



Birding
Sri Lanka

*January 23rd -
February 5th
2011*

Sri Lanka, January 23rd - February 5th 2011

Front cover

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, *Terpsiphone paradisi paradisi*, Sinharaja 27.1.

Participants

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General information

Sri Lanka is a well-known birding destination to a very friendly part of the world. The best time for a visit seem to be between December and March. During this time of year you have a fair chance of seeing all endemics and also some very nice wintering Himalayan birds. Sea-birds however are scarce and probably more numerous earlier in the autumn around August to September. During two weeks you should get between 230-255 species, a number most comprehensible comparing to many other tropical destinations. The taxonomic status of many endemics is still awaiting full recognition which make naming a bit puzzling. Rasmussen and Anderton seem to be more pro-split compared with the (from an Asian point of view) less up-to-date Clements Checklist.

When planning the trip we soon decided to go with a local ground agent (although we usually prefer to go by ourselves). There are three well-established traveling companies in big rivalry on Sri Lanka: Bours&Co, Jetwing Eco Holidays, and Bird & Wildlife Team. Judging from other reports most people seem satisfied with all of them. We chose Bours and would highly recommend them. We made contact with Mr Perry (tourism@bours.com) in September 2010 and by the end of October we finally decided to book a 14-day birding tour and flight tickets with SAS to London and then with Sri Lankan Airlines to Colombo. Our guide for the tour was Susantha Weerappulige and we are truly happy about that, since he's a most friendly guy, sharp observer, careful driver and a very reliable and knowledgeable person.

The route we followed is well staked, one might consider change the route a bit. The last two days in Kandy didn't produce many new species, however the small barbet might be easiest here. Instead of two days around Kandy you could go for two days in the eastern parts of the country in Gal Oya NP or Nilgala Medicinal Forest. Here there is chance to see e.g. Painted Francolin, Jungle Owlet and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo.

Following the latest updates on the situation of malaria we decided to skip out on prophylaxis, there were actually very few mosquitos around, leaches on the other hand were extremely numerous, especially at Sinharaja and Uda Wattakele, without leach-proof socks (which you can buy at Blue Magpie Lodge in Sinharaja) these sites wouldn't be possible to bird (at least not in a pleasant manner).

Literature

- * A Field Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka, J Harrison (1999)
- * Birds of the Indian Subcontinent, R Grimmett, C Inskipp, T Inskipp (1998)
- * Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide, Vol 1 and 2, P Rasmussen, J Anderton (2005)
- * The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World, 6th ed. (2007)
- * Many trip-reports from the web including: Merrill 2005, Eady 2010, Howat et al 2009, Sorensen & Bech 2010, and some of the Birdquest-reports.

Map of Sri Lanka



Our route. We started with five days in the rainforest at Kithulgala and Sinharaja then to the dry southeastern parts where we birded Uda Walawe, Kalametiya, Bundala and Yala NP. Then back to the highlands and Nuwara Eliya and Horton Plains before finishing off at Kandy.

Itinerary

- 23.1 Arrival in the afternoon at Colombo. Drive to Kithulgala.
- 24-25.1 Full day birding in Kithulgala.
- 26.1 Morning birding around Kithulgala Rest House. Transport to Sinharaja. Birding en route at promising paddyfields 30 minutes before reaching Sinharaja. Check-in at Blue Magpie Lodge. Evening birding around the lodge.
- 27.1 Full day birding in Sinharaja.
- 28.1 Birding until 1 pm Sinharaja. Transport to Uda Walawe. Late evening birding roadside at Uda Walawe Tank. Local hotel.
- 29.1 Full day birding in Uda Walawe NP. Night at Centuria Hotel in Embilipitiya.
- 30.1 Quick look in the hotel gardens in the morning before departure. Transport to Kalametiya Bird Sanctuary where birding until 12 am. Then transport to Tissa. Check in at Lake View Hotel. Evening birding around Tissa Tanks.
- 31.1 Early morning to Yala NP. Jeep-safari until 1 pm. Afternoon birding outside Bundala NP.
- 1.2 Jeep-safari in Bundala NP until 11 am, birding outside Bundala rest of the day, lunch in Tissa.
- 2.2 Morning around Tissa Tanks. Transport to Nuwara Eliya. Birding 2h at Surrey Tea Estate en route. Birding Victoria Park in the evening.
- 3.2 Early morning start to Horton Plains NP where birding until 12 am. Afternoon birding in Victoria Park and at Gregory's Lake Marsh.
- 4.2 Transport to Kandy. Check in at Hotel Suisse. Birding Peradeniya Botanical Gardens in the

- afternoon.
- 5.2 Birding Uda Wattakele Forest Reserve in the morning. Afternoon transport to Colombo and late night flight to Stockholm via Heathrow.



Indian Pitta, Pitta brachyura, perched for 10 minutes in the open at Blue Magpie Lodge close to Sinharaja 26.1.

Daily log

January 23rd

Four of us arrived in the 3.35 pm after a all too long flight via Malé in The Maldives, Mårten glimpsed an unidentified white egret through the aircraft window. Magnus (who already was in Sri Lanka since a few weeks back) and our guide Susantha met us at the airport. Also another representative from Baur&Co greeted us. We quickly settled the economical issues, all of us paid cash which went smoothly. After a quick change from jeans to shorts on the airport parking lot we were more than eager to hit the road. The weather had improved in Sri Lanka the last week after a long period of heavy unseasonal rain and it was a clear blue sky. Along the road to Kithulgala before it got dark we made a few very short roadside stops to ease our urge to bird. Some common roadside birds including one Asian Paradise Flycatcher, one Brown Shrike, 10 Little Swifts and 3 Ashy Woodswallows. After a 3 ½ h drive we reached Kithulgala Rest House for a nice dinner.

January 24th

Before breakfast we started at a village east of Kithulgala. A pleasant morning walk yielded the first endemics: Layard's Parakeet, Spot-winged Thrush, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill and best bird being a responsive Green-billed Coucal. A Crested Goshawk flew by. Back to the Rest House for a quick breakfast before we crossed Kelani River. A Blyth's Reed Warbler and a Brown-breasted Flycatcher was seen in bamboo close to the river and three of us saw an Indian Cuckoo while waiting for the returning canoe. On the far side of the river we walked through the small village before reaching a big

sign saying Mandawa Rainforest. A Large-billed Leaf-Warbler called and a superb male Malabar Trogon of the slaty-headed endemic race *fuscatus* showed off. We walked along a nice path crossing two small streams before reaching some paddyfields. Around these paddyfields we spent rest of the morning getting more endemics like Black-capped Bulbul, Brown-capped Babbler and Crested Drongo. We also heard two pairs of Sri Lanka Spurfowl duetting and also heard at least 3 Chestnut-backed Owlets without seeing one. Susantha tried hard to find Serendib Scops-Owl on day-roost without any luck. At lunch-time activity had dropped significantly and we headed back to the Rest House for a lunch. Some slow after-lunch birding from the terrace produced soaring Black Eagle and Legge's Flowpecker. Later in the afternoon we once again crossed the Kelani River and walked upriver through the village trying still for Chestnut-backed Owlet without any luck. A flock of Brown-backed Needletails flew by and we saw endemic race *wellsi* of Lesser Yellownape and quite a few Asian Brown Flycatchers perched on wires in the village. In the evening we were back in the rainforest for some nightbirding. We connected with two Brown Hawk-Owls and heard several Sri Lanka Frogmouths before we had one responsive in the flashlight. No Scops-owls... After a nice buffet dinner we were ready to hit the sack after an intensive first full day's birding.



Serendib Scops-Owl, *Otus thilohoffmanni*, Kithulgala 25.1.



Brown-breasted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa muttui*, Kithulgala 25.1.



Malabar Trogon, *Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus*, Kithulgala 24.1.



