

BIRD TOURS

David Bishop

**The Birds and Other Wildlife
recorded on the David Bishop Bird
Tours Bhutan Tour - 2015**



Wallcreeper © K. David Bishop

Compiled and led by K. David Bishop

BHUTAN 2015

"The Paro Dzong (monastery), guarded by icy crags, sits warming under the late afternoon sun. It seems to welcome our approach to our beautifully located hotel. An Ibisbill, so subtle as to be taken for a glacial stone, dips quietly in the snowmelt. This is indeed the Kingdom of Bhutan and the land of the peaceful Dragon." As my good friend Steve Hilty remarked on first setting foot in the kingdom, "This is fairytale land."

K. David Bishop

This was my 28th bird tour to Bhutan. I first began leading bird tours to this magical kingdom in 1994 and have enjoyed the privilege of returning there once or twice a year almost annually since then. So what is it that makes this particular tour so attractive? Quite simply Bhutan is in a class of its very own. Yes it is an expensive tour (although with David Bishop Bird Tours perhaps not so), largely because the Bhutanese have decided (in our opinion quite rightly) that they would rather not compromise their culture and spectacular natural environment to hundreds of thousands of tourists and in consequence they charge a princely sum for being among the privileged few to visit their country. Similarly we feel that we have a very special product to offer and whilst we could make it shorter and thus less expensive we feel that that would diminish the experience.



Dawn in the High Himalayas © K. David Bishop

By taking more time in Bhutan we can literally take the opportunity to smell the ‘roses’ or rather the Daphne, imbibe the various serendipitous cultural opportunities that offer themselves as well as really enjoy the birds, mammals, butterflies and flowering plants that are so profuse in spring in the eastern Himalayas. Many of these species and experiences require time and we don’t want to short-change our valued clients. How often have you heard on tour after tour that one wishes one was here 40 or more years ago. In the case of Bhutan, we are there 40 years ago BUT with all the joys and comforts that an increasingly good infrastructure brings.



Spring leaf colour in Bhutan © K. David Bishop

Bhutan is literally everything we had hoped it would be and more. And it just gets better and better. Our ground agents Gangri Tours and Travel treat us like royalty and are absolutely professional sometimes to the point of this leader’s amazement. From Wangdi, our truly world-class bus driver to the newest dining room recruit and our wonderful ground crew they all contribute majorly to the fun, happiness, comfort and enjoyment everyone derives from this special tour.

On David Bishop Bhutan Bird tours we typically record well in excess of 330 species of birds (our record is 375 species in Bhutan) and 15-25 species of mammals. It has to be said that our mammal list seems to be getting better and bigger each year, perhaps a reflection of my personal interest in the mammalian critters of Asia and in particular the Himalayas. And perhaps the enthusiasm of our clients and our driver for night-drives and spotlighting! The brand new field guide to the butterflies of the India subcontinent will undoubtedly result in more butterflies being recorded on this and other tours in and around the Indian Sub-Continent.

Whilst clearly everyone wants to see such mega-charismatic species as Satyr Tragopan, Ward’s Trogon, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Himalayan Monal, Ibisbill, Beautiful Nuthatch and a host of other specialties there is always a tremendous sense of excitement at experiencing the unknown on David Bishop Bhutan Bird tours. Some years we have done very nicely with the enigmatic and globally critically endangered White-bellied Heron – this year was exceptional with a pair fishing and displaying to one another in front of us for an hour -- whilst in other years no one has seen this species at all. Sometimes we struggle with Satyr Tragopans whilst in other

years they behave like a dream and males show off to us – as they did this year! Beautiful Nuthatch is yet another blue ribbon bird but has become very difficult at one site possibly



Chestnut-tailed Minla © K. David Bishop

because of excessive use of tape-plack-back. Because we know Bhutan so well we not only know the birds very well but also know Bhutan well enough to take our clients to less utilised sites. This year we turned up trumps with exceptional and prolonged views of a flock of four Beautiful Nuthatches, Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal and Rufous-necked Hornbill. It really was quite a trip. Hmmm

Migration adds enormously to the excitement of Bhutan tours; for example sometimes you can go for several days without seeing a species you would typically expect to find fairly easily and then you bump into a migrating flock of 200 or so. And then there is the real thrill of something



Hairstreak butterfly © K. David Bishop

completely off the wall such as this year's White-bellied Heron and female White-throated Redstart. Flowering plants are a constant distraction and the more you get into them the more you see. A spray of orchids gracing lichen dappled rock and mountainsides ablaze with as many as 8-10 species of flowering rhododendrons most of them in giant tree-like growth-forms merely hint at the floristic joys of the kingdom of the thunder dragon.

This then is Bhutan a place as wonderous and enchanting as you can imagine and with more real birds as you could ever hope for!

I consider myself very privileged to have travelled so often and so extensively throughout the kingdom of Bhutan (1994 to the present). To have the opportunity to regularly explore such an incredible and special destination and in company with my wonderful Bhutanese friends is something I treasure and look forward to every year. This particular Bhutan tour was especially memorable and I thank you my clients and friends for help making it so. The vastness and beauty of Bhutan's forests is to experience a window onto what Asia and the Himalayas once were like. This combined with the opportunity to make very real discoveries never fails to rejuvenate my soul and make me want to return there time after time.

In large part the success of our Bhutan tours is due to our wonderful ... no change that, fantastic ground crew. I would like to thank them and of course you all for making the entire tour such a great experience.



Cheri Monastery at dawn © K. David Bishop

The following is a summary of our daily activities, including some of the trip's highlights together with a list of what we heard and saw. Nevertheless it only conveys part of the story and can never really express the wonderful sights and sounds of Bhutan, its land, its forests, wildlife and its people. I doubt any of us will forget the encounter with the pair of courting White-bellied Herons; Satyr Tragopans, Blood Pheasants, Himalayan Monal; four Beautiful Nuthatches with a mixed flock that foraged around us as we took lunch on the Zhemgang Road; fine 'scope views of a Sultan Tits and then as we descended towards the plains a mixed flock of White-bellied Parrotbills, Coral-billed Scimitar-Babblers and Rufous-fronted Barwings followed in quick succession by a host of new birds not least of which were a very obliging and rarely seen pair of Grey-headed Parrotbills; oh yes and what about those hornbill Rufous-necked and Great to the point we almost didn't look at them any more ☺. Of course the birding is always great in Bhutan and any time you find Rufous-necked Hornbills as well as we did was very special. But as seems to be a recurring theme on David Bishop Bird tours it was a very good trip for mammals with a total of 17 species seen including many Golden Langurs, good looks at the goat-like antelope Goral; for one lucky participant a Red Panda whilst our driver actually photographed a Marbled Cat on the Zhemgang Road – now that is painful!

This tour is undoubtedly a wonderful exposition of the rich biodiversity, landscapes and culture of this fascinating Kingdom. I cannot wait to return!

Thank you

David Bishop





Rufous-fronted Tit © K. David Bishop

Diary

- 22 March** Early AM flight Bangkok via Bagdogra to Paro, Bhutan. Met by guide Ugyen and driver Wangdi. PM birding Paro Valley; Tigers Nest and Drugyel Dzong. Ibisbill attending a nest.
- 23 March** Slow birding drive up to Cheli La circa 3,900m for b'fast; descended into Ha Valley and long circuitous drive to capital Thimpu. Kalij, male Himalayan Monal, female White-throated Redstart, flock Collared Grosbeaks. Red Panda – Elizabeth & Wangdi.
- 24 April** AM Cheri Valley; Jigme Dorji National park – superlative primeval Boreal Forest. Afternoon wandering the streets of the capital and some really fun shopping. Wallcreeper, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide
- 25 March** Dochu La; exceptionally clear views of the high Himalayas; breakfast 2,700m; walk then drive to Puna Tsang Chuu; birding around 'Dog's Bollock's Campsite' on the Mo Chuu. Crested Kingfisher, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Great Crested Grebe.
- 26 March** Non-stop birding around camp 05.30 – 08.30; Tashitang Trail 09.00 – 10.30 then drove and birded up to 2600m. Returned to Punakha hotel for dinner. Red-headed Trogon, Cutia.
- 27 March** 06.25 – 08.45 Po Chuu - watched a pair of fishing and courting White-bellied Herons for one hour then b'fast; followed Puna Tsang Chuu, checking for migrants, especially waterbird before driving up through Wangdi to Pele La and camp on the old road. KDB very sick with serious chest infection Ugh!
- 28 March** 06.25 – 08.45 birding old Pele La Road female Satyr Tragopan, six male Monal, Himalayan Griffons soaring low over head; flock of Snow Pigeons.
- 29 March** AM Yutong La but departed to early in time to experience a Tsetchu in the Jakar Valley. PM revelling in the intricacies of Aum Leki's extraordinary weavings.

- 30 March** The journey to our camp at Sengor is surely one of the engineering marvels of the world via Ura. Birded down from Thrumzing La to Sengor and then below our camp. 2 prs Blood Pheasant; male Satyr Tragopan; Brown Parrotbill.
- 31 March** "We woke to the sound of Satyr Tragopans calling all around us and then watched astonished as several males disported themselves in the open." B'fast at Sengor Camp then birded and drove, avoiding road works, rain and cloud, absolutely fantastic scenery, crossed the 'Namling Death Drop' to new lodge just below Yongkola. Very comfortable rooms with hot showers and a spectacular view over the Shonkhar Chu Valley.
- 1 April** 06.15 birded from our lodeg down in to the Shonkhar Chu Valley – fabulous non-stop birding. 1350m 09.10 turned around and headed up hill to a rather late b'fast 20150m; remainder of the day birding the Limithang Road.
- 2 April** 06.20 birded from Namling downhill – Broad-billed Warbler, Gold-breasted Fulvetta, Ward's Tropicbird; B'fast but rained all day thereafter. "Orchids abound, and the understory of the forest is often relatively clear, although the higher strata are often strung with enormous woody vines and lianas. And then there are the patches of bamboo so full of secrets and promise."
- 3 April** 06.20 Limithang Road below 2200m down to Bonkosomey Camp then drive up to Sengor for lunch followed by log drive to Trongsa via new 'short-cut' bypass.
- 4 April** Descended from the Trongsa Dzong into the Upper Mangde Chu Valley with initially its rich forests and extensive but lovely farmlands. Birded up and down hill through secondary woodland to camp just before Zhemgang. Nigh Safari Hodgson's Flying-Squirrel, Tickell's Thrush.
- 5 April** With an altitudinal range of circa. 500 - 2000m the Zhemgang Road nicely complements its more illustrious cousin, the Limithang Road. Furthermore, the Shemgang Road sees very little traffic, leaving one in peace and serenity to enjoy the beauty of its quite remarkable forests. 06.00 – 12.30 birded – Rufous-necked Hornbill - to lunch spot where a mixed flock included four Beautiful Nuthatches, Common Green Magpie and Long-tailed Broadbills. PM birding then 16.15 drove to Bamboo Camp in the lovely Mangde Chu Valley.
- 6 April** 06.00 – 08.45 Mangde Chu Valley 700m Great Hornbill, Pale-billed Parrotbill; ascended Tama La for lunch then birded down south slope to 1780m and finally drove to Jigmicholing Camp 1280m.
- 7 April** 05.46 birded, b'fasted and birded down to 510m. Alive with birds - White-bellied Parrotbills, Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler Grey-headed Parrotbill.
- 8 April** 06.00 – 10.30 Sal Forest and adjoining scrub 1.5 – 5 km west of Geylephu -- Common Peafowl – common; Greater Yellownape, migrating raptors incl. Greater Spotted Eagle. Ascended to overlook for lunch and thenc to Camp at Tsirang and a great evening's revelry. Speckled Piculet.
- 9 April** Long drive up hill initially through spectacular landscapes; brunch and goodbyes just below the dam works; 50 km through a massive dam project to Wangdi and up over Dochu La and into Paro. Phew. Wangdi you are amazing.
- 10 April** And so this magical tour once again came to end.



