

BHUTAN

MARCH 22 – APRIL 16, 2006

LEADER: DION HOBSCROFT

COMPILED BY: DION HOBSCROFT

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003
AUSTIN, TX 78746
WWW.VENTBIRD.COM**

TOUR REPORT BHUTAN 2006

Dion Hobcroft

Our trip to Bhutan was outstanding. Super birding combined with the beautiful countryside of the Buddhist kingdom and the beauty of the people made this a very special journey.

Our first day of comfortable birding in Delhi always astounds the participants. This year was no exception. We tallied 107 species in the morning at Yamuna River and in the afternoon at Sultanpur. Outstanding birds came thick and fast. Highlights for the leader included superb studies of the **Indian Courser**, **Black-necked Stork**, **Greater Flamingo**, the incredible **Indian Peafowl**, **Slender-billed** and **Pallas's gulls**—both in breeding plumage, **Black-rumped Flameback**, stunning views of **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse**, and a host of lesser known passerines ranging from **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** to **White-tailed Stonechat**.

Up early and off to Bhutan, we secured the desired left hand seats and were upgraded to business class in a brand new airbus. The weather gods were with us and we enjoyed sensational views of the greatest mountains in the world—Everest, Makalu, Annapurna and, my favorite, Kanchenjunga. It is not often that one can cruise at 30,000 feet and still take in a view at eye level! We arrived at the most beautiful airport in the world and met our outstanding local leader, Karma, and the best driver in the country, Rinchin. On the way to our hotel we had a great view of our first megabird, the **Ibisbill**. We enjoyed a pleasant afternoon birding around the ruins of a 16th century temple.

Our morning at Chele La was fantastic. It is the only place in the world where you can drive up to search for the most spectacular of Himalayan birds, the **Himalayan Monal**. The description summarizes it beautifully in *A Guide to the Birds of India*: “unmistakable, metallic green head and spatulate-tipped wire like crest, brilliant metallic green and bronze on the hindneck and mantle; iridescent blue and purple and green on the wings, cinnamon brown tail with velvet black underparts and a white back.” We were not disappointed and enjoyed lengthy scope views of 11 individuals, including six males. Further jaw-dropping took place when a party of 35 **Blood Pheasants** strolled across the road, giving us megaviews.

We ate breakfast in the fairy tale setting of Cheri Gumpa. We found the rare **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** in attendance at the spectacular honeycombs of the rock bee. This bird is virtually a Bhutan endemic and it is rare to be able to study one at eye level. Everybody loves the sunbirds; Mrs. Gould's and Green-tailed were the first birds to appear, dancing animatedly to the sound of the **Collared Owlet**. We indulged in a bit of shopping and sightseeing in the capital, Thimphu.

In the dry valley of Punakha we requested an audience with a very special bird—sadly, amongst the most threatened in the world. We reveled in our success; a giant **White-bellied Heron** stood monolithic in the pristine Po Chu River. Well done, Judith, for spotting this bird! We had another bonus when we found the rare **Tawny Fish-Owl** roosting in the day; this was a megabird—one of the largest owls in the world. Also among our sightings in Punakha were a **Collared Scops-Owl**, **Bay Woodpecker**, and **Pallas's Fish-Eagle**.

We camped amongst the yak herds on the Old Pele La Road, and great birds continued to appear in our binoculars: a rare **Crimson-browed Finch**; huge **Himalayan Griffons** attending a yak carcass (predated by the tiger we heard roaring at dawn); and **White-browed, Dark-breasted, and Dark-rumped rosefinches**. Adding extra zing on our drive to Trongsa was a **Wallcreeper** that performed a spectacular butterfly display at close range on a rock face.

For a total change of scenery our group was transported to the extensive subtropical jungles of Tingtibi. The birding was outstanding with many highlights, including the dynamic **Rufous-necked Hornbill, Red-headed Trogon, Maroon Oriole**, nesting **Pin-tailed Green Pigeons**, stunning **Sultan Tits**, a **Brown Hawk-Owl** that almost collided with my head, both **Red Junglefowl** and **Kalij Pheasant**, and great views of the rare **Dark-rumped Swift**. Troops of spectacular golden langurs were encountered daily.

Exploring high altitude forests at Yutong La turned up **Great Parrotbill**, while Jakar came through with both **Brown Parrotbill** and the little-known **Russet Bush-Warbler**. We found a lot of good rarities, including a sensational view of the rare **Bar-winged Wren-Babbler**. Our drive to Sengor was especially wonderful—we finished the day with three **Satyr Tragopans**, including a male that we watched for 15 minutes as it fed on the road. Hooray! A thunderstorm that night could not dampen our enthusiasm for the wonderful birding in Bhutan.

The weather cleared as we descended to our camp in Yongcola. Many great birds followed, from such skulkers as **Long-billed and Rufous-throated wren-babblers**, and **Scaly Laughingthrush**, to shimmering bamboo mixed flocks with **Greater Rufous-headed and Black-throated parrotbills, Golden-breasted and Yellow-throated fulvettas**, and elusive **Coral-billed and Slender-billed scimitar-babblers**.

Our journey east took us to new birding territory. Rontong produced a marvelous **Black-tailed Crake**. Morong was superb, and provided a fitting climax with super views of the rare **Beautiful Nuthatch**. This topped a morning that produced **Brown Bullfinch, Long-tailed Sibia, Green Magpie**, and the shy **Red-faced Liocichla**. It was hard to top this.

As we birded in the lowlands of Samdrup Jhonkhar (pronounced Soma Zonkar, hereafter known as SZ), we added to our list: **Wreathed Hornbill and Oriental Pied-Hornbill, Fairy Bluebird, Himalayan Flameback**, the scarce **White-hooded Babbler, Hill Myna**, and **Black-backed Forktail** to mention a few.

Finally it was time to leave the land of the peaceful dragon, and we exited into Assam. A very bird-filled drive to Gauhati produced wonderful views of the stunningly ugly **Lesser Adjutant**, super-sized **Stork-billed Kingfisher**, and **Bronze-winged Jacana**. Everywhere we stopped we added a new bird to our trip list. Sadly, we were soon on our plane back to Delhi, and our fantastic Bhutan birding adventure came to an end.

I would really like to thank my wonderful local leader, Karma, for his outstanding work; what a guy—so knowledgeable on all aspects of Bhutan culture, and a great birder as well. I would also like to thank Rinchen, who drove for us and stopped so frequently; Karmalat, our

excellent cook; and the wonderful camp crew who did everything for us, and more, so effortlessly.

Finally I would like to thank the tour participants: **Ralph Perry** and **Mary Louise Seldenfleu**, **Judith Sparrow**, and **Richard** and **Eleanor Wolf** for making this such a special tour.

Dion Hobcroft

14 June 2006

ITINERARY

Fri 24 Mar 06: Sultanpur National Park and Yamuna River, Delhi.

Sat 25 Mar 06: Fly from Delhi to Paro, Bhutan. Afternoon birding Drukgyel Dzong.

Sun 26 Mar 06: Paro to Chele La. Drive to Thimphu.

Mon 27 Mar 06: Morning birding at Cheri Goempa. Afternoon shopping Thimphu.

Tue 28 Mar 06: Morning at Dochu La. Afternoon at Punakha.

Wed 29 Mar 06: Morning Tashitang. Afternoon Punakha Dzong.

Thu 30 Mar 06: Drive from Punakha to Pele La, camping on the old road.

Fri 31 Mar 06: Birding Pele La till 1400 before driving to Trongsa.