Kithulgala.

January 25th

This morning we asked for a packed breakfast a set out early to reach the good forest early in the morning. We walked the same way as yesterday, short after entering the rainforest in the early first light we heard a metallic sharp call, Susantha quickly pulled out his taping equipment and played, soon the bird was below us and called a few more times before disappearing unseen, an Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher. Once again we birded around the paddyfields, calling Purple-faced Leaf Monkey gave a nice setting to the scene. There was good movement in a particular sun-lit tree producing the first Green Leaf Warbler, another Legge's Flowepecker, flocks of Orange Minivets and a Black-naped Monarch. Susantha who once again headed out in the forest soon returned with a huge smile on his

face, he'd found two cooperative Serendib Scops-Owls on day-roost! What a thrill. One by one we gently approached the site not to disturb the birds. We got absolutely fantastic views of this endemic reddish owl. The list of seen endemics was soon boosted as two Sri Lanka Mynas called from a nearby treetop. We could scope the birds taking a closer look on the peculiar wattles. Today we explored the small valley going uphill beyond the abandoned rice paddies. After a 30 minute walk we reached another village where we turned back. The weather was still fine with a clear blue sky. In the afternoon after a very refreshing swim in the river we once more tried for Chestnut-backed Owlet in the village E of Kithulgala. Here we got Greenish Warbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler and Sri Lanka Swallow but still no owlet.

January 26th

Last morning in Kithulgala. We now badly wanted the owlet. Luckily last day we met Danish birder Thomas who we shared some info with, today he joined us for a stake out for the owlet at an old abandoned hotel next to the Rest House. And there it was! We got great views as the bird perched in the tree above us. After this success we had a last breakfast before we hit the road for a 6 hour drive to Sinharaja. The last two hours the road conditions got worse. Half an hour before we reached Sinharaja we made first a quick stop for a roadside Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike and then a longer stop at some promising paddyfields. Soon we found a flock of highly-wanted Black-throated Munias. Other birds at this site were two Black Eagles soaring close by, a few Plum-headed Parakeets, and the first Indian Robin. We checked in at the delightful Blue Magpie Lodge where we soon found another flock of Black-throated Munias in the nearby paddyfield and a showy Indian Pitta in the scrub behind the kitchen. In the afternoon we made a stroll along the valley outside the lodge. At a small wet area some 15 minutes walk from the lodge Susantha played Slaty-legged Crake and by pure chance a crake immediately responded. Fantastic, after some patience the crake finally crossed a small path in front of us giving short but clear view of this difficult species. The Rice & Curry at the lodge for dinner was superb.

January 27th

Early departure and a 30 minute drive via the park HQ for registration and then uphill on an extremely bumpy road to the park gate at Sinharaja World Heritage. We started off by scanning the clearing just next to the gate for the first 30 minutes. We then slowly started to walk the path toward the Research station. Along the way we had our first Sri Lanka Blue Magpies, heard a few Sri Lanka Spurfowl and saw some Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler and three huge Crimson-backed Flamebacks. Before reaching the Research station the local National Park guide took us to a good spot for the scaly thrush. After quite some work most of us had a short glimpse of the shy creature. After that we met a group of German birders who just found a perched Crested Goshawk, unfortunately it took off before everyone had a good view. Later on, along the stream close by the Research station we had another encounter with Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and this time all of us had a brief but clear views of a bird on the ground. We found our first bird-party on a loop trail beyond the station containing loads of Orange-billed Babbler and Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes, in the canopy one White-faced Starling and one Red-faced Malkoha disappeared too soon. We had lunch at Martin's lodge and had a huge bird-wave around the park gate with two Red-faced Malkohas, many babbler, two Crested Drongos and a few white males Asian Paradise Flycatchers. There were a few heavy rain showers in the afternoon impairing birding, however we did connect with two different shy males Indian Blue Robin. From 5 pm it started to rain continuously preventing any further birding.

January 28th

This morning we made another morning visit to the park. The sky was clear again and before reaching the park gate we stopped at some tea plantations and walked 5 minutes to a forest slope where Susantha had a stake-out for the Spurfowl. After a short playback we had great views of one male and two females. At the clearing by the gate we had two White-faced Starlings and everybody had good scope views. Along the main track we connected with a female Sri Lanka Spurfowl feeding unconcerned of our presence for 5 minutes before running off. Amazing, Magnus was the happiest of us since he'd stayed in the car early in the morning to avoid the leeches and therefore had missed those spurfowls. Soon we also connected with Red-faced Malkoha meaning success for everybody in seeing the important endemics at Sinharaja. Back at the Research station we made an effort to try

to flush a Malayan Night Heron from the streams around the station. Hard work gave us up-close fantastic views of a feeding Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush but no heron. There had been no sightings this year according to Susantha and our local guide. On the way back for lunch it started to rain heavily again. Since we now had seen all our targets for the rainforest-part of this birding tour we quickly decided to change the itinerary. After lunch we went back to the lodge repacked and went back on road and headed to Uda Walawe in the dry zone. Originally we had planned for one more night at the Blue Magpie Lodge. We arrived at Uda Walawe late evening, squeezing in 20 minutes birding by the Uda Walawe Tank in the last light. An Indian Pitta called, we found our first Indian Stone Curlews, Spoonbills and Black-headed Ibises. We slept in a clean small hotel and had a rather scrappy dinner at a local joint.



Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush, *Zoothera imbricata*, Sinharaja 28.1.

January 29th

We left early once again and was at Uda Walawe National Park gate by dawn and jumped into our open jeep for the full day safari. At the park HQ we found a 2cy-female Pallid Harrier on top of a dead tree. Then we were on our way. The weather was perfect throughout the day with clear sky in the morning then later on some clouds which helped cooling off the intense heat a bit. In the afternoon we had a 20-30 minute heavy shower. After just a few kilometers we started to find the first elephants of the day (approximately 40 throughout the day) and we had to stop over and over again for new birds in the vast grasslands, we had Grey-breasted, Ashy and Jungle Prinia, Jerdon's Bushlark and Tricoloured Munia. A few Blyth's Reed Warblers and one Blyth's Pipit. At one stop for a perched Black-winged Kite a swift falcon flew past us turning back and went directly over our heads. We got some decent photos of the bird. At first we thought it might have been an Amur Falcon, considered a rare winter visitor but soon, after looking in the camera displays we thought it might have been an Eurasian Hobby, a bird previously never seen in Sri Lanka according to our books! After scrutinizing the pictures back home we are now certain about the identification and the record have been submitted to FOGSL and OBC. We went on, seeing one Lesser Adjutant and three Woolly-necked Storks in a huge dead tree. We spent around 1 hour by a very large dam seeing the first Pied Cuckoo of the trip, two ssp. *halimodendri*-type Lesser Whitethroats, and many waterbirds like Indian Cormorant, Great Thick-knee and various terns. Two Grey-headed Fish-Eagles soared and Ashy-

crowned Sparrowlark and another Blyth's Pipit was on the ground. After this we drove to a larger river further east in the park. Along the way Susantha had a brief Sirkeer Malkoha that the rest of us missed. We had lunch in the shadow of some larger trees close to the river. Close-by there were two Forest Wagtails and two White-rumped Shamans. Our local guide took us further to another wooded area close to the river where we soon found two smashing Orange-headed Thrushes, a few more Forest Wagtails, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher and Indian Pitta. In the afternoon we had some rain showers. In between we finally found a nice Sirkeer Malkoha to everybody's big enjoyment. Also a rare Lesser Cuckoo, several Grey-bellied Cuckoos, the endemic Sri Lanka Woodshrike and a perched Brown Fish Owl. In total we counted 132 species this fantastic day. After leaving the park and the Uda Walawe Tank behind we drove to Embilipitiya and the luxurious Centuria Hotel for a good night sleep.