The Limithang Road, circa 3400m © K. David Bishop

(H) = Heard only. Species marked in bold represent unusual or noteworthy records.

Annotated List of Birds

NON-PASSERINES

Ducks & Geese ANATIDAE

1. Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

One seen briefly flying over the Puna Tsang Chu (27 March), however, a flock of circa 40 flying in classic 'V' formation over the Shemgang Road at the same time that good numbers of raptors were migrating north was an extraordinary experience.

2. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

We first saw a group of circa 50 along the Puna Tsang Chu (25 & 26 March) and an even larger total at the same site and then down the river towards Wangdi on 29 March. This attractive Himalayan breeding duck was often seen loafing together with other migrant waterfowl.

3. Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Three together with other migrant waterfowl resting along the Puna Tsang Chu on 27 March.

4. Mallard *Anas p. platyrhynchos*

A total of eight loafing together with other migrant waterfowl along the Puna Tsang Chu near Punakah Dzong on 27 March.

5. Green-winged (Common) Teal *Anas c. crecca*
Three together with other migrant waterfowl resting along the Puna Tsang Chuu on 27 March.
6. Common Merganzer *Mergus merganser*
Small numbers (1-6) on three days along the Puna Tsang Chuu near Punakha Dzong.

Pheasants & Partridges PHASIANIDAE

7. (H) Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus asiae*
Heard during our one morning in the lowlands of Geylephu. Several were heard calling within dense scrub ca 5 km west of Geylephu. Although until recently there have been very few records of this species for Bhutan, our continuing records adds further to the suggestion that this species is likely resident in the area.
8. (H) (Common) Hill Partridge *Arborophila t. torqueola*
Widespread and heard on many days.
9. (H) Chestnut-breasted Partridge *Arborophila mandellii*
Pairs heard duetting daily along the upper Tashitang Trail and Limithang Road. Classified by Birdlife International as globally Vulnerable.
10. (H) Rufous-throated Hill Partridge *Arborophila r. rufoocularis*
Heard on several days across Bhutan.
11. Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus tibetanus*
Just one pair on the upper slopes of Cheli La on our first morning in Bhutan; two pairs seen very nicely as we descended through Boreal Hemlock and Rhododendron Forest to Sengor and a total of seven as we retraced our way back along the Limithang Rd. to Trongsa.
12. Satyr Tragopan *Tragopan satyra*
Just a single female this year on Pele La; heard on Yutong La; then we hit the motherloade with multiple, prolonged and superb views of several males feeding along the roadside just below our Sengor camp. Thereafter heard at the surprisingly low altitude of circa 2000m.
13. Himalayan Monal *Lophophorus impejanus*
Two fabulous males on the upper slopes of Cheli La; a total of six glowing males on Pele La permitted some wonderful images. We then found one more *en route* to the Ura Valley. Undoubtedly one of the world's most iridescent and spectacular birds.
14. Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus murghi*
Fine looks at a very handsome male circa 5km west of Geylephu. Apparently a local resident.

15. Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelana melanota* and *moffitti*

A total of 18, including a group of five males on the slopes of Cheli La. A further four birds were counted during the late afternoon in lightly wooded farmland as we drove from Ha to Thimpu; two pair along the Tashitang Trail during the late afternoon. Thereafter ones and twos along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.

16. (H) Gray Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum bakeri*

At least three males heard giving their advertising call from a beautifully forested river valley far below as we descended from our b'fast stop (780m) on the Jigmicholing to Geylephu Road. Despite that there was no way to access the forest to try and see this species it was exciting just to hear such a wild bird in the midst of these wonderful landscapes.

17. Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

A total of seven this year in the scrub adjoining tall Sal Forest up to 5 km west of Geylephu. Circa five fully plumaged males plus two females or non-fully-plumaged males were either sitting out calling or in one case in flight showing us the true glory of his magnificent tail. A grand sight indeed. This species was unknown in Bhutan until a few years ago, however, recent exploration of the narrow strip of lowland Terai Forest that belongs to Bhutan reveals that this species is actually locally common.

Grebes PODICEPIDAE

18. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps c. cristatus*

Two in breeding plumage together with several other migrant waterbirds on the Puna Tsang Chu (25 March). A rare passage migrant in Bhutan.

Cormorants PHALACROCORACIDAE

19. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

As many as 12 on three days including several in attractive breeding plumage along the Puna Tsang Chu (25 – 27 March) and ones and twos along rivers adjacent to Geylephu. The subspecies *sinensis* regular winters in the Kingdom.

Herons & Egrets ARDEIDAE

20. White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis*

Undoubtedly the avian highlight of our magnificent tour. We watched for nearly an hour as a pair of birds fished and caught a large ?Trout along the Po Chu. The pair then flew down river where the male began to display to the female. A wondrous moment to cherish and a reminder of just how very special Bhutan truly is.

The on going increase in disturbance to the specialised riverine habitat of this Critically Endangered species is a matter for grave concern. The complete loss of habitat below the township of Wangdi including a known and active nest-site due to the horrendous mess and chaos resulting from the building of yet another hydroelectric dam is nothing short of a disaster for this species. Add to this the increasing number of foot-bridges, growing human population and the sheer folly of permitting river-rafting along the critically important Po Chu may well spell the

death knell for this species, whose world population is thought likely less than 200. Critically Endangered.



A pair of White-bellied Herons fishing along the Po Chuu, Bhutan
© K. David Bishop



White-bellied Heron displaying © K. David Bishop

21. Little Egret *Egretta g. garzetta*

One on river gravels near to Geylephu.

22. Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis coromandus*

Two in the semi-urban fields of Geylephu.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites ACCIPITRIDAE

23. Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus ruficollis*

At least one seen well in flight precipitated our observation of a very exciting migration of large raptors right over where we were having b'fast. Another in flight along the Mangde Chu as we headed north from Tsirang.

24. Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

One high over Pele La and then a total of at least eight the next morning, coming off their roost on Pele La and soaring low over our heads. Fantastic stuff. Four between Ura and Thrumzing La and a distant individual along with several other species of raptors seen from the lowlands near Geylephu. This species tends to be most often encountered in areas most frequented by domestic Yak.

25. Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis c. cheela*

One and twos most days from just above Trongsa south along the Zhemgang Rd. to Geylephu. An impressive total of ten as began to ascend from the lowlands towards Tsirang.

26. Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus n. nipalensis*

A good year for this impressive species; we found it widespread with individuals seen on at least seven days including some impressive close views in flight of this powerful raptor. Mainly along the Limithang and Zhemgang Roads

27. Rufous-bellied Eagle *Lophotriorchis (Hieraaetus) kienerii*

One immature seen well along the Zhemgang Road.

28. Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* (NOTE revised spelling)

A most evocative and distinctive eagle; we watched in awe as one hunted within the inter-canopy spaces of steep warm broadleaved forest at circa 2,000m on the Limithang Rd. Watching the dexterity with which this large eagle hunted back and forth deep within the forest, dropping into densely branched and leaved



canopies and then re-emerging once again was surely one of the highlights of the trip. Singles between Ura and Thrumzing La; the Limithang Rd. below Namling and a pair the following day; a total of four below Zhemgang; two above the Mangde Chu below Tingtibi; two between Jigmicholing and Geylephu and finally fabulous vies up close and personal in Sal Forest circa 10 km west of Geylephu.

29. Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

At least one moving north with a scatter of other raptors, observed from the open country circa 15 km west of Geylephu. This species appears to be a rare passage migrant in Bhutan.

30. Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

At least one moving north with a scatter of other raptors, observed from the open country circa 15 km west of Geylephu. This is an uncommon passage migrant in Bhutan.

31. Steppe Eagle *Aquila n. nipalensis*

Four with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April). This appears to be a regular migration site for modest numbers of raptors as they move out of the Tingtibi Valley and rise up what is almost a vertical face of the Himalayas before heading northwards.

32. Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila f. fasciata*

One with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April). A second was observed moving north with a scatter of other raptors, observed from the open country circa 15 km west of Geylephu. This species is a poorly known resident and, as these observations suggest may also be a passage migrant in Spring.



33. Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus indicus*

One exhibiting its distinctive display flight over the Shonkhar Chu Valley. Two with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April) and one perched in scrub near the edge of Sal Forest circa 10 km west of Geylephu.

34. Shikra *Accipiter badius poliopsis*

One adult male seen superbly in flight with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April). This is a scarce species in Bhutan.

35. Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* subsp?

One along the Po Chu and two moving north with a scatter of other raptors, observed from the open country circa 15 km west of Geylephu.

36. Black Kite *Milvus migrans limnaetus*

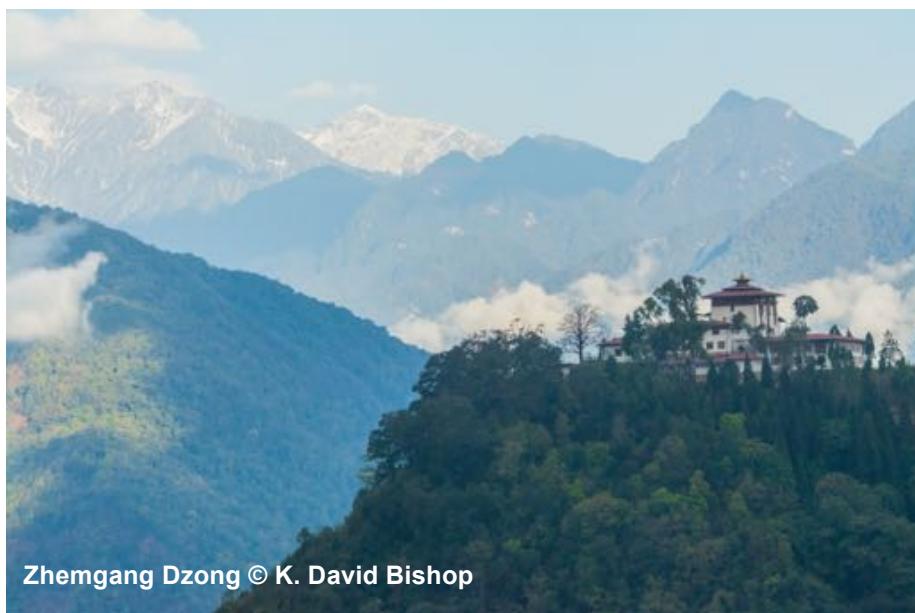
A total of seven of the distinctive subspecies *limnaetus* seen superbly in flight with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April). These birds were almost certainly passage migrants, however, this species is also resident in Bhutan.

37. Pallas's Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Fabulous views of an adult hunting along the Puna Tsang Chuu just below Punakha Dzong. A second bird with distinctive white markings was also seen two days later at the same site. It scared the devil out of the loafing Ruddy Shelducks. Yet another magnificent species. Classified by Birdlife International as globally Vulnerable.

38. Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo buteo burmanicus*

One over the eastern slopes of Pele La and one over the Shonkhar Chu Valley. NOTE: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) argue that *burmanicus* is specifically distinct from Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*.