Sat 1 Apr 06: Drive from Trongsa via Shemgang to Tingtibi.

Sun 2 Apr 06: Tingtibi

Mon 3 Apr 06: Tingtibi

Tue 4 Apr 06: Tingtibi via Shemgang to Trongsa.

Wed 5 Apr 06: Trongsa to Jakar via Yutong La

Thu 6 Apr 06: Jakar to Sengor via Thrumsingh La

Fri 7 Apr 06: Sengor via Namling to Yongcola (Limithang Road). Camp VIP Guesthouse

Sat 8 Apr 06: Yongcola camping

Sun 9 Apr 06: Yongcola camping

Mon 10 Apr 06: Yongcola to Mongar

Tue 11 Apr 06: Mongar to Rontong via Khori La and Kha Chu

Wed 12 Apr 06: Rontong to Morong via Narphung La

Thu 13 Apr 06: Morong. After lunch drive to Samdrup Jhonkar (SZ) birding in afternoon above checkpoint.

Fri 14 Apr 06: Birding SZ 0600-1030 and 1600-1840 above checkpoint.

Sun 15 Apr 06: Exit Bhutan via Samdrup Jhonkar to Darranga, Assam. Drive to Gauhati and then fly Gauhati to Delhi.

BIRDLIST

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: (20) Sultanpur

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*: (10) Yamuna and (5) Sultanpur

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*: (5) Sultanpur and Okhla, **B:** regularly encountered in small numbers on most rivers in Bhutan with a high count of (20) on the Mo Chu River.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*: (3) Yamuna and (1) Sultanpur

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: (1) Yamuna and (1) Sultanpur.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: (10) Yamuna R. and (2) Sultanpur.

White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis*: (1) adult in breeding plumage on the Po Chu River near Punakha on 28 March was a very good sighting of this extremely rare bird and was well spotted by Judith. Globally threatened.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: Small numbers at Sultanpur and Yamuna.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*: (10) Yamuna

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: (5) Yamuna.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: (20) Yamuna

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*: (20) Yamuna; **B:** (4) SJ.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephalus*: (20) Yamuna R. (1)Sultanpur.

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*: (1) Sultanpur. Globally threatened.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*: (50) Assam

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*: (15) Assam

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: (5) Sultanpur

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*: (1) Sultanpur

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*: (3) Yamuna and (5) Sultanpur

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*: (30) Yamuna R.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*: (2) Yamuna.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*: **B:** (5) Thimphu STW, (2) near Jakar.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotus*: (2) Sultanpur

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: (10) Yamuna **B:** (5) Thimphu STW

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*: (10) Yamuna **B:** (3) Thimphu STW.

Indian Spotbill *Anas poecilorhyncha*: (20) Yamuna

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*: (1000) Yamuna, **B:** (1) female Thimphu STW.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*: (100) Yamuna-Sultanpur

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: (50) Yamuna

Common Teal *Anas crecca*: (2) Yamuna **B:** One female Thimphu STW. A rare winter visitor and passage migrant in Bhutan.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*: (1) Thimphu STW (26-27 Mar) and (1) Mo Chu River near Punakha Dzong (28 Mar): both adult males in breeding plumage.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*: (10) Yamuna

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*: (50) Yamuna **B:** (1) male Thimphu STW on 26-27 Mar.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: B: (1) near Punakha on 29 Mar.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: (1) Sultanpur and (1) Yamuna

Common (Himalayan) Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: B: recorded on eight days with a maximum count of 3 on 31 March around Pele La.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: Abundant in the vicinity of Delhi including (30 plus) **B:** (1) Thimphu STW on 27 Mar and (1) near Shemgang Dzong on 4 Apr. Scarce in Bhutan.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*: B: (1) adult seen in flight over Mo Chu River, Punakha on 29 Mar and (1) in distance on 11 Apr on Kha Chu. Globally threatened.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*: B: A good year for this gigantic species. (1) soaring over Cheli La 26 March, (40) feeding on Tiger predated Yak carcass at Pele La on 31 Mar that flushed off as we walked towards the kill, an amazing experience to watch them fly through the dense forest. (3) on 12 Apr and (1) on 13 Apr near SJ.

Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus*: (1) near Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Crested Serpent-eagle *Spilornis cheela*: B: Recorded on 4 days with a max. (4) at SJ on 14 Apr. Some excellent studies of this handsome raptor.

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: (2) Yamuna.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*: B: (1) on 9 and 14 Apr-both seen in flight.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*: (2) Yamuna-Sultanpur **B:** (1) on 10 Apr on drive to Limithang.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: B: Recorded on five days with several excellent scope studies particularly the first at Dochu La on 26 Mar.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentiles*: B: (1) female in flight near Yutong La on 5 Apr.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*: B: Recorded on two days only; (1) near Paro Airport on 25 Mar and incredible views to 20 metres of single birds hunting over our breakfast table on 1 Apr near Trongsa.

Mountain Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*: B: Recorded on 13 days with a maximum of (2) on 28 Mar and 11, 12 and 14 Apr. Several individuals were seen in display flight performing spectacular manoeuvres and an outstanding perched view at Chele La on 26 Mar was hard to beat..

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: (1) Sultanpur **B:** Widespread and moderately common in open, non-forested country. Recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (4) on 29-30 Mar around Punakha.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus*: (2) Yamuna and (5) Sultanpur gave good views.

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*: Heard only Sultanpur

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola*: B: Single seen leader only in flight on 10 Apr on Limithang Rad below Namling. Heard on 8 days.

Rufous-throated Partridge *Arborophila rufogularis*: B: Heard only on the road between Tingtibi to Shemgang.

Chestnut-breasted Partridge *Arborophila mandellii*: B: Heard only on the Limithang Rd. Globally threatened.

Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*: B: A very good year for this spectacular bird with excellent views of 35 birds on 26 March as we approached Chele La. A further (7) birds were recorded on 6 Apr as we drove across the pass at Thrumsingh La.

Satyr Tragopan *Tragopan satyra*: B: A great result for this spectacular bird this year with an outstanding male watched on the road for 20 minutes near Sengor preceded by a female and

a less co-operative male on the same drive on 6 Apr. Heard also at Pele La and the following morning from our sightings at Sengor.

Himalayan Monal Lophophorus impejanus: **B:** Everyone enjoyed incredible views of a total of 11 individuals on 26 March at Chele La including several males that just sat out in the open allowing superb scope views. Also heard at Pele La and another knockout male near Thrumsingh La on 6 April.

Red Junglefowl Gallus gallus: **B:** (2) on the roadside above our Orange Orchard camp, Tingtibi on 2 April was a great sighting. The male is a spectacular bird.

Kalij Pheasant Lophura leucomelana: **B:** (2) on the morning drive to Chele La 26 Mar, (2) on the road below our Tingtibi Camp on 3 Apr were our only sightings this year.

Indian Peafowl Pavo cristatus: (1) Yamuna and (5) Sultanpur including some superb males.

White-breasted Waterhen Amaurornis phoenicurus: (2) Sultanpur

Black-tailed Crake Porzana bicolor: A good view of a tape responsive pair on 12 April in rice crops near our Rontong camp. Absent from other sites perhaps due to the dry conditions experienced this year.

Purple Swamphen Porphyrio porphyrio: (20) Sultanpur-Yamuna.

Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus: (10) Sultanpur.

Eurasian Coot Fulica atra: (20) Yamuna

Common Crane Grus grus: (1) Sultanpur

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse Pterocles exustus: (2) scoped on the flats at Sultanpur giving a beautiful view.

