

**BHUTAN:  
THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**

**APRIL 12 – MAY 4, 2015**

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**TOUR REPORT**  
**BHUTAN: THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**  
**April 12–May 4, 2015**

**By Steve Hilty**

When I first visited Bhutan in 1996 with David Bishop, I said that a visit to Bhutan was like entering a fairy tale world. Everything seemed so different and, in some sense, much of the country did seem frozen in time, with traditions and a culture that had seen relatively little change in centuries. Even its name, Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon, seemed to reflect this fairy tale setting. The country was governed by a real king, a benevolent and enlightened one to be sure, but away from the cities of Paro and Thimphu in the western region, life seemed to have been little affected by the modern world. Buddhism dominated life, monks in dark red robes could be seen almost everywhere, and impressive monasteries called dzongs were scattered throughout the countryside, as were prayer wheels and long strings of prayer flags flying in the breeze. Long isolated, the tiny kingdom known today as Bhutan has even undergone numerous name permutations, once known as Boutan (after a 1774 British report) and since then by various other spellings and pronunciations. Prior to this date Bhutan consisted largely of a number of warring fiefdoms, and only in the last 50 years or so has it opened its borders (albeit in a limited manner) to foreigners.

On this visit, after an absence of 19 years, I can see change, although it is not overwhelming. Today there are more hotels for visitors, many now equipped with Wi-Fi. And cell phone service is widely available. There may be a few more vehicles, although the increase is small, and there is new road construction (mainly improving existing roads), but there is still only one road that connects the more modern west with the remote east, and much of it is a single lane road! There are still no stoplights in the capital city (perhaps the only capital city in the world that can claim that distinction), and while the mighty Himalayan mountains dominate the country, the Kingdom of Bhutan does not permit its highest peaks to be climbed, believing them sacred, although various trekking routes allow limited access. Best of all, from a conservation standpoint, and for birders and naturalists, approximately 72% of the country is covered by forest, much of it either primary forest, or only selectively cut. Bhutan is, then, a remarkable country on many levels, spiritually, culturally, and environmentally, and the opportunity for our small group to travel through much of this country is indeed a privilege. It is also an expensive one because the kingdom extracts a daily fee from all visitors for the opportunity to visit this remote mountain kingdom.

First and foremost, Bhutan is a country of mountains. There is almost no flat land anywhere, and visitors quickly appreciate this when they land at the international airport in Paro on a single short airstrip that runs slightly uphill south to north and with towering mountains all around. Entering and leaving the country by air is thus not for the faint-of-heart. During the course of our visit we would soon learn that there also are no straight

roads in Bhutan, and travel anywhere takes much more time than it would take the Large-billed Crow to fly the route.

Our Bhutan birding experience began less than ten minutes after leaving the international airport when we stopped along the Paro Chu (“Chu” means river) and almost immediately recorded our first Himalayan endemic, the Ibisbill. Our first full-day trip was a visit to a high mountain pass called Chele La (the “La” means a mountain pass), where we thrilled to repeated sightings of Kalij Pheasants and lovely Blood-colored Pheasants. A day later we visited the stunningly beautiful Cheri Valley north of the capital city of Thimphu. Thereafter we proceeded eastward day by day, alternately camping and staying in hotels, with our easternmost destination being the tiny hamlet of Yongkola. From there we backtracked a long day’s journey to the city of Trongsa and its magnificent dzong, and the following day began working our way southward beginning with a three-day camp and two final days at a small hotel in the town of Gelephu on the India border.

With such an extensive route it isn’t difficult to imagine that we visited many different habitats ranging from rather plantation-like Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest in the extreme south near the Indian border to dry Chir Pine and scrub in lower rain-shadow valleys (e.g. around Paro), to humid mixed broadleaf forest at mid-elevations (Limithang Road near Yongkola), and to various evergreen forests right up almost to tree line. And finally we ended the trip with a 6-hour, bird-filled sprint across northern Assam to the bustling Indian city of Gauwathi where we flew back to our starting point in New Delhi.

Wildlife highlights convey only a part of the experience of visiting Bhutan. Of course the Himalayas are filled with little birds with curious, mostly Nepalese names like cutia, fulvetta, minla, sibia, tesia, and yuhina, but there is much more. There is a nice selection of raptors (I especially liked the Black Eagle), lots of kinds of cuckoos, and some hornbills so fantastic they could hardly have been conjured in fairy tales. The Himalayan mountains also are particularly rich in corvids (treepies, magpies, crows, choughs, and even a lovely Eurasian Jay), and there is a remarkable proliferation of wee little parids and allies, almost all of which carry the moniker “tit,” but North American birders weaned on “chickadees” would find both groups much the same. However, two families seem to embody the Himalayan experience more than any others and these are the babblers, now placed in two related families, and the laughingthrushes, which include a slew of rather large, hulking passerines with crazy-quilt patterns and a more eclectic group of species that include the sibias, barwings, minlas, and a *Leiothrix* and *Liocicla*, almost all of which also sport equally complex, patchwork quilt patterns. Finally, there is an almost dizzying array of little blue and rufous “flycatchers” (Old World flycatchers not to be confused with those in the New World), and an array of confusing leaf-warblers and bush-warblers, many of which require hefty servings of patience and experience to identify with confidence. Finally, there are the sunbirds, a feast of color so dazzling that even the most jaded birder could not help but feel a pang of excitement at their appearance.

And here is the best part. We saw species in all of these wonderful groups almost every day. In fact, there were new birds and new names every day, all amidst a display of flowering rhododendron that almost had to be seen to be believed. Layer onto this the unique culture and history, exotic architecture and beautiful artwork, and some of the most gentle and polite people you'll ever meet (weren't the children wonderful?), and you truly do have the trip of a lifetime.

***Itinerary:***

**Days 1-2: Flights from home to Delhi**

**Day 3: Arrival and p.m. drive near Paro**

**Day 4. A.M. to Cheli (La) Pass; p.m. to Thimphu**

**Day 5. Thimphu to Cheri Valley**

**Day 6. Thimphu to Tashithang campsite via Dochu (La) Pass**

**Day 7. Tashithang Road. Camp**

**Day 8. Tashithang to Punakha with p.m. visit to Punakha Dzong**

**Day 9. Pho River valley in a.m. and on to Pele (La) Pass campsite**

**Day 10. Pele (La) Pass campsite to Trongsa**

**Day 11. Trongsa to Bumthang (Leki Guesthouse)**

**Day 12. Bumthang via old road to Sengor campsite**

**Day 13 Sengor to Yongkola**

**Day 14-15. Yongkola area**

**Day 16. Yongkola to Trongsa (via by-pass)**

**Day 17. Trongsa to Zhemgang and Tingtibi**

**Day 18-19. Tingtibi area**

**Day 20. Drive to Gelephu**

**Day 21. Gelephu lowlands**

**Day 22. Depart Bhutan; drive to Guwahati and fly to New Delhi and onward home (arriving on day 23)**

***Key:***

**Blue** = seen only in India (including Radisson Blu)

**Red** = rare or unusual for various reasons

\* (asterisk) heard only

***BIRD LIST: COMMON NAME, SCIENTIFIC NAME***

Note that a number of species on this list are elevational migrants (moving lower or onto the India subcontinent plains during winter months), or passage migrants that occur in Bhutan only during migration.

**Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl, Anatidae**

**Lesser Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna javanica*, ca. 10-12 seen in India on last day**

Ruddy Shelduck, *Tadorna ferruginea*, 7 along the Pho River from Punakha toward Kewanang

Gadwall, *Anas strepera*, a couple along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Eurasian Wigeon, *Anas Penelope*, 1 or 2 along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, 1 female in same area as previous ducks

### **Pheasants, Grouse & Allies, Phasianidae**

\*Hill Partridge, *Arborophila torqueola*, heard in morning most days but we did not see it

\*Rufous-throated Partridge, *Arborophila ruficularis*, heard our last morning camped near Tingtibi

Blood Pheasant, *Ithaginis cruentus*, great studies near Cheli La and on drive from Yongkola back to Trongsa

Satyr Tragopan, *Tragopan satyra*, female seen at Cheli La; heard Cheri Valley; female near Sengor camp; males seen en route to Yongkola

**Himalayan Monal**, *Lophophorus impejanus*, spectacular views of 5 at Sengor camp (10,800 ft); pair seen en route to Yongkola

Red Junglefowl, *Gallus gallus*, seen near Gelephu (male perched in shrub!)

Kalij Pheasant, *Lophura leucomelanos*, seen at Cheli La the first morning and thereafter at various higher-elevations

Indian Peafowl, *Pavo cristatus*, several in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Storks, Ciconiidae**

Asian Openbill, *Anastomus oscitans*, ca. 30-40+ last day in Assam India

Lesser Adjutant, *Leptoptilos javanicus*, ca. 12-15 last days in Assam India

### **Cormorants & Shags, Phalacrocoracidae**

Little Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax niger*, 1 seen in river in foothills above Gelephu

Indian Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*, one seen by some people on last day in India

### **Darters, Anhingidae**

Oriental Darter, *Anhinga melanogaster*, 3 seen soaring; last day in Assam India

### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns, Ardeidae**

**White-bellied Heron**, *Ardea insignis*, seen finally seen along Puma Tsang River (below junction of Pho and Mo rivers) some distance below Punakha; an endangered species

Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*, 1 seen at distance the last day in Assam India

Great Egret, *Ardea (Egretta) alba*, several the last day in Assam India

Intermediate Egret, *Mesophoyx intermedia*, 1-2 (identified by Ansar) the last day in Assam India

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*, several in Assam India

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, commonly seen in rice fields etc. the last day in Assam India

Indian Pond-Heron, *Ardeola grayii*, a few seen in rice fields the last day in Assam India

## **Hawks, Eagles & Kites, Accipitridae**

Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*, seen on drive through Assam India

Oriental Honey-buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, 1 seen along lower section of Zhemgang Road (600 m); also 1 seen the last day as we cross Assam, India

Indian Vulture, *Gyps indicus*, several in Assam India; a surprise as vulture populations were devastated in India a dozen or more years ago but now are slowly recovering

White-rumped Vulture, *Gyps bengalensis*, 2 seen (1 soaring; 1 on ground); scarce and a welcome surprise to see en route across Assam, India

Himalayan Griffon, *Gyps himalayensis*, seen at high elevations on several days; huge assemblage of 60+ seen en route to Trongsa on April 21 (apparently at a dead Yak or cow)

Crested Serpent-Eagle, *Spilornis cheela*, first seen along Mo River at our Tashithang Track camp site; thereafter seen in mid to low elevations on numerous days including lowlands near Gelephu.

Mountain (Hodgson's) Hawk-Eagle, *Nisaetus (Spizaetus) nipalensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site; thereafter seen on at least 7 other days

Black Eagle, *Ictinaetus malayensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site (same place as Mt. Hawk-Eagle); thereafter seen on 3 additional days including one quite close in foothills above Gelephu on our last full day in Bhutan

Steppe Eagle, *Aquila nipalensis*, 1 seen on our drive from the Pele La campsite to Trongsa (our only sighting)

Crested Goshawk, *Accipiter trivirgatus*, 1 seen briefly en route from Yongkola back to Trongsa on April 27

Shikra, *Accipiter badius*, 1 seen in dry Pho River Valley near Punakha; another (prob. this sp) near Gelephu the last day

Besra, *Accipiter virgatus*, 1 seen en above our Tashithang campsite in Pho River valley

Eurasian Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*, a couple seen the first day near Paro; also near Punakha (en route to Tashithang camp site); another near Gelephu on our last day in Bhutan

Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*, seen at Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi at start of trip

Pallas's Fish-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*, great scope studies of one along Pho River near Punakha

Himalayan Buzzard, *Buteo (b.) burmanicus* (now sometimes split from Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*, first seen en route from Trongsa to Bumthang; thereafter seen at least more times in mountains

Upland Buzzard, *Buteo hemilasius*, 2 seen on April 17<sup>th</sup>; en route between Thimphu to Tashithang; identified by Ansar and seen by all of group

## **Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**

White-breasted Waterhen, *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, 1 briefly seen by Ansar and a couple people our last day in Assam India

Eurasian (Common) Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, seen last day in Assam India

Eurasian Coot, *Fulica atra*, 1 seen along Pho (or Mo) river at the Punakha Dzong  
Purple Swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*, 1 seen last day in Assam India by Bev  
and Robert and Ansar

### **Ibisbill, Ibidorhynchidae**

Ibisbill, *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, seen on our first day and within ten minutes of  
leaving the Paro airport; quintessential Himalayan species

### **Plovers & Lapwings, Charadriidae**

River Lapwing, *Vanellus duvaucelii*, seen mainly along Pho River near Punakha  
Red-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus indicus*, seen in dry fields along Pho River Valley  
near Punakha

Pacific Golden Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*, 2 seen last day in Assam India (on  
rice paddy burm); late migrants?)

### **Jacanas, Jacanidae**

Bronze-winged Jacana, *Metopidius indicus*, ca. 5-6 seen in Assam India  
Pheasant-tailed Jacana, *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, at last a half dozen or more  
quite distant at large vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India

### **Sandpipers & Allies, Scolopacidae**

Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, seen twice in Pho river valley near  
Punakha

### **Gulls, Terns & Skimmers, Laridae**

Black-bellied Tern, *Sterna acuticauda*, about 6 individuals distant over large  
vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India; apparently this is the species we  
saw although the similar White-winged (Black) Tern (*Chidonias leucopterus*)  
does occur especially along both east and west coasts of India and to a  
limited extent inland (see Indian Birds, vol. 1(4): 81-83, 2005)

### **Pigeons & Doves, Columbidae,**

Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I), *Columba livia*, seen in all villages and towns; also  
Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Speckled Wood-Pigeon, *Columba hodgsonii*, seen a couple times above  
Yongkola

Oriental Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia orientalis*, seen every day until the last 3 days  
when we encountered none in the lowlands near Gelephu

Red Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia tranquebarica*, 1 seen on rice paddy berm in  
Assam India

Spotted Dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*, seen at various drier, lower elevation  
sites; particularly numerous in dry valleys around Punakha and Gelephu

Barred Cuckoo-Dove, *Macropygia unchall*, seen 2-3 times at our Tashithang  
campsite; also several sightings above Tingtibi

Emerald Dove, *Chalcophaps indica*, seen near our Tingtibi campsite and also at  
a couple sites near but above this camp

Yellow-footed (Green-) Pigeon, *Treron Phoenicopterus*, 1 spotted on nest in trees behind Radisson Blu in New Delhi by Ron and seen by most of group  
Pin-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron apicauda*, seen near Tingtibi by Kirsten  
Wedge-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron sphenurus*, good scope views of a half dozen perched in bare tree above Tingtibi  
Green Imperial Pigeon, *Ducula aenea*, a few in lowlands near Gelephu  
Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula badia*, one in scope at our Tashithang camp; a few other fly-overs (and probably more numerous than our records indicated because we frequently saw large unidentified pigeons in the mountains)

### **Cuckoos, Cuculidae**

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, *Clamator coromandus*, a pair near our Tingtibi campsite; scarce and a good find; pair responded well to playback  
Large Hawk-Cuckoo, *Hierococcyx sparverioides*, the “brain fever” song; first seen on April 24 below Sengor camp but heard daily from about the 17<sup>th</sup> onward  
Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus micropterus*, the 4-note *we-wa wu-hu* (descending in see-saw fashion); heard especially at night at our Tingtibi camp site; seen the last day near Gelephu  
Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, the classic “*Ku-ku*” call); seen on the 18<sup>th</sup> (Tashithang camp area) and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Himalayan Cuckoo, *Cuculus saturatus*, the 4 deep hollow -sounding “*whu-whu-whu-whu*” calls that were heard almost daily (although not at Gelephu apparently); now regarded as a separate species from Oriental Cuckoo *C. optatus*  
Lesser Cuckoo, *Cuculus poliocephalus*, pair well studied in scopes at close range in Cheri Valley  
Banded Bay Cuckoo, *Cacomantis sonneratii*, a couple seen at around 550-600 m elevation near Tingtibi  
Asian Emerald Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx maculatus*, one seen (spotted by Debbie) along road below our Tashithang camp  
Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, *Surniculus lugubris*, first seen (without white tail tips) south of Trongsa along Zhemgang road; and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Asian (Common) Koel, *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, seen (and heard) within the town of Gelephu (and no it is not a “quail” although when you hear Ansar pronounce the name it certainly sounds that way)  
Greater Coucal, *Centropus sinensis*, pair on fence of airport at Gelephu

### **Owls, Strigidae**

\*Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei*, heard only  
Asian Barred Owlet, *Glaucidium cuculoides*, 1 spotted in bare tree (as we were driving) by Ansar; above Tingtibi; another seen in Sal forest near Gelephu



Brown Boobook, *Ninox scutulata*, seen (responded to playback) in Sal forest near Gelephu; we heard it at both of our high elevation campsites (3300 m and 3500 m el)

### **Nightjars & Allies, Caprimulgidae**

Gray (Jungle) Nightjar, *Caprimulgus indicus*, silent and unresponsive at Punakha; seen briefly (silhouette) at our Tingtibi camp (525 m) but called little and was only minimally responsive

### **Swifts, Apodidae**

White-throated Needletail, *Hirundapus caudacutus*, noted by Ron on the 16<sup>th</sup>; group of perhaps a dozen seen very close along the Zhemgang road south of Trongsa an hour or so (ca. 1800 m); spectacular flying machines these birds  
Himalayan Swiftlet, *Aerodramus (Collocalia) brevirostris*, small dark swift; Zhemgang road; Tingtibi and Gelephu; probably at numerous other sites where we saw small dark unidentified swifts

Pacific (Fork-tailed) Swift, *Apus pacificus*, seen a numerous higher-elevation sites from the Punakha/Tashithang camp area onward to the upper part of the Zhemgang road

Dark-rumped Swift, *Apus acuticauda*, a few identified as such in the Pele La area (and en route from there to Trongsa); swift identification is often problematic and this remains a “probable” identification

Asian Palm-Swift, *Cypsiurus balasienis*, several in Gelephu area (lowlands)

### **Kingfishers, Alcedinidae**

White-throated Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*, first seen in Pho river valley (near Punakha) and at numerous lower- to mid-elevation sites thereafter; most numerous in lowlands near Gelephu and in Assam India; Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Crested Kingfisher, *Megaceryle (Ceryle) lugubris*, first seen in Pho river valley near Punakha; also seen a couple times late in tour in the Tingtibi area

Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*, apparently seen by a few people (I don't have a locality listed nor did I see this species)

### **Bee-eaters, Meropidae**

Blue-bearded Bee-eater, *Nyctyornis athertoni*, several sightings of this striking bird near Tingtibi including a pair at nest site on large red clay bank

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, *Merops leschenaulti*, pair seen in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Rollers, Coraciidae**

Indian Roller, *Coracias benghalensis*, seen near Gelephu

Dollarbird, *Eurystomus orientalis*, seen near Gelephu and in Assam, India

### **Hoopoes, Upupidae**

Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, seen the first day near Paro and on 5 days thereafter including near Gelephu

### **Hornbills, Bucerotidae**

Great Hornbill, *Buceros bicornis*, a couple close to road in broadleaf forest in foothills above Tingtibi; and nearly a dozen seen in lowlands near Gelephu

**Rufous-necked Hornbill, *Aceros nipalensis***, one close in treetop along road en route to Tingtibi; another at similar elevation closer to Tingtibi; maybe not rare but surely an impressive bird

Wreathed Hornbill, *Aceros undulatus*, several near Gelephu including one bird that stopped in a treetop in a busy roadside area very close to our group

### **Asian Barbets, Megalaimidae**

Great Barbet, *Megalaima virens*, heard or seen almost daily from the Dochu La (Pass) onward

Lineated Barbet, *Megalaima lineata*, seen within the town of Gelephu and the Sal forest nearby

Golden-throated Barbet, *Megalaima franklinii*, first seen near our Tashithang camp and at least 7 days thereafter

Blue-throated Barbet, *Megalaima asiatica*, less numerous than previous species; seen en route to Pele La (Pass) and thereafter mainly in the Zhemgang/Tingtibi area

Coppersmith Barbet, *Megalaima haemacephala*, 1 very distant bird in bare treetop near Gelephu (bird seen from bus); heard near Gelephu and in Assam India; unfortunately never seen well

### **Honeyguides, Indicatoridae**

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, *Indicator xanthonotus***, fabulous study of a female that perched near a rock bee colony in the lower Cheri Valley (north of Thimphu). We saw a male at another bee colony south of Trongsa (at 1900 m el)

### **Woodpeckers, Picidae**

Speckled Piculet, *Picumnus innominatus*, 1 seen above Tingtibi (ca. 1250 m el)

Gray-capped (Pygmy-) Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) canicapillus*, we saw 3 in the Tingtibi area (ca. 500-600 m el) and a family of 4 at 800 m el in the foothills NW of Gelephu

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) cathpharius*, heard on the 23 and seen on the 24, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Sengor/Yongkola area (mostly at high elevations)

Darjeeling Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) darjellensis*, 1 seen at ca. 2200 m el on the upper section of the Tashithang Valley road that we explored; possibly heard at higher elevation in the Sengor area

Rufous Woodpecker, *Celeus (Micropterus) brachyurus*, our only record was of 1 in flight in the drier upper section of the Zhemgang road (in vicinity of hydroelectric plant maintenance facilities)

Lesser Yellownape, *Picus chlorolophus*, first seen (on two consecutive days) along the Tashithang track road below our camp; also near our camp at Tingtibi on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