Zhemgang Dzong © K. David Bishop

39. Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Good views of a dark morph seen superbly in flight with several other raptors migrating north over the Zhemgang Road (5 April).

Rails and Crakes RALLIDAE

40. Black-tailed Crake *Amaurornis bicolor*

Fabulous views of one and second heard very nearby in wet, terraced fields with borders of dense sedges above the Tashitang Valley. This species was only known from one specimen prior to the first bird tours to visit Bhutan in 1994.

However, with the information others and we have gained over the ensuing years it now appears that this species is locally common throughout the kingdom.

Ibisbill IBIDORHYNCHIDAE

41. Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Fabulous views of a pair nesting on a gravel island alongside the Paro airport and another seen along the Po Chu. Despite that Bhutan is indeed a stronghold for this very special species sometimes finding it during the nesting season can prove challenging as we have noted on some previous tours. However, the early date for this year's tour may have been timed prior to this species nesting and thus it was less secretive.



Plovers & Lapwings CHARADRIDAE

42. River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii*

Four along the Puna Tsang Chu and eight along the adjoining Po Chu. A further two along the Jakar Chu and finally one near Geylephu.

43. Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus i. indicus*

Two on short grassy sward alongside the Mo Chu. Moderately common in the lowlands where seven were seen around Geylephu and six from 5km west of Geylephu.

44. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius jerdoni*

One in breeding plumage on river gravels near Geylephu.

45. *Charadrius* sp

Two on 25 March along the Puna Tsang Chu. Most probably Long-billed Plover but not seen well enough to be sure.

Sandpipers & Allies SCOLOPACIDAE

46. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucus*
Two along the Paro Chu; one near Geylephu.

Pratincoles GLAREOLIDAE

47. Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*
Circa ten feeding over braided river gravel near Geylephu. There are very few records of this species from Bhutan, especially in central areas.

Gulls & Terns LARIDAE

48. Pallas's (Great Black-headed) Gull *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus*
One magnificent individual in full breeding on two days along the Puna Tsang Chu. This species is an uncommon passage migrant in Bhutan.

Pigeons & Doves COLUMBIDAE

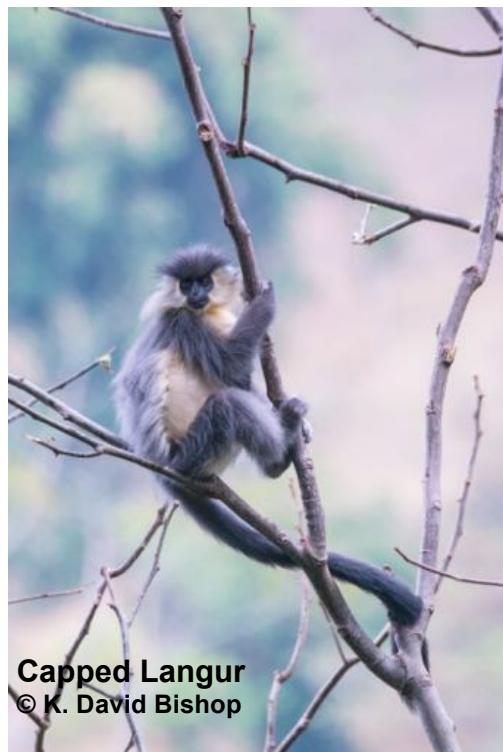
49. Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
Widespread and common. It is now almost impossible to determine which individuals are feral birds and which are wild birds.

50. Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota gradaria*
A notably good year for this very attractive species. Observations included a flock of ca. 30 on Cheli La; a total of 80 in 3-4 flocks along the Thimpu Chu below Cheri Monastery; two flocks of 30+ on the eastern slopes of Pele La and a flock of circa 50 along the Limithang Road.
51. Speckled Wood-Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*
A total of 15 along the Limithang Rd. at ca. 580m.



Worth a million words – Mick and Wangdi © K. David Bishop

52. (H) Ashy Wood-Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis*
Circa four heard and taped but despite our best efforts would not reveal themselves in lovely forest at circa 2500m above Tashitang.
53. Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis agricola*
Widespread, common, sometime very common and observed daily, often foraging on the road.
54. Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica humilis*
Two along the Puna Tsang Chu.
55. Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis tigrina*
Moderately common in open country in upland areas and notably very common in the flat borderlands.



56. Barred Cuckoo-dove *Macropygia unchall tusalia*
One in sub-tropical forest above Geylephu and another below Tsirang.
57. Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra*
Fine views of four in scrub with scattered trees near the airport west of Geylephu.
58. Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron a. apicauda*
At least three seen very nicely along the Mangde Chu below Tingtibi and a fine male seen beautifully in Sal Forest circa 5km west of Geylephu.

59. Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea sylvatica*
A total of 12 circa 5 km west of Geylephu.

60. Mountain Imperial Pigeon *Ducula badia insignis*
Superlative views of four including several birds exhibiting their spectacular display flight, over forest below Jigmecholing. Four recorded below Tsirang.

Cuckoos CUCULIDAE

61. (H) Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*

Just one heard in Sal Forest west of Geylephu. Presumably this individual was an early arrival into Bhutan. This species vocalisation is distinctive and, along with most other migrant cuckoos was notably scarce, likely due to the early date of this year's tour.



62. Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx s. sparveroides*

Widespread and seemingly common with superlative views in the Shonkhar Chu Valley. NOTE: Sometimes placed in *Cuculus*.

63. Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus v. varius*

Fine views of an immature in a rather strange plumage – perhaps grading to adult plumage in its first Spring in Bhutan. Observed in lightly treed scrub near Geylephu. This species an uncommon Summer Visitor to Bhutan.

64. Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus m. micropterus*

Thanks to some good 'scope work by Ugyen we all enjoyed exceptional views of this often elusive species within Sal Forest near Geylephu.

65. Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus sub telephonus*

Amazingly just one heard above the Ura Valley. Also known as Eurasian Cuckoo.

66. Himalayan (Oriental) Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*

Small numbers heard from 1st April, in the Shonkhar Chu Valley onwards. Seen in flight only in response to tape-playback on the slopes of Tama La. NOTE: 'Oriental' Cuckoo *C. saturatus* has recently been split three ways: the taxon we saw was Himalayan Cuckoo *C. saturatus* (previously referred to as Oriental Cuckoo); Horsfield's Cuckoo *C. optatus* and Sunda Cuckoo *C. lepidus*.

67. (H) Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis s. sonneratii*

Heard below persistently Jigmicholing.

68. Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris barussarum*

First heard and then seen on 6 April in the Mangde Chuu Valley and thereafter heard daily and two seen nicely near Geylephu. NOTE: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) point out that 'Drongo Cuckoo' clearly involves multiple species. The birds we saw and heard in the Himalayas is just one of several species derived from this split.

69. Asian Koel *Eudynamys s. scolopacea*

Singles, all males seen and heard in Sal Forest near Geylephu.

70. Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus t. tristis*

Two seen well in flight over on the Zhemgang Rd.

71. Lesser Coucal *Centropus b. bengalensis*

One heard in scrub circa 5km west of Geylephu.

Owls STRIGIDAE

72. (H) Mountain Scops-Owl *Otus s. spilocephalus*

Heard along the Zhemgang Road south to our Jigmecholing Camp.



The 'Tiger' = Collared Owlet © K. David Bishop

73. Collared Scops-Owl *Otus l. lettia*

Several heard on two nights along the Zhemgang Road.

74. Collared Owlet *Glaucidium b. brodei*

A notably good trip this year for thei species; birds, sometimes several were heard on 11 days across Bhutan including superb views of a total of three along the Limithang Road.

75. Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium c. cuculoides*

Great views of one in lightly wooded farmland as we drove to our Jigmicholing Camp. Several other heard along the Zhemgang Road and in the Mangde Chu Valley.

Nightjars CAPRIMULGIDAE

76. Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka hazarae*

One seen on the western slopes of Dochu La. Also heard on the lower slopes of Cheli La; Trongsa and above Tsirang. NOTE: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) point out that Himalayan (*jotaka*) South Indian (*indicus*) and Sri Lankan (*kelaarti*) populations exhibit clear, consistent morphological and vocal differences such that they should be treated as separate species.

Swifts APODIDAE

77. Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus b. brevirostris*

A mixed flock of 100+ swifts foraging over the Limithang Road included good numbers of this species and provided an excellent opportunity to learn how to separate these various swift species. Thereafter recorded daily from the Zhemgang Road to near Tsirang.

78. Blyth's (Fork-tailed) Swift *Apus (pacificus) leuconyx*

A mixed flock of 100+ swifts foraging over the Limithang Road included good numbers of this species. Thereafter recorded daily from the Zhemgang Road to near Tsirang. Recorded nesting along the Zhemgang Road between Zhemgang and Tingtibi and near Tsirang. NOTE: Forktailed Swift has recently been split into several species.

79. House Swift *Apus n. nipalensis*

A mixed flock of 100+ swifts foraging over the Limithang Road included good numbers of this species. Thereafter recorded on two days along the Zhemgang Road.

80. Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus b. balasiensis*

Modest numbers around Geylephu (10) and as many as 20 among the Arecca sp Palms west of Geylephu.

Trogons TROGONIDAE

81. Red-headed Trogan *Harpactes erythrocephalus hodgsoni*

Good views of a gorgeous male along the Tashitang Trail; heard in the Shonkhar Chu Valley and another male seen below Tsirang.

82. Ward's Trogon *Harpactes wardii*

Fine views of an immature male at 2,200m along the Limithang Road. This species is becoming increasingly difficult to find such that some have actually missed this mega-charismatic species during the past few years. I attribute this largely to the destruction of roadside territories on Dochu La and Pele La (and probably elsewhere), the general increase in disturbance at most places coupled with the huge increase in the number of visiting birders and the injudicious use of 'tapes' to lure this species into view.

Kingfishers ALCEDINIDAE

83. Eurasian Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis bengalensis*

One along the Po Chuu and one along the Mou Khola Chuu, near Geylephu.

84. White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* subsp?

A total of ten along the Po and Puna Tsang chhus. Thereafter observed in low numbers daily from the Mangde Chuu Valley to Tsirang.

85. Crested Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris continentalis*

Fine views of this striking and charismatic species along a tributary of the Puna Tsang Chuu – a regular haunt; two on the Po Chuu near Punakha and one along the Mangde Chuu.

Bee-eaters MEROPIDAE

86. Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctiornis a. athertoni*

Two seen superbly at ca 1,800m on the Limithang Rd. and then good looks at an individual in the Mangde Chuu Valley. Also heard on the road between Trongsa and Zhemgang.



Blue-bearded Bee-eater
© K. David Bishop

87. Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis ferrugineus*

One in lightly wooded scrub along the Mou Khola Chuu, near Geylephu. This species is a real rarity in Bhutan but quite common a short distance across the border into India.

88. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops I. leschenaulti*

Two of this handsome species in lightly wooded scrub along the Mou Khola Chuu, near Geylephu.

Rollers CORACIDAE

89. Indian Roller *Coracias b. benghalensis*

Moderately common between near Geylephu and between Geylephu and Sarpang where as many as ten counted. Until recently there were few Bhutan records of this species, however, it is quite common a short distance across the border into India.

Hoopoes UPUPIDAE

90. Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops longirostris*

Widespread but not common; one in the Paro Valley; two along the Puna Tsang Chuu and a second two days later; two in the Jakar valley and one at Sengor camp.