Ibisbill Ibidorhyncha struthersii: **B:** (2) along the Paro Chu on 25 March on the drive from the airport to our first hotel: (2) at Tashitang on 29 Mar and (1) on 6 Apr on the Jakar Chu. Bhutan is indeed a stronghold for this very special species.

Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus: (20) Yamuna

Yellow-wattled Lapwing Vanellus malarbaricus: (2) Sultanpur-scope views of this scarce Indian endemic.

Red-wattled Lapwing Vanellus indicus: (20) Sultanpur-Yamuna.

River Lapwing Vanellus duvauceli (4) Yamuna **B:** Recorded on 4 days with a max. (10) Thimphu STW on 26 Mar.

Indian Courser Cursorius coromandelicus: (5) of these stunning scarce and local endemics on the Sultanpur flats.

Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa: (10) Yamuna

Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia: (1) Sultanpur

Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus: (10) Yamuna. **B:** (1) Thimphu STW on 27 Mar.

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola: (1) Yamuna

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos: (4) Yamuna **B:** Recorded on three days (1) Paro on 25 Mar and singles Thimphu STW on 26-27 Mar.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*: (10) Yamuna. **B:** (12) in small flock flying along Jakar Chu on migration on 6 Apr.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: (20) Yamuna

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*: (1) Yamuna River in breeding plumage was a great record of this vagrant species and a lifer for me! Excellent scope views with the other three species available for direct comparison.

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*: (1) Yamuna R. in breeding plumage in view with all of the above species was a treat for gull enthusiasts.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*: Widespread and common recorded in Bhutan on 13 days with max. (100) at Punakha Dzong.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*: **B:** (100) Cheri Monastery on 27 March; (20) at Dochu La on 28 Mar and (70) in Ura Valley and near Sengor on 6 Apr including perched scope views of this handsome high altitude specialist.

Speckled Wood Pigeon *Columba hodgsoni*: **B:** (10) on 11 Apr between Mongar and Rontong was a good discovery by Eleanor with good scope perched views.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decocto*: (10) Yamuna

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*: **B:** Widespread, common and observed on 15 days, often foraging on the road.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: (5) Yamuna

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*: **B:** (1-2) recorded on 7 days in Bhutan.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*: (2) Yamuna

Barred Cuckoo-dove *Macropygia unchall*: **B:** (3) on 1 Apr near Shemgang with (1) on 10 Apr at Yongcola and (1) on 13 Apr near Morong.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*: **B:** (1-3) seen on 2 days around our Tingtibi camp giving flight views only.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*: (10) each at Sultanpur and Yamuna, giving excellent scope views with (1) at the Bhutan immigration checkpoint at Samdrup Jonkhar on 15 Apr.

Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron apicauda*: **B:** (8) Tingtibi on 3 Apr including watching a nest being built in a vine thicket on the forest edge 8 metre up. (2-5) were seen on both days forest birding above SJ.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenura*: **B:** (1) Tingtibi on 3 Apr and (1-2) on three days at SJ..

Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia*: **B:** (2) Tingtibi camp on 2 Apr and (1) on 8 Apr at Yongcola.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*: Widespread and common at all sites visited in Delhi.

Common Hawk Cuckoo *Cuculus varius*: (1) on drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr studied in scope.

Large Hawk-cuckoo *Cuculus sparveroides*: **B:** Excellent scope views of one bird near Namling on 9 Apr. Heard on 14 other days.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*: **B:** Heard only on 9 and 11 Apr.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*: **B:** Excellent views of single birds perched and in the scope on 29 Mar at Tashitang and 12 Apr between Rontong and Morong. Heard on 11 other days.

Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus*: B: Heard on 3 Apr and (1) seen well on 11 Apr between Mongar and Rontong.

Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris*: B: Singles seen well at Rontong and SJ on both 12 and 14 Apr. Heard on two other days.

Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*: A male seen well Uppal's Orchid Hotel, Delhi on 24 Mar with a good view of a female at Yamuna the same day.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*: (10) Yamuna

Mountain Scops Owl *Otus spilocephalus*: B: Heard only on 8 nights. Lived up to its reputation of being very difficult to tape in and spotlight despite considerable effort. The tough guy as Karma referred to it.

Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*: B: (1) responded like a rocket to playback at the Zangtho Pelri Hotel, Punakha on 29 Mar. Heard only at our camp on the Limithang Road at Yongcola.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodei*: B: (1) on 4 Apr at Tingtibi gave an amazing view virtually at our feet. Heard on 8 days.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*: B: (2) seen very well at Tashitang on 29 Mar with (1) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi and (1) on 7 Apr at Yongcola... Heard on 5 days.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*: (1) Sultanpur and (1) Yamuna on 24 Mar.

Himalayan Wood Owl *Strix nivicola*: B: Heard only on 31 March just before dawn whilst camped at Pele La.

Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata*: B: (2) spotlit very well at our Orange Orchard camp at Tingtibi, one bird almost colliding with my head in response to playback on 2 Apr. An interesting record for a new altitude and district. Heard every night whilst camped here.

Tawny Fish Owl *Ketupa flavipes*: B: (2) on 29 Mar at Punakha seen by Dion and Karma whilst scouting with (1) found the next morning; a great sighting of this rare giant owl.

Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*: B: One bird hawking around the lights at dawn of the Zangtho Pelri Hotel, Punakha on 29 March gave a great view. Heard on 7 other nights.

Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris*: B: Flocks of (10-100) seen on 7 days.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*: B: (1) on 13 Apr at Morong gave an excellent view of this fastest flying bird.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*: B: (20) at SJ on 14 Apr.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*: B: Widespread and locally common recorded on 8 days with a high count of over 50 on 7 Apr between Sengor and Yongola mostly nesting around cliffs at Namling.

Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda*: B: (5) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi both at our camp and in the hydro area gave repeat excellent views showing the key features of this rare and highly localised species. A surprise in this location where I have camped three times previously and despite scouring all Fork-tailed Swifts had never encountered this species before. This was lucky because at the best site for this species we were fogged in.

House Swift *Apus affinis*: (20) on the drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Ward's Trogon *Harpactes wardii*: B: (2) on 8 Apr at Yongcola were seen briefly in flight. Heard on three other days but proved impossible to lure in despite much effort.

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*: B: (1) Tingtibi on 4 Apr performed beautifully perching out in the scope several times.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: B: (2) SJ on 13-14 Mar giving very good scope views.

White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*: (5) Yamuna. **B:** Recorded on 8 days mostly singles.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon capensis*: (1) on the drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Crested Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris*: B: (1-2) seen on six days with several mega views of this spectacular bird.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: (1) on the drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctiornis athertoni*: B: (1) seen on the drive from Punakha to Pele La on 30 Mar was well spotted by Judith, giving several excellent scope views. Heard also on 13 Apr.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*: (50) Sultanpur-Yamuna.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*: (1) Trongsa of the nominate subspecies on 5 Apr was a curious vagrant. Duly photographed for the record. Subspecies *affinis* recorded on the drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: B: Recorded on 3 days with a maximum of (2) at Punakha on 30 Mar and Namling on 7 Apr.

Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyceros birostris*: (2) Sultanpur.

Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*: B: Without doubt, for many, THE highlight of a great tour. Sensational views of (1-5) birds on six days including perched along the road from Shemgang to Tingtibi, the Limithang Road and Morong. Ralph spotted our first big male that flew right over our heads giving a mega view.

Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulatus*: B: (4-6) on 13-14 Apr at SJ gave some great views.

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*: B: (2) SJ on 14 Apr.

