-rumped sunbird
 purple sunbird
 long-billed sunbird
 green-tailed sunbird
 Mrs Gould's sunbird
 fire-tailed sunbird
 black-throated sunbird
 Richard's pipit
 paddyfield pipit
 olive-backed pipit
 forest wagtail
 grey wagtail
 house sparrow
 white-throated silverbill

Pomatorhinus erythrogenys
Pellorneus fuscicapillus
Pellorneum albiventris
Pellorneum ruficeps
Turdoides rufescens
Turdoides affinis
Stachyris rufifrons
Minla strigula
Minla cyanouropterus
Alcippe fratercula
Alcippe castaneiceps
Actinodura ramsayi
Heterophasia melanoleuca
Dicaeum agile
Dicaeum vincens
Dicaeum erythrorhynchus
Leptocoma. zeylonica
Cinnyris asiaticus
Cinnyris. lotenius
Aethopyga nipalensis
Aethopyga gouldiae
Aethopyga ignicauda
Aethopyga saturata
Anthus richardi
Anthus rufulus
Anthus hodgsoni
Dendronanthus indicus
Motacilla cinerea
Passer domesticus
Lonchura malabarica

white-rumped munia
scaly-breasted munia
black-throated munia
black-headed munia

Lonchura. striata
Lonchura punctulata
Lonchura kelaarti
Lonchura malacca

MAMMALS



lesser woolly horseshoe bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Taxa presented in order according to Duff/Lawson; Mammals of the World , a Checklist 2004. Names also follow Duff/Lawson except for red spiny maxomys and splits after 2004.

dugong*Dugong dugon*

Sri Lanka: This species was not found. See page 11.

indian hare*Lepus nigricollis*

Sri Lanka: Seen during night-drives on Knuckles Ridge 28 and 29/1, between Nuwarraeliya and Horton Plains 30/1 (six ind.) and outside Yala National Park 1/ 2.

black giant squirrel*Ratufa bicolor*

Thailand: One seen in Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 6/1.

Sri Lanka giant squirrel*Ratufa macroura*

Sri Lanka: Several seen at Sigiriya 25/1 and 26/1. Thereafter seen but not noted down.

asian red-cheeked squirrel*Dremomys rufigensis*

Thailand: One seen at Doi Inthanon 18/1.



Asian red-cheeked squirrel

Photo © Stefan Lithner

grey-bellied squirrel*Callosciurus caniceps*

Thailand: Seen near Shupatal 16/1, Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 16/1. Thereafter not noted down at every occasion.

Pallas's squirrel*Callosciurus erythraeus*

Thailand: Two seen in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 16/1, two seen, Doi Inthanon National Park 18 and 19/1, and one seen in Doi Lang National Park 21/1.

Finlayson's squirrel (variable squirrel)*Callosciurus finlaysonii*

Thailand: One seen 15/1.

himalayan striped squirrel (western striped squirrel)*Tamias maclellandi*

Thailand: One seen in Doi Lang National Park 21/1.

indochinese ground squirrel *Menetes berdmorei*

Thailand: One seen in Huai Kra Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 16/1, and one seen in Doi Lang National Park 21/1.

indian palm squirrel *Funambulus palmarum*

Sri Lanka: One seen in Tahale Ville church area 24/1 1. One seen along the road to Yala 31/1. One seen at Blue Magpie Lodge Sinharaja 3/2.

dusky palm squirrel *Funambulus sublineatus*

Sri Lanka: One seen on Horton Plains 1 30/1, and one seen in Nuwarraeilliya: Victoria Park 31/1.

Phayer's flying squirrel *Hylopetes phayeri*

Thailand: One found during night-walk outside Doi Intanon National Park 19/1.

Temminck's flying squirrel *Petaurista setosus*

Thailand; One seen in Doi Lang National Park 21/1 1.

indian gerbil *Tatera indica*

Sri Lanka: One seen in Sigiriya during night drive 25/1 and several seen during night-drives Kirinda – Yala 1/2 and 2/2.

common soft-furred rat *Millardia meltada*

Sri Lanka: Kithulgala; one coming out of the forest onto a path just before dark 5/2.