Hornbills BUCEROTIDAE

91. Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoboceros a. albirostris*

Just one seen in flight over lowland Sal Forest 5km west of Geylephu. This is the least common species of hornbill in Bhutan.

92. Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*

Truly one of the world's most magnificent birds. Fabulous views of two in the Mangde Chuu Valley and a total of seven in Sal Forest circa 5km west of Geylephu. Classified by Birdlife International as globally Near Threatened.



93. Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*

Without doubt this species was a major highlight of a great tour. We enjoyed sensational views of several birds daily along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads down to and including the Mangde Chuu Valley. A further six were seen as ascended toward Tsirang – what a send off!!!! Classified by Birdlife International as globally Vulnerable.

Asian Barbets MEGALAIMIDAE

94. Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephala indicus*

Heard on the outskirts of Geylephu.

95. Great Barbet *Psilopogon (Megalaima) virens magnificus*

Widespread and common, recorded on 12 days.

96. Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon (Megalaima) lineatus hodgsoni*

Many heard and two seen in Sal Forest near Geylephu.

97. Golden-throated Barbet *Psilopogon (Megalaima) f. franklinii*

Widespread and moderately common, recorded on 11 days.

98. Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon (Megalaima) a. asiaticus*

Recorded in moderate numbers on the upper Tashitang Trail, the Shonkhar Chuu Valley and daily along the Shemgang Road, over Tama La, down to Geylephu and up to near Tsirang. Possibly too early in the first part of this early tour for this species to have arrived at higher elevations.



Male Rufous-bellied Woodpecker
© K. David Bishop

Honeyguides INDICATORIDAE

99. Yellow-rumped Honeyguide *Indicator xanthonotus radcliffei*

One male seen very nicely at one of our regular Rock Bee hive sites, this one in the Cheri Valley and two found thanks to the persistence of Elizabeth at another regular site below Trongsa. Classified by Birdlife International as globally Near Threatened.

Woodpeckers PICIDAE

100. Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* subsp?

Fine views of one with a mixed flock on the road up to Tsirang.

101. Gray-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus semicoronatus*

One seen above Geylephu.

102. Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Picoides m. macei*

Good looks at a pair in the Mangde Chuu Valley and female in Sal Forest near Geylephu.



Traditional Bhutanese farm © K. David Bishop

103. Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos h. hyperythrus*

We saw a male of this notably handsome species in the Cheri Valley and heard a couple of others throughout the tour.

104. Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos c. cathpharius*

Great looks at a male on the lower Tashitang Trail and on the Limithang Road.

105. Darjeeling Woodpecker *Picoides darjellensis*

Fine views of a pair in the Cheri Valley and on Yutong La.

106. Lesser Yellownape *Picus c. chlorolophus*

Great views of a lovely male below our Jigmicholing camp.

107. Greater Yellownape *Picus f. flavinucha*

Great views of a pair, brilliantly found by Mick in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; a single male on the Zhemgang Road and a total of three in Sal Forest circa 5km west of Geylephu.

108. Gray-headed (Grey-faced) Woodpecker *Picus canus hessei*

Excellent views of a pair and singleton in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; one in the Mangde Chuu Valley and two below our Jigmicholing Camp. Several others heard throughout the tour.

109. Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachurus phaioceps*

One found nicely by Peter on the Zhemgang Road.

110. Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes g. guttacristatus*

Fine 'scope views of two males and a female in Sal Forest circa 5 km west of Geylephu. This is a very localised species in Bhutan. NOTE: Now split into 5 spp.

111. (H) Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus p. pyrrhotis*

As is often the case heard commonly, this year just once on the Limithang road and thereafter daily along the Zhemgang Road to Geylephu. Sadly we could not entice this species into view.

Falcons FALCONIDAE

112. Common (Eurasian) Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus interstinctus*

A pair seen well near Punakha thereafter a total of four along the Po Chuu, two in farmland below Trongsa and a total of five over scrub along the Indian border circa 1-5 km west of Geylephu.

113. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* subsp?

Thanks to some great work by Elizabeth some of us were lucky enough to see this infrequently seen species (in Bhutan that is) over our Jigmicholing Camp.

Parakeets PSITTACIDAE

114. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria nipalensis*

Two in Sal Forest circa 1-5km west of Geylephu.

115. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri borealis*

Totals of six and ten in and around Geylephu on two days.

116. Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri fasciata*

Six in Sal Forest circa 1-5km west of Geylephu.

PASSERINES

Broadbills EURYLAIMIDAE

117. Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus d. dalhousiae*

Undoubtedly a trip highlight; a group of three with a spectacular mixed flock including Beautiful Nuthatch called and foraged around us as we ate lunch at our favourite spot on the Zhemgang Road; heard as we descended from our Jigmicholing Camp through slightly degraded subtropical forest above Geylephu and then an amazing total of ten, mostly seen as we ascended toward Tsirang.

Vangas & Allies VANGIDAE

118. Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis gularis pelvicus*

One on the Zhemgang Road and one as we descended from our Jigmicholing Camp through slightly degraded subtropical forest above Geylephu .

119. Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus capitalis*

Ten with a mixed flock in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley and thereafter just one in the Mangde Chuu Valley.

Woodswallows ARTAMIDAE

120. Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*

Four at circa 1200m on the north side of Tama La and two over Sal Forest circa 4km west of Geylephu.

Cuckooshrikes CAMPEPHAGIDAE

121. Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus s. solaris*

Several pairs and singles seen very nicely, often with mixed species flocks in mid-altitude forests especially in the east.

122. Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus b. brevirostris*

Just three seen but definitively so on the Tashitang Trail.

123. Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus laetus*

Widespread and moderately common; recorded on six days.

124. Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus s. speciosus*

Six in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley, thereafter small numbers seen daily from below Trongsa onwards. NOTE: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) show that southern India populations should be treated as a separate species.

Consequently northern populations adopt the specific name *speciosus*.

125. Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei nipalensis*

Three in Sal Forest near Geylephu.

126. Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Lalage (Coracina) m. melaschistos*

One near Chendibji Chorten and scattered ones and twos heard thereafter.



Male Grey-chinned Minivet © K. David Bishop

Shrikes LANIIDAE

127. Brown Shrike *Lanius c. cristatus*

Excellent views of one of these Palaearctic migrants in a small, scrubby clearing within forest circa 1800m on the Zhemgang Road.

128. Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach tricolor*

Widespread and common in open habitat.

129. Gray-backed Shrike *Lanius t. tephronotus*

Widespread but only single birds seen on just six days, scattered throughout the kingdom.

Shrike-Babblers VIREONIDAE

130. Blyth's (White-browed) Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius (flaviscapis) aerulatus validirostris*

Fine views of three on the Upper Tashitang Trail; thereafter pairs and singletons seen and heard daily from the Limithang Road to above Geylephu.

131. Green Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus occidentalis*

Great views of two these 'spectacular' species in the Ha Valley and one on Yutong La. This is often a very eratic species.

132. Black-eared Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius m. melanotis*

A good trip for this handsome species with single males seen nicely with three mixed flocks along the Limithang Road.

133. White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis z. zantholeuca*

Two in the Shonkhar Chhu Valley; six on Zhemgang Road and eight with a large mixed flock as we climbed towards Tsirang.



Old World Orioles ORIOLIDAE

134. Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo*

One seen in lightly degraded subtropical forest below Jigmicholing. This is a rare species in Bhutan.

135. Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus x. xanthornus*

Four in Sal Forest circa 1-4 km west of Geylephu. A very localised species in Bhutan.

136. Maroon Oriole *Oriolus t. trailli*

Two seen well along the Tashitang Trail; two in lightly disturbed subtropical forest below Jigmicholing including superb views of an adult male; two above Sarpang.

Drongos DICRURIDAE

137. Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus albirictus*

Just one circa 8km west of Geylephu. NOTE: Asian populations were once united with African Black Drongo under *D. adsimilis* are now widely treated as a separate species *macrocercus*.

138. Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus hopwoodi*

Widespread and common to very common, recorded almost daily.

139. Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus a. aeneus*

Two at 1500m in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley thereafter common along the Zhemgang Road daily to Tsirang.

140. Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer tectirostris*

One, as predicted, in lightly degraded subtropical forest below Jigmicholing and two as we ascended towards Tsirang.

141. Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus h. hottentotus*

Seven counted on the Zhemgang Road; common in Sal Forest near Geylephu and onwards up towards Wangdi.



Female White-throated Redstart © K. David Bishop

Fantails RHIPIDURIDAE

142. White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura a. albicollis*

Widespread but rather scattered in low numbers.

Crows, Jays & Magpies CORVIDAE

143. Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius interstinctus*

Two of this rather distinctive race on Dochu La.

144. Yellow-billed Blue (Gold-billed) Magpie *Urocissa f. flavirostris*

One of the many, truly great birds of Bhutan and the Himalayas. Widespread and common, especially at the upper forest edge and around relatively undisturbed farmhouses from Cheli La east to Yutong La and thereafter small numbers seen along the Limithang Road.

145. Common Green Magpie *Cissa c. chinensis*

Superb views of two birds on the Zhemgang Road; two below our Jigmicholing Camp and then fabulous views of one of these striking birds as we ascended to Tsirang.

146. Grey (Himalayan) Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae himalayensis*

Widespread and locally moderately common especially along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.

147. Eurasian (Black-billed) Magpie *Pica pica bottanensis*
Common in the upland valleys of the Bumthang Region.
148. Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes macella*
Widespread and common at higher elevations within Boreal Forest and lightly wooded Yak pastures from Cheli La and the Cheri Valley east to the Limithang Road. NOTE: This taxon is sometimes split from populations to the west viz. Larger Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga multipunctata*.
149. Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax himalayanus*
Moderately common in groups of 2 to 30 within open fields surrounded by woodland, especially in the west. Also recorded in the upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa.
150. House Crow *Corvus s. splendens*
Just 3 in Thimpu and common in and around Geylephu.
151. Large-billed Crow *Corvus japonensis*
Common to very common and widespread, recorded daily. NOTE: A revision of the entire 'Large-billed Crow' complex has been proposed (see Rasmussen and Anderton 2005). The very large-billed birds that inhabit the Himalayas from Afghanistan eastwards to Aranachal Pradesh are the birds we observed in Bhutan and they appropriately retain the common name Large-billed Crow but are given the specific name *japonensis*. Populations in the lowlands of NE India are now referred to as Eastern Jungle Crow *C. levaillantii* and populations in peninsula India, south from the base of the Himalayas are referred to as Indian Jungle Crow *C. culminatus*. Based on my own observations of the Indian sub-continent and populations elsewhere in SE Asia I completely concur with these authors revision of this fascinating group.
152. Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus levaillantii*
Common around Geylephu.



Larks ALAUDIDAE

153. Sand Lark *Calandrella r. raytal*

Two seen very nicely as they foraged around large river boulders near where the Mou Khola Chuu emerged from the Himalyan foothills near Geylephu. Previously this species has only been recorded in Bhutan from Puntsholing. Our thanks to Josh Engels for sharing the information, which led us to seeing this species.

Swallows & Martins HIRUNDINIDAE

154. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica gutturalis*

Four in the village of Dung Dung in the Upper Mnagde Chuu Valley appeared to be prospecting for a nest site. Four in the Mangde Chuu Valley below Tingtibi.

155. Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalensis nipalense*

At least thirty nesting at a traditional site just above the village of Namling on the Limithang Road. Thereafter seen daily along the Limithang Road.