January 30th

We met early after breakfast and Susantha had already found our target bird in the hotel garden: two roosting Indian Scops Owl! What a good start of the day. We drove for 1 ½ hours before reaching the coastal bird sanctuary Kalametiya for some waders. On a large grassy field there were perhaps 100 Pacific Golden Plovers, Lesser Sand Plovers and a few Greater Sand Plovers. The star birds here were two Oriental Pratincoles who showed off their dark upperparts, little red on bill and lack of white trailing edge to the secondaries. Other shorebirds were a single Ruff, a few Whimbrels, Grey Plovers and many Pintail Snipes. During the morning we also had four-five flocks of Rosy Starlings flying by. There have been a few claims of Caspian Plovers from this site, so we searched hard for this most-wanted plover, without fortune though. We continued along the coastline east and checked in at Lake View Hotel in Tissa for a three night stay. After lunch we went to Tissa Tanks, we walked along a large tank and soon found the targets: Yellow Bittern, Black Bittern, Watercock and Indian Reed Warbler. In the evening we tried at a palm-plantation close by for White-naped Woodpecker without success. In the last light an Indian Cuckoo suddenly appeared outside our hotel in Tissa.



Besra, *Accipiter virgatus*,
Uda Walawe 29.1.



Indian Scops-Owl, *Otus bakkamoena*,
Centuria Hotel, Embilipitiya 30.1.

January 31th

Early start for a half-day jeep-safari in famous Yala National Park. At the HQ we heard a predawn Indian Nightjar and another one sat on the road when approaching the gate. It was fairly good skies during the safari. Early on we approached a bunch of parked vehicles and was told a leopard disappeared 5 minutes ago, that was how close to the big cat we were. A full day in the park would of course increase our chances but this was a birding trip after all... Among other animals we observed a few Elephants, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer and Golden Jackal. At one stop we suddenly found two loras looking a bit different. We couldn't believe our eyes: Marshall's lora. The pair sat in a tree close to us for a short while flying across the road for a bit more posing so we could get some good enough pictures. Amazing, this population far from northwestern India was rediscovered (after a museum specimen) just a few years ago. Other nice birds during the safari were a colony of Baya Weavers in breeding plumage, three Brahminy Starlings, Blue-faced Malkoha, Woolly-necked Stork and two Sanderlings on the beach. After lunch in Tissa we went to some great wetlands just outside Bundala

NP. During the afternoon heavy rain started (for quite a long it would turn out...), even though we found a large assembly of Long-toed Stint, no more than 12 birds and at the same place at least 6 Temminck's Stint, a probable ssp. lutea yellow-headed Yellow Wagtail, Pied Cuckoo and a small flock of 5 Hume's Whitethroat.



Long-toed Stint, *Calidris subminuta*,
outside Bundala NP 31.1.

Yala NP.

February 1st

It was still raining when we woke up. Susantha picked us up at the hotel long before daylight and we drove to Bundala again. Outside the park along the entrance road we had several, up to 10 Indian Nightjars on the ground and also calling. From the scrub along the road we also heard at least 3 or 4 different Jerdon's Nightjar, however we couldn't flashlight any. We entered the jeep and went for half a day birding among the salt pans. Some of the pools were full of waders and it took a few hours to cover this site properly. After politely asking the local guide we were allowed to walk closer to some of the best pools on the embankment. There was also a large flock of terns, mostly Great Crested Terns but also a few Lesser Crested, also a few Little/Saunders's Tern, three birds in summer plumage were definitely Little Terns, we had good views of a bird in winter plumage with at least 4 dark outer primaries suggesting Saunders's Tern, but it seems unclear how solid this character is. Differentiate Saunders's and Little Tern in winter plumage is not an easy task (if possible at all). Among the waders we added Broad-billed Sandpiper, another Ruff, a few Curlews, a single Terek Sandpiper and two Red-necked Phalaropes. Two brown martins were present, the status of these birds is disputed, only Sand Martins are official records, but some have suggested that also Pale Martin could occur. The birds we saw were quite pale grey-brown on the back suggesting Pale Martin, on the other hand, the breast band was complete and thick in the middle and therefore we think they are Sand Martins after all. On the way back to the park HQ it started rain more heavily and it was a big surprise to boost our list with a Yellow-crowned Woodpecker along the way. Before heading back to Tissa for lunch we continued the road past Bundala further along the coast. At the last stop close to a large reed bed, there was a small colony of Streaked Weavers, although we couldn't see the nests inside the reed, a few beautiful males showed nicely. After lunch now in pouring rain we went back to Bundala and tried to scan the wetland behind the park HQ where there is a large visitor center and with a large covered platform. In good shelter from the rain we scanned the large water body, it was an amazing sight to see thousands and thousands of marsh terns flying back and forth. We estimated the numbers to at least 5000 Whiskered Tern and many hundred of White-winged Terns. In the reeds we found around 10 Yellow Bitterns, many Indian Reed Warblers, a lone Greater Sand Plover on a grassy area and the only Eurasian Coot of the trip.

February 2nd

Last morning in Tissa area. We tried at dawn a last time for the White-naped Woodpecker in the palm plantation close to Tissa Tanks. Most surprisingly it was ... yes... raining... No woodpecker but a soaking wet Black Bittern before we left for the highlands. After a long but very memorable drive we reached Surrey Tea Estate. Memorable since halfway up the mountains at a short break, Mårten

shouted like an insane when he found a large 30 cm Monitor Lizard in the glove compartment of the car. It had probably sneaked in during the night escaping the wet and cold. The small patch of forest at Surrey holds many good birds. Susantha lead the way along the slippery slope and the small paths. We soon flushed a Brown Wood Owl, and after another 20-30 minute search Susantha flushed another one, amazingly flying just beneath us across a diminutive clearing, meaning all of us having a fairly good look at this impressive owl. Sri Lanka Woodpigeons called but never showed. We found two Dull Blue Flycatchers and three Blyth's Reed Warblers. In a nearby fruiting tree there were at least 25 Coppersmith Barbets, a male Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike and a Chestnut-headed Bee-eater. It was still raining when we left Surrey and drove the last hour to Nuwara Eliya and our hotel for lunch. In the afternoon, still in pouring rain, we went to Victoria Park, and after a short while Susantha flushed a Pied Thrush! The bird quickly disappeared and only three of us had a decent but brief view. We spread out searching the park. Susantha, Klacke and Magnus had a swift observation of a presumed Syke's Warbler which we never could relocate. Two Forest Wagtails, many Yellow-eared Bulbuls and Sri Lanka White-eyes, two or three Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers and a few Green Leaf Warbles were also seen. An hour later we found the Pied Thrush again, now on the ground, cooperative and all of us had fantastic looks. However we couldn't find any Kashmir Flycatcher. Still very eager to see the rare flycatcher we tried the close-by grounds of Hill Club Hotel where the Danish birders we met at Kithulgala had seen two or three birds, but still without any luck. We were becoming increasingly anxious but Susantha told us to relax, he thought we would see the flycatcher the next day.



Pied Thrush, Zoothera wardii, Victoria Park is perhaps the only reliable site in the world for this splendid Zoothera-thrush. Mindblowing! 2.2.