Greater Yellownape, *Picus flavinucha*, also first seen along the Tashithang track road; also seen a couple times later including lowlands near Gelephu

Gray-faced (Gray-headed) Woodpecker, *Picus canus*, 4 scattered sightings (in scope) including the upper Tashithang track; near Yongkola; near out Tingtibi camp (ca. 600 m el); and in lowlands near Gelephu

\*Greater Flameback, *Chrysocolaptes guttacrastatus*, heard in Sal forest near Gelephu but did not respond

Pale-headed Woodpecker, *Gecinulus grantia*, 1 seen in bamboo area at ca. 1250 m el on road above Tingtibi

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, 1 seen (and its mate heard) along road above Tingtibi (1550 m) en route to Gelephu

### **Falcons & Caracaras, Falconidae**

Eurasian (Common) Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, seen the first day just above Paro; recorded on at least 4 more days (mostly in drier mid- to lower-elevation valleys) including the Pho River and near Punakha

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, 1 seen flying (circling) near the Punakha Dzong

### **Parrots, Psittacidae**

Rose-ringed Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri*, a few in town of Gelephu (including one that flew down into a small cornfield in town); also in Sal Forest near Gelephu; unidentified *Psittacula* seen flying over Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-breasted Parakeet, *Psittacula alexandri*, a few in treetops in Sal forest near Gelephu

### **Asian & Grauer's (African) Broadbills, Eurylaimidae**

Long-tailed Broadbill, *Psarisomus dalhousiae*, beautiful study of a pair (responding to playback) at ca. 1400 m el) above Tingtibi; pair sat close together and flicked long narrow tails up and down in dramatically exaggerated fashion

### **Vangas, Helmetshrikes & Allies, Vangidae**

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, *Hemipus picatus*, seen along the Zhemgang road above Tingtibi on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Woodswallows, Artamidae**

Ashy Woodswallow, *Artamus fuscus*, a couple briefly NW of Gelephu; also seen by some participants in Assam, India

### **loras, Aegithinidae**

Common lora, *Aegithina tiphia*, 1 seen on May 2 (in foothills NW of Gelephu) by Kirsten and also seen by Robert and perhaps others; never seen particularly well

### **Cuckooshrikes, Campephagidae**

Gray-chinned Minivet, *Pericrocotus solaris*, first seen with large mixed species flock near Yongkola; also at higher elevation in same area and above Tingtibi  
Long-tailed Minivet, *Pericrocotus ethologus*, first seen in Cheri Valley and at 3 (or 4?) sites thereafter but mostly in the western and central part of our trip route  
Scarlet Minivet, *Pericrocotus speciosus*, the commonest and most widespread Minivet; recorded on 9 days beginning with several daily at the Tashithang track campground area

Large Cuckooshrike, *Coracina macei*, 1 seen in Sal forest near Gelephu

Black-winged Cuckooshrike, *Lalage melaschistos*, first seen along road near our Tashithang track camp; then on at least 7 additional days thereafter including a bird heard at ca. 3300 m el near Pele La (pass)

### **Shrikes, Laniidae**

Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus*, one spotted by Robert in dry Pho River valley near Punakha; this bird seen by almost everyone before it finally disappeared despite an extensive on-foot search

Long-tailed Shrike, *Lanius schach*, mainly lower- to mid-elevations; recorded on 8 days

Gray-backed Shrike, *Lanius tephronotus*, commonest shrike at mid- to higher elevations; our first was just 10 minutes from the airport.

### **Vireos, Vireonidae**

Pied (White-browed) Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius flaviscapis*, first seen near Yongkola and twice thereafter

Green Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius xanthochlorus*, pair seen a kilometer below our Sengor camp at around 3000 m (ca. 10,000 ft)

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius melanotis*, pair seen on April 26 about 30 minutes above Yongkola at ca. 2000 m; single bird responded to playback after initial sighting by Beverly

White-bellied Erpornis, *Erpornis zantholeuca*, seen near Yongkola and above Tingtibi

### **Old World Orioles, Oriolidae**

Black-hooded Oriole, *Oriolus xanthonus*, 2 seen by everyone in Sal forest near Gelephu

Maroon Oriole, *Oriolus traillii*, a dozen or more seen near our camp on the Tashithang track road; also seen near Yongkola and at a couple other sites; surprisingly numerous

### **Drongos, Dicruridae**

Black Drongo, *Dicrurus macrocercus*, seen in open lowlands near Gelephu; possible also in open foothills above Gelephu; also Radisson Blue in Delhi  
Ashy Drongo, *Dicrurus leucophaeus*, widespread in Bhutan; seen almost daily in forested mountains; not around Gelephu  
Bronzed Drongo, *Dicrurus aeneus*, another forest-based drongo; seen only along the Zhemgang road between Trongsa and Gelephu; mainly above ca. 500 m  
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus remifer*, 1 (prob. this sp.) near Yongkola; two between Tingtibi and Gelephu  
Hair-crested Drongo, *Dicrurus hottentottus*, seen at our Tashithang campsite; near Yongkola; and on the Zhemgang road and at Tingtibi  
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus paradiseus*, 1 near Tingtibi and a pair at edge of Sal forest near Gelephu that were harassing a Great Hornbill

### **Fantails, Rhipiduridae**

White-throated Fantail, *Rhipidura albicollis*, first seen between Trongsa and Bumthang; several near Yongkola and along Zhemgang road

### **Monarch Flycatchers, Monarchidae**

\*Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, *Terpsiphone paradisi*, heard (AK)

### **Crows, Jays & Magpies, Corvidae**

Eurasian Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*, a number of these beautiful birds were seen in the Cheri Valley  
Yellow-billed (or Gold-billed) Blue-Magpie, *Urocissa flavirostris*, widespread in more open or partly open western half of Bhutan  
Rufous Treepie, *Dendrocitta vagabunda*, only seen near Gelephu; also Assam, India  
Gray Treepie, *Dendrocitta formosae*, rather common and widespread in both forested and lightly wooded areas; first seen east of Thimphu on our drive to the Tashithang camping site; almost daily thereafter  
Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica*, only in drier open valleys between Bumthang and Sengor  
Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m)  
Red-billed Chough, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, also at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m) but favors semi-open areas  
House Crow, *Corvus splendens*, Around Thimphu and Gelephu (particularly numerous in Gelephu); Radisson Blue in New Delhi  
Large-billed Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos*, seen daily; all areas and all elevations

### **Swallows, Hirundinidae**

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, 1 in settled area NW of Gelephu was only sighting

Red-rumped Swallow, *Cecropis (Hirundo) daurica*, a single in settled area NW  
OF Gelephu

Dusky Craig-Martin, *Ptyonoprogne concolor*, a couple over Radisson Blu Hotel in  
New Delhi; originally identified as Eurasian Crag-Martin but this species  
should not occur here (or is only a vagrant); Dusky Crag-Martin is similar but  
darker and seems likely to be the species we saw as it is widespread across  
India

Nepal House-Martin, *Delichon nipalense*, local at several cliff nesting sites;  
Tashithang track road (1800-2000 m); above Yongkola (about 2200 m el)

### **Fairy Flycatchers, Stenostiridae**

Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail, *Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*, Cheri Valley (pair);  
Thimphu to Bumthang (colony); south of Trongsa at rock bee colony

Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, first seen near our  
Tashithang track campsite; also at three other sites

### **Chickadees & Tits, Paridae**

Coal Tit, *Periparus ater*, widespread at higher elevations (fir forest)

Rufous-vented Tit, *Periparus rubidiventris*, another species of higher elevation fir  
forests; first seen near our Pele La camp site; and almost daily between Pele  
La and Yongkola

Gray-crested Tit, *Lophophanes dichrous*, much less numerous than previous two  
species; first seen at Pele La (pass); driver from Trongsa to Bumthang; and  
higher forests en route to Sengor camp site

[Cinereous Tit, *Parus cinereus*, one seen or heard by Ansar near Gelephu]

Green-backed Tit, *Parus monticolus*, commonest and most widespread "tit"; seen  
daily except in lowlands near Gelephu

Yellow-cheeked (Black-spotted) Tit, *Parus spilonotus*, above Yongkola (ca. 1550  
m-2200 m); on Zhemgang road (ca. 1800 m el)

Yellow-browed Tit, *Sylviparus modestus*, first seen in upper Cheri Valley;  
thereafter on 5 days at higher elevations sites; almost always noted with a  
mixed species flock; dull and warbler-like

Sultan Tit, *Melanochlora sultanea*, 1 seen very well on the Damphu road (ca. 600  
m el)

### **Penduline-Tits, Remizidae**

Fire-capped Tit, *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*, seen only April 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>;  
Tashithang camping area

### **Long-tailed Tits, Aegithalidae**

Black-throated (Gray-crowned) Tit, *Aegithalos concinnus*, first seen in Cheri  
Valley and on eight other days in middle elevations (1600-2400 m)

Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit, *Aegithalos iouschistos*, seen on two days  
near our Pele La (Pass) camp site; 3200 m el)

### **Nuthatches, Sittidae**

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, *Sitta cinnamoventris*, Damphu road (near Tingtibi) and on drive from Tingtibi south to Gelephu

White-tailed Nuthatch, *Sitta himalayensis*, the commonest nuthatch in Bhutan; seen on 6 days beginning with a couple in the Cheri Valley

### **Treecreepers, Certhiidae**

Hodgson's Treecreeper, *Certhia hodgsoni*, first seen near Cheli La (Pass); a second bird seen (also in high elevation evergreen forest) between Bumthang and our Sengor campsite

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, *Certhia nipalensis*, seen once between Trongsa and Bumthang (on April 22)

Sikkim Treecreeper, *Certhia discolor*, first seen between the Sengor camp site and Yongkola; seen again near Tingtibi

### **Dippers, Cinclidae**

Brown Dipper, *Cinclus pallasii*, seen on the first seven days of the trip (Apr 14 through 20) but curiously not thereafter; mountain streams

### **Bulbuls, Pycnonotidae**

Striated Bulbul, *Pycnonotus striatus*, first seen between our Sengor camp and Yongkola; also on Zhemgang road (1500-1750 m) above Tingtibi

Black-crested Bulbul, *Pycnonotus flaviventris*, mainly the Zhemgang area downward into foothills

Red-vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus cafer*, a widespread bulbul in Bhutan although not seen at high elevations; most common in Pho Valley around Punakha and around Gelephu and lower part of Zhemgang road; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-whiskered Bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus*, only seen twice; once near Tingtibi and again in Sal forest near Gelephu

White-throated Bulbul, *Alophoixus flaveolus*, a mid-elevation species; Zhemgang road

Black Bulbul, *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, perhaps THE most numerous and widespread bulbul in Bhutan; seen almost every day except in lowlands around Gelephu

Ashy Bulbul, *Hemixos flavala*, a mid- to lower montane species; several scattered records with more sightings along Zhemgang road

Mountain Bulbul, *Ixos (Hypsipetes) mcclllandii*, rather uncommon species first seen along Tashithang track at ca. 1650 m (above camp site); again on two days in Zhemgang area (ca. 800-1400 m)

### **Kinglets, Regulidae**

Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*, seen once in evergreen forest in highlands (ca. 3000+ m) between Bumthang and Sengor camp by Robert and AK

### **Cupwings (Wren-Babblers), Pnoepygidae**

\*Pygmy Cupwing, *Pnoepyga pusilla*, heard along Tashithang; heard between Trongsa and Bumthang; and heard above Yongkola

### **Bush-Warblers & Allies, Cettiidae**

[\*Gray-bellied Tesia, *Tesia cyaniventer*, heard along Zhemgang road by AK

\*Slaty-bellied Tesia, *Tesia olivea*, another *Tesia* heard along Zhemgang road

Chestnut-crowned Bush-Warbler, *Cettia major*, apparently seen in Tashithang

track area and between Trongsa and Bumthang and heard in Zhemgang area

Chestnut-headed Tesia, *Cettia castaneocoronata*, first seen (twice) just below

the Sengor camp at ca. 3000 m; and above Yongkola

Rufous-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus albogularis*

Black-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus schisticeps*

Mountain Tailorbird, *Phyllergates cucullatus*

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, *Horornis fortipes*

### **Leaf-Warblers, Phylloscopidae**

Common (Siberian) Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, 1 seen in Gelephu

Dusky Warbler, *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, 2-3 seen at 1650 m (below Zhemgang)

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus affinis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and 4 sites thereafter; mostly at 2400 m or higher

Buff-barred Warbler, *Phylloscopus pulcher*, first identified at Pele La (pass); identified on two additional days; mostly at 3000 m or higher

Ashy-throated Warbler, *Phylloscopus maculipennis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and thereafter 3 more times; mostly at fairly high elevations

Pale-(Lemon-)rumped Warbler, *Phylloscopus chloronotus*, another mostly high elevation species (breeding?); Cheli La and on 6 days thereafter

Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*, identified near the Tashithang campsite and en route to Sengor campsite

Greenish Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, a single record (possibly only by Ansar?); en route from Thimphu to Tashithang

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus reguloides*, first identified in Cheri Valley; and a 4 additional sites thereafter; apparently fairly common but confusing because it lacks good field marks; at various elevations

Yellow-vented Warbler, *Phylloscopus cantator*, seen near Tashithang camp site and again at mid-elevations along Zhemgang road

Gray-hooded Warbler, *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*, first identified near Dochu La (en route to Tashithang camp site); seen on 8 additional days

Golden-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus burkii*, first identified in Tashithang track area (on two days); also identified on Zhemgang road (April 30)

Whistler's Warbler, *Seicercus whistleri*, a single record (presumably this species) near Dochu La (pass) en route to Tashithang campsite; identified by AK

White-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus affinis*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; another between Bumthang and Sengor camp (both at higher elevations)

Gray-cheeked Warbler, *Seicercus poliogenys*, first identified below the Sengor camp site and on 3 succeeding days



Chestnut-crowned Warbler, *Seicercus castaneiceps*, first seen just below Sengor campsite and then on four additional days; cute pairs in thickets

### **Cisticolas & Allies, Cisticolidae**

Common Tailorbird, *Orthotomus sutorius*, first identified (in Bhutan) above Yongkola; heard or seen three more times in Zhemgang road area including down to ca. 1400 m on May 1 (lunch stop); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Striated Prinia, *Prinia crinigera*, first noted in dry scrub in Pho Valley (near Punakha); seen once more in Zhemgang area and also heard in this latter area

Hill Prinia, *Prinia superciliaris*, 1 seen on April 26 well above Yongkola (on our long return drive to Trongsa)

### **Parrotbills, Wrentit and Allies, Paradoxornithidae**

Fire-tailed Myzornis, *Myzornis pyrrhura*, 3 (a family) seen in red-flowering *Rhododendron* sp. shrub at 3000 m el near Pele La (pass); another seen near Sengor camp (2850 m) by Ron

Golden-breasted Fulvetta, *Lioparus chrysotis*, 1 extended study (with playback response) above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el)

White-browed Fulvetta, *Fulvetta vinipectus*, first seen on Cheli La (pass) and on 5 additional days (mostly ca. 2500-3200 m el)

Great Parrotbill, *Conostoma oemodiu*, 1 seen with mixed species flock near Pele La (pass) campsite at ca. 3300 m el

Brown Parrotbill, *Cholornis unicolor*, 1 seen in bamboo in lower end of Cheri Valley

Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, *Paradoxornis bakeri*, seen along Zhemgang road on April 28 (in bamboo at 1510 m el) and April 29 (in bamboo at 580 m el)

### **Yuhinas, White-eyes & Allies, Zosteropidae**

Striated Yuhina, *Yuhina castaneiceps*, only seen in lower Zhemgang area at ca. 600-1200 m

White-naped Yuhina, *Yuhina bakeri*, 1 group of ca. 3 birds at 1700 m in drier zone of Zhemgang road en route to Gelephu

Whiskered Yuhina, *Yuhina flavicollis*, widespread and common at all mid- to high elevations; seen on at least 11 days

Stripe-throated Yuhina, *Yuhina gularis*, another fairly widespread species of upper elevations (seen on at least 9 days)

Rufous-vented Yuhina, *Yuhina occipitalis*, less numerous than previous two species; first seen near Pele La (pass) and on the following 4 days (mostly ca. 2800-3300 m)

Black-chinned Yuhina, *Yuhina nigrimenta*, a lower elevation species seen on April 28 (ca. 1250 m) and April 30 (ca. 800 m)

Oriental White-eye, *Zosterops palpebrosus*, first seen in dry shrubby vegetation along stream in Pho Valley at 1180 m; thereafter on 4 additional days at

elevations of 800 m (Tingtibi) up to 2800 m (between Punakha and Pele La); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Tree-, Scimitar-Babblers & Allies, Timaliidae**

- Golden Babbler, *Cyanoderma chrysaeum*, first seen above Yongkola (2200 m) and twice thereafter along Zhemgang road (down to 800 m)
- Rufous-capped Babbler, *Cyanoderma ruficeps*, heard near Pele La (2800 m); seen beyond Pele La (2600 m); twice more above Yongkola (ca. 1550-2000 m) and also along Zhemgang Road
- Rufous-fronted Babbler, *Cyanoderma rufifrons*, several seen on April 26 at various elevations above Yongkola (ca. 1550 m to 2450 m)
- Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis caudatus*, 1 above Yongkola (1450 m) eventually responding to playback
- Spotted Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis formosus*, 1 seen along Tashithang track road (responded well to playback)
- Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus superciliaris*, 1 seen below Sengor camp (at ca. 2800 m)
- Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*, 1 at ca. 2300-2400 m el above Yongkola (which led us on a long peek-a-boo chase up the road and later foraged out completely in the open!)
- White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*, seen best around our camp at Tingtibi (ca. 525-600 m)
- Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, *Megapomatorhinus erythrogenys*, apparently rather widespread; first seen in dry scrub of Pho River valley near Punakha; also a various other sites on at least 7 other days
- Gray-throated Babbler, *Stachyris nigriceps*, 4-5 seen along Zhemgang road (ca. 800-900 m el)

### **Ground Babblers & Allies, Pellorneidae**

- White-hooded Babbler**, *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*, family of 4-5 seen for extended period of time in bamboo along the Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575-605 m el
- Yellow-throated Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus cinereus*, 1 seen (1550 m el) above Tingtibi en route to Gelephu; low at broadleaf forest edge
- Rufous-winged Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus castaneiceps*, seen at least twice (more?) above Yongkola at 2200 m el

### **Laughingthrushes & Allies, Leiothrichidae**

- Nepal Fulvetta, *Alcippe nipalensis*, several along Tashithang road (1400 m); also in Zhemgang area above Tingtibi
- Striated Laughingthrush, *Grammatoptila striata*, widespread; seen on at least 12 days; finally heard singing on May 1 above Tingtibi
- Himalayan Cutia, *Cutia nipalensis*, heard and glimpsed above Yongkola (ca. 1500 m el); seen above Tingtibi (1550 m el) with a mixed species flock; methodical branch searcher

Jungle Babbler, *Turdoides striata*, first seen at Radisson Blu in Delhi; also in and near Gelephu (250-300 m el)

White-crested Laughingthrush, *Garrulax leucolophus*, first seen on outskirts of Yongkola in early a.m.; seen and heard daily from Trongsa southward to Gelephu

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, *Garrulax monileger*, best seen in late p.m. along Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575 m

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla rufularis*, seen by a few at Tashithang camp; also above Yongkola and near Tingtibi

Spotted Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ocellata*, heard at a couple spots by SK; only seen (pair) in high elevation evergreen forest between Pele La (pass) and Sengor and what a strikingly-marked bird this is!