Blanford's rat *Cremnomys blanfordi* 79

Sri Lanka; One seen near Sigiriya Hotel 29/1 one seen by Saman in Sigiriya at Archaeological Reservation Land 26/1. I missed the latter.



purple-faced langur (*T. vetulus monticola*)

Photo © Stefan Lithner

Mayor's mouse*Mus mayori*

Knuckles Ridge, Sir John's Bungalow; at least one 29/1. It took a while before I managed to assess that these little mice really belonged to this species.

Sri Lanka spiny mouse*Musfernandoni*

On the road up to Yala National Park entrance during night drive on 2/2 one was running back and forth in front of the car and eventually leaving the asphalt road. See also p. 31.

little indian field mouse*Mus booduga*

Sri Lanka; One seen in Sigiriya Hotel garden 25/1, two seen on Knuckles Ridge 27/1 and 28/1 and one seen on Horton Plains 30/1.

indian bush rat*Golunda elioti*

Sri Lanka; Two specimens were running back and forth across the road during night-drive on Knuckles Ridge 27/1.

Nilu rat*Rattus montanus*

Sri Lanka; One seen slowly climbing on a tree-trunk about three meters off the ground in montane forest in Horton Plains National Park at dawn 30/1.



toque macaque

Photo © Stefan Lithner

house rat (Black Rat)*Rattus rattus rattus*

Sri Lanka; One was seen climbing under the roof of an abandoned house at Kalpitiya, Thaleville Church area 24/1.

Kelaart's rat*Rattus rattus kelaarti*

Sri Lanka; One seen leaving the road as we approached it in Seepaeliya, outside Nuwara Eliya.

The rats in the Sri Lanka Highlands are subjected to review. The *R. r. rattus* is known to occur up to about 1400 meters asl, while the *R. r. kelaarti* occurs on higher altitude. I have not seen a lot of *R. r. rattus*, and only one specimen of *Rattus rattus* at about 1700 meters asl. in the Sri Lankan highlands, but this specimen of *R. r.* appeared heavier, more compact than those I have previously seen.

greater bandicoot rat *Bandicoota indica*

Sri Lanka: Several seen during night drives on Knuckles Ridge; Three seen during night drive 28/1. Two seen during morning drive and one seen during night drive 29/1.

red spiny maxomys (red spiny rat) *Maxomys surifer*

Thailand: Resort near village Shupatal outside Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary: One was trapped, identified, photographed and released before dawn 16/1. Sometimes this animal goes under the name red spiny rat. I think it is misleading and unworthy to needlessly let people who don't know the difference associate this handsome animal with annoying rodents of the genus *Rattus*, particularly the noxious house rat *R. rattus* and the brown rat *R. norvegicus*.

Ohiya rat *Srilankamys ohiensis*

Sri Lanka: During night drive on Knuckles Ridge 27/1 one crossed the road at close range.

small indian civet (ring-tailed civet) *Vervicula indica*

Sri Lanka: Seen during night drives on Knuckles Ridge 27 – 29/1.

asian palm civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*

Sri Lanka: One seen during night drive near Seephaeliya (outside Nuwarraeliya) 30/1.



tufted grey langur

Photo © Stefan Lithner

golden palm civet*Paradoxurus zeylanicus*

Sri Lanka; One seen at the roadside at close range during night drive at Knuckles Ridge 27/1

jungle cat*Felis chaus*

Sri Lanka: Species seen during night drives; Sigigrya 25/1, Knuckles Range 27/1, Seepaeliya (Nuwarraeliya area) 30/1.

rusty-spotted cat*Felis rubiginosa*

Sri Lanka: One seen at the most Sigiriya 25/1.

fishing cat*Felis viverina*

Sri Lanka: One seen during night drive on the road up to entrance of Yala National Park 2/2.

leopard*Panthera pardus*

Sri Lanka: One heard on Horton Plains 30/1. Leopards were also spotted by other drivers in Yala on 1 and 2/2, but long queues with tourist-vehicles were formed rather immediately and the time it would have taken to get a chance to see one did not seem worth the effort.

small indian mongoose*Herpestes auropunctatus*

Thailand: One seen at Doi Inthanon National Park 20/1.

short-tailed mongoose (Brown Mongoose) *Herpestes brachyurus*

Sri Lanka: One was seen crossing the road near Sam Popomi Arboretum 26/1 and also seen on Knuckles Ridge about five times 27 – 29/1. One seen crossing the road shortly after leaving Surrey Bird Sanctuary on 23/1 and one also seen in the hotel garden in Mirissa 7/2.