Fairy Flycatchers STENOSTIRIDAE

156. Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail *Chelidohynx (Rhipidura) hypoxantha*

Notably common this year being recorded in modest numbers, often with mixed flocks on at least six days.

157. Gray-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicacapa ceylonensis calochrysea*

Widespread and moderately common. A flock of 20+ were observed moving upslope at 2,000m on the Limithang Road.

Tits PARIDAE

158. Coal Tit *Periparus (Parus) ater aemodius*

Widespread and common in all high elevation Boreal forests. Often together with several other species of tits in classic mixed tit flocks.

159. Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus (Parus) rubidiventris beavani*

Recorded on just three days although in good number (12+) invariably with mixed tit flocks in high elevation Boreal forests.

160. Grey-crested Tit *Lophophanes (Parus) d. dichrous*

Recorded on just five days and in small numbers (<4) invariably with mixed tit flocks in high elevation Boreal forests.

161. Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus nipalensis*

One or two heard and briefly seen in the lightly wooded outskirts of Geylephu.
NOTE: Split by some authorities from Great Tit *P. major* (see Rasmussen & Anderton 2012 and IOC Checklist).



Streaked Spiderhunter
© K. David Bishop

162. Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus yunnanensis*

This attractive Himalayan species was common to locally abundant and ubiquitous in suitable forested habitat. Seen daily at all localities visited. One of the most frequently seen species.

163. Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus s. spilonotus*

This very snazzy looking bird was moderately common this year with superb views of a pair near Chendibji; one with a mixed flock on the Limithang Road. Thereafter 4-6 daily along the Zhemgang Road, Mangde Chuu Valley and below Tsirang.

164. Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus m. modestus*

Widespread and moderately common, especially in mixed species flocks at higher elevation Boreal forests.

165. Sultan Tit *Melanochlora s. sultanea*

What a stunner! Exceptional views of four as we ascended towards Tsirang.

Penduline-Tits REMIZIDAE

166. Fire-capped Tit *Cephalopyrus flammiceps olivaceus*

One possible seen along the Limithang Road.

Long-tailed Tits AEGITHALIDAE

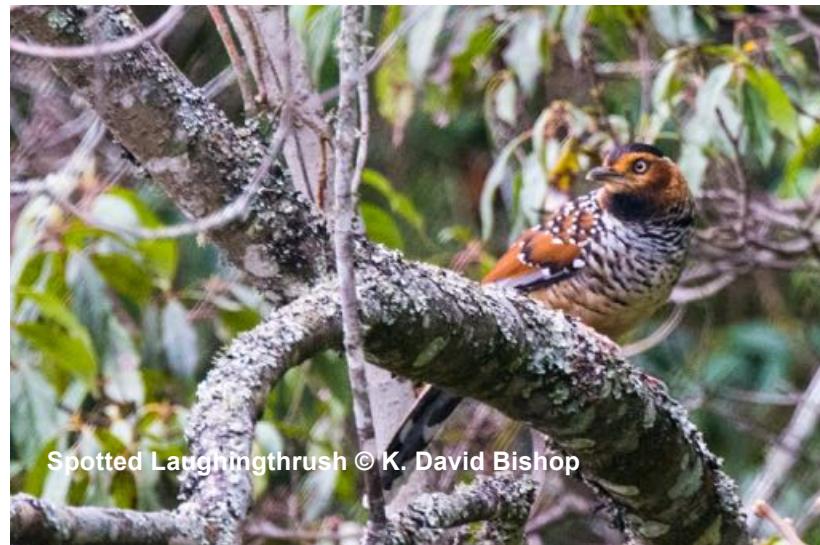
167. Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus* subsp?

A delightful species and a great favourite with everyone. This year this species

was seen at three localities: Limithang Road, Zhemgang Road and below our Jigmicholing Camp.

168. Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos i. iouschistos*

Rather scarce this year with just two in the Ha Valley; 2 on Yutong La and 1-2 on the Limithang Road.



Spotted Laughingthrush © K. David Bishop

Nuthatches SITTIDAE

169. Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta citrinocristata koelzi*

Two males and two females in the Mangde Chuu Valley. NOTE: This taxon forms a superspecies with Eurasian Nuthatch *S. europaea*, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *S. nagaensis*, Kashmir Nuthatch *S. cashmirensis*, Indian Nuthatch *S. castanea*, and Neglected Nuthatch *S. neglecta* and often treated as conspecific with the last of these two taxa under the name Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *S. castanea*. However, *S. cinnamoventris* overlaps in range with *S. nagaensis* but separates altitudinally. *S. cinnamoventris* differs markedly morphologically and vocally from *S. castanea*. (see Rasmussen & Anderton 2005; HBW).

170. White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis*

Widespread and fairly common; usually in mixed species flocks.

171. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta f. frontalis*

Two in Sal Forest circa 4km west of Geylephu.

172. Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa*

Undoubtedly one of the most delightful highlights of the tour. Thanks to Tony who casually pointed out the four birds as we finished up our lunch at a favourite spot on the Zhemgang Road. What a lovely surprise and to enjoy them at such length and so close. For much of the time they were foraging with a mixed flock that included Long-tailed Broadbills, Common Green Magpie and Sultan Tits. Sooooo wonderful.

Wallcreeper TICHODROMIDAE

173. Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria nepalensis*

An exceptional close and prolonged encounter with this softly marked gem as it foraged on a roadside cliff wall, permitting us to really get to know this bird. Wonderful! A second bird was later seen along the Po Chuu.



Treecreepers CERTHIDAE

174. Hodgson's (Eurasian) Treecreeper *Certhia (familiaris) hodgsoni mandellii*

Singles seen well as we ascended through impressive in magnificent old growth Boreal forest above Cheri within Jigme-Dorji National Park. NOTE: Formally treated as conspecific with *C. familiaris* Eurasian Treecreeper, however clear genetic and vocal differences indicate that populations in the Himalayas (including Bhutan) and the mountains of S China should be treated as a separate species: Hodgson's Treecreeper *C. hodgsoni*

175. Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *Certhia nipalensis*

Fine views of this uncommon species in magnificent old growth Boreal forest above Cheri within Jigme-Dorji National Park.

176. Sikkim (Brown-throated) Treecreeper *Certhia discolor*

One on Cheli La seen superbly, thereafter singles heard at a scatter of localities. NOTE: Clear genetic and vocal differences indicate that what was until recently regarded as one species is now regarded as comprising two distinct species: Sikkim Treecreeper *C. discolor* through the central and eastern Himalayas (including Bhutan) east to SW China and Manipur Treecreeper *C. manipurensis* which is distributed from NE India to parts of Burma, Thailand and Vietnam.

Wrens TROGLODYTIDAE

177. Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes nipalensis*

A very territorial individual posed for us superbly in magnificent old growth Boreal forest above Cheri within Jigme-Dorji National Park.



Rufous-breasted Accentor © K. David Bishop

Dippers CINCLIDAE

178. Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii tenuirostris*

A pair were attending a nest along the Paro Chuu plus two other seen; four along along the Cheri Chuu and thereafter recorded daily along the Po, Mo and Puna Tsang Chuus.

Bulbs PYCNONOTIDAE

179. Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus s. striatus*

A strikingly handsome bulbul. Small numbers along the upper and lower Tashitang Trail; the Limithang and Zhemgang roads and as we ascended towards Tsirang.

180. Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus f. flaviventris* **B:** Small numbers in the Mangde Chuu Valley; below Jimicholing in slightly degraded subtropical forest and as we ascended towards Tsirang. NOTE: The Black-crested Bulbul group is better treated as a superspecies consisting probably of five allopatric species: *P. melanicteris* – Sri Lanka; *P. gularis* Western Ghats, South India; *P. flaviventris* – Himalayas and Central India eastwards to Vietnam; *P. dispar* – Sumatra; and *P. montis* – Borneo. (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005).

181. Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer bengalensis*

Ubiquitous in all but the most densely forested areas up to *circa* 2,300m. For example it was ubiquitous in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley.

182. White-throated Bulbul *Alphoixus f. flaveolus*

Many seen within slightly degraded subtropical forest and as we ascended towards Tsirang.

183. Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus pasaroides*

Common and widespread; seen almost daily.

184. Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos f. flavala*

Four in the Shonkhar Chuu and daily in low numbers along the Zhemgang Road; below our camp near Jigmicholing to Geylephu and from Geylephu to Tsirang.

185. Mountain Bulbul *Hypsipetes m. mcclellandi*

The bulbul with the 'bad hair day'; a total of eight in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley small numbers daily along the Zhemgang Road down to the Mangde Chuu Valley.

Cupwings PNOEPYGIDAE

186. Pygmy Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga p. pusilla*

Widespread and heard commonly and seen on the Limithang Road.

Bush-Warbblers & Allies CETTIDAE

187. Gray-bellied Tesia *Tesia cyaniventer*

Heard occasionally and glimpsed along the Limithang Road.

188. Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea*

At least one seen superbly along the Limithang Road and heard at several other locations.

189. Gray-sided Bush-Warbler *Cettia b. brunnifrons*

Fine views of one below Namling on the Limithang Road and heard at several other sites.



Primula edgeworthii © K. David Bishop

190. Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia (Tesia) c. castaneocoronata*

We enjoyed remarkable views of this charismatic species at dusk around our camp on the Tashitang Trail. Thereafter this species was heard and seen fairly commonly on the Limithang Road.

191. Yellow-bellied Warbler *Abroscopos superciliaris flaviventris*

A total of six seen within stands of giant bamboo in the Mangde Chuu Valley.

192. Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus s. schisticeps*

One of the most attractive and charming of all Old World Warblers. This was an exceptional year for this species: we saw four on Dochu La; six on the Limithang Road; a total of circa 50 migrating on the Limthang Road; a total of 15 below Trongsa; circa 50 counted on the Zhemgang Road and circa 20 in the Mangde Chuu Valley. This is by far the most numerous we have ever encountered this species in Bhutan and suggests that the timing of our tour coincided with a major movement of this attractive species.

193. Broad-billed Warbler *Tickelliae h. hodgsoni*

A superb encounter with one of these rare bamboo specialists along the Limithang Road and heard again the following day.

194. Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *Horornis (Cettia) f. fortipes*

Heard on several days, invariably in open, scrubby country with one very obliging individual seen on the Limithang Road.

Leaf Warblers PHYLLOSCOPIDAE

195. Tickell's Leaf-warbler *Phylloscopus a. affinis*

Notably uncommon this year; first observed below Trongsa, thereafter small numbers along the Zhemgang Road through to near Tsirang.

196. Buff- (Orange) barred Warbler *Phylloscopus p. pulcher*

Widespread and regularly recorded at higher altitudes in low numbers (1-4).

197. Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus m. maculipennis*

Widespread and generally common, most frequently encountered in mixed species flocks at higher altitudes (circa 18 above the Cheri Valley in the Jigme-Dorji National Park). Also known as Grey-faced Warbler, Grey-faced Leaf-Warbler, Grey-throated Willow Warbler.

198. Pale-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Warbler *Phylloscopus c. chloronotus*

Notably uncommon this year with just one on the Upper Tashitang Trail and a couple on Yutong La. NOTE: Several small and very similar *Phylloscopus* warblers were until recently considered to be a sub-species of Pallas's Warbler *P. proregulus*. Fieldwork in the mountains of central China by Per Alstrom and Urban Olsson has established that the forms *chloronotus* and *kansuensis* which were formerly considered to be subspecies of *P. proregulus* are in fact distinct species; Lemon-rumped Warbler *P. chloronotus* and Gansu Leaf Warbler *P.*

kansuensis. This work continues and other taxa revealed some of which may winter or occur on passage in Bhutan.