White-throated Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla albogularis*, common everywhere except at the lowest elevations the last couple days of trip but what an interesting bird; roams around in great mobs (50+) and forages from the ground (flips leaves) to well up in trees and dozens often seen gliding low across roads; one of the more behaviorally interesting birds of the trip

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ruficollis*, another strikingly-patterned laughingthrush; first seen in open fields at edge of Yongkola; later in other areas including our campsite at Tingtibi

Gray-sided Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla caerulata*, rather retiring pair eventually lured into view a few time along road (ca. 2300 m el) above Yongkola

Bhutan Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran imbricatus* (now split from Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteran lineatus*), first seen along Tashithang road track in dry scrub and brush; another above Yongkola seen by a few people

Blue-winged Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran squamatus*, 1 seen by Ron (others?) in middle part of Zhemgang road (ca. 1500 m)

Black-faced Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran affinis*, scattered records from April 17 through the 27<sup>th</sup> including both afternoon and the following morning at Pele La (2800-3300 m)

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran erythrocephalus*, first seen (several) in lower settled area of Cheri Valley and on 6 more days scattered through the tour route with 1 seen on the drive from our Tingtibi camp to Gelephu

Rufous Sibia, *Heterophasia capistrata*, widespread and common; seen every day from the Cheri Valley onward to our descent to Gelephu

Silver-eared Mesia, *Leiothrix argentauris*, only seen once; dry scrubby area at 800 m el on our descent from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-billed Leiothrix, *Leiothrix lutea*, 1 above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el) seen only by AK; another seen (ca. 1750 m) by Robert and a few others on the drive from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Red-tailed Minla, *Minla ignotincta*, 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owlet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; others seen near Pele La (pass) and in highland areas between Trongsa and Bumthang and near Sengor camp; beautiful little bird

Red-faced Liocichla, *Liocichla phoenicea*, seen only at one site (ca. 1550-1600 m) below Zhemgang Dzong on Zhemgang road; was with several White-browed Fulvetta and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills

Hoary-throated Barwing, *Actinodura nipalensis*, commoner of the two barwings we encountered; 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owllet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; also seen on 3 additional days including once with Rusty-fronted Barwing

Rusty-fronted Barwing, *Actinodura egertoni*, several with large mixed species flock (attracted closer with owl playback) at nearly 3000 m near Sengor west of Sengor; also seen along upper part of road from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Blue-winged Minla, *Minla cyanouroptera*, at least 5 scattered records including the first (April 19) seen only Ron and Robert; others seen by everyone

Chestnut-tailed Minla (Bar-throated Siva), *Minla strigula*, first seen east of Thimphu and beyond the Dochu La (pass); also seen on at least 6 additional days including nearly 15-20 above Yongkola on the 25<sup>th</sup>; overall a common highland species

### **Old World Flycatchers, Muscicapidae**

Dark-sided Flycatcher, *Muscicapa sibirica*, scattered records on 6 days between ca. 600 and 2400 m

Asian Brown Flycatcher, *Muscicapa latirostris*, only seen once; April 17 en route from Thimphu to Pele La (pass)

Oriental Magpie-Robin, *Copsychus saularis*, widespread; recorded on at least 11 days and especially around settled areas at low to mid-elevations (250 to ca. 2200 m); a great singer

White-rumped Shama, *Copsychus malabaricus*, one seen in Gelephu

Pale Blue-Flycatcher, *Cyornis unicolor*, difficult to identify correctly; we believe we saw 3 including one along upper Tashithang Road (ca. 1600 m); and a couple above Yongkola (1750 m)

Blue-throated (Blue) Flycatcher, *Cyornis rubeculoides*, one between Punakha and Pele La (pass) at ca. 1180 m; and 2 females on the Zhemgang road (ca. 600 m) including one of the latter carrying nest material

Large Niltava, *Niltava grandis*, 1 over road (1759 m) above Yongkola; another above Tingtibi

Small Niltava, *Niltava macgrigoriae*, 3 seen along Tashithang road; another above Yongkola at 1750 m el

Rufous-bellied Niltava, *Niltava sundara*, 1 along Tashithang road (1650 m); another near Pele La (pass) at 2800 m; another between Trongsa and Bumthang and a couple above Yongkola

Verditer Flycatcher, *Eumyias thalassinus*, common and widespread breeder; seen on at least 11 days at elevations of 1600-2700+ m

Blue Whistling-Thrush, *Myophonus caeruleus*, seen every day of trip except the last day in lowlands near Gelephu; numbers varied from singles to 30+ daily

Little Forktail, *Enicurus scouleri*, only record was a pair at the waterfall (and bee colony) an hour south of Trongsa

Spotted Forktail, *Enicurus maculatus*, 1 seen on the 22<sup>nd</sup> between Trongsa and Bumthang

Slaty-backed Forktail, *Enicurus schistaceus*, pair seen repeatedly along river at our Tashithang camp; another near Tingtibi

White-tailed Robin, *Cinclidium leucurum*, 1 seen briefly above Tingtibi (1550 m) by Robert and Ansar

Himalayan Bluetail (Red-flanked Bush-Robin), *Tarsiger rufilatus*, 2 seen very well on our trip up to Cheli La (pass); another at 3400 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road)

White-browed Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger indicus*, 1 seen at 3350 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road); unusually high record?

\*Golden Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger chrysaes*, heard near high pass (3400 m) on return from Yongkola to Trongsa but did not respond to playback

Little Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula westermanni*, 1 seen by Kirsten en route to Yongkola

Taiga Flycatcher, *Ficedula albicilla*, seen twice along Damphu road near Tingtibi at ca. 550-600 m el

Ultramarine Flycatcher, *Ficedula superciliaris*, Cheri valley; en route to Tashithang road camp; several at upper end of the section of Tashithang road (2600 m) we explored; another between Pele La (pass) and Trongsa (2600 m)

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, *Ficedula strophinata*, first seen in Cheri Valley and on 8 additional days at middle elevations or higher

Snowy-browed Flycatcher, *Ficedula hyperythra*, 1 seen by part of group on the Zhemgang road

Sapphire Flycatcher, *Ficedula sapphira*, 1 seen at 2100 m on upper part of the Tashithang road that we explored; lovely little flycatcher

Blue-fronted Redstart, *Phoenicurus frontalis*, 2 at Cheli La (pass) in upper evergreen zone; also seen twice in Tashithang road area

Plumbeous (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*, widespread and seen along most streams at middle elevations or higher

White-capped (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*, another widespread species (slightly less common than previous species); small streams

Black Redstart, *Phoenicurus chruros*, 1 seen briefly as it perched on a fence in the village of Yongkola

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, *Monticola rufiventris*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 6 additional days mostly at high elevations

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush, *Monticola cinclorhynchus*, 1 between Thimphu and Pele La (at 1400 m el); also seen on 6 additional days; most numerous in lower Zhemgang road area (i.e. 525-800 m) around Tingtibi and on Damphu road

Blue Rock-Thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, only 1 seen; upper elevation (ca. 1750-1800 m) on Zhemgang road not far below the Zhemgang Dzong

Siberian (Common) Stonechat, *Saxicola maura*, a male in Tashithang road area; another in Pho valley near Punakha

Gray Bushchat, *Saxicola ferreus*, seen on at least 7 days mostly in semi-open or settled areas up to ca. 2600 m

### **Thrushes & Allies, Turdidae**

White-collared Blackbird, *Turdus albocinctus*, seen on different days at elevations of ca. 1500 m (Tashithang road) to 3200 m (Pele La)

Gray-winged Blackbird, *Turdus boulboul*, at least 6 seen in Tashithang road area above our campsite including one female at a nest

### **Starlings, Sturnidae**

Common Hill Myna, *Gracula religiosa*, Gelephu area

Great (White-vented) Myna, *Acridotheres grandis*, Gelephu and Sal forest area

Jungle Myna, *Acridotheres fuscus*, Radisson Blu hotel grounds in Delhi; Gelephu

Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, recorded on 10 different days of trip; mainly lower drier elevations and around settled areas; numerous around Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Asian Pied Starling, *Gracupica contra*, Gelephu area

Chestnut-tailed Starling, *Sturnia malabarica* Gelephu area

[Brahminy Startling, \*Sturnia pagodarum\*, a couple \(possibly nesting\) in trees behind Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi; found by Bev](#)

### **Leafbirds, Chloropseidae**

Golden-fronted Leafbird, *Chloropsis aurifrons*, foothills (ca. 650 m) near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

Orange-bellied Leafbird, *Chloropsis hardwickii*, first seen in Tashithang road area and campsite; at least 3 times thereafter in lower Zhemgang road area and Damphu road

### **Flowerpeckers, Dicaeidae**

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum ignipectus*, first seen a few times in Tashithang road area (near campsite; also Zhemgang road and in foothills near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

### **Sunbirds & Spiderhunters, Nectariniidae**

Fire-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga ignicauda*, a pair seen near high pass (3300 m) on drive from Bumthang to Sengor campsite; spectacular as were all the sunbirds

Black-throated Sunbird, *Aethopyga saturata*, fairly widespread; first seen in Tashithang road area (near camp site) and on 7 additional days (middle to high elevations)

Gould's Sunbird, *Aethopyga gouldiae*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 5 additional days all at elevations of 2200 m or higher

Green-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga nipalensis*, commonest sunbird we encountered; first seen on drive from Thimphu to Tashithang road camp; than on 9 additional days at mid- to high elevations (up to at least 3200 m)

Crimson Sunbird, *Aethopyga siparaja*, only the Zhemgang road area; seen at ca. 1500 m; also a pair at ca. 600 m on the Damphu road

Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna*, mainly around our camp at Tingtibi; also a pair moderately dry woodland slope at 800 m en route to Gelephu

### **Accentors, Prunellidae**

Rufous-breasted Accentor, *Prunella strophiatea*, first seen after breakfast (2600 m) on drive to Tashithang road; seen 3 more times at high elevations between Trongsa and Bumthang; and Bumthang to Sengor

### **Wagtails & Pipits, Motacillidae**

Gray Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*, seen first in Pho valley near Punakha; also on 5 more days and especially on roads in Zhemgang area

White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, seen first at 1300 m on Thimphu to Tashithang road drive; also Pho valley; and on drive to Sengor

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit, *Anthus rufulus*, near Gelephu (briefly) and again in Assam India

Rosy Pipit, *Anthus roseatus*, 2 at 2200 m on Tashithang road (or rice paddy berm)

Olive-backed Pipit, *Anthus hodgsoni*, various sites on 8 different days

### **Buntings & New World Sparrows, Emberizidae**

Crested Bunting, *Melophus lathamii*, Pho River valley (3-4); another in Zhemgang road area

Little Bunting, *Emberiza pusilla*, 1 female (identified as this) on trip to Cheli La (pass)

### **Siskins, Crossbills & Allies, Fringillidae**

Gold-naped Finch, *Pyrrhoptes epauletta*, pair above Yongkola; another near pass (1900 m) en route from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-headed Bullfinch, *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*, flock of ca. 6 at 3350 m el near Pele La campsite and another the following day

Dark-breasted Rosefinch, *Carpodacus nipalensis*, 1 seen by Ron and Ansar en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Common Rosefinch, *Carpodacus erythrinus*, 1 male seen with big mixed species flock (bird photographed) at ca. 3300 m between Bumthang and Sengor campsite

Dark-rumped Rosefinch, *Carpodacus edwardsii*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; and a female on ground inside forest near pass (ca. 3300 m) on drive from Yongkola to Trongsa

Scarlet Finch, *Haematospiza sipahi*, 2 males seen briefly at 2200 m on Tashithang Road; another male perched in treetop at ca. 1600 m (above Yongkola)

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, *Chloris spinoides*, 1 seen on 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road camp site; flock of 15-18 on upper edge of village of Yongkola

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*, flock of 45+ nibbling at sandy concrete near the Dochu La (pass) at 3200+ m); a few also seen above Yongkola on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April; interesting behavior as they returned several times to chew on the sandy concrete even when frightened away

Tibetan Serin, *Serinus thibetanus*, flock of 8-9 at breakfast spot on the 21<sup>st</sup> en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Spot-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas melanozanthos*, 4 on Cheli La (pass) at 3200 m+); another on the 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road campsite

White-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas carnipes*, seen at high elevation above Yongkola and a female on the upper Zhemgang road

### **Old World Sparrows, Passeridae**

House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, village NW of Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Russet Sparrow, *Passer rutilans*, present in almost all villages and settled areas

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, widespread in villages and settled areas

### **Weavers & Allies, Ploceidae**

Indian Silverbill, *Euodice malabarica*, a couple in a palm tree behind Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Waxbills & Allies, Estrildidae**

Scaly-breasted Munia (Nutmeg Mannikin), *Lonchura punctulata*, small group seen on the 20<sup>th</sup> en route to Pele La campsite; another small group at ca. 500 m near Tingtibi (Damphu road)

### **Old World Monkeys, Cercopithecidae**

Assamese Macaque, *Macaca assamensis*, various areas on 8 days; mostly below ca. 2000 m

Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca mulatta*, some question about identity of macaque sightings near the Tashithang campsite; possible this species seen?

Common Langur, *Presbytis entellus*, 2 adults and a juvenile at 2950 m near Dochu La (pass); a high cold site for this species; also above Yongkola

Golden Langur, *Presbytis geel*, common at lower elevations in Zhemgang area

### **Bears, Ursidae**

Himalayan Black Bear, *Selenarctos thibetanus*, 2 (surprisingly close) along river in upper Cheri Valley; well photographed!



### **Weasels, Mustelidae**

Common Otter, *Lutra lutra*, 2 groups of 4 and 3 respectively; Pho River NW of Punakha

Yellow-throated Marten, *Martes flavigula*, 3 animals on steep rocky slope at 2500 m el above Yongkola (less than a kilometer above village of Nambling)

### **Squirrels, Sciuridae**

Giant Pied Squirrel, *Tarufa bicolor*, at least 3 of these enormous squirrels seen in Damphu valley and Zhemgang road near Tingtibi

Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, *Callosciurus pygerythus*, widespread and seen on 8 days of trip; only those in Tingtibi area and Gelephu had pale bellies

Himalayan Striped Squirrel, *Callosciurus macclellandi*, frequent in upper elevation forests

### **Cloven-hoofed ruminants, Bovidae**

Goral (Ghoral), *Nemorhaedus goral*, 1 seen resting on cliff in upper Cheri Valley; possibly a younger animal

### **Deer, Cervidae**

Common Barking Deer, *Muntiacus muntjak*, heard near Pele La (Pass) at 3350 m; one seen by Ansar (others?) near Sal forest at Gelephu

Royle's Pika, *Ochotona roylei*, the commonest pika in the Himalayas and possibly the one we saw frequently although Wikipedia does not list it (on map or in text) specifically for Bhutan

Other items of interest:

**House Gecko** (Gelephu) | **Yaks** (all of the ones we saw were domesticated); a **bat** (at our Tingtibi campsite) which Ansar said was probably Short-noted Bat; a large boldly marked non-poisonous **snake** crossing the Zhemgang road; **rock bee colonies** (in one case with a sign instructing passersby to close their car windows and another sign indicating that you have safely passed the rock bee colony and can now open your window!)

**Plants: see web site:** [www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan](http://www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan)

(Web site has 33 pages with ca. 45 species per page; also has a section on trees of India)

For woody plants: Storrs, Adrian, *Trees and Shrubs of the Minlayas*.

Noble Dendrobium, *Dendrobium noblie*, the pink and white orchids (with dark "eyes") that we all photographed; first encountered in tree canopy along road near the Tashithang campsite

Most interesting to me on this trip was to note that, unlike birds, a large proportion of both woody and herbaceous plants in the Himalayas have allies (e.g. same genus) represented in North America.

**BHUTAN:  
THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**

**APRIL 12 – MAY 4, 2015**

**LEADERS: STEVE HILTY, ANSAR KHAN  
& GASEP UGYEN**

**COMPILED BY: STEVE HILTY**

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.  
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003  
AUSTIN, TX 78746  
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**TOUR REPORT**  
**BHUTAN: THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**  
**April 12–May 4, 2015**

**By Steve Hilty**

When I first visited Bhutan in 1996 with David Bishop, I said that a visit to Bhutan was like entering a fairy tale world. Everything seemed so different and, in some sense, much of the country did seem frozen in time, with traditions and a culture that had seen relatively little change in centuries. Even its name, Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon, seemed to reflect this fairy tale setting. The country was governed by a real king, a benevolent and enlightened one to be sure, but away from the cities of Paro and Thimphu in the western region, life seemed to have been little affected by the modern world. Buddhism dominated life, monks in dark red robes could be seen almost everywhere, and impressive monasteries called dzongs were scattered throughout the countryside, as were prayer wheels and long strings of prayer flags flying in the breeze. Long isolated, the tiny kingdom known today as Bhutan has even undergone numerous name permutations, once known as Boutan (after a 1774 British report) and since then by various other spellings and pronunciations. Prior to this date Bhutan consisted largely of a number of warring fiefdoms, and only in the last 50 years or so has it opened its borders (albeit in a limited manner) to foreigners.

On this visit, after an absence of 19 years, I can see change, although it is not overwhelming. Today there are more hotels for visitors, many now equipped with Wi-Fi. And cell phone service is widely available. There may be a few more vehicles, although the increase is small, and there is new road construction (mainly improving existing roads), but there is still only one road that connects the more modern west with the remote east, and much of it is a single lane road! There are still no stoplights in the capital city (perhaps the only capital city in the world that can claim that distinction), and while the mighty Himalayan mountains dominate the country, the Kingdom of Bhutan does not permit its highest peaks to be climbed, believing them sacred, although various trekking routes allow limited access. Best of all, from a conservation standpoint, and for birders and naturalists, approximately 72% of the country is covered by forest, much of it either primary forest, or only selectively cut. Bhutan is, then, a remarkable country on many levels, spiritually, culturally, and environmentally, and the opportunity for our small group to travel through much of this country is indeed a privilege. It is also an expensive one because the kingdom extracts a daily fee from all visitors for the opportunity to visit this remote mountain kingdom.

First and foremost, Bhutan is a country of mountains. There is almost no flat land anywhere, and visitors quickly appreciate this when they land at the international airport in Paro on a single short airstrip that runs slightly uphill south to north and with towering mountains all around. Entering and leaving the country by air is thus not for the faint-of-heart. During the course of our visit we would soon learn that there also are no straight

roads in Bhutan, and travel anywhere takes much more time than it would take the Large-billed Crow to fly the route.

Our Bhutan birding experience began less than ten minutes after leaving the international airport when we stopped along the Paro Chu (“Chu” means river) and almost immediately recorded our first Himalayan endemic, the Ibisbill. Our first full-day trip was a visit to a high mountain pass called Chele La (the “La” means a mountain pass), where we thrilled to repeated sightings of Kalij Pheasants and lovely Blood-colored Pheasants. A day later we visited the stunningly beautiful Cheri Valley north of the capital city of Thimphu. Thereafter we proceeded eastward day by day, alternately camping and staying in hotels, with our easternmost destination being the tiny hamlet of Yongkola. From there we backtracked a long day’s journey to the city of Trongsa and its magnificent dzong, and the following day began working our way southward beginning with a three-day camp and two final days at a small hotel in the town of Gelephu on the India border.

With such an extensive route it isn’t difficult to imagine that we visited many different habitats ranging from rather plantation-like Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest in the extreme south near the Indian border to dry Chir Pine and scrub in lower rain-shadow valleys (e.g. around Paro), to humid mixed broadleaf forest at mid-elevations (Limithang Road near Yongkola), and to various evergreen forests right up almost to tree line. And finally we ended the trip with a 6-hour, bird-filled sprint across northern Assam to the bustling Indian city of Gauwathi where we flew back to our starting point in New Delhi.

Wildlife highlights convey only a part of the experience of visiting Bhutan. Of course the Himalayas are filled with little birds with curious, mostly Nepalese names like cutia, fulvetta, minla, sibia, tesia, and yuhina, but there is much more. There is a nice selection of raptors (I especially liked the Black Eagle), lots of kinds of cuckoos, and some hornbills so fantastic they could hardly have been conjured in fairy tales. The Himalayan mountains also are particularly rich in corvids (treepies, magpies, crows, choughs, and even a lovely Eurasian Jay), and there is a remarkable proliferation of wee little parids and allies, almost all of which carry the moniker “tit,” but North American birders weaned on “chickadees” would find both groups much the same. However, two families seem to embody the Himalayan experience more than any others and these are the babblers, now placed in two related families, and the laughingthrushes, which include a slew of rather large, hulking passerines with crazy-quilt patterns and a more eclectic group of species that include the sibias, barwings, minlas, and a *Leiothrix* and *Liocicla*, almost all of which also sport equally complex, patchwork quilt patterns. Finally, there is an almost dizzying array of little blue and rufous “flycatchers” (Old World flycatchers not to be confused with those in the New World), and an array of confusing leaf-warblers and bush-warblers, many of which require hefty servings of patience and experience to identify with confidence. Finally, there are the sunbirds, a feast of color so dazzling that even the most jaded birder could not help but feel a pang of excitement at their appearance.

And here is the best part. We saw species in all of these wonderful groups almost every day. In fact, there were new birds and new names every day, all amidst a display of flowering rhododendron that almost had to be seen to be believed. Layer onto this the unique culture and history, exotic architecture and beautiful artwork, and some of the most gentle and polite people you'll ever meet (weren't the children wonderful?), and you truly do have the trip of a lifetime.

***Itinerary:***

**Days 1-2: Flights from home to Delhi**

**Day 3: Arrival and p.m. drive near Paro**

**Day 4. A.M. to Cheli (La) Pass; p.m. to Thimphu**

**Day 5. Thimphu to Cheri Valley**

**Day 6. Thimphu to Tashithang campsite via Dochu (La) Pass**

**Day 7. Tashithang Road. Camp**

**Day 8. Tashithang to Punakha with p.m. visit to Punakha Dzong**

**Day 9. Pho River valley in a.m. and on to Pele (La) Pass campsite**

**Day 10. Pele (La) Pass campsite to Trongsa**

**Day 11. Trongsa to Bumthang (Leki Guesthouse)**

**Day 12. Bumthang via old road to Sengor campsite**

**Day 13 Sengor to Yongkola**

**Day 14-15. Yongkola area**

**Day 16. Yongkola to Trongsa (via by-pass)**

**Day 17. Trongsa to Zhemgang and Tingtibi**

**Day 18-19. Tingtibi area**

**Day 20. Drive to Gelephu**

**Day 21. Gelephu lowlands**

**Day 22. Depart Bhutan; drive to Guwahati and fly to New Delhi and onward home (arriving on day 23)**

***Key:***

**Blue** = seen only in India (including Radisson Blu)

**Red** = rare or unusual for various reasons

\* (asterisk) heard only

***BIRD LIST: COMMON NAME, SCIENTIFIC NAME***

Note that a number of species on this list are elevational migrants (moving lower or onto the India subcontinent plains during winter months), or passage migrants that occur in Bhutan only during migration.

**Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl, Anatidae**

**Lesser Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna javanica*, ca. 10-12 seen in India on last day**

Ruddy Shelduck, *Tadorna ferruginea*, 7 along the Pho River from Punakha toward Kewanang

Gadwall, *Anas strepera*, a couple along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Eurasian Wigeon, *Anas Penelope*, 1 or 2 along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, 1 female is same area as previous ducks

### **Pheasants, Grouse & Allies, Phasianidae**

\*Hill Partridge, *Arborophila torqueola*, heard in morning most days but we did not see it

\*Rufous-throated Partridge, *Arborophila ruficularis*, heard our last morning camped near Tingtibi

Blood Pheasant, *Ithaginis cruentus*, great studies near Cheli La and on drive from Yongkola back to Trongsa

Satyr Tragopan, *Tragopan satyra*, female seen at Cheli La; heard Cheri Valley; female near Sengor camp; males seen en route to Yongkola

**Himalayan Monal**, *Lophophorus impejanus*, spectacular views of 5 at Sengor camp (10,800 ft); pair seen en route to Yongkola

Red Junglefowl, *Gallus gallus*, seen near Gelephu (male perched in shrub!)

Kalij Pheasant, *Lophura leucomelanos*, seen at Cheli La the first morning and thereafter at various higher-elevations

Indian Peafowl, *Pavo cristatus*, several in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Storks, Ciconiidae**

Asian Openbill, *Anastomus oscitans*, ca. 30-40+ last day in Assam India

Lesser Adjutant, *Leptoptilos javanicus*, ca. 12-15 last days in Assam India

### **Cormorants & Shags, Phalacrocoracidae**

Little Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax niger*, 1 seen in river in foothills above Gelephu

Indian Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*, one seen by some people on last day in India

### **Darters, Anhingidae**

Oriental Darter, *Anhinga melanogaster*, 3 seen soaring; last day in Assam India

### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns, Ardeidae**

**White-bellied Heron**, *Ardea insignis*, seen finally seen along Puma Tsang River (below junction of Pho and Mo rivers) some distance below Punakha; an endangered species

Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*, 1 seen at distance the last day in Assam India

Great Egret, *Ardea (Egretta) alba*, several the last day in Assam India

Intermediate Egret, *Mesophoyx intermedia*, 1-2 (identified by Ansar) the last day in Assam India

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*, several in Assam India

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, commonly seen in rice fields etc. the last day in Assam India

Indian Pond-Heron, *Ardeola grayii*, a few seen in rice fields the last day in Assam India

## **Hawks, Eagles & Kites, Accipitridae**

Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*, seen on drive through Assam India

Oriental Honey-buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, 1 seen along lower section of Zhemgang Road (600 m); also 1 seen the last day as we cross Assam, India

Indian Vulture, *Gyps indicus*, several in Assam India; a surprise as vulture populations were devastated in India a dozen or more years ago but now are slowly recovering

White-rumped Vulture, *Gyps bengalensis*, 2 seen (1 soaring; 1 on ground); scarce and a welcome surprise to see en route across Assam, India

Himalayan Griffon, *Gyps himalayensis*, seen at high elevations on several days; huge assemblage of 60+ seen en route to Trongsa on April 21 (apparently at a dead Yak or cow)

Crested Serpent-Eagle, *Spilornis cheela*, first seen along Mo River at our Tashithang Track camp site; thereafter seen in mid to low elevations on numerous days including lowlands near Gelephu.

Mountain (Hodgson's) Hawk-Eagle, *Nisaetus (Spizaetus) nipalensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site; thereafter seen on at least 7 other days

Black Eagle, *Ictinaetus malayensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site (same place as Mt. Hawk-Eagle); thereafter seen on 3 additional days including one quite close in foothills above Gelephu on our last full day in Bhutan

Steppe Eagle, *Aquila nipalensis*, 1 seen on our drive from the Pele La campsite to Trongsa (our only sighting)

Crested Goshawk, *Accipiter trivirgatus*, 1 seen briefly en route from Yongkola back to Trongsa on April 27

Shikra, *Accipiter badius*, 1 seen in dry Pho River Valley near Punakha; another (prob. this sp) near Gelephu the last day

Besra, *Accipiter virgatus*, 1 seen en above our Tashithang campsite in Pho River valley

Eurasian Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*, a couple seen the first day near Paro; also near Punakha (en route to Tashithang camp site); another near Gelephu on our last day in Bhutan

Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*, seen at Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi at start of trip

Pallas's Fish-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*, great scope studies of one along Pho River near Punakha

Himalayan Buzzard, *Buteo (b.) burmanicus* (now sometimes split from Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*, first seen en route from Trongsa to Bumthang; thereafter seen at least more times in mountains

Upland Buzzard, *Buteo hemilasius*, 2 seen on April 17<sup>th</sup>; en route between Thimphu to Tashithang; identified by Ansar and seen by all of group

## **Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**

White-breasted Waterhen, *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, 1 briefly seen by Ansar and a couple people our last day in Assam India

Eurasian (Common) Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, seen last day in Assam India

Eurasian Coot, *Fulica atra*, 1 seen along Pho (or Mo) river at the Punakha Dzong  
Purple Swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*, 1 seen last day in Assam India by Bev  
and Robert and Ansar

### **Ibisbill, Ibidorhynchidae**

Ibisbill, *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, seen on our first day and within ten minutes of  
leaving the Paro airport; quintessential Himalayan species

### **Plovers & Lapwings, Charadriidae**

River Lapwing, *Vanellus duvaucelii*, seen mainly along Pho River near Punakha  
Red-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus indicus*, seen in dry fields along Pho River Valley  
near Punakha

Pacific Golden Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*, 2 seen last day in Assam India (on  
rice paddy burm); late migrants?)

### **Jacanas, Jacanidae**

Bronze-winged Jacana, *Metopidius indicus*, ca. 5-6 seen in Assam India  
Pheasant-tailed Jacana, *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, at last a half dozen or more  
quite distant at large vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India

### **Sandpipers & Allies, Scolopacidae**

Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, seen twice in Pho river valley near  
Punakha

### **Gulls, Terns & Skimmers, Laridae**

Black-bellied Tern, *Sterna acuticauda*, about 6 individuals distant over large  
vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India; apparently this is the species we  
saw although the similar White-winged (Black) Tern (*Chidonias leucopterus*)  
does occur especially along both east and west coasts of India and to a  
limited extent inland (see Indian Birds, vol. 1(4): 81-83, 2005)

### **Pigeons & Doves, Columbidae,**

Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I), *Columba livia*, seen in all villages and towns; also  
Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Speckled Wood-Pigeon, *Columba hodgsonii*, seen a couple times above  
Yongkola

Oriental Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia orientalis*, seen every day until the last 3 days  
when we encountered none in the lowlands near Gelephu

Red Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia tranquebarica*, 1 seen on rice paddy berm in  
Assam India

Spotted Dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*, seen at various drier, lower elevation  
sites; particularly numerous in dry valleys around Punakha and Gelephu

Barred Cuckoo-Dove, *Macropygia unchall*, seen 2-3 times at our Tashithang  
campsite; also several sightings above Tingtibi

Emerald Dove, *Chalcophaps indica*, seen near our Tingtibi campsite and also at  
a couple sites near but above this camp



Yellow-footed (Green-) Pigeon, *Treron Phoenicopterus*, 1 spotted on nest in trees behind Radisson Blu in New Delhi by Ron and seen by most of group  
Pin-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron apicauda*, seen near Tingtibi by Kirsten  
Wedge-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron sphenurus*, good scope views of a half dozen perched in bare tree above Tingtibi  
Green Imperial Pigeon, *Ducula aenea*, a few in lowlands near Gelephu  
Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula badia*, one in scope at our Tashithang camp; a few other fly-overs (and probably more numerous than our records indicated because we frequently saw large unidentified pigeons in the mountains)

### **Cuckoos, Cuculidae**

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, *Clamator coromandus*, a pair near our Tingtibi campsite; scarce and a good find; pair responded well to playback  
Large Hawk-Cuckoo, *Hierococcyx sparverioides*, the “brain fever” song; first seen on April 24 below Sengor camp but heard daily from about the 17<sup>th</sup> onward  
Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus micropterus*, the 4-note *we-wa wu-hu* (descending in see-saw fashion); heard especially at night at our Tingtibi camp site; seen the last day near Gelephu  
Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, the classic “*Ku-ku*” call); seen on the 18<sup>th</sup> (Tashithang camp area) and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Himalayan Cuckoo, *Cuculus saturatus*, the 4 deep hollow -sounding “*whu-whu-whu-whu*” calls that were heard almost daily (although not at Gelephu apparently); now regarded as a separate species from Oriental Cuckoo *C. optatus*  
Lesser Cuckoo, *Cuculus poliocephalus*, pair well studied in scopes at close range in Cheri Valley  
Banded Bay Cuckoo, *Cacomantis sonneratii*, a couple seen at around 550-600 m elevation near Tingtibi  
Asian Emerald Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx maculatus*, one seen (spotted by Debbie) along road below our Tashithang camp  
Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, *Surniculus lugubris*, first seen (without white tail tips) south of Trongsa along Zhemgang road; and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Asian (Common) Koel, *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, seen (and heard) within the town of Gelephu (and no it is not a “quail” although when you hear Ansar pronounce the name it certainly sounds that way)  
Greater Coucal, *Centropus sinensis*, pair on fence of airport at Gelephu

### **Owls, Strigidae**

\*Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei*, heard only  
Asian Barred Owlet, *Glaucidium cuculoides*, 1 spotted in bare tree (as we were driving) by Ansar; above Tingtibi; another seen in Sal forest near Gelephu

Brown Boobook, *Ninox scutulata*, seen (responded to playback) in Sal forest near Gelephu; we heard it at both of our high elevation campsites (3300 m and 3500 m el)

### **Nightjars & Allies, Caprimulgidae**

Gray (Jungle) Nightjar, *Caprimulgus indicus*, silent and unresponsive at Punakha; seen briefly (silhouette) at our Tingtibi camp (525 m) but called little and was only minimally responsive

### **Swifts, Apodidae**

White-throated Needletail, *Hirundapus caudacutus*, noted by Ron on the 16<sup>th</sup>; group of perhaps a dozen seen very close along the Zhemgang road south of Trongsa an hour or so (ca. 1800 m); spectacular flying machines these birds  
Himalayan Swiftlet, *Aerodramus (Collocalia) brevirostris*, small dark swift; Zhemgang road; Tingtibi and Gelephu; probably at numerous other sites where we saw small dark unidentified swifts

Pacific (Fork-tailed) Swift, *Apus pacificus*, seen a numerous higher-elevation sites from the Punakha/Tashithang camp area onward to the upper part of the Zhemgang road

Dark-rumped Swift, *Apus acuticauda*, a few identified as such in the Pele La area (and en route from there to Trongsa); swift identification is often problematic and this remains a “probable” identification

Asian Palm-Swift, *Cypsiurus balasienis*, several in Gelephu area (lowlands)

### **Kingfishers, Alcedinidae**

White-throated Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*, first seen in Pho river valley (near Punakha) and at numerous lower- to mid-elevation sites thereafter; most numerous in lowlands near Gelephu and in Assam India; Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Crested Kingfisher, *Megaceryle (Ceryle) lugubris*, first seen in Pho river valley near Punakha; also seen a couple times late in tour in the Tingtibi area

Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*, apparently seen by a few people (I don't have a locality listed nor did I see this species)

### **Bee-eaters, Meropidae**

Blue-bearded Bee-eater, *Nyctyornis athertoni*, several sightings of this striking bird near Tingtibi including a pair at nest site on large red clay bank

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, *Merops leschenaulti*, pair seen in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Rollers, Coraciidae**

Indian Roller, *Coracias benghalensis*, seen near Gelephu

Dollarbird, *Eurystomus orientalis*, seen near Gelephu and in Assam, India

### **Hoopoes, Upupidae**

Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, seen the first day near Paro and on 5 days thereafter including near Gelephu

### **Hornbills, Bucerotidae**

Great Hornbill, *Buceros bicornis*, a couple close to road in broadleaf forest in foothills above Tingtibi; and nearly a dozen seen in lowlands near Gelephu

**Rufous-necked Hornbill, *Aceros nipalensis***, one close in treetop along road en route to Tingtibi; another at similar elevation closer to Tingtibi; maybe not rare but surely an impressive bird

Wreathed Hornbill, *Aceros undulatus*, several near Gelephu including one bird that stopped in a treetop in a busy roadside area very close to our group

### **Asian Barbets, Megalaimidae**

Great Barbet, *Megalaima virens*, heard or seen almost daily from the Dochu La (Pass) onward

Lineated Barbet, *Megalaima lineata*, seen within the town of Gelephu and the Sal forest nearby

Golden-throated Barbet, *Megalaima franklinii*, first seen near our Tashithang camp and at least 7 days thereafter

Blue-throated Barbet, *Megalaima asiatica*, less numerous than previous species; seen en route to Pele La (Pass) and thereafter mainly in the Zhemgang/Tingtibi area

Coppersmith Barbet, *Megalaima haemacephala*, 1 very distant bird in bare treetop near Gelephu (bird seen from bus); heard near Gelephu and in Assam India; unfortunately never seen well

### **Honeyguides, Indicatoridae**

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, *Indicator xanthonotus***, fabulous study of a female that perched near a rock bee colony in the lower Cheri Valley (north of Thimphu). We saw a male at another bee colony south of Trongsa (at 1900 m el)

### **Woodpeckers, Picidae**

Speckled Piculet, *Picumnus innominatus*, 1 seen above Tingtibi (ca. 1250 m el)

Gray-capped (Pygmy-) Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) canicapillus*, we saw 3 in the Tingtibi area (ca. 500-600 m el) and a family of 4 at 800 m el in the foothills NW of Gelephu

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) cathpharius*, heard on the 23 and seen on the 24, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Sengor/Yongkola area (mostly at high elevations)

Darjeeling Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) darjellensis*, 1 seen at ca. 2200 m el on the upper section of the Tashithang Valley road that we explored; possibly heard at higher elevation in the Sengor area

Rufous Woodpecker, *Celeus (Micropterus) brachyurus*, our only record was of 1 in flight in the drier upper section of the Zhemgang road (in vicinity of hydroelectric plant maintenance facilities)

Lesser Yellownape, *Picus chlorolophus*, first seen (on two consecutive days) along the Tashithang track road below our camp; also near our camp at Tingtibi on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

Greater Yellownape, *Picus flavinucha*, also first seen along the Tashithang track road; also seen a couple times later including lowlands near Gelephu

Gray-faced (Gray-headed) Woodpecker, *Picus canus*, 4 scattered sightings (in scope) including the upper Tashithang track; near Yongkola; near out Tingtibi camp (ca. 600 m el); and in lowlands near Gelephu

\*Greater Flameback, *Chrysocolaptes guttacrastatus*, heard in Sal forest near Gelephu but did not respond

Pale-headed Woodpecker, *Gecinulus grantia*, 1 seen in bamboo area at ca. 1250 m el on road above Tingtibi

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, 1 seen (and its mate heard) along road above Tingtibi (1550 m) en route to Gelephu

### **Falcons & Caracaras, Falconidae**

Eurasian (Common) Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, seen the first day just above Paro; recorded on at least 4 more days (mostly in drier mid- to lower-elevation valleys) including the Pho River and near Punakha

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, 1 seen flying (circling) near the Punakha Dzong

### **Parrots, Psittacidae**

Rose-ringed Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri*, a few in town of Gelephu (including one that flew down into a small cornfield in town); also in Sal Forest near Gelephu; unidentified *Psittacula* seen flying over Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-breasted Parakeet, *Psittacula alexandri*, a few in treetops in Sal forest near Gelephu

### **Asian & Grauer's (African) Broadbills, Eurylaimidae**

Long-tailed Broadbill, *Psarisomus dalhousiae*, beautiful study of a pair (responding to playback) at ca. 1400 m el) above Tingtibi; pair sat close together and flicked long narrow tails up and down in dramatically exaggerated fashion

### **Vangas, Helmetshrikes & Allies, Vangidae**

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, *Hemipus picatus*, seen along the Zhemgang road above Tingtibi on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Woodswallows, Artamidae**

Ashy Woodswallow, *Artamus fuscus*, a couple briefly NW of Gelephu; also seen by some participants in Assam, India

### **loras, Aegithinidae**

Common lora, *Aegithina tiphia*, 1 seen on May 2 (in foothills NW of Gelephu) by Kirsten and also seen by Robert and perhaps others; never seen particularly well

### **Cuckooshrikes, Campephagidae**

Gray-chinned Minivet, *Pericrocotus solaris*, first seen with large mixed species flock near Yongkola; also at higher elevation in same area and above Tingtibi  
Long-tailed Minivet, *Pericrocotus ethologus*, first seen in Cheri Valley and at 3 (or 4?) sites thereafter but mostly in the western and central part of our trip route  
Scarlet Minivet, *Pericrocotus speciosus*, the commonest and most widespread Minivet; recorded on 9 days beginning with several daily at the Tashithang track campground area

Large Cuckooshrike, *Coracina macei*, 1 seen in Sal forest near Gelephu

Black-winged Cuckooshrike, *Lalage melaschistos*, first seen along road near our Tashithang track camp; then on at least 7 additional days thereafter including a bird heard at ca. 3300 m el near Pele La (pass)

### **Shrikes, Laniidae**

Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus*, one spotted by Robert in dry Pho River valley near Punakha; this bird seen by almost everyone before it finally disappeared despite an extensive on-foot search

Long-tailed Shrike, *Lanius schach*, mainly lower- to mid-elevations; recorded on 8 days

Gray-backed Shrike, *Lanius tephronotus*, commonest shrike at mid- to higher elevations; our first was just 10 minutes from the airport.

### **Vireos, Vireonidae**

Pied (White-browed) Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius flaviscapis*, first seen near Yongkola and twice thereafter

Green Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius xanthochlorus*, pair seen a kilometer below our Sengor camp at around 3000 m (ca. 10,000 ft)

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius melanotis*, pair seen on April 26 about 30 minutes above Yongkola at ca. 2000 m; single bird responded to playback after initial sighting by Beverly

White-bellied Erpornis, *Erpornis zantholeuca*, seen near Yongkola and above Tingtibi

### **Old World Orioles, Oriolidae**

Black-hooded Oriole, *Oriolus xanthonus*, 2 seen by everyone in Sal forest near Gelephu

Maroon Oriole, *Oriolus traillii*, a dozen or more seen near our camp on the Tashithang track road; also seen near Yongkola and at a couple other sites; surprisingly numerous

### **Drongos, Dicruridae**

Black Drongo, *Dicrurus macrocercus*, seen in open lowlands near Gelephu; possible also in open foothills above Gelephu; also Radisson Blue in Delhi  
Ashy Drongo, *Dicrurus leucophaeus*, widespread in Bhutan; seen almost daily in forested mountains; not around Gelephu  
Bronzed Drongo, *Dicrurus aeneus*, another forest-based drongo; seen only along the Zhemgang road between Trongsa and Gelephu; mainly above ca. 500 m  
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus remifer*, 1 (prob. this sp.) near Yongkola; two between Tingtibi and Gelephu  
Hair-crested Drongo, *Dicrurus hottentottus*, seen at our Tashithang campsite; near Yongkola; and on the Zhemgang road and at Tingtibi  
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus paradiseus*, 1 near Tingtibi and a pair at edge of Sal forest near Gelephu that were harassing a Great Hornbill

### **Fantails, Rhipiduridae**

White-throated Fantail, *Rhipidura albicollis*, first seen between Trongsa and Bumthang; several near Yongkola and along Zhemgang road

### **Monarch Flycatchers, Monarchidae**

\*Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, *Terpsiphone paradisi*, heard (AK)

### **Crows, Jays & Magpies, Corvidae**

Eurasian Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*, a number of these beautiful birds were seen in the Cheri Valley  
Yellow-billed (or Gold-billed) Blue-Magpie, *Urocissa flavirostris*, widespread in more open or partly open western half of Bhutan  
Rufous Treepie, *Dendrocitta vagabunda*, only seen near Gelephu; also Assam, India  
Gray Treepie, *Dendrocitta formosae*, rather common and widespread in both forested and lightly wooded areas; first seen east of Thimphu on our drive to the Tashithang camping site; almost daily thereafter  
Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica*, only in drier open valleys between Bumthang and Sengor  
Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m)  
Red-billed Chough, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, also at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m) but favors semi-open areas  
House Crow, *Corvus splendens*, Around Thimphu and Gelephu (particularly numerous in Gelephu); Radisson Blue in New Delhi  
Large-billed Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos*, seen daily; all areas and all elevations

### **Swallows, Hirundinidae**

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, 1 in settled area NW of Gelephu was only sighting

Red-rumped Swallow, *Cecropis (Hirundo) daurica*, a single in settled area NW OF Gelephu

Dusky Craig-Martin, *Ptyonoprogne concolor*, a couple over Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi; originally identified as Eurasian Crag-Martin but this species should not occur here (or is only a vagrant); Dusky Crag-Martin is similar but darker and seems likely to be the species we saw as it is widespread across India

Nepal House-Martin, *Delichon nipalense*, local at several cliff nesting sites; Tashithang track road (1800-2000 m); above Yongkola (about 2200 m el)

### **Fairy Flycatchers, Stenostiridae**

Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail, *Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*, Cheri Valley (pair); Thimphu to Bumthang (colony); south of Trongsa at rock bee colony

Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, first seen near our Tashithang track campsite; also at three other sites

### **Chickadees & Tits, Paridae**

Coal Tit, *Periparus ater*, widespread at higher elevations (fir forest)

Rufous-vented Tit, *Periparus rubidiventris*, another species of higher elevation fir forests; first seen near our Pele La camp site; and almost daily between Pele La and Yongkola