February 3rd

Today we had a classic early start at 04.30 and drove 1 ½ hours to Horton Plains NP. When we reached the park gate first light appeared. It was pretty dense clouds and still raining now and then but with less intensity than the previous days. It was damp and chilly when we heard a sharp long-drawn whistle, and the reaction from Susantha was immediate: Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush calling! After playback we soon found an obliging pair. What a start! Around the small pool at the entrance

gate we also encountered the small Sri Lanka Bush Warbler (the last endemic!) and a Blyth's Reed Warbler. We went further on to Arranga Pool. It was a beautiful place with thick damp forest. A few Indian Blackbirds were seen and also 2+1 Sri Lanka Woodpigeon flew past us, one perched for a short while providing scope-views. A calling Sri Lanka Spurfowl and a distant Sri Lanka Blue Magpie was a nice reunion with some old friends. After an hour we went further to the grassy hill plains. Quite a few Sambar Deers along the way to the park visitor center. Along the way we saw a few Pied Bushchat and a distant Eurasian (or Himalayan) Buzzard. Around the visitor center there were at least 5 Hill Swallows. We went back to Nuwara Eliya for lunch and then concentrated all our energy on the flycatcher. And finally, after having searched the park thoroughly back and forth for two hours Susantha did the discovery. An extremely skulking male at the southeastern corner of the park. It took almost 45 minutes before all of us had good views. Now we had seen practically all our target-birds for the trip! After some celebrating we took a last stroll through the park and one of us had a brief look at another male Kashmir Flycatcher behind the women's toilets, and one of us once again flushed Pied Thrush, now two males together. Before heading back to the hotel we searched a marshy area close to the Horse tracks next to Gregory's Lake. We spread out and flushed around 20 Pintail Snipes and one Common Snipe. Also a lot of prinias and Zitting Cisticolas but no Pallas's Grashopper Warblers... From 5 pm the rain increased again.



Blue-tailed Bee-eater, *Merops philippinus*, Kalametiya Sanctuary 30.1.



Arranga Pool, Horton Plains NP, good place for Sri Lanka Woodpigeon and Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush.

February 4th

Forth day with continuous rain, which was rather remarkable, the weather phenomena La Niña had struck Sri Lanka bad this winter. Since we had done Victoria Park twice already we couldn't mobilize for another visit. And after breakfast we headed 3 h further north to Kandy. We checked in at Hotel Suisse and had lunch before we went to the famous Botanical Gardens of Perendiya. Between the heavy showers we actually had some nice birding here. One new species for the trip was a pair of Jerdon's Leafbirds, other good stuff were two or three Sri Lanka Small Barbets, Indian Pitta, two Forest Wagtails, two Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrikes, 2 Greenish Warblers, a few Tickell's Blue and Brown-breasted Flycatchers. However no Common Hawk-Cuckoo.

February 5th

Last day of the trip. Finally the rain stopped (after 4 ½ days!). We had a great morning stroll along a loop trail in Uda Wattakele Sanctuary close to Kandy. At the park gate early in the morning we had a pair of Brown Fish-Owl calling. Along the track we observed both Wild Boar and Muntjac. The forest patch was pretty nice with rather high and massive trees and sparse under-vegetation. Brown-capped Babbler, a species we had only seen briefly before showed off well at the end of the loop. Likewise we had good observations of at least 2 or 3 White-rumped Shammas, a Black-naped Monarch, a few drumming Crimson-backed Flamebacks, and two Forest Wagtails on the floor. In the afternoon we went back to Negombo to catch a midnight flight back to Stockholm via Heathrow for Måns and Mattias while the other three of us did a two day extension to the south for a successful whale-safari (which isn't covered in this report).



Yellow-eared Bulbul, *Pycnonotus penicillatus*, Victoria Park 3.2.

Site comments

Kithulgala

Important species: Green-billed Coucal, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Serendib Scops-Owl.

We had two full days and one morning here, we think it was enough time spent. Most good birds were found close to the partly abandoned rice paddies. Pretty good birding around the Kithulgala Rest House. (See sketch map)

Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve

Important species: White-faced Starling, Red-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Indian Blue Robin, Black-throated Munia, Slaty-legged Crake, Malayan Night Heron.

We had originally planned for two full days in the park and one morning and one afternoon around Blue Magpie Lodge. But instead we changed the plan after having been most successful with all important species, so we actually left after just 1 ½ day inside the park. The rainforest is amazing and impressive and beside the birds there are many beautiful butterflies and many other fascinating insects. (See sketch map)

Uda Walawe NP

Important species: Sirkeer Malkoha, Blyth's Pipit, prinias, raptors and wetland birds.

We had a full day in the park. Maybe that day was the best birding day of the whole trip, although only one endemic, Sri Lanka Woodshrike we had amazing 137 species and one possible new species for Sri Lanka: Eurasian Hobby! Originally our itinerary stated one afternoon here but instead we got a full day which was really good since the park is very large and hard to cover in half a day. We would recommend a full day here for sure. The birding is primarily from an open jeep, but at one place in

the middle of the park close to a reservoir we were allowed to walk around a smaller area and likewise further east(?) in the park close to a larger river.

Kalametiya Sanctuary

Important species: Oriental Pratincole, there might have been records of Caspian Plover here. There is a large open grassy area just before you reach the pools closest to the sea which was very good.

Tissa Tanks

Important species: Bitterns and Watercock, White-naped Woodpecker. Easy birding along the embankment to the tank north of Tissa. When approaching the tank you pass through a palm plantation where White-naped Woodpeckers sometimes roost.

Bundala NP

Important species: Nightjars, waders and terns. Great birding both at the salt pans and especially at the wetland before you reach the park HQ.

Yala NP

Important species: Marshall's Iora and wetland birds, and of course, Leopard. Since you're not allowed to leave the car all birding is from the jeep.

Surrey Tea Estate

Important species: Brown Wood Owl, Dull Blue Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon. Productive forest patch at a tea estate hillside. A guide is needed to reach this place.

Victoria Park

Important species: Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, Syke's Warbler. Rather easy birding. Search along the stream from the first to the second bridge and behind the women WC. A few hours is enough to search the park thoroughly. Kashmir Flycatcher seem to leave Sri Lanka quite early in the spring since a few reports from late March and April miss out.

Horton Plains NP

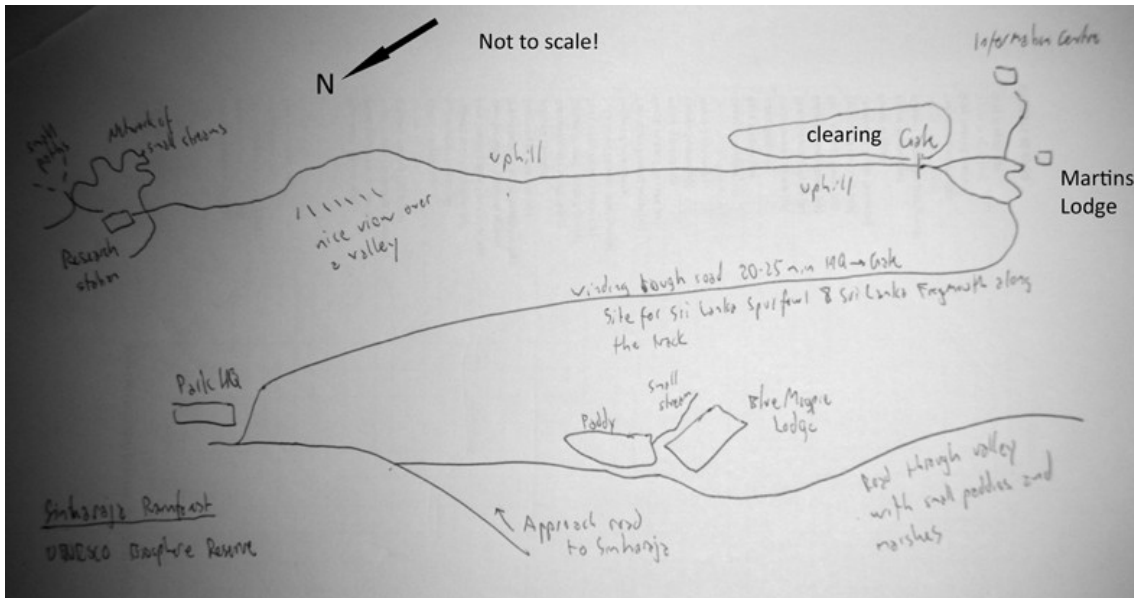
Important species: Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, Hill Swallow, Sri Lanka Woodpigeon, Indian Blackbird, Dull Blue Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler. We found the best places for birding around the small pool at the park gate and at Arranga Pool. Pied Bushchats and Hill Swallows were easily found in the grassy areas.