Gold-breasted Fulvetta © K. David Bishop

199. Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Five on the Upper Limithang Road and two below Namling on the same road.

200. Hume's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* subsp?

Two on Dochu La; two on the Tashitang Trail and six on the Limithang Road. This and a couple of other very similar and very confusing species provide quite an identification challenge.

201. Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

One on the slopes of Cheli La.

202. Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus r. reguloides*

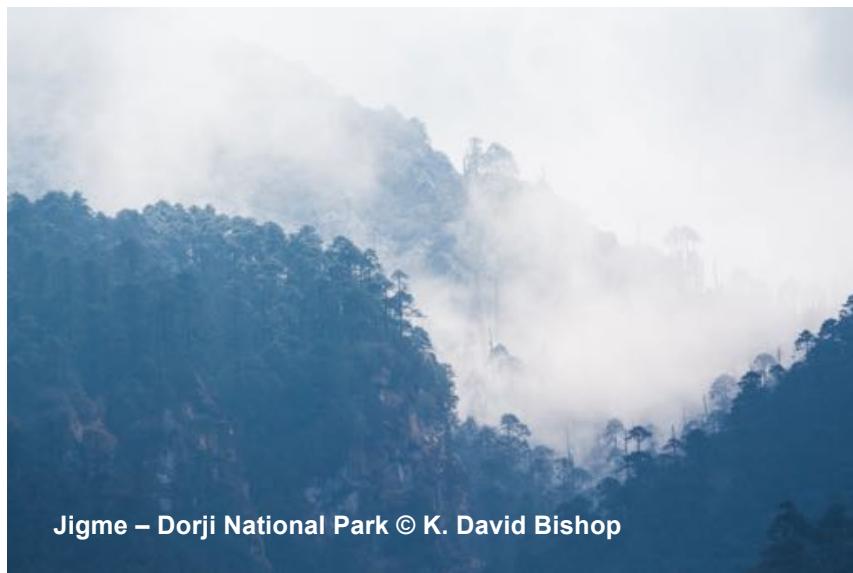
Widespread but rather scarce and encountered in small numbers. Also known as Blyth's Crowned Leaf Warbler, Blyth's Crowned Willow Warbler.

203. Yellow-vented Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus c. cantator*

Great looks at circa 20 along the Tashitang Trail including many with a mixed flock and eight in the Mangde Chuu Valley. This is a distinctive and relatively little known *Phylloscopus* species. Also known as Yellow-faced Leaf Warbler or Yellow-throated Leaf Warbler.

204. Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos jerdoni*

One on the Tashitang Trail; notably very common on 1 April along the Limithang Road and in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; recorded daily below Trongsa, along the Zhemgang Road down to the Mangde Chuu Valley.



205. Whistler's (Golden-spectacled) Warbler *Seicercus whistleri nemoralis*

One seen well near our camp on the Tashitang Trail and another seen near Chendibji. NOTE: The Golden-spectacled Warbler has until very recently been treated as a single species, *Seicercus burkii*, widely distributed in the mountains of southern Asia. A recent paper by Per Alstrom and others provides strong evidence that this taxon is actually a complex of six species. At least two species occur and probably breed in Bhutan: Golden-spectacled Warbler *S. burkii* and Whistler's Warbler *S. whistleri*. See Ibis (1999) 141, pp 545-568 and Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

206. White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus a. affinis*

One in the Mangde Chuu Valley.

207. Grey-cheeked Warbler *Seicercus polioogenys*

Two seen well on the Limithang Road.

208. Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus c. castaniceps*

Widespread but mostly seen in low numbers, invariably with mixed species flocks, however, this attractive species was notably common along the Zhemgang Road through to near Tsirang.

Grassbirds & Allies LOCUSTELLIDAE

209. Russet (Mandelli's) Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus m. mandellii*

One or two singing in very dense bamboo at the Brown Parrotbill site in the Jakar Valley where one seen fleetingly.

Cisticolas & Allies CISTICOLIDAE

210. Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius patia*

Two in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley.

211. Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger*
Great views of two on the Trongsa to Zhemgang Road and one above Tsirang.
212. Black-throated Hill Prinia *Prinia a. atrogularis*
Superb views of a pair on the Zhemgang Road.
213. Rufescent Prinia *Prinia r. rufescens*
One seen well in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley.



Babblers – Colloquially known as ‘Real Birds’ (well at least by KDB) this is the most heterogenous group of Asian birds reflecting a surprising and generally very attractive diversity of form and function. Systematics of Asian birds has lagged behind that of other continents for an overly long time. Happily that situation is being rapidly redressed and the recent publication of Rasmussen & Anderton (2005 – Birds of South Asia) and even more recently volume 12 of the Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) got things underway. This work, especially the biogenetic analysis has now taken this process even further and as a consequence babblers have been completely revised and split into at least five families. I have tried to indicate these changes below and to relate them to our field guide in order to reduce confusion. Several worthy splits and numerous re-assignments at the generic level have now been confirmed.

Parrotbills & Allies PARADOXORNITHIDAE

214. Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Lioparus (Alcippe) c. chrysotis*
Superb views of four of these handsome birds in bamboo below Namling on the Limithang Road.
215. White-browed Fulvetta *Fulvetta (Alcippe) vinipectus chumbiensis*
Widespread and locally common, usually with mixed species flocks in the

understorey of both mixed Evergreen and Cool Mixed Broad-leaved Forest at higher elevations.

216. Brown Parrotbill *Choloronis (Paradoxornis) unicolor*

Despite that much of the habitat at our regular site in the Jakar Valley had been cleared as a result of clearance for the new airport a pair of these birds was still hanging on.

217. Gray-headed Parrotbill *Psittiparus (Paradoxornis) g. gularis*

Exceptional views of two (presumably a pair) foraging in a tall, isolated, epiphyte covered tree at circa 600m in lightly degraded sub-tropical forest between Jigmicholing and Geylephu.

218. White-breasted Parrotbill *Psittiparus (Paradoxornis) ruficeps*

Great views of at least 14 in a mixed flock together with Rufous-fronted Barwings and Coral-billed Scimitar-Babblers. The flock was foraging downslope on a steep incline around a dense patch of wild bananas and regrowth subtropical forest, circa 600m. NOTE: Previously known as Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill. This taxa has been split into two species: *P. ruficeps* Nepal to Bhutan, n Assam, s China (nw Yunnan) and se Tibet and *P. b. bakeri* and *P. b. magnirostris* Nepal to Bhutan, n Assam, s China (nw Yunnan) and se Tibet and Highlands of central Tonkin, Vietnam.

219. Pale-billed Parrotbill *Chleuasicus (Paradoxornis) atrosuperciliaris oatesi*

Good views of a group of four in a large, monotypic stand of Giant Bamboo *Dendrocalamus* sp in the Mangde Chu Valley. NOTE: Previously known as Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill,

Yuhinas, White-eyes & Allies Zosteropidae

220. Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps plumbeiceps*

A rather localised species, circa 20 in the Shonkhar Chu Valley and circa ten at circa 600m between Jigmicholing and Geylephu.

221. White-naped Yuhina *Yuhina bakeri*

Twelve at circa 2,100m along the Limithang Road and another 12 between Jigmicholing and Geylephu. This handsome species is by far the least common species of Yuhina in Bhutan.

222. Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina f. flavigularis*

Wonderfully widespread and common and recorded on ten days. Regularly observed in mixed species flocks and mono-specific flocks in mixed Broad-leaved Forest.

223. Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina g. gularis*

Widespread and moderately common at high elevations.

224. Rufous-vented Yuhina *Yuhina o. occipitalis*

Widespread and common to very common (a total of circa 60 below Sengor on the Limithang Road – 31 March), especially at higher elevations.

225. Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina n. nigrimenta*

Locally common this year with circa 40 recorded in the Shonkhar Chu Valley and thereafter observed daily along the Zhemgang Road to Geylephu. Circa 50 as we ascended towards Tsirang. Also known as Black-lored Yuhina.

226. Oriental White-eye *Zosterops p. palpebrosus*

Recorded on eight days at medium altitudes especially along the Zhemgang Road.



Tree-Babblers TIMALIIDAE

227. Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Mixornis (Macronus) gularis rubricapilla*

Two seen well in lightly disturbed subtropical forest, circa 400m above Geylehu.

NOTE: Formerly treated as conspecific with the Bornean population, however, clear morphological, biogeographic and vocal differences strongly suggest these two taxa should be treated as separate species.

228. Golden Babbler *Cyanoderma (Stachyridopsis, Stachyris) c. chrysaeum*

Ones and twos along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.

229. Rufous-capped Babbler *Cyanoderma (Stachyris) r. ruficeps*

Three along the Tashitang Trail; one near Chendibji and two below Namling. Other heard.

230. Rufous-fronted Babbler *Cyanoderma (Stachyris) rufifrons* subsp?

Two below and two in the Mangde Chu Valley.

231. Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis caudatus*
Fabulous close and prolonged views of two of these gorgeous little songsters at circa 2100m, along the Limithang Road. **NT**
232. Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus f. ferruginosus*
One or two in a mixed flock together with Rufous-fronted Barwings and 14 White-bellied Parrotbills foraging downslope on a steep incline around a dense patch of wild bananas and regrowth subtropical forest, circa 600m below Jigmicholing.
233. Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus (Xiphirhynchus) s. superciliaris*
Heard along the Tashitang Trail and one seen at 2,100m along the Limithang Road. Also known as Sicklebilled Scimitar-babbler.
234. Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis godwini*
Great views of four very responsive birds in the Ha Valley; two near Chendibji; heard on Yutong La and daily along the Limithang Road and below Trongsa. Finally four seen nicely on the Zhemgang Road.
235. White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus s. schisticeps*
A superb trip for this handsome species; four on the Zhemgang Road and two on the following three days through to near Tsirang.
236. Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogenys harringtoni*
Moderately common in scrubby edges to farmland such as in the Shonkar Chuu Valley; the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa and in the Mangde Chuu Valley.
237. Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris n. nigriceps*
Very uncommon this year; one in the Shonkar Chuu Valley and two below our Jigmicholing Camp.

Ground-Babblers PELLORNEIDAE

238. Yellow-throated Fulvetta *Schoeniparus (Alcippe) cinerea*
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 wonderful Limithang Road. However, this year we saw just six on one day on the Limithang Road.
239. Rufous-winged Fulvetta *Schoeniparus (Alcippe) c. castaneiceps*
Low numbers observed on six days invariably with mixed flocks within cool mixed Broad-leaved Forest, typically with mixed flocks.

Laughingthrushes & Allies LEIOTHRICIDAE

240. Nepal Fulvetta *Alcippe n. nipalensis*
Usually very skulking and locally quite numerous, this year, however, we were treated to several very good views of this interesting looking species.

241. Striated Laughingthrush *Grammatoptila (Garrulax) striata sikkimensis*
Common and recorded widely in suitable forested habitat on most days.

242. Himalayan Cutia *Cutia n. nipalensis*
Sensational views of six on the Upper Tashitang Trail; thereafter a flock of ten and then six the following day along the Limithang Road. NOTE: Formerly treated as conspecific with *C. legalleni* Vietnamese Cutia.