golden jackal

Photo © Stefan Lithner

indian grey mongoose*Herpestes edwardsii*

Sri Lanka: Species was seen rather often in open and semi open country. 23/1, 26/1, 27/1

ruddy mongoose*Herpestes smithii*

Sri Lanka: Several seen in Yala National Park 1/2 and 2/2.

stripe-necked mongoose*Herpestes vitticollis*

Sri Lanka: One seen on the road to Seralle Waterfall on Knuckles Ridge; 28/1.

golden jackal*Canis aureus*

Sri Lanka: Two seen in Yala National Park 1/2 and one seen on 2/2.

asian house shrew*Suncus murinus*

Sri Lanka: One seen at Hotel Sigiriya 25/1 by Mr Saman. (I missed it) and one seen in Kithulgala; Ceylon Adventure Eco Lodge in the morning of 6/2.

Sri Lanka shrew*Suncus fellowesgordoni*

Sri Lanka; One seen leaving the road, disappearing in the ditch about one hour before dawn 29/1. Saman also saw one at the roadside on our drive up to Horton Plains 30/1.

Sri Lanka highland shrew*Suncus montanus*

Sri Lanka: One seen at Horton Plains grasslands 30/1.

BATS

During the trip I took at least 115 photos of bats. Twelve species have been identified. Five of them, found in Thailand were previously known and identified by my Thai guide Rattapon Kaichid (RK). Four species in Sri Lanka have been confirmed from photos by Mr Sampath A Goonatillake (SAG), programme officer IUNC.

With my ultra-sound bat-recorder Pettersson 240X I have recorded 77 individuals. I analysed the calls with Peterson Batsound 4.1. I assessed maximum intensity for echolocation calls (EmaxF). Among the genera of bats I am familiar with sonograms from eight genera we have in Sweden, and also one genus from Slovenia. In Thailand and Sri Lanka there are many genera I am not familiar with. Three genera I recognize in these recordings are: *Pipistrellus* and *Rhinolophus/Hipposideros*.

Eighteen of the recordings were *Pipistrellus*. All calls recognized as *Pipistrellus* fell within the EmaxF limits for the three Sri Lankan species of *Pipistrellus*. None of the calls recognized as *Pipistrellus* fell outside any of these species. Eleven fell within the limits for *P. tenuis* (50 – 55 kHz), Two fell within the limits for *P. ceylonicus*, (47 – 48 kHz) and two fell within the limits for *P. coromandra*, (39 – 42 kHz). Beyond that there were three sounds which may have been pipistrelles but were not been assessed. Six of the recordings and sonograms correspond with *Rhinolophus/Hipposideros*. Five of these fall within the EmaxF limits for *R. rouxii*; in Sri Lanka (73 – 79 kHz). These *Rhinolophus*-bats were also studied on site, photographed and identified as *R. rouxii*. Photos were not sharp enough for confirmation. One EmaxF falls within the limits for *Hipposiderus galeritus*. These bats were also studied on site, photographed and identified as *H. galeritus*. Photos were taken but sadly they were not sharp enough for confirmation.

One *Rhinolophus/Hipposideros* species was recorded at two different sites (40-42 kHz), prel. identified as *Rhinolophus luctus*. By correspondence with Mr Sampath

Goonatilake I learned that this species does not occur on the island. The *H. beddomei-luctus* complex is still complex. The species today identified as *H. beddomei*, has through the last century by turns been treated as *H. beddomei* and *H. kuctus*. Today the latter species (greater (wolly) horseshoe bat) is known to occur in SE Asia. My recordings were sent to Environmental Officer Dr Chandana Asela, who offered to take a look at them when time allowed him to do so. Results may eventually arrive.

indian flying fox

Pteropus giganteus

Sri Lanka: Tissamaharama Tank 3 – 5000 1/ 2, Godakawele 10 – 20.000 3/2. See p 31.

long-winged tomb bat

Taphozous longimanus

Thailand: Kao Noa cave at least 5 seen and photographed 17/1. (Det. RK)

black-bearded tomb bat

Taphozous melanopogon

Thailand: Kao Noa cave, about 35; seen and photographed. (Det RK)



black-bearded tomb bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner



long-winged tomb bat

Photo © Stefan Lithner

greater false vampire bat

Megaderma lyra

Sri Lanka: Sam Popomi Arborethrum 26/1 two roosting. Determined by scientist working at the Arborethrum.