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*: B: Widespread and common, recorded on 16 days, with the gull like wailing call a constant feature of forest birding in Bhutan and repeated excellent views.

Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii*: B: Widespread and regularly recorded in small numbers including several superb views. Seen on six days and heard on several more.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica*: B: Seen on 4 days and heard on three others. Several great views of this colourful species.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*: (1) at Darranga, Assam where we had our passports stamped entering into India from Bhutan. Heard also in Delhi.

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide *Indicator xanthonotus*: B: (1) male near Cheri gave a superb eye level view with (1) on 30 Mar between Punakha and Pele La heard giving a flowerpecker like "sit" call-a rare vocalisation from this inconspicuous and rare bird.

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*: B: (2) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi gave good views.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Picoides canicapillus*: B: Recorded only in secondary forest above SJ on 14 Apr.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Picoides hyperythrus*: B: Stunning pair on 30 Mar between Punakha and Pele La gave mega views.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Picoides cathpharius*: B: (1-2) on five days gave several outstanding views.

Darjeeling Woodpecker *Picoides darjellensis*: B: (1) on 30 Mar at Pele La and (1) on 5 Apr at Yutong La were our only sightings this year.

Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*: B: (1) ON 2 Apr at Tingtibi; (1) watched raiding an ants nest for 15 minutes in the scope at Rontong on 12 Apr and a pair at SJ on 14 Apr. A great year for this species.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*: B: (2) in the scope on 7 Apr at Yongcola and (1) SJ on 14 Apr.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha*: B: Excellent views on 3 days of (1-3) including studies at Tingtibi and SJ..

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: B: Seen on four days, all singles. Heard on a further five days.

Himalayan Flameback *Dinopium shorii*: B: (4) at SJ on 14 Apr appeared to be two pairs having a territorial standoff.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*: B: (2) at Sultanpur gave a magical late afternoon view.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*: B: A female gave a megaview at Tashitang on 29 Mar but true to this elusive species form it was heard only on 9 days.

Indian Bush Lark *Mirafra erythroptera*: B: (2) gave great views at Sultanpur.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix grisea*: B: (2) on the flats at Sultanpur.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: B: (4) Sultanpur.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*: B: (3) on 5 Apr near Jakar.

Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola*: B: (20) Yamuna

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*: B: (2) Yamuna: some good views of this spectacular swallow.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: B: (10) Mongar appeared to be preparing to nest on 10 Apr with (1) on 12 Apr between Rontong and Morong.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: B: (2) on 14 Apr at SJ.

Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalensis*: B: Fabulous views of large flocks hawking over the roads and cliffs. Recorded on 8 days with a high count in excess of (100).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*: B: Widespread and moderately common along creeks and rivers and associated open habitats such as farmland. Subspecies present was the black faced *alboides* (max. count 20) on 25 March in Paro Valley.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*: B: (1) on 3 Apr and 13 Apr.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*: B: (1) Sultanpur and (1) Yamuna.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*: B: Recorded on 12 days with a max. (10).

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*: B: (2) Cheli La on 25 Mar; (1) Cheri on 27 Mar and (10) in ploughed fields near Jakar on 5 Apr.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus trilli*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (4) on 2 Apr at our Tingtibi camp.

Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris*: B: (2) at Zangtho Pelri Hotel at Punakha on 30 Mar.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthonotus*: B: (1) on drive to Gauhati on 15 Apr.

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos*: B: Recorded on 11 days with max. (4) on 30 Mar.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a max. (4) on 13 Apr.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (6) on 6 Apr at Thrumsingh La.

Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris*: B: Recorded on 6 days with a max. (10) on 1 Apr between Tingtibi and Trongsa.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*: B: Recorded on 7 days with a maximum of (4) on 3-4 April near Tingtibi.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus*: B: Recorded on 5 days including small numbers daily near Tingtibi.

Large Wood-Shrike *Tephrodornis virgatus*: B: (2) on 2 Apr at Tingtibi.

Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus*: B: (1-10) recorded on 6 days with excellent views of this good looking bird.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*: B: (3-6) on 13-14 Apr at SJ.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*: B: (10) on 14 Apr at SJ.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*: B: (20) Yamuna **B:** Widespread and common, recorded on 12 days with a maximum count of (50 plus) on 30 March near Punakha.

White-throated Bulbul *Alphoixus flaveolus*: B: Recorded on 3 Apr at Tingtibi Hydro trail and on 14 Apr at SJ. Quite a shy species with a restricted range.

Ashy Bulbul *Hypsipetes flavala*: B: (1-3) recorded on three days along the Tingtibi Road.

Mountain Bulbul *Hypsipetes mccllellandii*: B: Recorded on 4 days including Tashitang, Tingtibi and between Mongar and Rontong.

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*: B: Widespread and common to abundant sometimes in flocks of (40) in suitable wooded habitat. Recorded on 16 days with a high count of (50) on the drive between Trongsa and Tingtibi.

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*: B: Recorded on 8 days with max. (6) birds recorded on 2 Apr around Tingtibi.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*: B: (1) male at SZ on 14 Apr.

Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella*: B: (1) male at SZ on 14 Apr.

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*: B: Recorded on 10 days with a max. (10) on 29-30 Mar at Tashitang-Punakha. Numerous very good views including adults ouzelling in the fast flowing rivers and attending recently fledged chicks.

Altai Accentor *Prunella himalayana*: B: (3) on 6 Apr on the drive between Jakar and Thrumsingh La, allowed good scope views.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*: B: (5), Pele La on 31 March with another (1-3) on 5-7 Apr at Thrumsingh La, Yutong La and Sengor. A good year for this high altitude confiding species.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiata*: B: Widespread but rather scattered within scrubby areas adjoining farmland. Recorded on 4 days with a maximum count of (4) near Sengor on 6 Apr.

Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*: B: (3) on 30 Mar between Punakha and Old Pele La road was a good sighting of this scarce and often secretive species.

Blue-capped Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus*: B: Widespread, recorded on 10 days with a maximum count of (10). Most frequently recorded on the Shemgang and Limithang Roads. The male is a beautiful bird and everyone had frequent excellent views.

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*: B: Excellent views of males and the distinctive female. Recorded on 6 days with a maximum of (6) on 12 Apr between Rontong and Morong.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*: B: Recorded on 5 days with a maximum count of (6) on 14 Apr at SZ.

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*: B: Common and ubiquitous; recorded on 20 days with a maximum count of (200) on 1 Apr on the drive between Trongsa and Tingtibi. At times pairs were recorded every 100 - 200m of road with many nesting in the concrete road culverts.

Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*: B: heard only at Ura La on 6 Apr.

Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima*: B: (4) gave great roadside views on 30 Mar on drive up Pele La. A quiet year for this species with the dry conditions.

White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (30) on 30 March at Old Pele La Road.

Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul*: B: Scarce this year, recorded on 4 days with max. (8) on 11 Apr in secondary scrub above Mongar.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*: B: (1) male of black-throated subspecies *atrogularis* at our Punakha Hotel on 30 Mar

Lesser Shortwing *Brachypteryx leucophrys*: B: Heard only daily on the Limithang Road.

Orange-flanked Bush Robin *Tarsiger cyanurus*: B: (4) at Chele La on 26 March.

Golden Bush Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*: B: (1) stunning male seen briefly at our Yongcola camp on 10 Apr.

Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*: (1) Sultanpur and (1) Yamuna. B: Moderately common at low and medium elevations in lightly wooded farmland and around settlements. Recorded on 10 days with a maximum of (4).