Gray-crested Tit, *Lophophanes dichrous*, much less numerous than previous two species; first seen at Pele La (pass); driver from Trongsa to Bumthang; and higher forests en route to Sengor camp site

[Cinereous Tit, *Parus cinereus*, one seen or heard by Ansar near Gelephu]

Green-backed Tit, *Parus monticolus*, commonest and most widespread "tit"; seen daily except in lowlands near Gelephu

Yellow-cheeked (Black-spotted) Tit, *Parus spilonotus*, above Yongkola (ca. 1550 m-2200 m); on Zhemgang road (ca. 1800 m el)

Yellow-browed Tit, *Sylviparus modestus*, first seen in upper Cheri Valley; thereafter on 5 days at higher elevations sites; almost always noted with a mixed species flock; dull and warbler-like

Sultan Tit, *Melanochlora sultanea*, 1 seen very well on the Damphu road (ca. 600 m el)

### **Penduline-Tits, Remizidae**

Fire-capped Tit, *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*, seen only April 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>; Tashithang camping area

### **Long-tailed Tits, Aegithalidae**

Black-throated (Gray-crowned) Tit, *Aegithalos concinnus*, first seen in Cheri Valley and on eight other days in middle elevations (1600-2400 m)

Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit, *Aegithalos iouschistos*, seen on two days near our Pele La (Pass) camp site; 3200 m el)

### **Nuthatches, Sittidae**

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, *Sitta cinnamoventris*, Damphu road (near Tingtibi) and on drive from Tingtibi south to Gelephu

White-tailed Nuthatch, *Sitta himalayensis*, the commonest nuthatch in Bhutan; seen on 6 days beginning with a couple in the Cheri Valley

### **Treecreepers, Certhiidae**

Hodgson's Treecreeper, *Certhia hodgsoni*, first seen near Cheli La (Pass); a second bird seen (also in high elevation evergreen forest) between Bumthang and our Sengor campsite

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, *Certhia nipalensis*, seen once between Trongsa and Bumthang (on April 22)

Sikkim Treecreeper, *Certhia discolor*, first seen between the Sengor camp site and Yongkola; seen again near Tingtibi

### **Dippers, Cinclidae**

Brown Dipper, *Cinclus pallasii*, seen on the first seven days of the trip (Apr 14 through 20) but curiously not thereafter; mountain streams

### **Bulbuls, Pycnonotidae**

Striated Bulbul, *Pycnonotus striatus*, first seen between our Sengor camp and Yongkola; also on Zhemgang road (1500-1750 m) above Tingtibi

Black-crested Bulbul, *Pycnonotus flaviventris*, mainly the Zhemgang area downward into foothills

Red-vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus cafer*, a widespread bulbul in Bhutan although not seen at high elevations; most common in Pho Valley around Punakha and around Gelephu and lower part of Zhemgang road; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-whiskered Bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus*, only seen twice; once near Tingtibi and again in Sal forest near Gelephu

White-throated Bulbul, *Alophoixus flaveolus*, a mid-elevation species; Zhemgang road

Black Bulbul, *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, perhaps THE most numerous and widespread bulbul in Bhutan; seen almost every day except in lowlands around Gelephu

Ashy Bulbul, *Hemixos flavala*, a mid- to lower montane species; several scattered records with more sightings along Zhemgang road

Mountain Bulbul, *Ixos (Hypsipetes) mcclllandii*, rather uncommon species first seen along Tashithang track at ca. 1650 m (above camp site); again on two days in Zhemgang area (ca. 800-1400 m)

### **Kinglets, Regulidae**

Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*, seen once in evergreen forest in highlands (ca. 3000+ m) between Bumthang and Sengor camp by Robert and AK



### **Cupwings (Wren-Babblers), Pnoepygidae**

\*Pygmy Cupwing, *Pnoepyga pusilla*, heard along Tashithang; heard between Trongsa and Bumthang; and heard above Yongkola

### **Bush-Warblers & Allies, Cettiidae**

[\*Gray-bellied Tesia, *Tesia cyaniventer*, heard along Zhemgang road by AK

\*Slaty-bellied Tesia, *Tesia olivea*, another *Tesia* heard along Zhemgang road

Chestnut-crowned Bush-Warbler, *Cettia major*, apparently seen in Tashithang track area and between Trongsa and Bumthang and heard in Zhemgang area

Chestnut-headed Tesia, *Cettia castaneocoronata*, first seen (twice) just below the Sengor camp at ca. 3000 m; and above Yongkola

Rufous-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus albogularis*

Black-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus schisticeps*

Mountain Tailorbird, *Phyllergates cucullatus*

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, *Horornis fortipes*

### **Leaf-Warblers, Phylloscopidae**

Common (Siberian) Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, 1 seen in Gelephu

Dusky Warbler, *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, 2-3 seen at 1650 m (below Zhemgang)

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus affinis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and 4 sites thereafter; mostly at 2400 m or higher

Buff-barred Warbler, *Phylloscopus pulcher*, first identified at Pele La (pass); identified on two additional days; mostly at 3000 m or higher

Ashy-throated Warbler, *Phylloscopus maculipennis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and thereafter 3 more times; mostly at fairly high elevations

Pale-(Lemon-)rumped Warbler, *Phylloscopus chloronotus*, another mostly high elevation species (breeding?); Cheli La and on 6 days thereafter

Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*, identified near the Tashithang campsite and en route to Sengor campsite

Greenish Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, a single record (possibly only by Ansar?); en route from Thimphu to Tashithang

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus reguloides*, first identified in Cheri Valley; and a 4 additional sites thereafter; apparently fairly common but confusing because it lacks good field marks; at various elevations

Yellow-vented Warbler, *Phylloscopus cantator*, seen near Tashithang camp site and again at mid-elevations along Zhemgang road

Gray-hooded Warbler, *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*, first identified near Dochu La (en route to Tashithang camp site); seen on 8 additional days

Golden-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus burkii*, first identified in Tashithang track area (on two days); also identified on Zhemgang road (April 30)

Whistler's Warbler, *Seicercus whistleri*, a single record (presumably this species) near Dochu La (pass) en route to Tashithang campsite; identified by AK

White-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus affinis*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; another between Bumthang and Sengor camp (both at higher elevations)

Gray-cheeked Warbler, *Seicercus poliogenys*, first identified below the Sengor camp site and on 3 succeeding days

Chestnut-crowned Warbler, *Seicercus castaneiceps*, first seen just below Sengor campsite and then on four additional days; cute pairs in thickets

### **Cisticolas & Allies, Cisticolidae**

Common Tailorbird, *Orthotomus sutorius*, first identified (in Bhutan) above Yongkola; heard or seen three more times in Zhemgang road area including down to ca. 1400 m on May 1 (lunch stop); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Striated Prinia, *Prinia crinigera*, first noted in dry scrub in Pho Valley (near Punakha); seen once more in Zhemgang area and also heard in this latter area

Hill Prinia, *Prinia superciliaris*, 1 seen on April 26 well above Yongkola (on our long return drive to Trongsa)

### **Parrotbills, Wrentit and Allies, Paradoxornithidae**

Fire-tailed Myzornis, *Myzornis pyrrhura*, 3 (a family) seen in red-flowering *Rhododendron* sp. shrub at 3000 m el near Pele La (pass); another seen near Sengor camp (2850 m) by Ron

Golden-breasted Fulvetta, *Lioparus chrysotis*, 1 extended study (with playback response) above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el)

White-browed Fulvetta, *Fulvetta vinipectus*, first seen on Cheli La (pass) and on 5 additional days (mostly ca. 2500-3200 m el)

Great Parrotbill, *Conostoma oemodiu*, 1 seen with mixed species flock near Pele La (pass) campsite at ca. 3300 m el

Brown Parrotbill, *Cholornis unicolor*, 1 seen in bamboo in lower end of Cheri Valley

Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, *Paradoxornis bakeri*, seen along Zhemgang road on April 28 (in bamboo at 1510 m el) and April 29 (in bamboo at 580 m el)

### **Yuhinas, White-eyes & Allies, Zosteropidae**

Striated Yuhina, *Yuhina castaneiceps*, only seen in lower Zhemgang area at ca. 600-1200 m

White-naped Yuhina, *Yuhina bakeri*, 1 group of ca. 3 birds at 1700 m in drier zone of Zhemgang road en route to Gelephu

Whiskered Yuhina, *Yuhina flavicollis*, widespread and common at all mid- to high elevations; seen on at least 11 days

Stripe-throated Yuhina, *Yuhina gularis*, another fairly widespread species of upper elevations (seen on at least 9 days)

Rufous-vented Yuhina, *Yuhina occipitalis*, less numerous than previous two species; first seen near Pele La (pass) and on the following 4 days (mostly ca. 2800-3300 m)

Black-chinned Yuhina, *Yuhina nigrimenta*, a lower elevation species seen on April 28 (ca. 1250 m) and April 30 (ca. 800 m)

Oriental White-eye, *Zosterops palpebrosus*, first seen in dry shrubby vegetation along stream in Pho Valley at 1180 m; thereafter on 4 additional days at

elevations of 800 m (Tingtibi) up to 2800 m (between Punakha and Pele La); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Tree-, Scimitar-Babblers & Allies, Timaliidae**

- Golden Babbler, *Cyanoderma chrysaeum*, first seen above Yongkola (2200 m) and twice thereafter along Zhemgang road (down to 800 m)
- Rufous-capped Babbler. *Cyanoderma ruficeps*, heard near Pele La (2800 m); seen beyond Pele La (2600 m); twice more above Yongkola (ca. 1550-2000 m) and also along Zhemgang Road
- Rufous-fronted Babbler, *Cyanoderma rufifrons*, several seen on April 26 at various elevations above Yongkola (ca. 1550 m to 2450 m)
- Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis caudatus*, 1 above Yongkola (1450 m) eventually responding to playback
- Spotted Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis formosus*, 1 seen along Tashithang track road (responded well to playback)
- Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus superciliaris*, 1 seen below Sengor camp (at ca. 2800 m)
- Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*, 1 at ca. 2300-2400 m el above Yongkola (which led us on a long peek-a-boo chase up the road and later foraged out completely in the open!)
- White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*, seen best around our camp at Tingtibi (ca. 525-600 m)
- Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, *Megapomatorhinus erythrogegens*, apparently rather widespread; first seen in dry scrub of Pho River valley near Punakha; also a various other sites on at least 7 other days
- Gray-throated Babbler, *Stachyris nigriceps*, 4-5 seen along Zhemgang road (ca. 800-900 m el)

### **Ground Babblers & Allies, Pellorneidae**

- White-hooded Babbler**, *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*, family of 4-5 seen for extended period of time in bamboo along the Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575-605 m el
- Yellow-throated Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus cinereus*, 1 seen (1550 m el) above Tingtibi en route to Gelephu; low at broadleaf forest edge
- Rufous-winged Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus castaneiceps*, seen at least twice (more?) above Yongkola at 2200 m el

### **Laughingthrushes & Allies, Leiothrichidae**

- Nepal Fulvetta, *Alcippe nipalensis*, several along Tashithang road (1400 m); also in Zhemgang area above Tingtibi
- Striated Laughingthrush, *Grammatoptila striata*, widespread; seen on at least 12 days; finally heard singing on May 1 above Tingtibi
- Himalayan Cutia. *Cutia nipalensis*, heard and glimpsed above Yongkola (ca. 1500 m el); seen above Tingtibi (1550 m el) with a mixed species flock; methodical branch searcher

Jungle Babbler, *Turdoides striata*, first seen at Radisson Blu in Delhi; also in and near Gelephu (250-300 m el)

White-crested Laughingthrush, *Garrulax leucolophus*, first seen on outskirts of Yongkola in early a.m.; seen and heard daily from Trongsa southward to Gelephu

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, *Garrulax monileger*, best seen in late p.m. along Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575 m

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla rufularis*, seen by a few at Tashithang camp; also above Yongkola and near Tingtibi

Spotted Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ocellata*, heard at a couple spots by SK; only seen (pair) in high elevation evergreen forest between Pele La (pass) and Sengor and what a strikingly-marked bird this is!

White-throated Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla albogularis*, common everywhere except at the lowest elevations the last couple days of trip but what an interesting bird; roams around in great mobs (50+) and forages from the ground (flips leaves) to well up in trees and dozens often seen gliding low across roads; one of the more behaviorally interesting birds of the trip

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ruficollis*, another strikingly-patterned laughingthrush; first seen in open fields at edge of Yongkola; later in other areas including our campsite at Tingtibi

Gray-sided Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla caeruleata*, rather retiring pair eventually lured into view a few time along road (ca. 2300 m el) above Yongkola

Bhutan Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran imbricatus* (now split from Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteran lineatus*), first seen along Tashithang road track in dry scrub and brush; another above Yongkola seen by a few people

Blue-winged Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran squamatus*, 1 seen by Ron (others?) in middle part of Zhemgang road (ca. 1500 m)

Black-faced Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran affinis*, scattered records from April 17 through the 27<sup>th</sup> including both afternoon and the following morning at Pele La (2800-3300 m)

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran erythrocephalus*, first seen (several) in lower settled area of Cheri Valley and on 6 more days scattered through the tour route with 1 seen on the drive from our Tingtibi camp to Gelephu

Rufous Sibia, *Heterophasia capistrata*, widespread and common; seen every day from the Cheri Valley onward to our descent to Gelephu

Silver-eared Mesia, *Leiothrix argentauris*, only seen once; dry scrubby area at 800 m el on our descent from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-billed Leiothrix, *Leiothrix lutea*, 1 above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el) seen only by AK; another seen (ca. 1750 m) by Robert and a few others on the drive from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Red-tailed Minla, *Minla ignotincta*, 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owlet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; others seen near Pele La (pass) and in highland areas between Trongsa and Bumthang and near Sengor camp; beautiful little bird

Red-faced Liocichla, *Liocichla phoenicea*, seen only at one site (ca. 1550-1600 m) below Zhemgang Dzong on Zhemgang road; was with several White-browed Fulvetta and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills

Hoary-throated Barwing, *Actinodura nipalensis*, commoner of the two barwings we encountered; 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owlet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; also seen on 3 additional days including once with Rusty-fronted Barwing

Rusty-fronted Barwing, *Actinodura egertoni*, several with large mixed species flock (attracted closer with owl playback) at nearly 3000 m near Sengor west of Sengor; also seen along upper part of road from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Blue-winged Minla, *Minla cyanouroptera*, at least 5 scattered records including the first (April 19) seen only Ron and Robert; others seen by everyone

Chestnut-tailed Minla (Bar-throated Siva), *Minla strigula*, first seen east of Thimphu and beyond the Dochu La (pass); also seen on at least 6 additional days including nearly 15-20 above Yongkola on the 25<sup>th</sup>; overall a common highland species

### **Old World Flycatchers, Muscicapidae**

Dark-sided Flycatcher, *Muscicapa sibirica*, scattered records on 6 days between ca. 600 and 2400 m

Asian Brown Flycatcher, *Muscicapa latirostris*, only seen once; April 17 en route from Thimphu to Pele La (pass)

Oriental Magpie-Robin, *Copsychus saularis*, widespread; recorded on at least 11 days and especially around settled areas at low to mid-elevations (250 to ca. 2200 m); a great singer

White-rumped Shama, *Copsychus malabaricus*, one seen in Gelephu

Pale Blue-Flycatcher, *Cyornis unicolor*, difficult to identify correctly; we believe we saw 3 including one along upper Tashithang Road (ca. 1600 m); and a couple above Yongkola (1750 m)

Blue-throated (Blue) Flycatcher, *Cyornis rubeculoides*, one between Punakha and Pele La (pass) at ca. 1180 m; and 2 females on the Zhemgang road (ca. 600 m) including one of the latter carrying nest material

Large Niltava, *Niltava grandis*, 1 over road (1759 m) above Yongkola; another above Tingtibi

Small Niltava, *Niltava macgrigoriae*, 3 seen along Tashithang road; another above Yongkola at 1750 m el

Rufous-bellied Niltava, *Niltava sundara*, 1 along Tashithang road (1650 m); another near Pele La (pass) at 2800 m; another between Trongsa and Bumthang and a couple above Yongkola

Verditer Flycatcher, *Eumyias thalassinus*, common and widespread breeder; seen on at least 11 days at elevations of 1600-2700+ m

Blue Whistling-Thrush, *Myophonus caeruleus*, seen every day of trip except the last day in lowlands near Gelephu; numbers varied from singles to 30+ daily

Little Forktail, *Enicurus scouleri*, only record was a pair at the waterfall (and bee colony) an hour south of Trongsa

Spotted Forktail, *Enicurus maculatus*, 1 seen on the 22<sup>nd</sup> between Trongsa and Bumthang

Slaty-backed Forktail, *Enicurus schistaceus*, pair seen repeatedly along river at our Tashithang camp; another near Tingtibi

White-tailed Robin, *Cinclidium leucurum*, 1 seen briefly above Tingtibi (1550 m) by Robert and Ansar

Himalayan Bluetail (Red-flanked Bush-Robin), *Tarsiger rufilatus*, 2 seen very well on our trip up to Cheli La (pass); another at 3400 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road)

White-browed Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger indicus*, 1 seen at 3350 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road); unusually high record?

\*Golden Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger chrysaes*, heard near high pass (3400 m) on return from Yongkola to Trongsa but did not respond to playback

Little Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula westermanni*, 1 seen by Kirsten en route to Yongkola

Taiga Flycatcher, *Ficedula albicilla*, seen twice along Damphu road near Tingtibi at ca. 550-600 m el

Ultramarine Flycatcher, *Ficedula superciliaris*, Cheri valley; en route to Tashithang road camp; several at upper end of the section of Tashithang road (2600 m) we explored; another between Pele La (pass) and Trongsa (2600 m)

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, *Ficedula strophinata*, first seen in Cheri Valley and on 8 additional days at middle elevations or higher

Snowy-browed Flycatcher, *Ficedula hyperythra*, 1 seen by part of group on the Zhemgang road

Sapphire Flycatcher, *Ficedula sapphira*, 1 seen at 2100 m on upper part of the Tashithang road that we explored; lovely little flycatcher

Blue-fronted Redstart, *Phoenicurus frontalis*, 2 at Cheli La (pass) in upper evergreen zone; also seen twice in Tashithang road area

Plumbeous (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*, widespread and seen along most streams at middle elevations or higher

White-capped (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*, another widespread species (slightly less common than previous species); small streams

Black Redstart, *Phoenicurus chruros*, 1 seen briefly as it perched on a fence in the village of Yongkola

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, *Monticola rufiventris*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 6 additional days mostly at high elevations

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush, *Monticola cinclorhynchus*, 1 between Thimphu and Pele La (at 1400 m el); also seen on 6 additional days; most numerous in lower Zhemgang road area (i.e. 525-800 m) around Tingtibi and on Damphu road

Blue Rock-Thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, only 1 seen; upper elevation (ca. 1750-1800 m) on Zhemgang road not far below the Zhemgang Dzong

Siberian (Common) Stonechat, *Saxicola maura*, a male in Tashithang road area; another in Pho valley near Punakha

Gray Bushchat, *Saxicola ferreus*, seen on at least 7 days mostly in semi-open or settled areas up to ca. 2600 m

### **Thrushes & Allies, Turdidae**

White-collared Blackbird, *Turdus albocinctus*, seen on different days at elevations of ca. 1500 m (Tashithang road) to 3200 m (Pele La)

Gray-winged Blackbird, *Turdus boulboul*, at least 6 seen in Tashithang road area above our campsite including one female at a nest

### **Starlings, Sturnidae**

Common Hill Myna, *Gracula religiosa*, Gelephu area

Great (White-vented) Myna, *Acridotheres grandis*, Gelephu and Sal forest area

Jungle Myna, *Acridotheres fuscus*, Radisson Blu hotel grounds in Delhi; Gelephu

Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, recorded on 10 different days of trip; mainly lower drier elevations and around settled areas; numerous around Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Asian Pied Starling, *Gracupica contra*, Gelephu area

Chestnut-tailed Starling, *Sturnia malabarica* Gelephu area

Brahminy Startling, *Sturnia pagodarum*, a couple (possibly nesting) in trees behind Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi; found by Bev

### **Leafbirds, Chloropseidae**

Golden-fronted Leafbird, *Chloropsis aurifrons*, foothills (ca. 650 m) near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

Orange-bellied Leafbird, *Chloropsis hardwickii*, first seen in Tashithang road area and campsite; at least 3 times thereafter in lower Zhemgang road area and Damphu road

### **Flowerpeckers, Dicaeidae**

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum ignipectus*, first seen a few times in Tashithang road area (near campsite; also Zhemgang road and in foothills near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

### **Sunbirds & Spiderhunters, Nectariniidae**

Fire-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga ignicauda*, a pair seen near high pass (3300 m) on drive from Bumthang to Sengor campsite; spectacular as were all the sunbirds

Black-throated Sunbird, *Aethopyga saturata*, fairly widespread; first seen in Tashithang road area (near camp site) and on 7 additional days (middle to high elevations)

Gould's Sunbird, *Aethopyga gouldiae*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 5 additional days all at elevations of 2200 m or higher

Green-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga nipalensis*, commonest sunbird we encountered; first seen on drive from Thimphu to Tashithang road camp; than on 9 additional days at mid- to high elevations (up to at least 3200 m)

Crimson Sunbird, *Aethopyga siparaja*, only the Zhemgang road area; seen at ca. 1500 m; also a pair at ca. 600 m on the Damphu road

Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna*, mainly around our camp at Tingtibi; also a pair moderately dry woodland slope at 800 m en route to Gelephu

### **Accentors, Prunellidae**

Rufous-breasted Accentor, *Prunella strophciata*, first seen after breakfast (2600 m) on drive to Tashithang road; seen 3 more times at high elevations between Trongsa and Bumthang; and Bumthang to Sengor

### **Wagtails & Pipits, Motacillidae**

Gray Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*, seen first in Pho valley near Punakha; also on 5 more days and especially on roads in Zhemgang area

White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, seen first at 1300 m on Thimphu to Tashithang road drive; also Pho valley; and on drive to Sengor

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit, *Anthus rufulus*, near Gelephu (briefly) and again in Assam India

Rosy Pipit, *Anthus roseatus*, 2 at 2200 m on Tashithang road (or rice paddy berm)

Olive-backed Pipit, *Anthus hodgsoni*, various sites on 8 different days

### **Buntings & New World Sparrows, Emberizidae**

Crested Bunting, *Melophus lathamii*, Pho River valley (3-4); another in Zhemgang road area

Little Bunting, *Emberiza pusilla*, 1 female (identified as this) on trip to Cheli La (pass)

### **Siskins, Crossbills & Allies, Fringillidae**

Gold-naped Finch, *Pyrrhoptes epauletta*, pair above Yongkola; another near pass (1900 m) en route from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-headed Bullfinch, *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*, flock of ca. 6 at 3350 m el near Pele La campsite and another the following day

Dark-breasted Rosefinch, *Carpodacus nipalensis*, 1 seen by Ron and Ansar en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Common Rosefinch, *Carpodacus erythrinus*, 1 male seen with big mixed species flock (bird photographed) at ca. 3300 m between Bumthang and Sengor campsite

Dark-rumped Rosefinch, *Carpodacus edwardsii*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; and a female on ground inside forest near pass (ca. 3300 m) on drive from Yongkola to Trongsa

Scarlet Finch, *Haematospiza sipahi*, 2 males seen briefly at 2200 m on Tashithang Road; another male perched in treetop at ca. 1600 m (above Yongkola)



Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, *Chloris spinoides*, 1 seen on 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road camp site; flock of 15-18 on upper edge of village of Yongkola

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*, flock of 45+ nibbling at sandy concrete near the Dochu La (pass) at 3200+ m); a few also seen above Yongkola on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April; interesting behavior as they returned several times to chew on the sandy concrete even when frightened away

Tibetan Serin, *Serinus thibetanus*, flock of 8-9 at breakfast spot on the 21<sup>st</sup> en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Spot-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas melanozanthos*, 4 on Cheli La (pass) at 3200 m+); another on the 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road campsite

White-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas carnipes*, seen at high elevation above Yongkola and a female on the upper Zhemgang road

### **Old World Sparrows, Passeridae**

House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, village NW of Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Russet Sparrow, *Passer rutilans*, present in almost all villages and settled areas

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, widespread in villages and settled areas

### **Weavers & Allies, Ploceidae**

Indian Silverbill, *Euodice malabarica*, a couple in a palm tree behind Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Waxbills & Allies, Estrildidae**

Scaly-breasted Munia (Nutmeg Mannikin), *Lonchura punctulata*, small group seen on the 20<sup>th</sup> en route to Pele La campsite; another small group at ca. 500 m near Tingtibi (Damphu road)

### **Old World Monkeys, Cercopithecidae**

Assamese Macaque, *Macaca assamensis*, various areas on 8 days; mostly below ca. 2000 m

Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca mulatta*, some question about identity of macaque sightings near the Tashithang campsite; possible this species seen?

Common Langur, *Presbytis entellus*, 2 adults and a juvenile at 2950 m near Dochu La (pass); a high cold site for this species; also above Yongkola

Golden Langur, *Presbytis geel*, common at lower elevations in Zhemgang area

### **Bears, Ursidae**

Himalayan Black Bear, *Selenarctos thibetanus*, 2 (surprisingly close) along river in upper Cheri Valley; well photographed!

### **Weasels, Mustelidae**

Common Otter, *Lutra lutra*, 2 groups of 4 and 3 respectively; Pho River NW of Punakha

Yellow-throated Marten, *Martes flavigula*, 3 animals on steep rocky slope at 2500 m el above Yongkola (less than a kilometer above village of Nambling)

### **Squirrels, Sciuridae**

Giant Pied Squirrel, *Tarufa bicolor*, at least 3 of these enormous squirrels seen in Damphu valley and Zhemgang road near Tingtibi

Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, *Callosciurus pygerythus*, widespread and seen on 8 days of trip; only those in Tingtibi area and Gelephu had pale bellies

Himalayan Striped Squirrel, *Callosciurus macclellandi*, frequent in upper elevation forests

### **Cloven-hoofed ruminants, Bovidae**

Goral (Ghoral), *Nemorhaedus goral*, 1 seen resting on cliff in upper Cheri Valley; possibly a younger animal

### **Deer, Cervidae**

Common Barking Deer, *Muntiacus muntjak*, heard near Pele La (Pass) at 3350 m; one seen by Ansar (others?) near Sal forest at Gelephu

Royle's Pika, *Ochotona roylei*, the commonest pika in the Himalayas and possibly the one we saw frequently although Wikipedia does not list it (on map or in text) specifically for Bhutan

Other items of interest:

**House Gecko** (Gelephu) | **Yaks** (all of the ones we saw were domesticated); a **bat** (at our Tingtibi campsite) which Ansar said was probably Short-noted Bat; a large boldly marked non-poisonous **snake** crossing the Zhemgang road; **rock bee colonies** (in one case with a sign instructing passersby to close their car windows and another sign indicating that you have safely passed the rock bee colony and can now open your window!)

**Plants: see web site:** [www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan](http://www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan)

(Web site has 33 pages with ca. 45 species per page; also has a section on trees of India)

For woody plants: Storrs, Adrian, *Trees and Shrubs of the Minlayas*.

Noble Dendrobium, *Dendrobium noblie*, the pink and white orchids (with dark "eyes") that we all photographed; first encountered in tree canopy along road near the Tashithang campsite

Most interesting to me on this trip was to note that, unlike birds, a large proportion of both woody and herbaceous plants in the Himalayas have allies (e.g. same genus) represented in North America.

**BHUTAN:  
THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**

**APRIL 12 – MAY 4, 2015**

**LEADERS: STEVE HILTY, ANSAR KHAN  
& GASEP UGYEN**

**COMPILED BY: STEVE HILTY**

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.  
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**TOUR REPORT**  
**BHUTAN: THE BLUE RIBBON TOUR**  
**April 12–May 4, 2015**

**By Steve Hilty**

When I first visited Bhutan in 1996 with David Bishop, I said that a visit to Bhutan was like entering a fairy tale world. Everything seemed so different and, in some sense, much of the country did seem frozen in time, with traditions and a culture that had seen relatively little change in centuries. Even its name, Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon, seemed to reflect this fairy tale setting. The country was governed by a real king, a benevolent and enlightened one to be sure, but away from the cities of Paro and Thimphu in the western region, life seemed to have been little affected by the modern world. Buddhism dominated life, monks in dark red robes could be seen almost everywhere, and impressive monasteries called dzongs were scattered throughout the countryside, as were prayer wheels and long strings of prayer flags flying in the breeze. Long isolated, the tiny kingdom known today as Bhutan has even undergone numerous name permutations, once known as Boutan (after a 1774 British report) and since then by various other spellings and pronunciations. Prior to this date Bhutan consisted largely of a number of warring fiefdoms, and only in the last 50 years or so has it opened its borders (albeit in a limited manner) to foreigners.

On this visit, after an absence of 19 years, I can see change, although it is not overwhelming. Today there are more hotels for visitors, many now equipped with Wi-Fi. And cell phone service is widely available. There may be a few more vehicles, although the increase is small, and there is new road construction (mainly improving existing roads), but there is still only one road that connects the more modern west with the remote east, and much of it is a single lane road! There are still no stoplights in the capital city (perhaps the only capital city in the world that can claim that distinction), and while the mighty Himalayan mountains dominate the country, the Kingdom of Bhutan does not permit its highest peaks to be climbed, believing them sacred, although various trekking routes allow limited access. Best of all, from a conservation standpoint, and for birders and naturalists, approximately 72% of the country is covered by forest, much of it either primary forest, or only selectively cut. Bhutan is, then, a remarkable country on many levels, spiritually, culturally, and environmentally, and the opportunity for our small group to travel through much of this country is indeed a privilege. It is also an expensive one because the kingdom extracts a daily fee from all visitors for the opportunity to visit this remote mountain kingdom.

First and foremost, Bhutan is a country of mountains. There is almost no flat land anywhere, and visitors quickly appreciate this when they land at the international airport in Paro on a single short airstrip that runs slightly uphill south to north and with towering mountains all around. Entering and leaving the country by air is thus not for the faint-of-heart. During the course of our visit we would soon learn that there also are no straight

roads in Bhutan, and travel anywhere takes much more time than it would take the Large-billed Crow to fly the route.

Our Bhutan birding experience began less than ten minutes after leaving the international airport when we stopped along the Paro Chu (“Chu” means river) and almost immediately recorded our first Himalayan endemic, the Ibisbill. Our first full-day trip was a visit to a high mountain pass called Chele La (the “La” means a mountain pass), where we thrilled to repeated sightings of Kalij Pheasants and lovely Blood-colored Pheasants. A day later we visited the stunningly beautiful Cheri Valley north of the capital city of Thimphu. Thereafter we proceeded eastward day by day, alternately camping and staying in hotels, with our easternmost destination being the tiny hamlet of Yongkola. From there we backtracked a long day’s journey to the city of Trongsa and its magnificent dzong, and the following day began working our way southward beginning with a three-day camp and two final days at a small hotel in the town of Gelephu on the India border.

With such an extensive route it isn’t difficult to imagine that we visited many different habitats ranging from rather plantation-like Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest in the extreme south near the Indian border to dry Chir Pine and scrub in lower rain-shadow valleys (e.g. around Paro), to humid mixed broadleaf forest at mid-elevations (Limithang Road near Yongkola), and to various evergreen forests right up almost to tree line. And finally we ended the trip with a 6-hour, bird-filled sprint across northern Assam to the bustling Indian city of Gauwathi where we flew back to our starting point in New Delhi.

Wildlife highlights convey only a part of the experience of visiting Bhutan. Of course the Himalayas are filled with little birds with curious, mostly Nepalese names like cutia, fulvetta, minla, sibia, tesia, and yuhina, but there is much more. There is a nice selection of raptors (I especially liked the Black Eagle), lots of kinds of cuckoos, and some hornbills so fantastic they could hardly have been conjured in fairy tales. The Himalayan mountains also are particularly rich in corvids (treepies, magpies, crows, choughs, and even a lovely Eurasian Jay), and there is a remarkable proliferation of wee little parids and allies, almost all of which carry the moniker “tit,” but North American birders weaned on “chickadees” would find both groups much the same. However, two families seem to embody the Himalayan experience more than any others and these are the babblers, now placed in two related families, and the laughingthrushes, which include a slew of rather large, hulking passerines with crazy-quilt patterns and a more eclectic group of species that include the sibias, barwings, minlas, and a *Leiothrix* and *Liocicla*, almost all of which also sport equally complex, patchwork quilt patterns. Finally, there is an almost dizzying array of little blue and rufous “flycatchers” (Old World flycatchers not to be confused with those in the New World), and an array of confusing leaf-warblers and bush-warblers, many of which require hefty servings of patience and experience to identify with confidence. Finally, there are the sunbirds, a feast of color so dazzling that even the most jaded birder could not help but feel a pang of excitement at their appearance.

And here is the best part. We saw species in all of these wonderful groups almost every day. In fact, there were new birds and new names every day, all amidst a display of flowering rhododendron that almost had to be seen to be believed. Layer onto this the unique culture and history, exotic architecture and beautiful artwork, and some of the most gentle and polite people you'll ever meet (weren't the children wonderful?), and you truly do have the trip of a lifetime.

***Itinerary:***

**Days 1-2: Flights from home to Delhi**

**Day 3: Arrival and p.m. drive near Paro**

**Day 4. A.M. to Cheli (La) Pass; p.m. to Thimphu**

**Day 5. Thimphu to Cheri Valley**

**Day 6. Thimphu to Tashithang campsite via Dochu (La) Pass**

**Day 7. Tashithang Road. Camp**

**Day 8. Tashithang to Punakha with p.m. visit to Punakha Dzong**

**Day 9. Pho River valley in a.m. and on to Pele (La) Pass campsite**

**Day 10. Pele (La) Pass campsite to Trongsa**

**Day 11. Trongsa to Bumthang (Leki Guesthouse)**

**Day 12. Bumthang via old road to Sengor campsite**

**Day 13 Sengor to Yongkola**

**Day 14-15. Yongkola area**

**Day 16. Yongkola to Trongsa (via by-pass)**

**Day 17. Trongsa to Zhemgang and Tingtibi**

**Day 18-19. Tingtibi area**

**Day 20. Drive to Gelephu**

**Day 21. Gelephu lowlands**

**Day 22. Depart Bhutan; drive to Guwahati and fly to New Delhi and onward home (arriving on day 23)**

***Key:***

**Blue** = seen only in India (including Radisson Blu)

**Red** = rare or unusual for various reasons

\* (asterisk) heard only

***BIRD LIST: COMMON NAME, SCIENTIFIC NAME***

Note that a number of species on this list are elevational migrants (moving lower or onto the India subcontinent plains during winter months), or passage migrants that occur in Bhutan only during migration.

**Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl, Anatidae**

**Lesser Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna javanica*, ca. 10-12 seen in India on last day**

Ruddy Shelduck, *Tadorna ferruginea*, 7 along the Pho River from Punakha toward Kewanang

Gadwall, *Anas strepera*, a couple along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Eurasian Wigeon, *Anas Penelope*, 1 or 2 along Pho River between Punakha and Kewanang

Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, 1 female in same area as previous ducks

### **Pheasants, Grouse & Allies, Phasianidae**

\*Hill Partridge, *Arborophila torqueola*, heard in morning most days but we did not see it

\*Rufous-throated Partridge, *Arborophila ruficularis*, heard our last morning camped near Tingtibi

Blood Pheasant, *Ithaginis cruentus*, great studies near Cheli La and on drive from Yongkola back to Trongsa

Satyr Tragopan, *Tragopan satyra*, female seen at Cheli La; heard Cheri Valley; female near Sengor camp; males seen en route to Yongkola

**Himalayan Monal**, *Lophophorus impejanus*, spectacular views of 5 at Sengor camp (10,800 ft); pair seen en route to Yongkola

Red Junglefowl, *Gallus gallus*, seen near Gelephu (male perched in shrub!)

Kalij Pheasant, *Lophura leucomelanos*, seen at Cheli La the first morning and thereafter at various higher-elevations

Indian Peafowl, *Pavo cristatus*, several in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Storks, Ciconiidae**

Asian Openbill, *Anastomus oscitans*, ca. 30-40+ last day in Assam India

Lesser Adjutant, *Leptoptilos javanicus*, ca. 12-15 last days in Assam India

### **Cormorants & Shags, Phalacrocoracidae**

Little Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax niger*, 1 seen in river in foothills above Gelephu

Indian Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*, one seen by some people on last day in India

### **Darters, Anhingidae**

Oriental Darter, *Anhinga melanogaster*, 3 seen soaring; last day in Assam India

### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns, Ardeidae**

**White-bellied Heron**, *Ardea insignis*, seen finally seen along Puma Tsang River (below junction of Pho and Mo rivers) some distance below Punakha; an endangered species

Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*, 1 seen at distance the last day in Assam India

Great Egret, *Ardea (Egretta) alba*, several the last day in Assam India

Intermediate Egret, *Mesophoyx intermedia*, 1-2 (identified by Ansar) the last day in Assam India

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*, several in Assam India

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, commonly seen in rice fields etc. the last day in Assam India

Indian Pond-Heron, *Ardeola grayii*, a few seen in rice fields the last day in Assam India

## **Hawks, Eagles & Kites, Accipitridae**

Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*, seen on drive through Assam India

Oriental Honey-buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, 1 seen along lower section of Zhemgang Road (600 m); also 1 seen the last day as we cross Assam, India

Indian Vulture, *Gyps indicus*, several in Assam India; a surprise as vulture populations were devastated in India a dozen or more years ago but now are slowly recovering

White-rumped Vulture, *Gyps bengalensis*, 2 seen (1 soaring; 1 on ground); scarce and a welcome surprise to see en route across Assam, India

Himalayan Griffon, *Gyps himalayensis*, seen at high elevations on several days; huge assemblage of 60+ seen en route to Trongsa on April 21 (apparently at a dead Yak or cow)

Crested Serpent-Eagle, *Spilornis cheela*, first seen along Mo River at our Tashithang Track camp site; thereafter seen in mid to low elevations on numerous days including lowlands near Gelephu.

Mountain (Hodgson's) Hawk-Eagle, *Nisaetus (Spizaetus) nipalensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site; thereafter seen on at least 7 other days

Black Eagle, *Ictinaetus malayensis*, first seen between Thimphu and our Tashithang camp site (same place as Mt. Hawk-Eagle); thereafter seen on 3 additional days including one quite close in foothills above Gelephu on our last full day in Bhutan

Steppe Eagle, *Aquila nipalensis*, 1 seen on our drive from the Pele La campsite to Trongsa (our only sighting)

Crested Goshawk, *Accipiter trivirgatus*, 1 seen briefly en route from Yongkola back to Trongsa on April 27

Shikra, *Accipiter badius*, 1 seen in dry Pho River Valley near Punakha; another (prob. this sp) near Gelephu the last day

Besra, *Accipiter virgatus*, 1 seen en above our Tashithang campsite in Pho River valley

Eurasian Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*, a couple seen the first day near Paro; also near Punakha (en route to Tashithang camp site); another near Gelephu on our last day in Bhutan

Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*, seen at Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi at start of trip

Pallas's Fish-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*, great scope studies of one along Pho River near Punakha

Himalayan Buzzard, *Buteo (b.) burmanicus* (now sometimes split from Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*, first seen en route from Trongsa to Bumthang; thereafter seen at least more times in mountains

Upland Buzzard, *Buteo hemilasius*, 2 seen on April 17<sup>th</sup>; en route between Thimphu to Tashithang; identified by Ansar and seen by all of group

## **Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**

White-breasted Waterhen, *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, 1 briefly seen by Ansar and a couple people our last day in Assam India

Eurasian (Common) Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, seen last day in Assam India



Eurasian Coot, *Fulica atra*, 1 seen along Pho (or Mo) river at the Punakha Dzong  
Purple Swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*, 1 seen last day in Assam India by Bev  
and Robert and Ansar

### **Ibisbill, Ibidorhynchidae**

Ibisbill, *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, seen on our first day and within ten minutes of  
leaving the Paro airport; quintessential Himalayan species

### **Plovers & Lapwings, Charadriidae**

River Lapwing, *Vanellus duvaucelii*, seen mainly along Pho River near Punakha  
Red-wattled Lapwing, *Vanellus indicus*, seen in dry fields along Pho River Valley  
near Punakha

Pacific Golden Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*, 2 seen last day in Assam India (on  
rice paddy burm); late migrants?)