lesser false vampire bat

Megaderma spasma

Thailand: Kao Noa cave one on 17/1 (Det. RK)

Sri Lanka: Tissamaharama Tank 3/2 a group of six animal roosting (Conf. SAG).

acuminate horseshoe bat

Rhinolophus acuminata

Thailand: Kao Noa cave one out of at least four photographed and recorded on 17/1 (Det. RK photo plus recording).

lesser wolly horseshoe bat

Rhinolophus beddomei

Sri Lanka: one in Hotel Sigiriya chapel 26/1: one in Kithulgala, Ceylon Adventure Eco Lodge 6/2. (Conf. SAG)

rufous horesshoe bat

Rhinolophus rouxii

Sri Lanka: Sigiriya Hotel chapel at least two 26/1 and a little group was seen, photographed and recorded in caves on Archaeological Reservation Land. (Field observation plus recording. Photos not clear enough for conf.)

Schneider's roundleaf bat *Hipposideros speoris*

Sri Lanka: Sigiriya Hotel; at least two ind. hanging in the roof of the chapel (Conf. SAG)

Cantor's roundleaf bat *Hipposideros galeritus*

Sri Lanka: Sigiriya Pidurangala Temples, at least one, maybe 5 - 7 on 25/1. (Field observation plus recording. Photos not clear enough for conf.)



lesser false vampire bat

Photo Rattapon Kaichid with compilers camea

greater asian yellow bat *Scotophilus heathi*

Sri Lanka: One bat hunting around street lamps and houses in Kalpitia. 16/1 is because of size, exterior features and habitat believed to belong to this species.

leser asian yellow bat *Scotophilus kuhlii*

Sri Lanka: This species was not assessed; Mirissa over Paradise Beach Club 6/2 and 8/2 large numbers of brown medium sized bats were hunting between 5 and 15 meters above the ground, around houses, street-lights and solitary trees. It was the only species recorded despite about 15 recordings. Their eco-location maximum falls within the range for this species. Its identity has not been assessed yet since I have never seen any sonogram of the species, but above mentioned data strongly suggest this species.

indian pipistrelle *Pipistrellus coromandra*

Sri Lanka: This species was recorded twice at the entrance of Yala NP in the morning of 1/2.



least pipistrelle

Photo © Stefan Lithner

least pipistrelle

Pipistrellus tenuis

Sri Lanka: Sigiriya Hotel; One photographed outside main building on 26/1. See p. 17.

(Conf SAG). The species was also recorded and identified via bat-recorder over Kiringa Beach Hotel 31/1 and about 700 meters from main entrance to Yala National Park 1/ 2.

Kelaart's pipistrelle

Pipistrellus ceylonicus

Sri Lanka: This species was recorded twice (39-42 kHz) at the same site along the road to Yala NP main entrance, at the turnoff to Wildlife office in the evening of 2/2.

Horsfield's myotis

Myotis horsfieldii

Thailand: Kao Noa cave one or two ind. on 17/1. (Det. RK).

Bengal slow loris (asian slow loris)

Nycticebus bengalensis

Thailand: one seen during spotlighting outside Shupatal near Huai Kha Kaeng 16/1

grey slender lori

Loris lydekkerianus

Sri Lanka: three ind. seen during spotlighting in Sam Popomi Arboretum 26/1

red slender lori

Loris tarfigradus

Sri Lanka: Bomuruelle Forest Reserve outside Nuwarraeliya; : Two ind. seen 30/1

tufted grey langur

Semnopithecus priam

Sri Lanka: Sigiriya Hotel garden ; a little group 26 – 27/1, and in Yala 2/2.

purple-faced langur

Trachypitecus vetulus

Sri Lanka: *T. vetulus monticola*: heard during my visit to Knuckles Ridge, Sir John's Bungalow 28 – 29/1 and one seen and photographed shortly before dark at Horton Plains 29/1.

T. v. vetulus: seen in Sinharaja 4/2

long-tailed macaque

Macaca fascicularis

Thailand: Kao Noa; more than 1000 in and around the temple.

toque macaque

Macaca sinica

Sri Lanka: seen at Agawimandawa Ramsah 23/1 and in Yala National Park 1/ 2 and 2/2.

white-handed gibbon

Hylobates lar

Thailand: heard in Huai Kha Kaeng in the morning of 16/1.



northern tree-shrew

Photo © Stefan Lithner

northern tree-shrew

Tupaia belangeri

Thailand: at least one seen in Huai Kha Kaeng 16/1, one in Doi Inthanon 18/1 and one in Doi Lang 22/1.