243. Jungle Babbler *Turdoides s. striata*
12 and 20 recorded on two days in and around Geylephu.

244. White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax l. leucolophus*
One of the most attractive and effervescent of Asia's laughingthrushes. Locally common along the Limithang Road – 15 in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; heard daily along the Zhemgang Road and several seen as we ascended towards Tsirang and the following day toward Wangdi. NOTE: Sumatran populations are now treated as a separate species *G. bicolor* Black-and-white-Laughingthrush

245. Lesser-necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax m. moniliger*
Ten in giant bamboo in the Mangde Chuu Valley and as we ascended towards Tsirang.

246. Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) r. rufogularis*
Thanks to some great work by Joanne we all enjoyed fine views of two of this uncommon and most striking species in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley. One below our Jigmicholing Camp.

247. Spotted Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) o. ocellata*
Exceptional views of a pair of these spectacular birds singing in woodland in the Ha Valley and further two well found by Mick as we climbed to Thrumzing La. Just hearing this species is sheer joy.

248. Greater-necklaced Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) pectoralis melanotis*
Two below our Jigmicholing Camp and then a superb flock of ten as we ascended towards Tsirang. Sorting out this species from Lessers is no mean feat.

249. White-throated Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) a. albogularis*
Widespread and common, locally very common; occasionally in flocks of >50 with daily totals occasionally exceeding 150. Recorded on most days.

250. Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) ruficollis*
Fabulous views of a flock of nine in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; scattered ones and twos in the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa and six circa 4km west of Geylephu.

251. Grey-sided Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla (Garrulax) c. caeruleata*
Just one seen all too briefly on the Limithang Road.

252. Bhutan Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron (Garrulax) imbricatum*
Surprisingly few records this year with just one seen well below Zhemgang and two as we climbed towards Wangdi. NOTE: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) present good evidence for splitting this taxon from Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron (Garrulax) lineatus*. The Bhutan Laughingthrush ranges throughout Bhutan eastwards to W Aranachal Pradesh. Formerly placed in *Garrulax*.

253. Blue-winged Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron (Garrulax) squamatum*
Two seen very nicely on the Limithang Road and several others heard here and on the Zhemgang Road down to near Geylephu.

254. Black-faced Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron (Garrulax) affinis bethelae*
Widespread and fairly common this year at upper elevations.

255. Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron (Garrulax) erythrocephalum nigritum*
Notably uncommon this year with just seven seen, albeit very nicely in the Paro Valley and two in the Cheri Valley. NOTE: Formerly conspecific with *T. chrysopterum* Assam Laughingthrush, *T. melanostigma* Silver-eared Laughingthrush, and *T. peninsulae* Malayan Laughingthrush. Formerly placed in *Garrulax*.

256. Rufous (Black-capped) Sibia s *Heterophasia capistrata bayleyi*
Common to occasionally abundant and ubiquitous and seen almost daily.

257. Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia p. picaoides*
Three as we descended towards Geylephu and at least ten as we climbed toward Tsirang. Very much a foothill species in Bhutan.

258. Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix a. argentauris*
This very striking species was common on the Zhemgang Road, Tama La and notably, with as many as 20 counted, in lightly disturbed subtropical forest below our Jigmicholing Camp.

259. Red-tailed Minla *Minla i. ignotincta*
What a fabulous bird. We finally found four with a large mixed flock on the south slopes of Tama La.

260. Red-faced Liocichla *Liocichla p. phoenicea*
Fine views of a very responsive individual along the Zhemgang Road; thereafter four in lightly disturbed subtropical forest below our Jigmicholing Camp.

261. Hoary Barwing *Actinodura nipalensis vinctura*
Exceptional views of four on the Upper Tashitang Trail; two near Chendibji; one

above Ura; a pair carrying nesting material just below Namling on the Limithang Road circa 2200m; also recorded below Trongsa.

262. Rusty-fronted Barwing *Actinodura e. egertoni*

Fabulous views of six along the Limithang Road and six with White-bellied Parrotbills and Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler at circa 600m below our Jigmicholing camp.

263. Blue-winged Minla *Minla c. cyanouroptera*

Very uncommon this year: one in scrub along in the Shinkhar Chuu Valley; a total of ten along the Zhemgang Road; two on Tamal La and two with a mixed flock as we ascended towards Tsirang.

264. Chestnut-tailed Minla *Minla s. strigula*

This striking ‘babbler’ was seen on just two days on the Zhemgang Road. Amazing.

Old World Flycatchers MUSCICAPIDAE

265. Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis erimelas*

Widespread and moderately common at low and medium elevations in lightly wooded farmland and around settlements: Puna Tsang and Po chuus, and from Yongkola thereafter daily to Tsirang.

266. Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis u. unicolor*

One male (part of a pair) singing his heart on the Zhemgang Road, thereafter three pairs observed in lightly degraded subtropical forest below our Jigmicholing Camp.

267. Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis r. rubeculoides*

Great views of a male at 1,400m in the Shonkhar Chu Valley thanks to some good spotting by Peter and another male in the Mangde Chu Valley.

268. Large Niltava *Niltava g. grandis*

Fine views of a male along the Limithang Road and heard on two days along the Zhemgang Road.

269. Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae signata*

Several superb views of glowing males and females (total six) singing on territory along the Tashitang Trail; singles seen and several others heard on the Limithang Road; the Upper Mangde Chu Valley; the Zhemgang Road; Mangde Chu Valley; Tama La and below our Jigmicholing Camp.

270. Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava s. sundara*

A real stunner, we saw just one male on the south slope of Tama La.

271. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias t. thalassina*

Widespread and often a very common bird, seen on 14 days. We recorded a

total of circa 20 birds in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley, suggesting this species was in the process of migrating up. A truly lovely bird.

272. (H) Lesser Shortwing *Brachypteryx leucophrys nipalensis*
Heard on several days along the Limithang Road.

273. Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* subsp?
Common and ubiquitous; recorded daily 150 – 3,200m; at times pairs were recorded along every 100 - 200m of road; many nest in the concrete road culverts.

274. Little Forktail *Enicurus s. scouleri*
One seen superbly as we drove down the Limithang Road towards Yongkola thereafter 1s and 2s on most days along the Limithang Road; a pair high on the Tashitang Trail and one pair on Yutong La.

275. Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus guttatus*
One seen very nicely along the Tashitang Trail and a pair seen exceptionally well as we descended from our Jigimicholing Camp towards Geylephu.

276. Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*
A pair seen well along the Tashitang Trail; and another pair seen very well as we descended from our Jigmicholong Camp towards Geylephu.

277. White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium l. leucurum*
Two seen well along the Zhemgang Road; and one as we ascended from Tsirang towards Wangdi.

278. Himalayan Red-flanked Bush-Robin *Tarsiger rufilatus*
Two superb males at high altitude on Cheli La and two males and a female as we climbed towards Thrumzing L. Also known as Red-flanked Bluetail; Orange-flanked Bush-Robin. NOTE: Sino-Himalayan *rufilatus* and N Asian *cyanurus* are widely disjunct in breeding ranges. Consistent differences in morphology and song-types over wide areas indicate they are better treated as separate species (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005).

279. White-browed Bush-Robin *Tarsiger i. indicus*
One male found by Peter near Sengor.

280. Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni australorientalis*
Notably uncommon this year, a pair in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; two on the Limithang Road; and two on the Zhemgang Road.

281. Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*
An uncommon migrant in Bhutan, we saw more than usual this year including two at circa 400m above Geylephu; two in riverine scrub near Geylephu and one in scrub at the edge of Sal Forest, circa 4 km west of Geylephu.

282. Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliaris aestigma*

A truly lovely bird that graced us with fine views on just three days, often with mixed species flocks.

283. Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula s. strophiata*

Not as common as usual this year; two in the Cheri Valley; one female near Chendibji; recorded daily on the Limithang Road including a total of 12 below Namling (2 April) and in the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa.

284. Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

Moderately common at upper altitudes and ones and twos at mid-altitudes.

285. Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis f. fuliginosus*

Widespread and common; seen on many days with as many as 10 (25 March) 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.

286. White-capped Water Redstart *Phoenicurus (Chaimarrornis) leucocephalus*

Widespread and moderately common except where absent surprisingly absent on the Limithang Road. This attractive species was seen on many of the creeks, streams and rivers that we encountered; c. 700 – 3,500m; a thoroughly delightful, charming, dapper bird. Also known as River Chat, River Redstart, White-capped Chat, White-capped River Chat.

287. Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

Common and widespread this year it was abundant in scrub along the Puna Tsang Chuu along which it appeared to be migrating?

288. White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

One of the more surprising records of this tour in that a female was well photographed in riverine woodland far down in the Ha Valley.

289. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros rufiventris*

One female along the Mo Chuu.

290. Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*

Yet another very handsome species that we saw on numerous occasions from above Ura then daily along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.

291. Blue-capped Rock-Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus*

The male is not only a beautiful looking creature but also a great songster. It would appear that birds were only just beginning to arrive on their breeding grounds and we saw 1s and 2s most days along the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.

292. Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitaires pando*

One along the Po Chuu; a female on river gravels near Geylephu and a smart looking male as we ascended towards Tsirang.

293. Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus indicus*

One along the Puna Tsang Chuu and ones and twos daily in open country thereafter and in the lowlands near Geylephu. NOTE: Some authorities treat the population wintering in the Indian sub-continent as a full species separate from Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*. See, however, Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

294. Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*

Widespread and locally common; observed on a total of seven days in open scrubby country, especially lightly wooded farmland.

Thrushes & Allies TURDIDAE

295. Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor*

One feeding at a fruiting vine at 2,100m in scrubby farmland in the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa. This is a rare Spring migrant in Bhutan but may also be occasionally resident in the kingdom.

296. White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus*

Widespread and encountered in low to occasionally high number numbers daily, invariably within Blue Pine Forest, east to the Limithang Road.

297. Gray-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul*

Notably uncommon this year with just a single female seen above Cheri in the Jigme Dorji National Park.

298. Tibetan Blackbird *Turdus maximus*

One male seen well as we drove through lightly wooded farmland to our Jigmicholing Camp.

299. Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*

A flock of 13 feeding on the ground and in the canopy of adjacent trees near the summit of Cheli La was a nice surprise. An additional three on the old Pele La Road. This species is supposedly indicative of thrush eruption, however, we saw no further evidence of such an event.

Starlings & Myna STURNIDAE

300. Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa intermedia*

A maxima of six in Sal Forest circa 4km west of Geylephu.

301. Jungle Myna *Acridotheres (grandis) f. fuscus*

Common in and around Geylephu with circa 50 counted west to Sarpang.

302. Common Myna *Acridotheres t. tristis*

Common just above Lobesa, the valley of the Puna Tsang Chuu and Po Chuu

Therafter common from the lower southern slopes of Tama La down to Geylephu and west to Sarpang.

303. Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica (Sturnus) contra sordidus*
Small numbers in and around Geylephu (1 & 6).

304. Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia (Sturnus) m. malabarica*
Two in lightly wooded country in the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley below Trongsa;
two in the Mangde Chuu Valley; ten in scrub at the edge of Sal Forests circa 4
km west of Geylephu.

Leafbirds CHLOROPSEIDAE

305. Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis a. aurifrons*
One male in Sal Forest near Geylephu and a possible female the previous day
on the edge of the town. This is a very uncommon species in Bhutan.

306. Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis h. hardwickii*
One superb male on the slopes of Dochu La therafter small numbers seen daily
from the Limithang Road to west of Geylephu.

Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae

307. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum i. ignipectus*
Notably uncommon this year with just scattered ones and twos with mixed
flocks. Also known as Buff-bellied Flowerpecker.