Perendiya Botanical Gardens

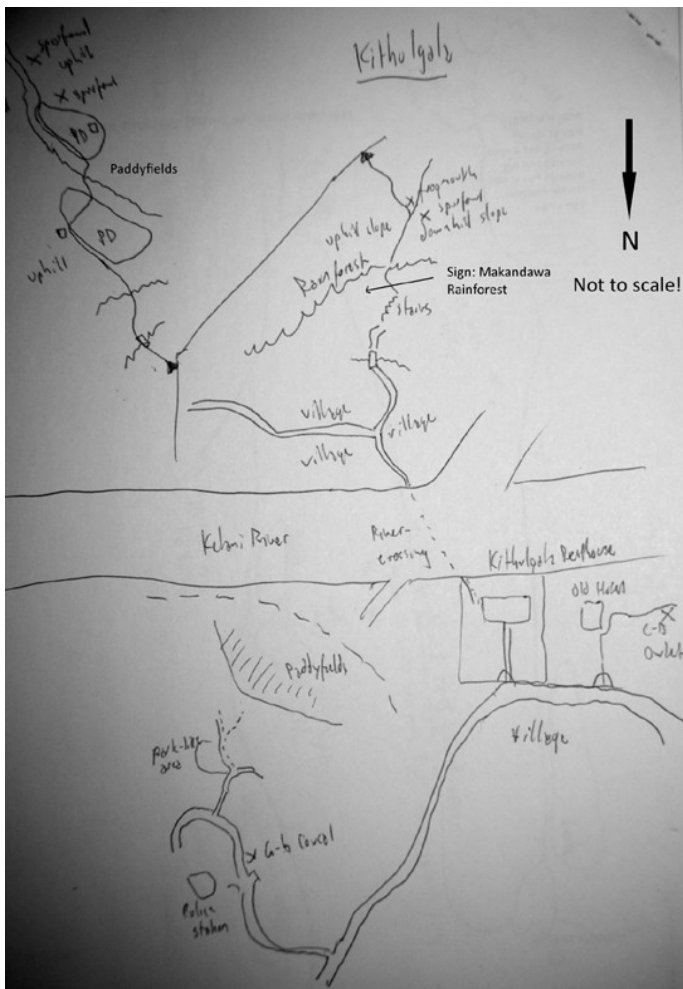
Important species: Sri Lanka Small Barbet, Common Hawk-Cuckoo. Easy birding. Reliable spot for the small Barbet which at least two groups we met had some troubles with.

Uda Wattakele Sanctuary

Important species: Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, White-rumped Shama. Rather easy birding from a loop trail.



Sketch map of Sinharaja, most birding is done from the gate along the dirt track to the Research station.



Sketch map of Kithulgala. We found best birding around the paddyfields inside the rainforest.

Birdlist: Sri Lanka January 23rd - February 5th 2011

Mostly follows Birds of South Asia (Rasmussen & Anderton, 2005). Many endemics are not (yet) acknowledged in Clements. In total: 253 species (24 species on the IUCN Red List).

1. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Many in Tissa Tanks.

2. Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* NT
Seen in Uda Walawe, Tissa, Bundala and Yala.

3. Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*
Almost daily.

4. Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
Small numbers at Uda Walawe and Tissa Tanks. Large colony in Kandy.

5. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Small numbers at Kelani River and in the Dry Zone.

6. Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* NT
Small numbers in the Dry Zone.

7. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Abundant in Dry Zone.

8. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
Abundant in Dry Zone.

9. Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Abundant in Dry Zone.

10. Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*
Abundant.

11. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Abundant.

12. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Abundant.

13. Striated Heron *Butorides striata*
1 Yala 31.1, 2 Bundala NP 1.2.

14. Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*
Abundant.

15. Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Abundant in Tissa Tanks. Colony in Kandy.

16. Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*
2 Tissa Tanks 30.1, 1 outside Bundala 31.1, 10 Bundala VC 1.2.

17. Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*
6 Tissa Tanks 30.1, 1 outside Bundala 31.1, 1 Tissa Tanks 2.2.

- 18. Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* NT
Abundant around tanks and paddyfields in the Dry Zone.
- 19. Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*
Singles throughout.
- 20. Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*
3 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Yala 31.1.
- 21. Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus* VU
1 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 22. Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* NT
Abundant around tanks and paddyfields in the Dry Zone.
- 23. Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
Singles around tanks and marshes in the Dry Zone.
- 24. Lesser Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*
Abundant in waterareas in the Dry Zone.
- 25. Cotton Teal** *Nettapus coromandelianus*
10 seen in Tissa Tanks 30.1-1.2.
- 26. Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
1 Uda Walawe Tank 29.1, c.25 outside Bundala 31.1-1.2.
- 27. Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*
1 2cy-bird Uda Walawe 29.1. Pending acceptance this could be the first sighting of Eurasian Hobby in Sri Lanka. Previous records are known from southern India and the Maldives. Record + photos submitted to FOGSL and OBC.
- 28. Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
3-4 Kithulgala 24-26.1, 3 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Kalamatiya 30.1, 1 Yala 31.1, 1 Horton Plains 3.2.
- 29. Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*
5 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 30. Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*
Abundant.
- 31. White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Max 5 Uda Walawe 28-29.1, 2 Tissa 30.1, 1 Yala 31.1, 1 Bundala 1.2.
- 32. Grey-headed Fish Eagle** *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* NT
2+2 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 33. Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*
Singles mostly in the Wet Zone.
- 34. Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* NT
1 2cy-female Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 35. Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*
1 Kithulgala 24.1, 1 Sinharaja 27.1.

36. Shikra *Accipiter badius*
Singles throughout.

37. Besra *Accipiter virgatus*
1 Uda Walawe 29.1.

38. Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*
1 Horton Plains 3.2. Proposed split from Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*.

39. Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*
2 Kithulgala 24-25.1, 3 e.r. Sinharaja 26.1.

40. Crested Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*
1 subad Kithulgala 25.1, 1 e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, 10 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Yala 31.1, 2 Bundala 1.2, 1 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2. Proposed split from Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus limnaeetus*.

41. Sri Lanka Spurfowl *Galloperdix bicalcarata* [Endemic]
2-3 pairs heard duetting Kithulgala 24-25.1, 1 male + 2 females seen outside Sinharaja and 1 female seen along the main track in Sinharaja 28.1. 1-2 other pairs heard duetting Sinharaja 27-28.1.

42. Sri Lanka Junglefowl *Gallus lafayetii* [Endemic]
Seen or heard almost daily.

43. Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
Abundant in the Dry Zone.

44. Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*
4 seen + 4 heard Uda Walawe 29.1.

45. Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides*
1 in the valley surrounding Blue Magpie Lodge 26.1.

46. White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
Abundant.

47. Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*
4 Tissa Tanks 30.1.

48. Grey-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*
1 e.r. Kithulgala 23.1, abundant around Tissa, Yala and Bundala. Proposed split from Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio porphyrio*.

49. Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
1 Bundala Visitor Centre 1.2.

50. Indian Stone Curlew *Burhinus indicus*
Max 6 Uda Walawe Tank 28-29.1, 2 Kalametiya 30.1, 4-6 outside Bundala NP 31.1-1.2. Proposed split from Eurasian Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*.

51. Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris*
Many seen in Uda Walawe, Yala and Bundala.

52. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Abundant in coastal areas.