Bryde's whale*Balaenoptera brydei*

Sri Lanka: About one hour by boat off the coast from Mirissa Harbour; one seen 7/2.

blue whale*Balaenoptera musculus*

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Sri Lanka: Continental Shelf south of Mirissa 7/2; two pairs plus three singles. 8/2; estimated by safari staff to be ten or twelve ind.

Indo-Pacific hump-backed dolphin*Sousa chinensis*

Sri Lanka: This species was not seen. See page 11.

Indo-Pacific bottle-nosed dolphin*Tursiops aduncus*

Sri Lanka: Off the coast of Calpitiya 15/1 during search for dugong we encountered a huge flock of dolphins. This herd had previously been estimated to be between 4000 and 10000 ind.; about 80% Indo-Pacific bottlenosed dolphins and 20% spinner dolphins.

spinner dolphin*Stenella longirostris*

Sri Lanka: Off the coast of Calpitiya 15/1 during search for dugong we encountered a huge flock of dolphins. This herd had previously been estimated to be between 4000 and 10000 ind. about 80% Indo-Pacific bottlenosed dolphins and 20% spinner dolphins.

eurasian wild boar*Sus scrofa*

Sri Lanka: seen on Knuckles Ridge 28/1 and in Yala NP 1 and 2/2.



wild boar

Photo © Stefan Lithner

white spotted chevrotain*Mosciola meminna*

Sri Lanka: at least three in Sam Popomi Arboretum 26/1, and one during night drive on Nuckles Ridge 28/1.

This species should not be confused with Yellow Striped Chevrotain *M. kathygre*, described as a new species (Groves and Meijard, 2005), found in the wet zone of Sri Lanka.

red muntjac (Barking Deer)*Muntiacus muntiac*

Sri Lanka: Surrey Bird Sanctuary; one barking.

Eld's deer*Rucervus eldii*

Thailand:

Huai Kha Khaeng WS 16/1. I saw about five ind.: one hirc and 4 – 5 does. See p. 6.

sambar*Rusa unicolor*

Thailand: Huai Kha Khaeng WS about four seen 16/1.

Sri Lanka: one doe seen in Yala NP 2/2.

chital*Axis axis*

Sri Lanka: fairly numerous in Yala NP 1/ 2 and 2/2.

hog deer*Axis porcinus*

Thailand: Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 16/1 about five ind. seen.

This deer was also reintroduced to the park. See p. 6.



chital

Photo © Stefan Lithner

chinese goral*Naemorhedus caudatus*

Thailand: Doi Inthanon National Park 20/1; seven seen. See pp 8-9.

banteng*Bos javanicus*

Thailand: Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary: A herd of 13 animals: one bull and 12 adult and non-adult cows/females were seen. Later in the afternoon we saw another two coming out to drink water from the river.

The population in HKK is estimated to about 400 ind.

wild water buffalo*Bubalus arnee*

Sri Lanka: See pp 18 – 19. A few (4 – 6) seen on Knuckles Ridge 27 – 29/2 and a few (4 – 5) in Yala National Park 1/2.

domestic and wild x domestic water buffalo *Bubalus bubalis et B. arnee x bubalis*

Sri Lanka: See pp 18 -19. At Agawimandawa Ramsah a herd with 20 – 30 heads seen, on Knuckles Ridge 27/1 and 28/1 4 – 6 heads seen, and in Yala National Park several herds of 20 to 30 heads seen.

asian elephant*Elephas maximus*

Thailand: When we arrived to the entrance of Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary in the morning of 16/1 we were not allowed to enter the park immediately since a herd of

elephants had just stirred about along the road between the entrance and the visitors centre. When we were allowed to enter we did not see any elephants here. See p 3. Sri Lanka holds a fair number of elephants, about 3000. The population in Yala National Park is estimated to be between 360 and 380 ind., 30 to 33 of these are adult males. Only three to four of these are “tuskers” (= carrying tusks). One of these wanders back and forth in corridors between Yala National Park and an adjacent wildlife reserves.