Sunbirds & Spiderhunters NECTARINIDAE

308. Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris a. asiatica*

A single male seen well in scrub at the edge of the Mou Khola Chuu adjacent to Geylephu. A rarity in Bhutan.

309. Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga i. ignicauda*

We enjoyed fine views of a glorious male on Yutong La and another found by Peter below Thrumsing La. Surely one of the world's most sumptuous sunbirds.

310. Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga s. saturata*

Notably common along the Tashitang Trail; six in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley thereafter small numbers recorded daily. A widespread species, it typically occurs at altitudes generally lower than the next two species.

311. Mrs Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga g. gouldiae*

Notably uncommon this year although we enjoyed several wonderful, close views of this exquisite creature in the Cheri Valley, Pele La, Yutong La and scarcely on the Limithang Road.

312. Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis koelzi*

Widespread and common, seen on most days, often in mixed flocks.

313. Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja labecula*

Great looks at a gorgeous male in the Mangde Chuu Valley; one as climbed towards Tsirang and another as we climbed towards Wangdi.

314. Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera m. magna*

One feeding at a banana palm in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; small numbers observed thereafter from the Zhemgang Road down to Geylephu.

Accentors PRUNELIDAE

315. Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris nipalensis*

One on Cheli La and one along the old Pele La Road.

316. Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella s. strophiata*

Rather small numbers this year; one on Cheli La; six in the Cheri Valley; and two on the Limithang Road.

Wagtails & Pipits MOTACILLIDAE

317. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla c. cinerea*

Widespread with ones and twos recorded seven days across the breadth of the tour.

318. White (Pied) Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Widespread and locally common along creeks and rivers and associated open habitats such as farmland: Paro Valley (8); Po Chuu Valley (30); Yutong La (2); Bumthang to Thrumsing La and the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley. Examples of subspecies *dukhunensis*, *personata*, *leucopsis* and *alboides* were all recorded.

319. White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis*

A total of four of these striking birds were observed at length as they fed among river gravels at the margins of the Mou Khola Chuu, near Geylephu. This is a rare species in Bhutan.

320. Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* subsp?

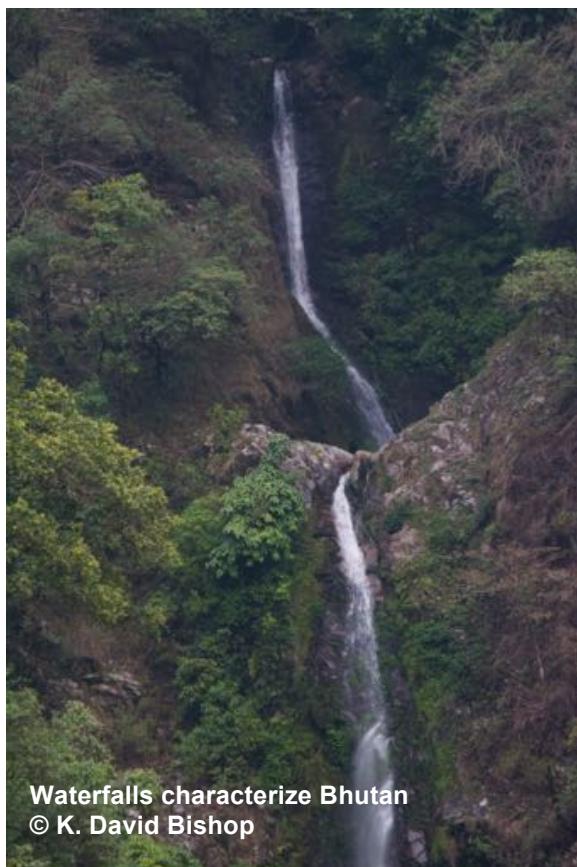
One among river gravels at the edge of the Mou Khola Chuu near to Geylephu.

321. Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit *Anthus r. rufulus*

One in the Paro Valley. NOTE: The recent revision of the taxonomy of the Richard's Pipit (including Paddyfield Pipit) complex has resulted in the large northern migratory form *richardi* being accepted as a distinct species *Anthus richardi*. Consequently the name *Anthus novaeseelandiae* is now restricted to the species occurring in New Zealand and Australia. The relatively small(ish) form found in the cultivated lowlands of south and south-east Asia is now treated as Paddyfield Pipit *A. rufulus*.

322. Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus h. hodgsoni*

Widespread but only small numbers at high elevations so birds were presumably still just arriving onto their breeding grounds; Dochu La (1), Po Chuu Valley (4), old Pele La Road (6), Yutong La (3), circa 20 at 1800m in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley; Mangde Chuu Valley (10) and ones and twos as we ascended towards tsirang and the following day towards Wangdi.



323. Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*

One on Dochu La; and six in the Shonkhar Chuu Valley at 1750m.

Spotted Elachura ELACHURIDAE

324. Spotted Elachura (Wren-Babbler) *Elachura formosus*

Heard along the Tashitang Trail and near Chendibi. Seen nicely on the southern slopes of Tama La and heard again below our Jigmicholing Camp. NOTE: Formerly placed in *Spelaeornis*.

Buntings & Allies EMBERIZIDAE

325. Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami*

Seven along the Puna Tsang Chuu and two in the farmland of the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley.

Bullfinches, Rosefinches, Grosbeaks & Crossbills FRINGILLIDAE

326. Gold-naped Finch *Pyrrhoplectes epaulette*

Fabulous views of a very handsome male on the Limithang Road as we drove from Sengor to Yongkola, thanks to some great work by Joanne. A total of four females were watched at length below Namling on the Limithang Road.

327. Crimson-browed Finch *Pinicola subhimachala*

Fine views of a male of this uncommon species on the Limithang Road as we drove from Sengor to Yongkola.

328. Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus p. pulcherrimus*

Fine views of a male feeding on the ground at the edge of scrub above the village of Ura and a second near sengor on the Limithang Road. NOTE: Split from populations in China (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

329. Dark-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus edwardsii rubicundus*

An exceptional year for this species. Good looks at two females in Boreal Forest in the Jigme Dorji National Park above Cheri; one along the Tashitang Trai; one on the olf Pele La Road and total of four females and a male below Sengor on the Limithang Road.

330. Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus t. thura*

Two glowing males and a female feeding 3,400m on Cheli La. NOTE: Split from populations in China (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

331. Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra himalayensis*

At least 50 recorded on Yutong La.

332. Tibetan Serin *Serinus thibetanus*

A flock of ten in the Mangde Chuu Valley.

333. Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*

Fabulous views of a flock of circa 15 feeding in Alders near the summit of Cheli La.

334. Spot-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas melanozanthos*

A flock of ten brilliantly found by Elizabeth as they fed on the Zhemgang Road.

335. White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas c. carnipes*

A total of ca 20 on Cheli La.



Collared Grosbeaks © K. David Bishop

Old World Sparrows PASSERIDAE

336. Russet (Cinnamon) Sparrow *Passer rutilans cinnamomeus*

Widespread, common to locally very common and recorded daily in suitable scrub and open country especially around farm buildings. Often together with Eurasian Tree Sparrows.

337. Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus obscuratus*

Ubiquitous in suitable open country especially around farm buildings. A total of 100 recorded near our Yonkola lodge including a dark morph individual.

Munias ESTRILIDAE

338. White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata acuticauda*

A flock of five in degraded subtropical forest as we descended towards Geylephu and one as we ascended towards Wangdi.

339. Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata subundulata*

A total of ten along the Po Chuu.



Assamese Macaques © K. David Bishop

MAMMALS

1. Assamese Macaque *Macaca assamensis*
Widespread and common especially at lower elevations.
2. Common (Hanuman) Langur *Presbytis entellus*
Notably larger and more heavily furred than populations in the warmer climatic plains of India.
3. Capped Langur *Presbytis pileatus*
A troop of circa 12 during the late afternoon in the Shonkhar Chu Valley put on a great show.
4. Golden Langur *Presbytis geei*
Notably common from the Upper Mngde Chu Valley and down the Zhemgang Road to near Tingtibi and Geylephu. Large numbers (20 – 100) seen on five days with several troops feeding on or at the side of the road including taking dirt from exposed cliffs.
5. Marbled Cat *Felis marmorata*
Photographed by our driver Wangdi on his smart-phone during the daytime along the Zhemgang Road.

6. Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*
One seen near the summit of Cheli La by Elizabeth and our driver Wangdi.
7. Hodgson's Flying Squirrel *Petaurista magnificus*
Four of this truly gorgeous creature were seen on our night safari on the Zhemgang Road.
8. Giant Pied Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor*
One on the Limithang Road, one in the Mangde Chuu Valley and as climbed towards Tsirang.
9. Orange-bellied Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah*
Scattered individuals seen on two days.
10. Hoary-bellied Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus*
Widespread and fairly common.
11. Irrawady Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus*
Several on the Zhemgang Road and in the Mangde Valley.
12. Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops macrællandi*
Several on the Limithang and Zhemgang roads.
13. Serow *Capricornis sumatraensis*
One on the old Pele La Road.
14. Goral *Nemorhaedus goral*
One near Cheri Monastery.
15. Sambar *Cervus unicolor*
One very alarmed individual crashing around in the Mo Chuu near our camp on the Tashitang Trail. Almost certainly responding to a nearby Leopard.
Four observed from the old Pele La Road.
16. Common Barking Deer (Muntjac) *Muntiacus muntjak*
Heard above the Cheri Valley; one well spotted by Mick on Dochu La; heard in the Upper Mangde Chuu Valley; one in the mangde Chuu Valley;
17. Royle's Pika *Ochotona roylei*
Widespread at high altitudes.



A selection of flowering plants identified during the course of our Bhutan tour

Ageratum conyzoides
Aeschynanthus hookeri
Ainsliaea optea
Anemone rupicola
Bamboo (several species, incl. male)
Berberis: (*aristata*, *koehniana*)
Begonia (*picata*?)
Bergenia ciliata
Buddleja crispa
Castanopsis sp
Caesalpinia decapetala
Calestemon citrinus
Chrysanthemum purethroides
Clintonia udensis
Colocasia fallax
Cotinus coggygria
Cotoneaster – 4 spp
Corginea sp
Crassocephalum crepidioides
Daphne: *bholua*, *mucronata*
Datura - introduced
Dendrobium sp Orchids

Desmodium elegans
Deutzia bhutanensis
Erigeron bellidoides
Euphorbia milii
Ficus (hispida?)
Fragaria nubicola
Geranium nakaoanum
Gnaphalium affine
Impatiens glandulifera
Iris: (goniocarpa, hookerana)
Jasminum multiflorum
Larch griffithiana
Magnolia campbellii
Melastoma (prob. normale)
Michelia doltsopa
Mimosa: (pudica, rubicaulis)
Mussaenda roxburghii
Myosotis: (alpestris, silvatica)
Orchids: (many, incl. coelogynne corymbosa, dendrobium denneanum, d. transparens, pleione praecox darjeeling)
Parocheirus communis
Pieris formosa
Pinus: (roxburghii, wallichiana)
Piptanthus nepalensis
Platystemma violoides
Potentillaanserina
Primula denticulata, edgeworthii, irregularis
Quercus baloot
Quercus semecarpifolia
Rhaphidophora decursiva
Ranunculus adoxifolius
Rhododendron arboreum
Rhus javanica
Rosa: (laevigata, serica)
Salix spp – Willows 2spp
Streptopus sp
Thermopsis inflata
Tsuga dumosa
Viburnum cotinifolium
Viola wallichiana

This then is Bhutan