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: (1) male Sultanpur B: Recorded on 3 days with (1) female on 5 Apr near Jakar; (3) on 7 Apr between Sengor and Yongcola and (1) male at SZ on 14 Apr.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsonii*: B: Widespread and moderately common this year, recorded on 10 days with a maximum of (10) on 1 Apr. Numerous good views of the handsome males.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*: B: (4) including 3 males that gave good views just below the pass at Cheli La on 26 March. An outstanding year for this near Chinese endemic.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*: B: Common and widespread this year, recorded on 10 days with a maximum of (10). A beautiful little bird.

White-capped Water Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*: B: Widespread and moderately common; seen on 15 days and found on virtually every creek, stream and river that we encountered; c. 700 - 3500m. A thoroughly delightful and dapper bird.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*: B: Widespread and common; seen on 15 days with as many as (20) on one day; usually seen in pairs with many males singing; found along virtually every stretch of creek, stream and river we encountered in addition to cliff-side waterfalls and springs.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*: B: (2) on a torrent between Trongsa and Shemgang on 1 Apr with one present at the same site on 4 Apr.

Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*: B: (2) Tashitang on 29 March, (2) at SZ on both 13-14 Apr. Very good views.

Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus immaculatus*: B: (1) SZ on 13 Apr with (3) there on 14 Apr. Great views of this uncommon and shy species.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*: (2) Sultanpur B: Recorded on 6 days typically (1-2). The subspecies *maura* is sometimes split as Siberian Stonechat.

White-tailed Stonechat *Saxicola leucura*: (2) Yamuna gave some great scope views of this rare and localised Indian endemic.

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*: (10) Sultanpur-Yamuna.

Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 12 days.

Brown Rock-Chat *Cercomela fusca*: (2) at Uppal's Orchid Hotel in Delhi was a surprise.

Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*: (2) Yamuna and (2) Sultanpur.

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Tesia castaneocoronata*: B: Heard only on five days.

Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea*: B: Heard only on 6 days.

Grey-bellied Tesia *Tesia cyaniventer*: B: (1) taped in on 10 Apr in forest interior below Namling gave some good but brief views.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *Cettia fortipes*: B: (1-2) seen on 4 days and heard on a further three dates. Several good views of this spirited songster.

Grey-sided Bush-Warbler *Cettia brunnifrons*: B: (1-2) seen on 6 days with several good views of this tiny skulker.

Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi*: B: (2) in bamboo near Jakar gave a sensational view in response to playback.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*: (2) Yamuna B: (1-2) seen on two days and heard on a further 4 dates.

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: (20) Yamuna and (2) Sultanpur.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*: B: (2-4) birds seen on 4 days.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis*: B: (2-6) recorded on 8 days.

Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*: B: Recorded on 4 days, all singles.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*: B: (1) 28 Mar and (1) 1 Apr.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*: B: (1) 11 Apr east of Mongar.

Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*: B: Recorded on 9 days with a maximum of (5) in forest around Tingtibi on 1 Apr.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*: B: (2) on 11 Apr at Kori La.

Yellow-vented Leaf-warbler *Phylloscopus cantator*: B: Recorded on 4 days with max. (2) daily near Tingtibi and (5) recorded Tashitang. This is a distinctive and little known *Phylloscopus* species.

Grey-crowned Warbler *Seicercus tephrocephalus*: B: (1) on 27 March at Cheri identified by half white in outer tail feathers.

Whistler's Warbler *Seicercus whistleri*: B: (2) on 28 Mar at Dochu La with (1) on 5,7 and 9 Apr between Trongsa and Yongcola.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (10) on 1 Apr at Tingtibi.

Grey-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys*: B: (2-6) daily 7-9 Apr on the Limithang Road. Excellent views allowing us to study the throat and identify the species.

White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis*: B: (3) on 10 Apr near Namling gave the outstanding views necessary to able to identify this species from Grey-cheeked.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps*: B: Widespread in low numbers, recorded on 11 days with a maximum of (2-4) daily on 7-9 Apr on the Limithang Road.

Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*: B: (4) on 1 Apr near Shemgang with (4) on 4 Apr nearby.

Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps*: B: Recorded on 6 days with max. (10) on 10 Apr near Yongcola. One of the most attractive and charming of all Old World Warblers.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*: (5) Yamuna. All identified as subspecies *althaea*, sometimes split as Hume's Whitethroat.

Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*: (1) Yamuna was a scarce surprise sighting.

Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris*: (1) Yamuna

Common Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*: B: (1) Chele La on 26 Mar and (5) on 6 Mar at Gayzamchu.

Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger*: B: Recorded on 4 days with max. (3) on 1 Apr. (chitzereet-chitzereet-chitzereet).

Hill Prinia *Prinia atrogularis*: B: (2) on 7 Apr below Yongcola camp with (1) 11 Apr East of Mongar.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens*: B: (2) SZ on 14 Apr.

Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis*: (1) Yamuna

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*: (10) Yamuna (jimmy-jimmy-jimmy).

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*: (2) Yamuna (tlik-tlik-tlik).

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris*: (1) Yamuna

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*: B: (1) on 3 Apr and (1) 13 Apr.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*: B: (1) 14 Apr at SZ.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophata*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 6 days with a maximum of (4).

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*: (1) Sultanpur; (1) Yamuna: both female plumaged so impossible to ID to species level. Both *albicilla* and *parva* are present at this location.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*: B: (1) male Sultanpur **B:** (1-2) SZ 13-14 Apr,

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni*: B: Seen on 4 days with max. (4) near Tingtibi, 1 Apr.

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliaris*: B: Noticeably scarce this year with singles seen on four days with most people not connecting with it till we found a co-operative male on 12 April near Narphung La.

White-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula monileger*: B: Heard and glimpsed only on 9 April above Yongcola.

Sapphire Flycatcher *Ficedula sapphira*: B: (2) male and female gave a great view on 2 April near Shemgang.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*: B: Widespread and often common, recorded on 12 days with a maximum of (10) on six dates. A truly spectacular bird.

Large Niltava *Niltava grandis*: B: (2) females on 4 April near Shemgang. Heard on several days.

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae*: B: Seen on 7 days and heard on a further three dates. Several excellent views of the jewel like male.

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*: B: (2) on 3 Apr near Shemgang with a great male on 10 Apr near Nmaling.

Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*: B: (1) male on 2 Apr and a pair on 4 Apr near Shemgang gave great views after a lengthy taping session.

Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*: B: (2-4) on 2-3 Apr at Tingtibi with another male on 12 Apr near Rontong. Heard on two other days.

Pygmy Blue Flycatcher *Muscicapella hodgsoni*: B: (1) Namling was a male seen briefly in a mixed flock in the forest interior.

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicacapa ceylonensis*: B: Widespread and moderately common, seen on 10 days with a maximum of (10) on 27 Mar at Cheri.

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha*: B: An excellent year for this tiny gem, recorded on 6 days with a maximum of (4) on 7 Apr in forest between Sengor and Yongcola.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*: B: Recorded on 9 days with a maximum of (4) on 8 Apr between Yongcola and Namling.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*: B: (1) male in bamboo forest above SZ on 14 Apr.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys*: B: (1-4) seen on 5 days with max. (4) between Punakha and Pele La on 30 Mar.

White-browed Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*: B: (1) in a mixed flock on 8 Apr near our Yongcola camp was the only sighting this year.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*: B: (2-3) seen very well on three days with max. at Namling on 10 Apr in bamboo forest.

Coral-billed Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus*: B: (1) on 8 Apr just above our Yongcola camp gave a couple of brief good views of this notoriously scarce and secretive species.