### **Jacanas, Jacanidae**

Bronze-winged Jacana, *Metopidius indicus*, ca. 5-6 seen in Assam India  
Pheasant-tailed Jacana, *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, at last a half dozen or more  
quite distant at large vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India

### **Sandpipers & Allies, Scolopacidae**

Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, seen twice in Pho river valley near  
Punakha

### **Gulls, Terns & Skimmers, Laridae**

Black-bellied Tern, *Sterna acuticauda*, about 6 individuals distant over large  
vegetation-filled lake near Guwahati India; apparently this is the species we  
saw although the similar White-winged (Black) Tern (*Chidonias leucopterus*)  
does occur especially along both east and west coasts of India and to a  
limited extent inland (see Indian Birds, vol. 1(4): 81-83, 2005)

### **Pigeons & Doves, Columbidae,**

Rock (Feral) Pigeon (I), *Columba livia*, seen in all villages and towns; also  
Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Speckled Wood-Pigeon, *Columba hodgsonii*, seen a couple times above  
Yongkola

Oriental Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia orientalis*, seen every day until the last 3 days  
when we encountered none in the lowlands near Gelephu

Red Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia tranquebarica*, 1 seen on rice paddy berm in  
Assam India

Spotted Dove, *Streptopelia chinensis*, seen at various drier, lower elevation  
sites; particularly numerous in dry valleys around Punakha and Gelephu

Barred Cuckoo-Dove, *Macropygia unchall*, seen 2-3 times at our Tashithang  
campsite; also several sightings above Tingtibi

Emerald Dove, *Chalcophaps indica*, seen near our Tingtibi campsite and also at  
a couple sites near but above this camp

Yellow-footed (Green-) Pigeon, *Treron Phoenicopterus*, 1 spotted on nest in trees behind Radisson Blu in New Delhi by Ron and seen by most of group  
Pin-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron apicauda*, seen near Tingtibi by Kirsten  
Wedge-tailed (Green-)Pigeon, *Treron sphenurus*, good scope views of a half dozen perched in bare tree above Tingtibi  
Green Imperial Pigeon, *Ducula aenea*, a few in lowlands near Gelephu  
Mountain Imperial-Pigeon, *Ducula badia*, one in scope at our Tashithang camp; a few other fly-overs (and probably more numerous than our records indicated because we frequently saw large unidentified pigeons in the mountains)

### **Cuckoos, Cuculidae**

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, *Clamator coromandus*, a pair near our Tingtibi campsite; scarce and a good find; pair responded well to playback  
Large Hawk-Cuckoo, *Hierococcyx sparverioides*, the “brain fever” song; first seen on April 24 below Sengor camp but heard daily from about the 17<sup>th</sup> onward  
Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus micropterus*, the 4-note *we-wa wu-hu* (descending in see-saw fashion); heard especially at night at our Tingtibi camp site; seen the last day near Gelephu  
Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, the classic “*Ku-ku*” call); seen on the 18<sup>th</sup> (Tashithang camp area) and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Himalayan Cuckoo, *Cuculus saturatus*, the 4 deep hollow -sounding “*whu-whu-whu-whu*” calls that were heard almost daily (although not at Gelephu apparently); now regarded as a separate species from Oriental Cuckoo *C. optatus*  
Lesser Cuckoo, *Cuculus poliocephalus*, pair well studied in scopes at close range in Cheri Valley  
Banded Bay Cuckoo, *Cacomantis sonneratii*, a couple seen at around 550-600 m elevation near Tingtibi  
Asian Emerald Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx maculatus*, one seen (spotted by Debbie) along road below our Tashithang camp  
Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, *Surniculus lugubris*, first seen (without white tail tips) south of Trongsa along Zhemgang road; and heard and seen almost daily thereafter  
Asian (Common) Koel, *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, seen (and heard) within the town of Gelephu (and no it is not a “quail” although when you hear Ansar pronounce the name it certainly sounds that way)  
Greater Coucal, *Centropus sinensis*, pair on fence of airport at Gelephu

### **Owls, Strigidae**

\*Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei*, heard only  
Asian Barred Owlet, *Glaucidium cuculoides*, 1 spotted in bare tree (as we were driving) by Ansar; above Tingtibi; another seen in Sal forest near Gelephu

Brown Boobook, *Ninox scutulata*, seen (responded to playback) in Sal forest near Gelephu; we heard it at both of our high elevation campsites (3300 m and 3500 m el)

### **Nightjars & Allies, Caprimulgidae**

Gray (Jungle) Nightjar, *Caprimulgus indicus*, silent and unresponsive at Punakha; seen briefly (silhouette) at our Tingtibi camp (525 m) but called little and was only minimally responsive

### **Swifts, Apodidae**

White-throated Needletail, *Hirundapus caudacutus*, noted by Ron on the 16<sup>th</sup>; group of perhaps a dozen seen very close along the Zhemgang road south of Trongsa an hour or so (ca. 1800 m); spectacular flying machines these birds  
Himalayan Swiftlet, *Aerodramus (Collocalia) brevirostris*, small dark swift; Zhemgang road; Tingtibi and Gelephu; probably at numerous other sites where we saw small dark unidentified swifts

Pacific (Fork-tailed) Swift, *Apus pacificus*, seen a numerous higher-elevation sites from the Punakha/Tashithang camp area onward to the upper part of the Zhemgang road

Dark-rumped Swift, *Apus acuticauda*, a few identified as such in the Pele La area (and en route from there to Trongsa); swift identification is often problematic and this remains a “probable” identification

Asian Palm-Swift, *Cypsiurus balasienis*, several in Gelephu area (lowlands)

### **Kingfishers, Alcedinidae**

White-throated Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*, first seen in Pho river valley (near Punakha) and at numerous lower- to mid-elevation sites thereafter; most numerous in lowlands near Gelephu and in Assam India; Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Crested Kingfisher, *Megaceryle (Ceryle) lugubris*, first seen in Pho river valley near Punakha; also seen a couple times late in tour in the Tingtibi area

Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*, apparently seen by a few people (I don't have a locality listed nor did I see this species)

### **Bee-eaters, Meropidae**

Blue-bearded Bee-eater, *Nyctyornis athertoni*, several sightings of this striking bird near Tingtibi including a pair at nest site on large red clay bank

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, *Merops leschenaulti*, pair seen in lowlands near Gelephu

### **Rollers, Coraciidae**

Indian Roller, *Coracias benghalensis*, seen near Gelephu

Dollarbird, *Eurystomus orientalis*, seen near Gelephu and in Assam, India

### **Hoopoes, Upupidae**

Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, seen the first day near Paro and on 5 days thereafter including near Gelephu

### **Hornbills, Bucerotidae**

Great Hornbill, *Buceros bicornis*, a couple close to road in broadleaf forest in foothills above Tingtibi; and nearly a dozen seen in lowlands near Gelephu

**Rufous-necked Hornbill, *Aceros nipalensis***, one close in treetop along road en route to Tingtibi; another at similar elevation closer to Tingtibi; maybe not rare but surely an impressive bird

Wreathed Hornbill, *Aceros undulatus*, several near Gelephu including one bird that stopped in a treetop in a busy roadside area very close to our group

### **Asian Barbets, Megalaimidae**

Great Barbet, *Megalaima virens*, heard or seen almost daily from the Dochu La (Pass) onward

Lineated Barbet, *Megalaima lineata*, seen within the town of Gelephu and the Sal forest nearby

Golden-throated Barbet, *Megalaima franklinii*, first seen near our Tashithang camp and at least 7 days thereafter

Blue-throated Barbet, *Megalaima asiatica*, less numerous than previous species; seen en route to Pele La (Pass) and thereafter mainly in the Zhemgang/Tingtibi area

Coppersmith Barbet, *Megalaima haemacephala*, 1 very distant bird in bare treetop near Gelephu (bird seen from bus); heard near Gelephu and in Assam India; unfortunately never seen well

### **Honeyguides, Indicatoridae**

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, *Indicator xanthonotus***, fabulous study of a female that perched near a rock bee colony in the lower Cheri Valley (north of Thimphu). We saw a male at another bee colony south of Trongsa (at 1900 m el)

### **Woodpeckers, Picidae**

Speckled Piculet, *Picumnus innominatus*, 1 seen above Tingtibi (ca. 1250 m el)

Gray-capped (Pygmy-) Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) canicapillus*, we saw 3 in the Tingtibi area (ca. 500-600 m el) and a family of 4 at 800 m el in the foothills NW of Gelephu

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) cathpharius*, heard on the 23 and seen on the 24, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in the Sengor/Yongkola area (mostly at high elevations)

Darjeeling Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos (Picoides) darjellensis*, 1 seen at ca. 2200 m el on the upper section of the Tashithang Valley road that we explored; possibly heard at higher elevation in the Sengor area

Rufous Woodpecker, *Celeus (Micropterus) brachyurus*, our only record was of 1 in flight in the drier upper section of the Zhemgang road (in vicinity of hydroelectric plant maintenance facilities)

Lesser Yellownape, *Picus chlorolophus*, first seen (on two consecutive days) along the Tashithang track road below our camp; also near our camp at Tingtibi on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

Greater Yellownape, *Picus flavinucha*, also first seen along the Tashithang track road; also seen a couple times later including lowlands near Gelephu

Gray-faced (Gray-headed) Woodpecker, *Picus canus*, 4 scattered sightings (in scope) including the upper Tashithang track; near Yongkola; near out Tingtibi camp (ca. 600 m el); and in lowlands near Gelephu

\*Greater Flameback, *Chrysocolaptes guttacrastatus*, heard in Sal forest near Gelephu but did not respond

Pale-headed Woodpecker, *Gecinulus grantia*, 1 seen in bamboo area at ca. 1250 m el on road above Tingtibi

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, 1 seen (and its mate heard) along road above Tingtibi (1550 m) en route to Gelephu

### **Falcons & Caracaras, Falconidae**

Eurasian (Common) Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, seen the first day just above Paro; recorded on at least 4 more days (mostly in drier mid- to lower-elevation valleys) including the Pho River and near Punakha

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, 1 seen flying (circling) near the Punakha Dzong

### **Parrots, Psittacidae**

Rose-ringed Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri*, a few in town of Gelephu (including one that flew down into a small cornfield in town); also in Sal Forest near Gelephu; unidentified *Psittacula* seen flying over Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-breasted Parakeet, *Psittacula alexandri*, a few in treetops in Sal forest near Gelephu

### **Asian & Grauer's (African) Broadbills, Eurylaimidae**

Long-tailed Broadbill, *Psarisomus dalhousiae*, beautiful study of a pair (responding to playback) at ca. 1400 m el) above Tingtibi; pair sat close together and flicked long narrow tails up and down in dramatically exaggerated fashion

### **Vangas, Helmetshrikes & Allies, Vangidae**

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, *Hemipus picatus*, seen along the Zhemgang road above Tingtibi on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Woodswallows, Artamidae**

Ashy Woodswallow, *Artamus fuscus*, a couple briefly NW of Gelephu; also seen by some participants in Assam, India

### **loras, Aegithinidae**

Common lora, *Aegithina tiphia*, 1 seen on May 2 (in foothills NW of Gelephu) by Kirsten and also seen by Robert and perhaps others; never seen particularly well

### **Cuckooshrikes, Campephagidae**

Gray-chinned Minivet, *Pericrocotus solaris*, first seen with large mixed species flock near Yongkola; also at higher elevation in same area and above Tingtibi  
Long-tailed Minivet, *Pericrocotus ethologus*, first seen in Cheri Valley and at 3 (or 4?) sites thereafter but mostly in the western and central part of our trip route  
Scarlet Minivet, *Pericrocotus speciosus*, the commonest and most widespread Minivet; recorded on 9 days beginning with several daily at the Tashithang track campground area

Large Cuckooshrike, *Coracina macei*, 1 seen in Sal forest near Gelephu

Black-winged Cuckooshrike, *Lalage melaschistos*, first seen along road near our Tashithang track camp; then on at least 7 additional days thereafter including a bird heard at ca. 3300 m el near Pele La (pass)

### **Shrikes, Laniidae**

Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus*, one spotted by Robert in dry Pho River valley near Punakha; this bird seen by almost everyone before it finally disappeared despite an extensive on-foot search

Long-tailed Shrike, *Lanius schach*, mainly lower- to mid-elevations; recorded on 8 days

Gray-backed Shrike, *Lanius tephronotus*, commonest shrike at mid- to higher elevations; our first was just 10 minutes from the airport.

### **Vireos, Vireonidae**

Pied (White-browed) Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius flaviscapis*, first seen near Yongkola and twice thereafter

Green Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius xanthochlorus*, pair seen a kilometer below our Sengor camp at around 3000 m (ca. 10,000 ft)

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler, *Pteruthius melanotis*, pair seen on April 26 about 30 minutes above Yongkola at ca. 2000 m; single bird responded to playback after initial sighting by Beverly

White-bellied Erpornis, *Erpornis zantholeuca*, seen near Yongkola and above Tingtibi

### **Old World Orioles, Oriolidae**

Black-hooded Oriole, *Oriolus xanthonus*, 2 seen by everyone in Sal forest near Gelephu

Maroon Oriole, *Oriolus traillii*, a dozen or more seen near our camp on the Tashithang track road; also seen near Yongkola and at a couple other sites; surprisingly numerous

### **Drongos, Dicruridae**

Black Drongo, *Dicrurus macrocercus*, seen in open lowlands near Gelephu; possible also in open foothills above Gelephu; also Radisson Blue in Delhi  
Ashy Drongo, *Dicrurus leucophaeus*, widespread in Bhutan; seen almost daily in forested mountains; not around Gelephu  
Bronzed Drongo, *Dicrurus aeneus*, another forest-based drongo; seen only along the Zhemgang road between Trongsa and Gelephu; mainly above ca. 500 m  
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus remifer*, 1 (prob. this sp.) near Yongkola; two between Tingtibi and Gelephu  
Hair-crested Drongo, *Dicrurus hottentottus*, seen at our Tashithang campsite; near Yongkola; and on the Zhemgang road and at Tingtibi  
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, *Dicrurus paradiseus*, 1 near Tingtibi and a pair at edge of Sal forest near Gelephu that were harassing a Great Hornbill

### **Fantails, Rhipiduridae**

White-throated Fantail, *Rhipidura albicollis*, first seen between Trongsa and Bumthang; several near Yongkola and along Zhemgang road

### **Monarch Flycatchers, Monarchidae**

\*Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, *Terpsiphone paradisi*, heard (AK)

### **Crows, Jays & Magpies, Corvidae**

Eurasian Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*, a number of these beautiful birds were seen in the Cheri Valley  
Yellow-billed (or Gold-billed) Blue-Magpie, *Urocissa flavirostris*, widespread in more open or partly open western half of Bhutan  
Rufous Treepie, *Dendrocitta vagabunda*, only seen near Gelephu; also Assam, India  
Gray Treepie, *Dendrocitta formosae*, rather common and widespread in both forested and lightly wooded areas; first seen east of Thimphu on our drive to the Tashithang camping site; almost daily thereafter  
Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica*, only in drier open valleys between Bumthang and Sengor  
Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m)  
Red-billed Chough, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, also at all high elevation sites (above ca. 3000 m) but favors semi-open areas  
House Crow, *Corvus splendens*, Around Thimphu and Gelephu (particularly numerous in Gelephu); Radisson Blue in New Delhi  
Large-billed Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos*, seen daily; all areas and all elevations

### **Swallows, Hirundinidae**

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, 1 in settled area NW of Gelephu was only sighting

Red-rumped Swallow, *Cecropis (Hirundo) daurica*, a single in settled area NW OF Gelephu

Dusky Craig-Martin, *Ptyonoprogne concolor*, a couple over Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi; originally identified as Eurasian Crag-Martin but this species should not occur here (or is only a vagrant); Dusky Crag-Martin is similar but darker and seems likely to be the species we saw as it is widespread across India

Nepal House-Martin, *Delichon nipalense*, local at several cliff nesting sites; Tashithang track road (1800-2000 m); above Yongkola (about 2200 m el)

### **Fairy Flycatchers, Stenostiridae**

Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail, *Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*, Cheri Valley (pair); Thimphu to Bumthang (colony); south of Trongsa at rock bee colony

Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, first seen near our Tashithang track campsite; also at three other sites

### **Chickadees & Tits, Paridae**

Coal Tit, *Periparus ater*, widespread at higher elevations (fir forest)

Rufous-vented Tit, *Periparus rubidiventris*, another species of higher elevation fir forests; first seen near our Pele La camp site; and almost daily between Pele La and Yongkola

Gray-crested Tit, *Lophophanes dichrous*, much less numerous than previous two species; first seen at Pele La (pass); driver from Trongsa to Bumthang; and higher forests en route to Sengor camp site

[Cinereous Tit, *Parus cinereus*, one seen or heard by Ansar near Gelephu]

Green-backed Tit, *Parus monticolus*, commonest and most widespread "tit"; seen daily except in lowlands near Gelephu

Yellow-cheeked (Black-spotted) Tit, *Parus spilonotus*, above Yongkola (ca. 1550 m-2200 m); on Zhemgang road (ca. 1800 m el)

Yellow-browed Tit, *Sylviparus modestus*, first seen in upper Cheri Valley; thereafter on 5 days at higher elevations sites; almost always noted with a mixed species flock; dull and warbler-like

Sultan Tit, *Melanochlora sultanea*, 1 seen very well on the Damphu road (ca. 600 m el)

### **Penduline-Tits, Remizidae**

Fire-capped Tit, *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*, seen only April 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>; Tashithang camping area

### **Long-tailed Tits, Aegithalidae**

Black-throated (Gray-crowned) Tit, *Aegithalos concinnus*, first seen in Cheri Valley and on eight other days in middle elevations (1600-2400 m)

Black-browed (Rufous-fronted) Tit, *Aegithalos iouschistos*, seen on two days near our Pele La (Pass) camp site; 3200 m el)



### **Nuthatches, Sittidae**

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, *Sitta cinnamoventris*, Damphu road (near Tingtibi) and on drive from Tingtibi south to Gelephu

White-tailed Nuthatch, *Sitta himalayensis*, the commonest nuthatch in Bhutan; seen on 6 days beginning with a couple in the Cheri Valley

### **Treecreepers, Certhiidae**

Hodgson's Treecreeper, *Certhia hodgsoni*, first seen near Cheli La (Pass); a second bird seen (also in high elevation evergreen forest) between Bumthang and our Sengor campsite

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, *Certhia nipalensis*, seen once between Trongsa and Bumthang (on April 22)

Sikkim Treecreeper, *Certhia discolor*, first seen between the Sengor camp site and Yongkola; seen again near Tingtibi

### **Dippers, Cinclidae**

Brown Dipper, *Cinclus pallasii*, seen on the first seven days of the trip (Apr 14 through 20) but curiously not thereafter; mountain streams

### **Bulbuls, Pycnonotidae**

Striated Bulbul, *Pycnonotus striatus*, first seen between our Sengor camp and Yongkola; also on Zhemgang road (1500-1750 m) above Tingtibi

Black-crested Bulbul, *Pycnonotus flaviventris*, mainly the Zhemgang area downward into foothills

Red-vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus cafer*, a widespread bulbul in Bhutan although not seen at high elevations; most common in Pho Valley around Punakha and around Gelephu and lower part of Zhemgang road; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Red-whiskered Bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus*, only seen twice; once near Tingtibi and again in Sal forest near Gelephu

White-throated Bulbul, *Alophoixus flaveolus*, a mid-elevation species; Zhemgang road

Black Bulbul, *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, perhaps THE most numerous and widespread bulbul in Bhutan; seen almost every day except in lowlands around Gelephu

Ashy Bulbul, *Hemixos flavala*, a mid- to lower montane species; several scattered records with more sightings along Zhemgang road

Mountain Bulbul, *Ixos (Hypsipetes) mcclllandii*, rather uncommon species first seen along Tashithang track at ca. 1650 m (above camp site); again on two days in Zhemgang area (ca. 800-1400 m)

### **Kinglets, Regulidae**

Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*, seen once in evergreen forest in highlands (ca. 3000+ m) between Bumthang and Sengor camp by Robert and AK

### **Cupwings (Wren-Babblers), Pnoepygidae**

\*Pygmy Cupwing, *Pnoepyga pusilla*, heard along Tashithang; heard between Trongsa and Bumthang; and heard above Yongkola

### **Bush-Warblers & Allies, Cettiidae**

[\*Gray-bellied Tesia, *Tesia cyaniventer*, heard along Zhemgang road by AK

\*Slaty-bellied Tesia, *Tesia olivea*, another *Tesia* heard along Zhemgang road

Chestnut-crowned Bush-Warbler, *Cettia major*, apparently seen in Tashithang track area and between Trongsa and Bumthang and heard in Zhemgang area

Chestnut-headed Tesia, *Cettia castaneocoronata*, first seen (twice) just below the Sengor camp at ca. 3000 m; and above Yongkola

Rufous-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus albogularis*

Black-faced Warbler, *Abroscopus schisticeps*

Mountain Tailorbird, *Phyllergates cucullatus*

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, *Horornis fortipes*

### **Leaf-Warblers, Phylloscopidae**

Common (Siberian) Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, 1 seen in Gelephu

Dusky Warbler, *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, 2-3 seen at 1650 m (below Zhemgang)

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus affinis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and 4 sites thereafter; mostly at 2400 m or higher

Buff-barred Warbler, *Phylloscopus pulcher*, first identified at Pele La (pass); identified on two additional days; mostly at 3000 m or higher

Ashy-throated Warbler, *Phylloscopus maculipennis*, first seen in Cheri Valley and thereafter 3 more times; mostly at fairly high elevations

Pale-(Lemon-)rumped Warbler, *Phylloscopus chloronotus*, another mostly high elevation species (breeding?); Cheli La and on 6 days thereafter

Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*, identified near the Tashithang campsite and en route to Sengor campsite

Greenish Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, a single record (possibly only by Ansar?); en route from Thimphu to Tashithang

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus reguloides*, first identified in Cheri Valley; and a 4 additional sites thereafter; apparently fairly common but confusing because it lacks good field marks; at various elevations

Yellow-vented Warbler, *Phylloscopus cantator*, seen near Tashithang camp site and again at mid-elevations along Zhemgang road

Gray-hooded Warbler, *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*, first identified near Dochu La (en route to Tashithang camp site); seen on 8 additional days

Golden-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus burkii*, first identified in Tashithang track area (on two days); also identified on Zhemgang road (April 30)

Whistler's Warbler, *Seicercus whistleri*, a single record (presumably this species) near Dochu La (pass) en route to Tashithang campsite; identified by AK

White-spectacled Warbler, *Seicercus affinis*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; another between Bumthang and Sengor camp (both at higher elevations)

Gray-cheeked Warbler, *Seicercus poliogenys*, first identified below the Sengor camp site and on 3 succeeding days

Chestnut-crowned Warbler, *Seicercus castaneiceps*, first seen just below Sengor campsite and then on four additional days; cute pairs in thickets

### **Cisticolas & Allies, Cisticolidae**

Common Tailorbird, *Orthotomus sutorius*, first identified (in Bhutan) above Yongkola; heard or seen three more times in Zhemgang road area including down to ca. 1400 m on May 1 (lunch stop); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Striated Prinia, *Prinia crinigera*, first noted in dry scrub in Pho Valley (near Punakha); seen once more in Zhemgang area and also heard in this latter area

Hill Prinia, *Prinia superciliaris*, 1 seen on April 26 well above Yongkola (on our long return drive to Trongsa

### **Parrotbills, Wrentit and Allies, Paradoxornithidae**

Fire-tailed Myzornis, *Myzornis pyrrhura*, 3 (a family) seen in red-flowering *Rhododendron* sp. shrub at 3000 m el near Pele La (pass); another seen near Sengor camp (2850 m) by Ron