- 53. Yellow-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus malabaricus*
Abundant in the Dry Zone.
- 54. Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*
Abundant.
- 55. Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
30 Kalametiya 30.1. Widespread in Bundala and Yala.
- 56. Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
3 Kalametiya 30.1, many at Bundala 1.2.
- 57. Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
Daily in the Dry Zone. Max 20.
- 58. Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Many seen in Bundala and Yala.
- 59. Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*
Many seen in Kalametiya, Bundala and Yala.
- 60. Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*
3 Kalametiya 30.1, 3 Yala 31.1, 1 Bundala 1.2.
- 61. Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
Tissa Tanks, Bundala and Yala.
- 62. Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*
Seen in Kalametiya, Yala, Bundala and Gregory's Marsh.
- 63. Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*
1 Bundala 1.2. 1 Gregory's Marsh 3.2.
- 64. Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* NT
In flocks overhead Kalametiya, Tissa and 200 at Bundala 1.2.
- 65. Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
3 Kalametiya 30.1.
- 66. Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* NT
3 Bundala Saltpans 1.2.
- 67. Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
Wetlands.
- 68. Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
Wetlands. Most numerous *Tringa*-sandpiper
- 69. Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
Wetlands.
- 70. Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
Wetlands.
- 71. Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Wetlands.

72. Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

1 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

73. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Singles throughout.

74. Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaris interpres*

Wetlands.

75. Sanderling *Calidris alba*

2 Yala beach 31.1.

76. Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Most numerous *Calidris*-sandpiper.

77. Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Max 6 outside Bundala 31.1-1.2.

78. Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

12 outside Bundala 31.1.

79. Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Wetlands.

80. Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

5 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

81. Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

1 male Kalametiya 30.1, 2 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

82. Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

2 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

83. Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*

2 Kalametiya 30.1.

84. Little Pratincole *Glareola lactea*

6 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

85. Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*

7 Bundala 1.2.

86. Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Singles in the Dry Zone, many at Bundala.

87. Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

2 Yala 31.1, 20 Bundala 1.2.

88. Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

40 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.

89. Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

1 Yala beach 31.1, 200 Bundala Salt pans and beach 1.2.

90. Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

3 in summer plumage Bundala Salt pans 1.2 + many Little/Saunders' in coastal wetlands.

91. Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Abundant in wetlands. At least 4000 at Bundala VC 1.2.

92. White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Abundant in wetlands. Less common than Whiskered Tern. At least 150 at Bundala VC 1.2.

93. Rock Dove (domest.) *Columba livia*

Abundant.

94. Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon *Columba torringtoniae* **VU [Endemic]**

3 heard Surrey Tea Estate 2.2, 3 seen + 3 heard Horton Plains.

95. Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Common.

96. Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

Seen daily (max 7) in Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

97. Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicinctus leggei*

15 Uda Walawe 29.1, 10 Yala 31.1, 10 Bundala 1.2.

98. Sri Lanka Green Pigeon *Treron pompadora* **[Endemic]**

Seen daily (max 10) in Kithulgala and Sinharaja. 2 Peradeniya 4.2. Proposed endemic split from Pompadour Green Pigeon *Treron pompadora*.

99. Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

Common except Nuwara Eliya and Kandy area.

100. Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot *Loriculus beryllinus* **[Endemic]**

Abundant in Kithulgala, Sinharaja and Kandy.

101. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

Singles seen (max 10) 7 days.

102. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Common away from Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

103. Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*

10 Paddyfields e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, 4 Uda Walawe 29.1.

104. Layard's Parakeet *Psittacula calthropae* **[Endemic]**

10-25 daily in Kithulgala, Sinharaja and Kandy.

105. Pied Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus jacobinus*

2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Kalametiya 30.1, 2 outside Bundala 31.1-1.2.

106. Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

1 Kelani River, Kithulgala 24.1, 1 male Tissa 30.1.

107. Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus*

1 in active tail-moult Uda Walawe 29.1.

108. Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantus passerinus*

7 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Kalametiya 30.1, 4 Yala 31.1, 3 Bundala 1.2.

109. Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus*
Seen 9 days.

110. Blue-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
4 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Kalametiya 30.1, 1 Yala 31.1.

111. Sirkeer Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii leschenaultii*
3 Uda Walawe 29.1.

112. Red-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* [Endemic]
3 Sinharaja 27.1, 2 Sinharaja 28.1.

113. Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis parroti*
Singles throughout, seen 11 days.

114. Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchus* VU [Endemic]
1 approx 1 km from Kithulgala, close to Sisira's Lodge 24-25.1, 1 heard Sinharaja 27.1.

115. Serendib Scops Owl *Otus thilohoffmanni* EN [Endemic]
2 on day-roost Kithulgala 25.1.

116. Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena bakkamoena*
2 on day-roost Centuria Hotel, Embilipitiya

117. Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis zeylonensis*
2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

118. Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica ochrogenys*
2 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.

119. Chestnut-backed Owlet *Glaucidium castanonotum* NT [Endemic]
1 seen at the abandoned hotel next to Kithulgala Rest House 26.1, 1 seen briefly Sinharaja 27.1, plus 2-3 heard in Kithulgala and further 2 heard in Sinharaja.

120. Brown Hawk-owl *Ninox scutulata hirsuta*
2 Kithulgala 24.1.

121. Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
1 seen in flashlight + 4 heard Kithulgala 24.1, 2 on day-roost outside Sinharaja 28.1.

122. Jerdon's Nightjar *Caprimulgus atripennis aequabilis* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
3 heard outside Bundala 1.2.

123. Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos*
1 heard + 1 seen Yala 31.1, around 10 seen and heard outside Bundala 1.2.

124. Indian Swiftlet *Aerodramus unicolor*
Abundant in the Wet Zone.

125. Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*
10 Kelani River 24.1, 1 Uda Walawe 29.1.

126. Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*
Seen on 8 days.

- 127. Little Swift** *Apus affinis*
Singles on 5 days. Most common around Tissa.
- 128. Crested Treeswift** *Hemiprocne coronata*
15 at Blue Magpie Lodge 26-28.1. Common at Uda Walawe and Yala.
- 129. Malabar Trogon** *Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
4 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 6 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 1 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.
- 130. Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*
5 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Kalamatiya 30.1, 3 Yala 31.1.
- 131. Stork-billed Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis capensis*
Singles seen 8 days.
- 132. White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Abundant.
- 133. Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx erithaca*
1 heard and responded to play-back Kithulgala 25.1.
- 134. Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*
Singles seen 10 days.
- 135. Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*
Max 6 daily in the Dry Zone.
- 136. Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis orientalis*
Abundant in the Dry Zone.
- 137. Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*
Abundant.
- 138. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater** *Merops leschenaultii*
10 Kithulgala Paddyfields 24-25.1, 2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Yala 31.1, 1 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.
- 139. Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upopa epops*
1 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Yala 31.1.
- 140. Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill** *Ocyroceros gingalensis* [Endemic]
Max 20 Kithulgala 24-26. 1-2 Sinharaja 27-28.1.
- 141. Malabar Pied Hornbill** *Anthracoceros coronatus* NT [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
15 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 heard Yala 31.1.
- 142. Brown-headed Barbet** *Megalaima zeylanica*
Abundant.
- 143. Yellow-fronted Barbet** *Megalaima flavifrons* [Endemic]
Abundant in the Wet Zone.
- 144. Sri Lanka Small Barbet** *Megalaima rubricapillus* [Endemic]
1 e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, 3 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2. Proposed endemic split from Crimson-fronted Barbet *Megalaima rubricapillus*.