Slender-billed Scimitar-babbler *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris*: B: (1) responding to a tape at Namling on 9-10 Apr gave brief views in its dense bamboo forest home but gave several people a tough time trying to get it in the binoculars.

Long-billed Wren-Babbler *Rimator malacoptilus*: B: (1) on 8 Apr near Yongcola gave a wonderful view of this rare and enigmatic species. (1) leader only below our Yongcola camp was a new location for this species and it was also heard below Morong on 13 Apr-another new site for this elusive species.

Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer*: B: Heard only near Shemgang.

Pygmy Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla*: B: Heard calling on at least 6 days.

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler *Spelaornis troglodytoides*: B: (1) near Sengor gave an outstanding view of this little known mega rarity.

Rufous-throated Wren Babbler *Spelaornis caudatus*: B: Fabulous views for everyone of (1) on 9 Apr on Limithang Road between Namling and Yongcola. Another was seen leader only near the same location on 8 Apr. Globally threatened.

Spotted Wren Babbler *Spelaornis formosus*: B: Heard only, but always in steep jungle terrain or drowned out by river torrent sound.

Wedge-billed Wren Babbler *Sphenocichla humei*: B: Heard only on 8 Apr near Yongcola but refused to come down the slope unfortunately. This elusive species is one of the least known of Asian birds. Globally threatened.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a maximum of (5) on the Limithang Road on 9 Apr.

Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea*: B: An excellent year for this species recorded on 6 days with a max. (5) on 9 Apr on the Limithang Road. Everyone had the chance to see this gorgeous little bird up close.

Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris nigriceps*: B: (2-5) above our Tingtibi camp on 2-3 Apr with (1) on 7 Apr near Yongcola. Heard on a couple of other dates..

Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi*: (10) Sultanpur.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus*: (10) Yamuna. B: (2) on 14 Apr in secondary scrub above checkpoint at SZ was a surprise sighting.

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*: B: (2) on 12 Apr at Narphung La was the only sighting this year in a mixed flock.

Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris*: B: (2) on 12 Apr and (10) on 13 Apr below Morong gave everyone a good view of this stunnig bird.

Cutia *Cutia nipalensis*: B: (1) below our Yongcola camp on 7 Apr and a wonderful pair in beautiful forest below Morong on 13 Apr gave everyone a megaview.

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius rufiventer*: B: (1) male near Namling on 8 Apr was a great sighting of this rare species.

White-browed Shrike-babbler *Pteruthius flaviscapis*: B: Seen on four days and heard on a further seven dates. Several great views of this beautiful species.

Green Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius aenobarbus*: B: An excellent year for this scarce species with (3) on 5 Apr at Yutong La and (3) on 7 Apr below Sengor. All responded to the call of the Collared Owlet and gave excellent views.

Black-eared Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius melanotis*: B: (1) female near Namling on 5 Apr and a pair here on 10 Apr.

Indian White-hooded Babbler *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*: B: (2) on 14 Apr in bamboo forest above SZ gave a great view. Split by some authorites from the subspecies in southeast Asia.

Rusty-fronted Barwing *Actinodura egertoni*: B: An excellent year for this species seen on 7 days with max. (30) on 8 Apr above our Yongcola camp.

Hoary-throated Barwing *Actinodura nipalensis*: B: (2) at Yutong La on 5 Apr and (2) below Sengor on 9 Apr.

Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera*: B: Recorded on 7 days with max. (20) below Morong on 13 Apr.

Chestnut-tailed Minla *Minla strigula*: B: Recorded on 11 days with max. (15) on 1 Apr near Shemgang.

Red-tailed Minla *Minla ignotincta*: B: Recorded on 5 days with max. (50) on 7 Apr between Namling and Yongcola.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis*: B: (2-6) daily in montane bamboo below our Sengor camp and Namling on the Limithang Road on 5-8 Apr. Stunning views of this stunning bird.

Yellow-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinerea*: B: In many ways this species epitomises the quality of the birding in Bhutan. A little known and rarely if ever seen species throughout most of its range it is locally common in Bhutan especially along the Limithang Road. On four consecutive days (7-10 Apr) we recorded totals of 2-10 with small numbers encountered below Morong.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta *Alcippe castaneiceps*: B: Widespread and moderately common, seen on 7 days with a maximum of (10) on 8 Apr at Yongcola.

White-browed Fulvetta *Alcippe vinipectus*: B: Widespread and common, seen on 10 days with a maximum of (10). Usually with mixed species flocks in the understorey of both mixed evergreen and broad-leaved forest.

Nepal Fulvetta *Alcippe nipalensis*: B: Very skulking although locally quite numerous. Seen on 3 days with max. (20) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi.

Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata*: B: Common and ubiquitous. Seen on 16 days with the highest daily count of (40) on 2 Apr.

Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia picaoides*: B: (6) on 13 Apr in forest below Morong.

Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps*: B: A very localised species. Recorded on 3 days 2-4 Apr in the Tingtibi area with a high count of (40) on 4 Apr. Also (1) on 13 Apr at Morong.

White-naped Yuhina *Yuhina bakeri*: B: Recorded on 6 days at Tingtibi, Yongcola and Morong. (2-10) being the range of individuals estimated daily. A good result for this uncommon to rare bird throughout its entire range. Listed as a Threatened Species.

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*: B: Widespread and moderately common; recorded on 14 days with a maximum count of (10) on 4 days especially on the Shemgang-Tingtibi Road.

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis*: B: Widespread and moderately common, especially at high elevations. Recorded on 6 days with a high count of (20 plus) on 31 March at Pele La.

Rufous-vented Yuhina *Yuhina occipitalis*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 4 days with a high count of (10) at Pele La on 31 March.

Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta*: B: Recorded on 3 days with a max. (50) on 2 Apr at Tingtibi.

White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina xantholeuca*: B: (4) at Tingtibi on 2 Apr was the only sighting this tour.

White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 6 days with a maximum count of (50) on 5 Apr around Trongsa.

White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*: B: One of the most attractive and effervescent of Asia's laughingthrushes. Seen daily along the road between Trongsa and Shemgang and Shemgang and Tingtibi. Also recorded below Yongcola and east of Mongar.

Greater-necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*: B: (10) in partially disturbed subtropical forest below our camp near Tingtibi on 3 Apr.

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *Garrulax ruficollis*: B: (2-10) on 1-3 Apr around Shemgang and Tingtibi.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*: B: Common and recorded widely in suitable forested habitat on 10 days with a high count of (10) on the Limithang Road.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis*: B: (3) on 3 Apr at our campsite in Tingtibi. A scarce and shy species.

Grey-sided Laughingthrush *Garrulax caerulatus*: B: (2) ON 11 Apr in roadside secondary forest east of Mongar. A good record of this scarce and shy bird.

Streaked Laughingthrush *Garrulax lineatus*: B: Recorded on 9 days in numbers of (1-4).

Blue-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax squamatus*: B: A great year for this skulker with singles seen 11,12 and 13 Apr with some good views. Also heard below Yongcola camp on 8 Apr.

Scaly Laughingthrush *Garrulax subunicolor*: B: (2) on 7 Apr and (5) on 8 Apr above Yongcola camp.

Black-faced Laughingthrush *Garrulax affinis*: B: Widespread and notably common and very vocal at high elevations. Seen on 5 days with a maximum count of (10) on 5 Apr at Yutong La.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax erythrocephalus*: B: An excellent year for this species recorded on 7 days with max. (10) on 30 Mar at Pele La.

Red-faced Liocichla *Liocichla phoenicea*: B: (2) in secondary scrub below Morong on 13 Apr gave a good view of this skulker.