Golden-breasted Fulvetta, *Lioparus chrysotis*, 1 extended study (with playback response) above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el)

White-browed Fulvetta, *Fulvetta vinipectus*, first seen on Cheli La (pass) and on 5 additional days (mostly ca. 2500-3200 m el)

Great Parrotbill, *Conostoma oemodiu*, 1 seen with mixed species flock near Pele La (pass) campsite at ca. 3300 m el

Brown Parrotbill, *Cholornis unicolor*, 1 seen in bamboo in lower end of Cheri Valley

Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, *Paradoxornis bakeri*, seen along Zhemgang road on April 28 (in bamboo at 1510 m el) and April 29 (in bamboo at 580 m el)

### **Yuhinas, White-eyes & Allies, Zosteropidae**

Striated Yuhina, *Yuhina castaneiceps*, only seen in lower Zhemgang area at ca. 600-1200 m

White-naped Yuhina, *Yuhina bakeri*, 1 group of ca. 3 birds at 1700 m in drier zone of Zhemgang road en route to Gelephu

Whiskered Yuhina, *Yuhina flavicollis*, widespread and common at all mid- to high elevations; seen on at least 11 days

Stripe-throated Yuhina, *Yuhina gularis*, another fairly widespread species of upper elevations (seen on at least 9 days)

Rufous-vented Yuhina, *Yuhina occipitalis*, less numerous than previous two species; first seen near Pele La (pass) and on the following 4 days (mostly ca. 2800-3300 m)

Black-chinned Yuhina, *Yuhina nigrimenta*, a lower elevation species seen on April 28 (ca. 1250 m) and April 30 (ca. 800 m)

Oriental White-eye, *Zosterops palpebrosus*, first seen in dry shrubby vegetation along stream in Pho Valley at 1180 m; thereafter on 4 additional days at

elevations of 800 m (Tingtibi) up to 2800 m (between Punakha and Pele La); also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Tree-, Scimitar-Babblers & Allies, Timaliidae**

- Golden Babbler, *Cyanoderma chrysaeum*, first seen above Yongkola (2200 m) and twice thereafter along Zhemgang road (down to 800 m)
- Rufous-capped Babbler, *Cyanoderma ruficeps*, heard near Pele La (2800 m); seen beyond Pele La (2600 m); twice more above Yongkola (ca. 1550-2000 m) and also along Zhemgang Road
- Rufous-fronted Babbler, *Cyanoderma rufifrons*, several seen on April 26 at various elevations above Yongkola (ca. 1550 m to 2450 m)
- Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis caudatus*, 1 above Yongkola (1450 m) eventually responding to playback
- Spotted Wren-Babbler, *Spelaeornis formosus*, 1 seen along Tashithang track road (responded well to playback)
- Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus superciliaris*, 1 seen below Sengor camp (at ca. 2800 m)
- Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*, 1 at ca. 2300-2400 m el above Yongkola (which led us on a long peek-a-boo chase up the road and later foraged out completely in the open!)
- White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*, seen best around our camp at Tingtibi (ca. 525-600 m)
- Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler, *Megapomatorhinus erythrogegens*, apparently rather widespread; first seen in dry scrub of Pho River valley near Punakha; also at various other sites on at least 7 other days
- Gray-throated Babbler, *Stachyris nigriceps*, 4-5 seen along Zhemgang road (ca. 800-900 m el)

### **Ground Babblers & Allies, Pellorneidae**

- White-hooded Babbler**, *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*, family of 4-5 seen for extended period of time in bamboo along the Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575-605 m el
- Yellow-throated Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus cinereus*, 1 seen (1550 m el) above Tingtibi en route to Gelephu; low at broadleaf forest edge
- Rufous-winged Fulvetta, *Schoeniparus castaneiceps*, seen at least twice (more?) above Yongkola at 2200 m el

### **Laughingthrushes & Allies, Leiothrichidae**

- Nepal Fulvetta, *Alcippe nipalensis*, several along Tashithang road (1400 m); also in Zhemgang area above Tingtibi
- Striated Laughingthrush, *Grammatoptila striata*, widespread; seen on at least 12 days; finally heard singing on May 1 above Tingtibi
- Himalayan Cutia, *Cutia nipalensis*, heard and glimpsed above Yongkola (ca. 1500 m el); seen above Tingtibi (1550 m el) with a mixed species flock; methodical branch searcher

Jungle Babbler, *Turdoides striata*, first seen at Radisson Blu in Delhi; also in and near Gelephu (250-300 m el)

White-crested Laughingthrush, *Garrulax leucolophus*, first seen on outskirts of Yongkola in early a.m.; seen and heard daily from Trongsa southward to Gelephu

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, *Garrulax monileger*, best seen in late p.m. along Damphu road (near Tingtibi) at ca. 575 m

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla rufularis*, seen by a few at Tashithang camp; also above Yongkola and near Tingtibi

Spotted Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ocellata*, heard at a couple spots by SK; only seen (pair) in high elevation evergreen forest between Pele La (pass) and Sengor and what a strikingly-marked bird this is!

White-throated Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla albogularis*, common everywhere except at the lowest elevations the last couple days of trip but what an interesting bird; roams around in great mobs (50+) and forages from the ground (flips leaves) to well up in trees and dozens often seen gliding low across roads; one of the more behaviorally interesting birds of the trip

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla ruficollis*, another strikingly-patterned laughingthrush; first seen in open fields at edge of Yongkola; later in other areas including our campsite at Tingtibi

Gray-sided Laughingthrush, *lanthocincla caerulata*, rather retiring pair eventually lured into view a few time along road (ca. 2300 m el) above Yongkola

Bhutan Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran imbricatus* (now split from Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteran lineatus*), first seen along Tashithang road track in dry scrub and brush; another above Yongkola seen by a few people

Blue-winged Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran squamatus*, 1 seen by Ron (others?) in middle part of Zhemgang road (ca. 1500 m)

Black-faced Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran affinis*, scattered records from April 17 through the 27<sup>th</sup> including both afternoon and the following morning at Pele La (2800-3300 m)

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, *Trochalopteran erythrocephalus*, first seen (several) in lower settled area of Cheri Valley and on 6 more days scattered through the tour route with 1 seen on the drive from our Tingtibi camp to Gelephu

Rufous Sibia, *Heterophasia capistrata*, widespread and common; seen every day from the Cheri Valley onward to our descent to Gelephu

Silver-eared Mesia, *Leiothrix argentauris*, only seen once; dry scrubby area at 800 m el on our descent from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-billed Leiothrix, *Leiothrix lutea*, 1 above Yongkola (ca. 2400 m el) seen only by AK; another seen (ca. 1750 m) by Robert and a few others on the drive from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Red-tailed Minla, *Minla ignotincta*, 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owlet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; others seen near Pele La (pass) and in highland areas between Trongsa and Bumthang and near Sengor camp; beautiful little bird

Red-faced Liocichla, *Liocichla phoenicea*, seen only at one site (ca. 1550-1600 m) below Zhemgang Dzong on Zhemgang road; was with several White-browed Fulvetta and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbills

Hoary-throated Barwing, *Actinodura nipalensis*, commoner of the two barwings we encountered; 4 seen (with small mixed species flock attracted to Collared Owlet vocalization) at 2600 m en route from Thimphu to Tashithang; also seen on 3 additional days including once with Rusty-fronted Barwing

Rusty-fronted Barwing, *Actinodura egertoni*, several with large mixed species flock (attracted closer with owl playback) at nearly 3000 m near Sengor west of Sengor; also seen along upper part of road from Trongsa to Tingtibi

Blue-winged Minla, *Minla cyanouroptera*, at least 5 scattered records including the first (April 19) seen only Ron and Robert; others seen by everyone

Chestnut-tailed Minla (Bar-throated Siva), *Minla strigula*, first seen east of Thimphu and beyond the Dochu La (pass); also seen on at least 6 additional days including nearly 15-20 above Yongkola on the 25<sup>th</sup>; overall a common highland species

### **Old World Flycatchers, Muscicapidae**

Dark-sided Flycatcher, *Muscicapa sibirica*, scattered records on 6 days between ca. 600 and 2400 m

Asian Brown Flycatcher, *Muscicapa latirostris*, only seen once; April 17 en route from Thimphu to Pele La (pass)

Oriental Magpie-Robin, *Copsychus saularis*, widespread; recorded on at least 11 days and especially around settled areas at low to mid-elevations (250 to ca. 2200 m); a great singer

White-rumped Shama, *Copsychus malabaricus*, one seen in Gelephu

Pale Blue-Flycatcher, *Cyornis unicolor*, difficult to identify correctly; we believe we saw 3 including one along upper Tashithang Road (ca. 1600 m); and a couple above Yongkola (1750 m)

Blue-throated (Blue) Flycatcher, *Cyornis rubeculoides*, one between Punakha and Pele La (pass) at ca. 1180 m; and 2 females on the Zhemgang road (ca. 600 m) including one of the latter carrying nest material

Large Niltava, *Niltava grandis*, 1 over road (1759 m) above Yongkola; another above Tingtibi

Small Niltava, *Niltava macgrigoriae*, 3 seen along Tashithang road; another above Yongkola at 1750 m el

Rufous-bellied Niltava, *Niltava sundara*, 1 along Tashithang road (1650 m); another near Pele La (pass) at 2800 m; another between Trongsa and Bumthang and a couple above Yongkola

Verditer Flycatcher, *Eumyias thalassinus*, common and widespread breeder; seen on at least 11 days at elevations of 1600-2700+ m

Blue Whistling-Thrush, *Myophonus caeruleus*, seen every day of trip except the last day in lowlands near Gelephu; numbers varied from singles to 30+ daily

Little Forktail, *Enicurus scouleri*, only record was a pair at the waterfall (and bee colony) an hour south of Trongsa

Spotted Forktail, *Enicurus maculatus*, 1 seen on the 22<sup>nd</sup> between Trongsa and Bumthang

Slaty-backed Forktail, *Enicurus schistaceus*, pair seen repeatedly along river at our Tashithang camp; another near Tingtibi

White-tailed Robin, *Cinclidium leucurum*, 1 seen briefly above Tingtibi (1550 m) by Robert and Ansar

Himalayan Bluetail (Red-flanked Bush-Robin), *Tarsiger rufilatus*, 2 seen very well on our trip up to Cheli La (pass); another at 3400 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road)

White-browed Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger indicus*, 1 seen at 3350 m el on drive from Bumthang to Sengor (via old road); unusually high record?

\*Golden Bush-Robin, *Tarsiger chrysaes*, heard near high pass (3400 m) on return from Yongkola to Trongsa but did not respond to playback

Little Pied Flycatcher, *Ficedula westermanni*, 1 seen by Kirsten en route to Yongkola

Taiga Flycatcher, *Ficedula albicilla*, seen twice along Damphu road near Tingtibi at ca. 550-600 m el

Ultramarine Flycatcher, *Ficedula superciliaris*, Cheri valley; en route to Tashithang road camp; several at upper end of the section of Tashithang road (2600 m) we explored; another between Pele La (pass) and Trongsa (2600 m)

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, *Ficedula strophinata*, first seen in Cheri Valley and on 8 additional days at middle elevations or higher

Snowy-browed Flycatcher, *Ficedula hyperythra*, 1 seen by part of group on the Zhemgang road

Sapphire Flycatcher, *Ficedula sapphira*, 1 seen at 2100 m on upper part of the Tashithang road that we explored; lovely little flycatcher

Blue-fronted Redstart, *Phoenicurus frontalis*, 2 at Cheli La (pass) in upper evergreen zone; also seen twice in Tashithang road area

Plumbeous (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*, widespread and seen along most streams at middle elevations or higher

White-capped (Water) Redstart, *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*, another widespread species (slightly less common than previous species); small streams

Black Redstart, *Phoenicurus chruros*, 1 seen briefly as it perched on a fence in the village of Yongkola

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, *Monticola rufiventris*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 6 additional days mostly at high elevations

Blue-capped Rock-Thrush, *Monticola cinclorhynchus*, 1 between Thimphu and Pele La (at 1400 m el); also seen on 6 additional days; most numerous in lower Zhemgang road area (i.e. 525-800 m) around Tingtibi and on Damphu road

Blue Rock-Thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, only 1 seen; upper elevation (ca. 1750-1800 m) on Zhemgang road not far below the Zhemgang Dzong

Siberian (Common) Stonechat, *Saxicola maura*, a male in Tashithang road area; another in Pho valley near Punakha

Gray Bushchat, *Saxicola ferreus*, seen on at least 7 days mostly in semi-open or settled areas up to ca. 2600 m

### **Thrushes & Allies, Turdidae**

White-collared Blackbird, *Turdus albocinctus*, seen on different days at elevations of ca. 1500 m (Tashithang road) to 3200 m (Pele La)

Gray-winged Blackbird, *Turdus boulboul*, at least 6 seen in Tashithang road area above our campsite including one female at a nest

### **Starlings, Sturnidae**

Common Hill Myna, *Gracula religiosa*, Gelephu area

Great (White-vented) Myna, *Acridotheres grandis*, Gelephu and Sal forest area

Jungle Myna, *Acridotheres fuscus*, Radisson Blu hotel grounds in Delhi; Gelephu

Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, recorded on 10 different days of trip; mainly lower drier elevations and around settled areas; numerous around Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Asian Pied Starling, *Gracupica contra*, Gelephu area

Chestnut-tailed Starling, *Sturnia malabarica* Gelephu area

[Brahminy Startling, \*Sturnia pagodarum\*, a couple \(possibly nesting\) in trees behind Radisson Blu hotel in Delhi; found by Bev](#)

### **Leafbirds, Chloropseidae**

Golden-fronted Leafbird, *Chloropsis aurifrons*, foothills (ca. 650 m) near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

Orange-bellied Leafbird, *Chloropsis hardwickii*, first seen in Tashithang road area and campsite; at least 3 times thereafter in lower Zhemgang road area and Damphu road

### **Flowerpeckers, Dicaeidae**

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum ignipectus*, first seen a few times in Tashithang road area (near campsite; also Zhemgang road and in foothills near Gelephu the last day in Bhutan

### **Sunbirds & Spiderhunters, Nectariniidae**

Fire-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga ignicauda*, a pair seen near high pass (3300 m) on drive from Bumthang to Sengor campsite; spectacular as were all the sunbirds

Black-throated Sunbird, *Aethopyga saturata*, fairly widespread; first seen in Tashithang road area (near camp site) and on 7 additional days (middle to high elevations)

Gould's Sunbird, *Aethopyga gouldiae*, first seen in Cheri Valley; also on 5 additional days all at elevations of 2200 m or higher

Green-tailed Sunbird, *Aethopyga nipalensis*, commonest sunbird we encountered; first seen on drive from Thimphu to Tashithang road camp; than on 9 additional days at mid- to high elevations (up to at least 3200 m)



Crimson Sunbird, *Aethopyga siparaja*, only the Zhemgang road area; seen at ca. 1500 m; also a pair at ca. 600 m on the Damphu road

Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna*, mainly around our camp at Tingtibi; also a pair moderately dry woodland slope at 800 m en route to Gelephu

### **Accentors, Prunellidae**

Rufous-breasted Accentor, *Prunella strophciata*, first seen after breakfast (2600 m) on drive to Tashithang road; seen 3 more times at high elevations between Trongsa and Bumthang; and Bumthang to Sengor

### **Wagtails & Pipits, Motacillidae**

Gray Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*, seen first in Pho valley near Punakha; also on 5 more days and especially on roads in Zhemgang area

White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, seen first at 1300 m on Thimphu to Tashithang road drive; also Pho valley; and on drive to Sengor

Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit, *Anthus rufulus*, near Gelephu (briefly) and again in Assam India

Rosy Pipit, *Anthus roseatus*, 2 at 2200 m on Tashithang road (or rice paddy berm)

Olive-backed Pipit, *Anthus hodgsoni*, various sites on 8 different days

### **Buntings & New World Sparrows, Emberizidae**

Crested Bunting, *Melophus lathamii*, Pho River valley (3-4); another in Zhemgang road area

Little Bunting, *Emberiza pusilla*, 1 female (identified as this) on trip to Cheli La (pass)

### **Siskins, Crossbills & Allies, Fringillidae**

Gold-naped Finch, *Pyrrhoptes epauletta*, pair above Yongkola; another near pass (1900 m) en route from Tingtibi to Gelephu

Red-headed Bullfinch, *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*, flock of ca. 6 at 3350 m el near Pele La campsite and another the following day

Dark-breasted Rosefinch, *Carpodacus nipalensis*, 1 seen by Ron and Ansar en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Common Rosefinch, *Carpodacus erythrinus*, 1 male seen with big mixed species flock (bird photographed) at ca. 3300 m between Bumthang and Sengor campsite

Dark-rumped Rosefinch, *Carpodacus edwardsii*, 1 between Trongsa and Bumthang; and a female on ground inside forest near pass (ca. 3300 m) on drive from Yongkola to Trongsa

Scarlet Finch, *Haematospiza sipahi*, 2 males seen briefly at 2200 m on Tashithang Road; another male perched in treetop at ca. 1600 m (above Yongkola)

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, *Chloris spinoides*, 1 seen on 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road camp site; flock of 15-18 on upper edge of village of Yongkola

Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*, flock of 45+ nibbling at sandy concrete near the Dochu La (pass) at 3200+ m); a few also seen above Yongkola on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April; interesting behavior as they returned several times to chew on the sandy concrete even when frightened away

Tibetan Serin, *Serinus thibetanus*, flock of 8-9 at breakfast spot on the 21<sup>st</sup> en route from Pele La to Trongsa

Spot-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas melanozanthos*, 4 on Cheli La (pass) at 3200 m+); another on the 18<sup>th</sup> en route to Tashithang road campsite

White-winged Grosbeak, *Mycerobas carnipes*, seen at high elevation above Yongkola and a female on the upper Zhemgang road

### **Old World Sparrows, Passeridae**

House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, village NW of Gelephu; also Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

Russet Sparrow, *Passer rutilans*, present in almost all villages and settled areas

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, widespread in villages and settled areas

### **Weavers & Allies, Ploceidae**

Indian Silverbill, *Euodice malabarica*, a couple in a palm tree behind Radisson Blu Hotel in New Delhi

### **Waxbills & Allies, Estrildidae**

Scaly-breasted Munia (Nutmeg Mannikin), *Lonchura punctulata*, small group seen on the 20<sup>th</sup> en route to Pele La campsite; another small group at ca. 500 m near Tingtibi (Damphu road)

### **Old World Monkeys, Cercopithecidae**

Assamese Macaque, *Macaca assamensis*, various areas on 8 days; mostly below ca. 2000 m

Rhesus Macaque, *Macaca mulatta*, some question about identity of macaque sightings near the Tashithang campsite; possible this species seen?

Common Langur, *Presbytis entellus*, 2 adults and a juvenile at 2950 m near Dochu La (pass); a high cold site for this species; also above Yongkola

Golden Langur, *Presbytis geel*, common at lower elevations in Zhemgang area

### **Bears, Ursidae**

Himalayan Black Bear, *Selenarctos thibetanus*, 2 (surprisingly close) along river in upper Cheri Valley; well photographed!

### **Weasels, Mustelidae**

Common Otter, *Lutra lutra*, 2 groups of 4 and 3 respectively; Pho River NW of Punakha

Yellow-throated Marten, *Martes flavigula*, 3 animals on steep rocky slope at 2500 m el above Yongkola (less than a kilometer above village of Nambling)

### **Squirrels, Sciuridae**

Giant Pied Squirrel, *Tarufa bicolor*, at least 3 of these enormous squirrels seen in Damphu valley and Zhemgang road near Tingtibi

Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, *Callosciurus pygerythus*, widespread and seen on 8 days of trip; only those in Tingtibi area and Gelephu had pale bellies

Himalayan Striped Squirrel, *Callosciurus macclellandi*, frequent in upper elevation forests

### **Cloven-hoofed ruminants, Bovidae**

Goral (Ghoral), *Nemorhaedus goral*, 1 seen resting on cliff in upper Cheri Valley; possibly a younger animal

### **Deer, Cervidae**

Common Barking Deer, *Muntiacus muntjak*, heard near Pele La (Pass) at 3350 m; one seen by Ansar (others?) near Sal forest at Gelephu

Royle's Pika, *Ochotona roylei*, the commonest pika in the Himalayas and possibly the one we saw frequently although Wikipedia does not list it (on map or in text) specifically for Bhutan

Other items of interest:

**House Gecko** (Gelephu) | **Yaks** (all of the ones we saw were domesticated); a **bat** (at our Tingtibi campsite) which Ansar said was probably Short-noted Bat; a large boldly marked non-poisonous **snake** crossing the Zhemgang road; **rock bee colonies** (in one case with a sign instructing passersby to close their car windows and another sign indicating that you have safely passed the rock bee colony and can now open your window!)

**Plants: see web site:** [www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan](http://www.flowersofindia.net/catalogue/himalayan)

(Web site has 33 pages with ca. 45 species per page; also has a section on trees of India)

For woody plants: Storrs, Adrian, *Trees and Shrubs of the Minlayas*.

Noble Dendrobium, *Dendrobium noblie*, the pink and white orchids (with dark "eyes") that we all photographed; first encountered in tree canopy along road near the Tashithang campsite

Most interesting to me on this trip was to note that, unlike birds, a large proportion of both woody and herbaceous plants in the Himalayas have allies (e.g. same genus) represented in North America.