- 145. Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala*
8 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Yala 31.1, 20 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2, 1 Victoria Park 3.2.
- 146. Brown-capped Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos nanus gymnophthalmus*
2 Kithulgala 25.1, 2 Kithulgala Rest House 26.1.
- 147. Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos mahrattensis*
1 female Bundala NP 1.2.
- 148. Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus wellsi*
3 Kithulgala 24-25.1, 3-4 Sinharaja 27-28.1.
- 149. Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium benghalense psarodes*
Singles seen on 10 days.
- 150. Crimson-backed Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi* [Endemic]
3 Kithulgala 24.1, 3 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 4 Uda Wattakele 5.2. Proposed endemic split from Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*.
- 151. Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyura*
1 Blue Magpie Lodge 26.1, 1 heard Uda Walawe Tank 28.1, 10 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Bundala NP 1.2, 2 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.
- 152. Jerdon's Bushlark** *Mirafra affinis* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
Abundant in Uda Walawe, Yala and Bundala.
- 153. Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*
2 Kalamatiya 30.1, 4 Bundala Salt pans 1.2.
- 154. Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark** *Eremopterix griseus*
Seen daily in the Dry Zone.
- 155. Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*
1 Kalamatiya 30.1, 2 Bundala Salt pans 1.2, 2 outside Bundala 1.2. The status of Martins in Sri Lanka are not fully understood yet. Only Sand Martin has been documented although there are reports of Pale Martin *Riparia diluta*. Our birds were overall pale brown-grey on the upperparts, but still with a full breast-band.
- 156. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica + tytleri*
Abundant away from the Wet Zone. At Bundala VC 1.2 we observed two pinkish-breasted Barn Swallows which we believe were ssp. *tytleri*.
- 157. Hill Swallow** *Hirundo domicola*
20 Horton Plains NP 3.2. Proposed split from Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*.
- 158. Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*
1 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 159. Sri Lanka Swallow** *Hirundo hyperythra* [Endemic]
Max 7 outside Kithulgala 24-25.1, 10 roadside 26 + 28.1, 1 Kalamatiya 30.1, 5 Yala NP 31.1. Proposed endemic split from Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*.
- 160. Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus*
Seen daily in the Dry Zone and in Horton Plains NP 3.2.
- 161. Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*

5 Uda Walawe NP 29.1.

162. Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*

6 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Victoria Park 2-3.2, 2 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2, 2 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

163. Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* ssp

2 Uda Walawe 29.1, many seen around Bundala NP and few seen in Yala NP. 1 yellow-headed presumed ssp. *lutea* outside Bundala 31.1. Overall mostly grey-headed but a few with a distinct white supercilium and harsh call might be of more eastern origin.

164. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Singles seen on 6 days in the Wet Zone.

165. Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melanoptera melanoptera*

1 pair e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, 1 male Surrey Tea Estate 2.2, 1 male + 1 female Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.

166. Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus cinnamomeus*

2 Kithulgala Rest House 24.1, 2 e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, small numbers daily in the Dry Zone, 5 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.

167. Orange Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]

Seen daily in the Wet Zone. Proposed split from Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*.

168. Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike *Hemipus picatus leggei*

Singles seen on 6 days in the Wet Zone.

169. Sri Lanka Woodshrike *Tephrodornis affinis* [Endemic]

Few singles daily in the Dry Zone. Proposed endemic split from Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*.

170. Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*

Max 4 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 3 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

171. Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi paradisi + ceylonensis*

Seen on 11 days. In total 10 white migratory ssp. *paradisi* males and c. 6 endemic ssp. *ceylonensis* males.

172. White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*

3 Yala NP 31.1, 2 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.

173. Black-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* [Endemic]

Max 5 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 10 Sinharaja 27-28.1. Proposed endemic split from Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*.

174. Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Common.

175. Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus* NT [Endemic]

Abundant in Nuwara Eliya 2-3.2.

176. White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]

Singles daily in the Dry Zone.

177. Yellow-browed Bulbul *Iole indica* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]

Seen daily in the Wet Zone.

- 178. Square-tailed Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes ganeesa* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
Seen daily in the Wet Zone. Proposed split from Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*.
- 179. Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia*
Seen in Kithulgala, Uda Walawe and max 10 at Yala 31.1.
- 180. Marshall's Iora** *Aegithina nigrolutea*
1 pair Yala NP 31.1. Recently rediscovered population. Known primarily from NW India.
- 181. Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*
Seen daily in Kithulgala and Sinharaja.
- 182. Jerdon's Leafbird** *Chloropsis jerdoni* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
1 pair Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.
- 183. Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*
Singles seen on 10 days. Highest counts: 8 Uda Walawe 29.1, 8 Yala 31.1. Surprisingly mostly grey-headed and grey-backed ssp. *lucionensis* seen. Also a few nominate race *cristatus*.
- 184. Pied Thrush** *Zoothera wardii*
2 males Victoria Park 2-3.2.
- 185. Orange-headed Thrush** *Zoothera citrina citrina*
2 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 186. Spot-winged Thrush** *Zoothera spiloptera* NT [Endemic]
Max 3 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 5 Sinharaja 27-28.1.
- 187. Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush** *Zoothera imbricata* NT [Endemic]
2 Sinharaja 27.1, 1 Sinharaja 28.1. Proposed split from Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*.
- 188. Indian Blackbird** *Turdus simillimus kinnisii*
3 seen + 5 heard Horton Plains NP 3.2. Proposed split from Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*.
- 189. Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus blighi* EN [Endemic]
1 pair Horton Plains Entrance 3.2.
- 190. Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*
Max 5 Kithulgala 24-26.1, Max 1 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 1 Uda Walawe 29.1, 1 Kalamatiya 30.1.
- 191. Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui*
3 Kithulgala 24.1, 2 Kithulgala 26.1, max 10 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 4 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2, 2 Uda Wattakele 5.2.
- 192. Kashmir Flycatcher** *Ficedula subrubra* VU
2 males Victoria Park 3.2.
- 193. Dull Blue Flycatcher** *Eumyias sordidus* NT [Endemic]
2 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.
- 194. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae*
2 Kithulgala 24-25.1, 2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2, 3 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2, 7 Uda Wattakele 5.2.
- 195. Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

Max 3 Victoria Park 2-3.2.

196. Indian Blue Robin *Erithacus brunnea*
3 males Sinharaja 27-28.1.

197. Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis*
Common.

198. White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus leggei*
2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

199. Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicatus leucoptera*
Seen 4 days in the Dry Zone.

200. Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata atratus*
Abundant on grassy hills Horton Plains NP 3.2, 1 Nuwara Eliya 4.2.

201. Ashy-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax cinereifrons* **VU [Endemic]**
Max 30 in bird-partys in Sinharaja 27-28.1.

202. Brown-capped Babbler *Pellorneum fuscocapillus* **[Endemic]**
4 Kithulgala 24.1, 1 Uda Walawe 29.1, 5 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

203. Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus melanurus* **[Endemic]**
Max 5 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 2 Surrey Tea Estate 2.2.

204. Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra* **[Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]**
3 Paddyfields outside Kithulgala 25.1, 6 Uda Walawe 29.1.

205. Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps* **[Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]**
5 Kithulgala 24.1. 20 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 3 Uda Walawe 29.1.

206. Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*
10 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Tissa Tanks 30.1.

207. Orange-billed Babbler *Turdoides rufescens* **NT [Endemic]**
Abundant in Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

208. Yellow-billed Babbler *Turdoides affinis taprobanus* **[Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]**
Common.

209. Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
Common in the parks in the Dry Zone and in Horton Plains NP 3.2.

210. Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*
5 Uda Walawe 29.1.

211. Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica*
5 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Bundala NP 1.2.

212. Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*
Abundant in Uda Walawe, Yala and Bundala.

213. Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*
Seen 8 days.

214. Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Abundant.

215. Sri Lanka Bush Warbler *Elaphrornis palliseri* NT [Endemic]

6 Horton Plains NP 3.2.

216. Indian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus brunnescens meridionalis*

2 Tissa Tanks 30.1, 5 outside Bundala 31.1, 15 Bundala VC 1.2. Proposed split from Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*.

217. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

1 Kelani River, Kithulgala 24-25.1, 3 Uda Walawe 29.1, 2 Victoria Park 2-3.2, 1 Horton Plains NP 3.2.

Booted/Syke's Warbler *Hippolais caligata/rama*

Two of us had a brief look of a presumed Syke's Warbler in Victoria Park 2.2.

218. Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*

Singles in Kithulgala and Sinharaja. Max 6 Victoria Park 2-3.2.

219. Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

1 Kithulgala 25.1, 1 Sinharaja 27.1, 2 Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.

220. Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

Max 4 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 5 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 2 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Horton Plains NP 3.2, 2 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

221. Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca halimodendri*

2 Uda Walawe 29.1.

222. Hume's Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea*

5 in a flock outside Bundala 31.1.

223. Great Tit *Parus major mahrattarum*

Abundant in Nuwara Eliya and Kandy.

224. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*

Max 10 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 3 Victoria Park 2.2, 5 Uda Wattakele 5.2.

225. Legge's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens* NT [Endemic]

Seen daily in Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

226. Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*

Seen on 9 days.

227. Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*

Common.

228. Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiatica*

Common in the Dry Zone.

229. Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenius* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]

Most numerous in Kithulgala and Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.

230. Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Abundant.

- 231. Sri Lanka White-eye** *Zosterops ceylonensis* [Endemic]
Abundant in Nuwara Eliya 2-3.2.
- 232. White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata*
Abundant in the Wet Zone.
- 233. Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata*
Abundant roadside, especially in the Wet Zone.
- 234. Black-throated Munia** *Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
6 Paddyfield e.r. Sinharaja 26.1, 4 Blue Magpie Lodge 26.1.
- 235. Tricoloured Munia** *Lonchura malacca*
Abundant in the Dry Zone.
- 236. Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica*
5 Uda Walawe 29.1, 3 Yala NP 31.1.
- 237. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
Seen on 7 days.
- 238. Streaked Weaver** *Ploceus manyar*
A small colony outside Bundala NP, around 10 birds seen 1.2.
- 239. Baya Weaver** *Ploceus philippinus*
A small colony in Yala NP, around 15 birds seen 31.1.
- 240. White-faced Starling** *Sturnia albofrontata* VU [Endemic]
1 in bird-party Sinharaja 27.1, 2+1 Sinharaja 28.1.
- 241. Brahminy Starling** *Temenuchus pagodarum*
3 Yala NP 31.1.
- 242. Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus*
160 in five different flocks flying by Kalamatiya and roadside 30.1.
- 243. Sri Lanka Myna** *Gracula ptilogenys* NT [Endemic]
2 Kithulgala 25.1, Max 10 Sinharaja and Blue Magpie Lodge 27-28.1.
- 244. Southern Hill Myna** *Gracula indica* [Restricted to Sri Lanka & South India]
Seen daily in the Wet Zone.
- 245. Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*
Common.
- 246. Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*
Abundant.
- 247. Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*
2 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 248. White-bellied Drongo** *Dicrurus caerulescens leucopygialis*
Abundant in the Wet Zone. 1 Uda Walawe 29.1.
- 249. Sri Lanka Crested Drongo** *Dicrurus lophorinus* [Endemic]
Max 3 Kithulgala 24-25.1, max 10 Sinharaja 27-28.1. One bird in Sinharaja showed rackets,

according to Rasmussen Crested Drongos (*Iophorinus*) rarely have rackets. We didn't record Greater Racket-tailed Drongo which should be confined to the Dry Zone. Proposed endemic split from Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*.

250. Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*
Singles seen 6 days.

251. Sri Lanka Blue Magpie *Urocissa ornata* **VU [Endemic]**
Heard in Kithulgala 24.1, max 6 Sinharaja 27-28.1, 1 Arranga Pool, Horton Plains 3.2.

252. House Crow *Corvus splendens protegatus*
Common.

253. Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus*
Common.

Some interesting species NOT seen

Painted Francolin - Indian subcontinent endemic. Occur in eastern Sri Lanka, Nilgala Medicinal Forest outside Bibile and Gal Oya are mentioned in other reports. A rather difficult species in most of India, should be considered when planning the trip.

Black-necked Stork - Critically endangered in Sri Lanka with only few pairs remaining, could still occur in Yala NP.

Malayan Night Heron - There are very few reports of this shy species. We searched the streams around the Forest Research Station in Sinharaja without luck.

Jerdon's Baza - Should be an uncommon breeding resident according to Rasmussen, Harrison and Inskipp. However I've never seen any report of Jerdon's Baza from Sri Lanka.

Rufous-bellied Eagle - Possible around Kithulgala and Sinharaja.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle - Ssp. *keelarti* shared with southern India, most likely around Nuwara Eliya.

Caspian Plover - Rare winter guest. Few reports from the south.

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo - Seldomly seen winter migrant. Could occur both in feeding parties in Sinharaja and in the Dry Zone (Uda Walawe, Bundala and Yala).

Ceylon Bay Owl - No reliable spots. A few reports from Sinharaja but not during the last years.

Spot-bellied Eagle Owl - Rarely occurs at Kithulgala and Uda Wattakele.

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler - Winter migrant. Have been reported from Gregory's Lake Marsh, Nuwara Eliya.

Additional record shots



Green-billed Coucal, Centropus chlororhynchos, Kithulgala 24.1.



Slaty-legged Crake, Rallina eurizonoides, Sinharaja 26.1.



Indian Blue Robin, Erithacus brunnea, Sinharaja 27.1.



Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Batrachostomus moniliger, Sinharaja 28.1.



Pallid Harrier, Circus macrourus, Uda Walawe 29.1.



Eurasian Hobby, Falco subbuteo, Uda Walawe 29.1. Possibly first record in Sri Lanka, more (and better) pictures will follow in BirdingASIA (OBC magazine).



'Tytler's' Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica tytleri*, Bundala 1.2.



Terek Sandpiper, *Xenus cinereus*, Bundala 1.2.



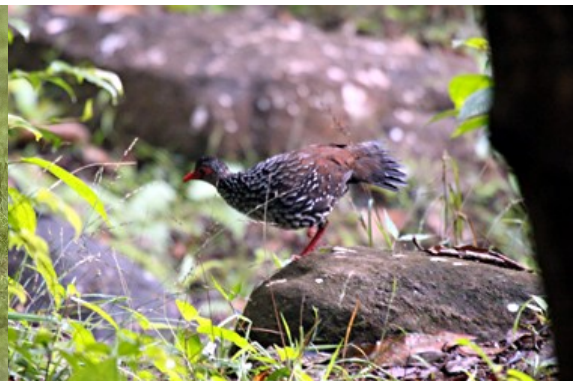
Grey-bellied Cuckoo, *Cacomantus passerinus*, Uda Walawe 29.1.



Lesser Cuckoo, *Cuculus poliocephalus*, Uda Walawe 29.1.



Oriental Pratincole, *Glaresola maldivarum*, Kalametiya Sanctuary 30.1.
Photo: Magnus Salmi



Sri Lanka Spurfowl, *Galloperdix bicalcaratus*, Outside Sinharaja 28.1.
Photo: Claes Wikström



Blyth's Pipit, *Anthus godlewskii*, Uda Walawe 29.1.



Marshall's lora, *Aegithina nigrolutea*, Yala NP 31.1. Photo: Claes Wikström



Kashmir Flycatcher, Ficedula subrubra,
Victoria Park 3.2.
Photo: Magnus Salmi



Greenish Warbler, Phylloscopus trochiloides,
Peradeniya Botanical Gardens 4.2.
Photo: Magnus Salmi



Brown Noddy, Anous stolidus, seen on the post-tour extension that Claes, Mårten and Magnus did to Mirissa for a Blue Whale Pelagic which was successful regarding the whales and also added Brown Noddy and Common Tern to their trip-list. Mirissa 7.2. Photo: Claes Wikström.