Great Parrotbill *Conostoma oemodium*: B: (3) at Yutong La on 5 Apr where curious and whistled in giving some megaviews.

Brown Parrotbill *Paradoxornis unicolor*: B: (2) in a bamboo field near Jakar on 6 Apr gave super views.

Black-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis nipalensis*: B: (30) on 7 Apr near Namling shimmering through the bamboo was our only encounter with this elusive species.

Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis ruficeps*: B: (10) on both 8 and 10 Apr on Limithang Road gave everyone superb views.

Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*: B: A delightful species and a great favourite with everyone. Recorded on 7 days with a maximum of (10) on 30 March in forest between Punakha and Pele La.

Rufous-fronted Tit *Aegithalos iouschistos*: B: Recorded on 5 days with a maximum count of (10) on 30 Mar in forest between Punakha and Pele La.

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*: B: Recorded on 5 days, moderately common at high altitude. Highest count was (10) on 30 Mar at Pele La.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*: B: Widespread and moderately common in all high elevation forests. Recorded on 6 days with a high count of (20) on 5Apr at Yutong La.

Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous*: B: Widespread and moderately common in all high elevation forests. Recorded on 7 days with a high count of (10) on 5 Apr at Yutong La.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*: B: Moderately common and ubiquitous in suitable forested habitat. Seen on 18 days with counts exceeding (10 plus) on at least 8 days. One of the most frequently seen but nevertheless most attractive Himalayan species.

Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*: B: A truly spectacular but rather uncommon species, (4-6) on Shemgang Road above Tingtibi; (4-10) on 7-9 Apr on the Limthang Road with (2) between Mongar and Rontong on 11 Apr.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 8 days with a regular high count of (5).

Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea*: B: A great year for this spectacular bird recorded on three days with (1) Tingtibi on 2 Apr with (3) here on 4 Apr; (2) below Yongcola camp on 7 Apr and heard here on 9 Apr.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*: B: (2-4) on 2-4 Apr on Shemgang-Tingtibi Road.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis*: B: Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 10 days this year, typically in pairs.

Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa*: B: (4) seen as two separate pairs in roadside forest below Morong on 13 Apr. We had some fabulous views even photos of this major rarity.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*: B: (1) on 31 Mar on a roadside rockface as we approached the Trongsa Dzong viewpoint was a lucky break appreciated by all tour members. We had a great view.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*: B: Recorded on 2 days, both singles on 30 Mar at Pele La and 6 Apr at Yutong La.

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *Certhia nipalensis*: B: (8) on 28 Mar at Dochu La in the forest interior was our only sighting of this scarce species.

Brown-throated Treecreeper *Certhia discolor*: B: Singles recorded on 7 Apr below Yongcola and 12 Apr near Narphung. Heard on two other days. Great views of all three species of treecreeper was a feature of this tour.

Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*: (10) Yamuna including some megaviews of males.

Mrs Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae*: B: Often together with Green-tailed Sunbirds and mixed species flocks. The resident subspecies in Bhutan is especially spectacular. Recorded on 8 days with a maximum count of (10) on 7 Apr between Sengor and Namling. All of the gorgeous sunbirds were popular with us and often the first to respond to a Collared Owlet call.

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis*: B: Common and often ubiquitous. Seen on 13 days with a high count of (20) on 7 Apr between Sengor and Yongcola.

Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*: B: Common and widespread especially at elevations generally lower than the previous two species. Seen on 9 days with a maximum daily total of (20) on 2 Apr near Tingtibi.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*: B: (2) stunning males in forest edge in SZ on 14 Apr including one feeding in a flowering shrub only a couple of yards away.

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*: B: (1-5) seen on the three days along the Shemgang to Tingtibi Road, 2-4 Apr and (10) in forest below Morong on 13 Apr.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus*: B: Widespread and moderately common at middle elevations. Seen on 7 days with a maximum count of (4) on both 2-4 Apr near Tingtibi.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosa*: B: Recorded on 8 days with a high count of (10) on six dates.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*: (1) of the southern rufous-backed subspecies *erythronotus* observed Yamuna **B:** Recorded on 7 days with a maximum of (5) on 12 Apr near Rontong. (1) on 29 Mar at Punakha was also of the subspecies *erythronotus*-a vagrant in Bhutan. A species of farmland-forest edge.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*: **B:** (1) Punakha on 29 Mar and (2) SZ on 14 Apr.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*: **B:** Widespread but sparse. Recorded on 6 days with a maximum of (2) on 13 Apr near Morong.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*: (20) Sultanpur-Yamuna.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*: **B:** Widespread and common to very common, recorded on 17 days with a max. (20).

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*: **B:** Recorded on 6 days with max. (20) on 2-4 Apr at Tingtibi.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer*: **B:** (1) on 10 Apr near Namling and (1) on 14 Apr in bamboo forest above SZ.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentotus*: **B:** (1-5) Tingtibi on 2-4 Apr.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*: **B:** (2) at SZ on 14 Apr.

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris*: **B:** One of the many great birds of Bhutan. Widespread and common from near to Paro and Thimpu and east to the Limithang Road. Seen on 4 days with a maximum count of (4).

Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis*: **B:** (1) on 1 Apr near Shemgang; (1) on 10 Apr near Namling and (2) on both 12-13 Apr near Morong gave a great view for all.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: **B:** (4) on 27 March between Thimphu and Cheri was our only sighting.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*: **B:** Widespread and locally moderately common, recorded on 10 days with a max. (20) at Tingtibi.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*: (1) on 15 Apr on drive to Gauhati Airport.

Black-billed Magpie *Pica pica*: **B:** Common in the upland valleys of the Bumthang Region with (6-20) individuals recorded on 5-6 April. The subspecies that occurs in the Bumthang Valley is *bottae*. This subspecies has a black rump. This subspecies has been split recently, by some authorities, as the Tibetan Magpie *Pica bottae*.

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*: **B:** Widespread and common in higher elevation evergreen forests from Paro and the Cheri Valley east to the Limithang Road. Recorded on 7 days with a high count of (10) on 26 March near Chele La.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*: **B:** Moderately common and seen on 6 days with a high count of (100) on 2 April near Jakar.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*: Abundant in Delhi. **B:** (2) Punakha Dzong was a rare Bhutan sighting on 29 Mar.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchus*: **B:** Common to very common and widespread, recorded on 20 days with as many as (100) around our camp at Sengor on 7 Apr.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*: **B:** (1) feeding in *Ficus religiosa* in the courtyard of the Punakha Dzong on 29 Mar and (10) that were attracted by insects near a lamp at the Zangtho Pelri Hotel, Punakha on 30 Apr. (1) at Rontong on 12 Apr and (10) SZ on 14 Apr.

Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*: (20) Sultanpur in flight

Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum*: (2) driving towards Yamuna-leader only.

Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra*: (10) Sultanpur (10) Yamuna; **B:** (6) SZ 14 Apr.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*: Common and ubiquitous in open country in the Delhi area. **B:** Recorded on 8 days with a high count of (20) on 29 March around Punakha. (1) at Paro on 25 Mar was my first sighting here.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*: (6) SZ

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*: Yamuna (10)

Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*: **B:** (4) at SZ on 14 Apr

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*: **B:** Common in suitable scrub and open country especially around farm buildings. Recorded on 6 days with a high count of (100) feeding in a field on 11 Apr between Mongar and Rontong.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: **B:** Ubiquitous in suitable open country especially around farm buildings. Recorded on 9 days with generally (10) birds on these days.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: (10) Yamuna; **B:** (5) in downtown SZ.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philipinus*: A couple in village of Darranga in Assam on 15 Apr while we had our passports processed. A distinctive pallid subspecies *burmanicus* here.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*: (15) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi and (4) in seeding bamboo in SZ on 14 Apr.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*: (4) and (20) near Punakha on 28 and 30 Mar respectively.