In Yala National Park we saw elephants at eight or nine occasions. They were all males. All, except possibly one were old males. One of these was one of the tuskers.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

The species are listed in alphabetic order for their scientific names, even though common names are placed first.

CROCODILE

swamp crocodile

Crocodylus palustris

Sri Lanka: common in Yala National Park 1-2/2



swamp crocodile

Photo © Stefan Lithner

LIZARDS

Five of these taxa have not yet received status as full species in IUCN and Catalogue of Life: (not COL).

Sri Lanka black-tongued lizard

Callotes negrogularis

Sri Lanka: One seen outside Nuwarraelliya 2/2.

common garden lizzard

Callotes versicolor

Sri Lanka: one seen at Agawimandawa Ramsah 23/1.

rocky day gecko

Cnemaspis scalpensis

Sri Lanka: : One seen in Sigiriya; Pidurangala Temples 25/1.

Edward Taylor´s bent-toed gecko

Cyrtoactylus edwardtaylori

Sri Lanka: One seen in Sigiriya; Pidurangala Temples 25/1. *C. kanyana*

Knuckles bent-toed lizard

Cyrtodactylos srilankensis (

Sri Lanka: One seen at Seralelle Waterfall 26/1.

striped rock skink/bronze grass skink

Eutropis macularia

Sri Lanka: One seen at Sigiriya Pidurangala Temples 25/1.

Brook´s house gecko

Hemidactylus brookii

Sri Lanka: One seen in Sigiriya 26/1.

common butterfly lizard

Leiolepis belliana

Thailand: One seen in Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary 16/1.

Wiegmann´s kangaroo lizard

Otocryptis wiegmanni

Sri Lanka: One seen at Sigiriya Pidurangala Temples 25/1.

land monitor

Varanus bengal

Sri Lanka: One seen in Sigiriya 26/1, one in Sam Popomi Arborethrum 26/1, one along the road to Yala 31/1, and some seen in Yala National Park P 1/ 2 and 2/2.



common butterfly lizard

Photo © Stefan Lithner



Brook´s house gecko

Photo © Stefan Lithner

FROGS

common indian toad

Bufo melanostictus

Sri Lanka: One seen near Kirinda Beach Resort 2/ 2.

cricket frog

Fejervarya limnocharis

Sri Lanka: Displaying in and around Yala National Park 1/ 2 and 2/ 2.

montane frog

Fejervarya greenii

Sri Lanka: Displaying in the morning near the entrance of Horton Plains National Park 30/1.

Jerdon's bullfrog

Hoplobatrachus crassus

Sri Lanka: Two seen around Nuwarraelliya 30/1.

corrugated water frog

Lankanectes corrugatus

Sri Lanka: Displaying along river passing Blue Magpie Lodge in Sinharaja 3 – 5/2.

common scrub frog

Pilautus/Pseudopilatus popularis

Sri Lanka: Calling in Kitulgala 6/2.

SERPENTS

trinked snake

Elaphe helena

Sri Lanka: One seen on the road to Sam Popomi Arborethrum 26/1

indian cobra

Naja naja

Sri Lanka: One appearing on the parking lot at Blue Magpie Lodge Sinharaja 4/2.

keelback/asiatic water snake

Xenochrophis piscator

Sri Lanka: One seen in water in Sam Popomi Arborethrum 26/1.



starred tortoise

Photo © Stefan Lithner

TURTLES

starred tortoise

Gelochelidon elegans

Sri Lanka: One seen along the road from Yala National Park entrance 1/ 2 and one seen outside Kirinda 2/2.

Parker's hard-shelled terrapin

Melanochelys trijuga thermalis

Sri Lanka: One seen during night drive outside Kirinda 1/ 2.



crimson rose

Photo © Stefan Lithner



blue glassy tiger

Photo © Stefan Lithner

BUTTERFLIES

The species are listed in alphabetic order for their scientific names, even though common names are placed first.

common jesabel

Delias eucharis

Sri Lanka: One seen in Sinharaja 4/2.

common indian crowe

Euploea core

Sri Lanka: one seen in Sinharaja 4/2.

blue glassy tiger

Ideopsis vulgaris

Sri Lanka: one seen in Sinharaja 4/2.

crimson rose

Pachliopta hector

Sri Lanka: One seen at Kalpitiya 25/1 and one seen near Sigiriya 25/1.

Adresses and links

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Photos from this trip available on http://www.pbase.com/stefan_lithner

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