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*: (2) in reedbeds at Yamuna.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Carduelis spinoides*: **B:** Recorded on 6 days with max. (100) on 13 Apr.

Tibetan Siskin *Serinus thibetanus*: **B:** (10) at Pele La on 30 Mar.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*: **B:** (20) at Chele La on 26 Mar; (20) at our camp on the Old Pele La Rd. on 30 Mar; (200) in finch fallout at Sengor on 6 Apr.

Blanford's Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubescens*: **B:** (1) male at Sengor on 6 Apr in the finch fallout. A rare bird.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch *Carpodacus nipalensis*: **B:** (10) on 31 Mar at Pele La and (30) in a fallout at Sengor on 6 Apr.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*: (10) Yamuna; **B:** (1-10) recorded on 3 days-11,12 and 14 Apr with max. at SZ.

Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*: **B:** (20) near Jakar on 5 Apr and (10) near Ura on 6 Apr. Good year for this species.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus edwardsii*: **B:** (1) female on 28 Mar at Dochu La with (10) at Pele La on 31 Mar a great result for this species.

White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura*: **B:** (10) including several males on 26 March in forest below Cheli La, (10) including several males at Pele La on 31 Mar and singles at Yutong La and Sengor.

Crimson-browed Finch *Propyrrhula subhimachala*: **B:** (1) stunning male on 31 March on the Old Pele La Road gave repeat sensational views around our campsite.

Scarlet Finch *Haematospiza sipahi*: **B:** (5-20) present in the early morning in our Yongcola camp on 9-10 Apr in the scope absolutely glowed.

Brown Bullfinch *Pyrrhula nipalensis*: B: (10) on 13 Apr in forest below Morong gave an outstanding view of this uncommon bird.

Red-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*: B: (5) on 28 Mar at Dochu La and (10) on 31 Mar at Pele La.

Collared Grosbeak *Coccothraustes affinis*: B: Recorded on 3 days with max. (10) on 6 Apr near Ura La

Spot-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas melanzanthos*: B: (2) on 2 Apr at Tingtibi gave a great view.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*: B: Recorded on 3 days with max. (100) in juniper forest near Ura La on 6 Apr. Several superb views.

Gold-naped Finch *Pyrrhoptes epauletta*: B: Seen on 5 days with a max. (5) on both 8 Apr at Yongcola and 13 Apr near Morong. An outstanding year for this species.

Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami*. B: (1-2) mostly males recorded on 4 days. Most common around Punakha and on the drive between Shemgang and Trongsa in agricultural areas.

MAMMALS

Assamese Macaque *Macaca assamensis*: B: Widespread and moderately common especially at lower elevations. Recorded on 7 days including Tingtibi, Yongcola and SZ.. Maximum count of (50) on 3 Apr at Tingtibi.

Common (Hanuman) Langur *Presbytis entellus*: B: Recorded on 2 days with max. (40) on 26 March between Paro and Thimphu. Notably larger and more heavily furred than populations in India.

Capped Langur *Presbytis pileatus*: B: Wonderful looks a total of (5-10) of these handsome primates below our Yongcola campsite on 7-9 Apr with (10) in forest above SZ ON 14 Apr.

Golden Langur *Presbytis geei*: B: Notably common from just below Trongsa to Shemgang and down to our camp near Tingtibi. Large numbers (20 – 100) seen on four days with several troops feeding on or at the side of the road from 1-4 Apr.

Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*: (3) Yamuna

Tiger *Panthera tigris*: B: On 31 Mar at our camp on the Old Pele La Road at 05:15 a Tiger was heard roaring within 1 kilometre of camp possibly closer. Very distinctive powerful “er-room” with 3-4 roars given in two sequences. This is different from the sawing call of Leopard. That morning we found a Yak carcass that had been killed two nights before. Apparently this male Tiger had killed at least five Yaks in the past two weeks and was being heard daily by local roadworkers and herdsman. Only its tracks, vocalisations and “deeds” were the indication of the Tiger’s presence. No sightings by local people.

Himalayan Black Bear *Selenarctos thibetanus*: B: A nest was found in a fig tree on the Hydrotrail at Tingtibi on 3 Apr. According to local workers it had been present in the tree for two days, two days before we visited.

Hodgson’s Flying Squirrel *Petaurista magnificus*: B: (3) seen by leaders only whilst spotlighting on 8 Apr in forest above the Yongcola camp. A cat-sized squirrel strikingly bright

orange with black stripes through eyes and ears, a black tail tip with one individual dusky on the back. Provisionally identified as this species but more research required.

Giant Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor*: B: (1) on 1,3 and 4 Apr. All sightings near Tingtibi and the valley west of Shemgang. A spectacular squirrel the largest in the world.

Hoary-bellied Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus*: B: (2-3) seen daily around Tingtibi.

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah*: B: (1) on 27 Mar; (1) 30 Mar and (1) 7 Apr.

Red-bellied Squirrel *Callosciurus pallasii*: B: (1) on 9 Apr near Yongcola camp.

Five-striped Squirrel *Funambulus pennanti*: (10) Sultanpur on 13 Mar.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops macclellandi*: B: Moderately common and widespread, seen on 4 days typically (1-2). Often associated with mixed foraging flocks of birds.

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*: B: Fresh dung found in bamboo forest above SZ on 14 Apr.

Goral *Nemorhaedus goral*: B: (2) scoped while feeding unconcernedly next to the monastery at Cheri on 27 March.

Common Barking Deer (Muntjac) *Muntiacus muntjak*: B: (1) seen at Cheri on 27 Mar and (1) seen near Tingtibi on 3 Apr. Heard barking on several nights whilst camping here.

Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus*: A herd of (50) Sultanpur with (3) Yamuna.

Large-eared Pika *Ochotona macrotis*: B: (1) on 26 Mar at the pass at Chele La was most likely of this species.

Forrest's Pika *Ochotona forresti*: B: (1) photographed at Namling on 9 Apr was identified as this species by the long foreclaws and grey patches meeting behind the nape. A first sighting for me.

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis*: (1) Sultanpur-disturbed during the day whilst searching for Indian Courser and Yellow-wattled Lapwing.

GPS references

Riverview Hotel, Thimpu 89° 38.81' E.	2308 metres	27° 28.29' N.,
Cheri Valley 89° 38.09' E.	2711 metres	27° 35.19' N,
Dochu La (summit) 89° 45.14'E.	3112 metres	27° 29.39' N.,
Zangtho Pelri Hotel, Punakha 89° 52.21' E.	1397 metres	27° 32.16' N.,

Pele La 90° 12.12' E.	3404 metres	27° 32.15' N,
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Campsite on eastern side of Pele La 90° 12.57' E.	3291 metres	27° 32.51' N.,
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Thrumsing La 90° 59.47' E.	3763 metres	27° 24.07' N.,
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Thrumsing La is 43 kms after the Ura (Sheltang) La, 17 kms before Sengor, 33 before the Namling cliffs & 38 before Namling.

Sengor Campsite 91° 01.53' E.	2965m	27° 21.21' N,
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Namling village 91° 06.37' E.	2309 metres	27° 20.15' N.,
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Yongcola Campsite 91° 07.42' E.	1855 metres	27° 19.16' N,
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