

Kerala, India 13th – 24th February 2014



Participants

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General

This trip report contains the bird observations made during a holiday trip to Kerala in southern India. The trip was set up as a family holiday, following similar trips to Costa Rica, Cuba, South Africa and Sri Lanka, with both birding and culture in focus.

All arrangements in Kerala were organized by the local travel agency Kalypso Adventures, see further below.

We can recommend Kerala as a very nice holiday target, both from a birding as well as a family point of view. There are a limited number of south Indian endemics (22-29 in total depending on which source you rely upon). We managed to see 20 of them without too much effort.

Travel

We flew with Emirates from Copenhagen via Dubai. Our tickets cost 5421 DKK/adult (app. € 730) including taxes and airport fees. The tickets for the children were 4340 DKK/child.

Arrangements in Kerala

All arrangements in Kerala were organized by the local travel agency Kalypso Adventures, based in Kochi, www.kalypsoadventures.com. We sent them a rather open request and already within three hours, we received two alternative suggestions for a 10-day and a 14-day tour respectively. Our request was handled by Mr. Thomas Zacharias in a very professional way and we finally managed to

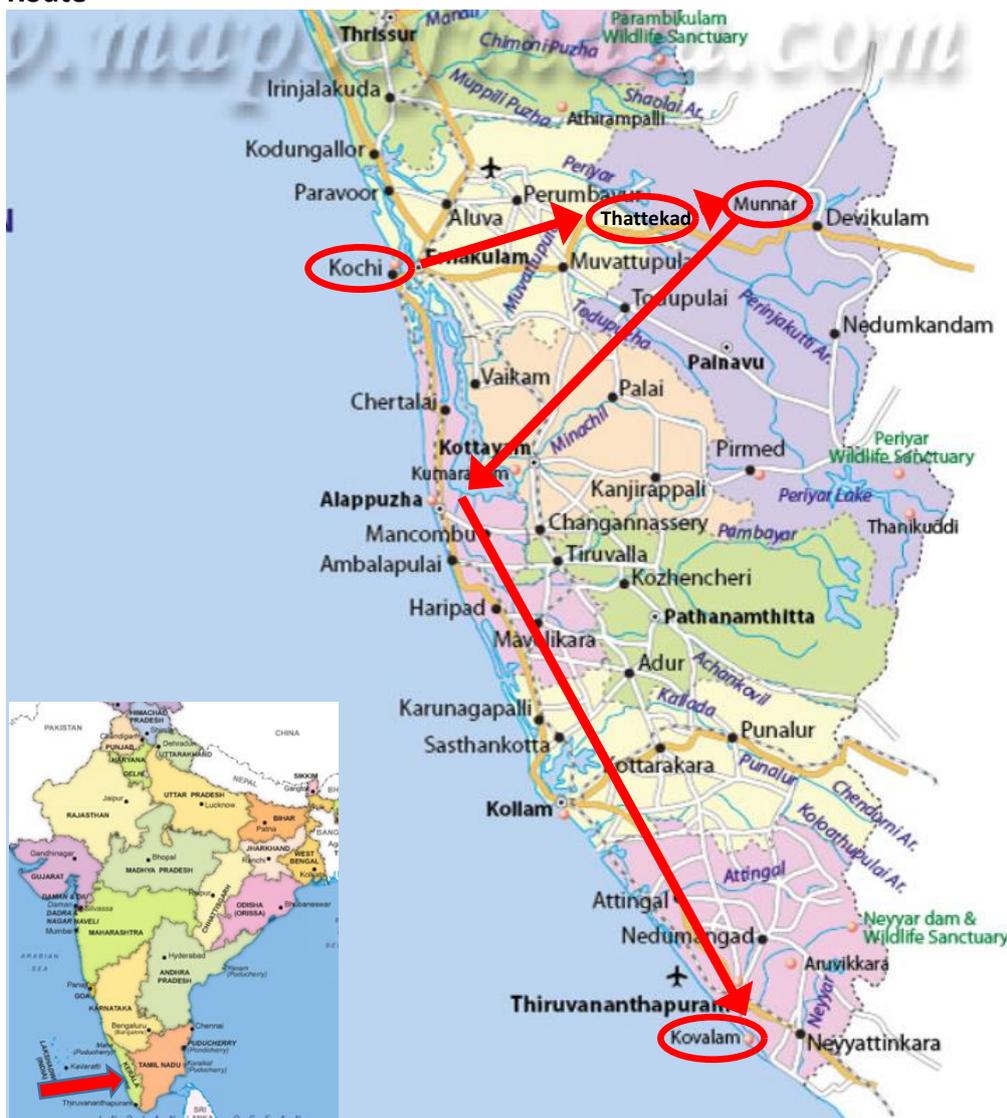
put together a tailor-made itinerary considering all our demands with regard to flight dates, mix of activities, hotel standard etc.

The Kalypso package included all accommodation in hotels and lodges of good standard, transports from airport to airport in a modern station car, driver/birding guide (except the days spent in the beach resort in Kovalam), house boat overnight trip in Backwaters, all meals with exception of the days in Kovalam (BB only), entrance fees to a Kathakali Dance Show and nature reserves. Total price for all six of us: 4.090 USD, which was paid in advance from Sweden. It is not completely straightforward to pay money to a company in India. We needed to consult our bank to be able to make the transfer. When that was settled, the money transfer went smooth. During the trip, all practical things worked out very well and we would like to give Kalypso Adventures our best recommendations.

Car, roads and traffic

The package included a six-seated car with a driver. It would probably be possible to rent a car and drive yourself, but with the intensity of the traffic, difficulties to read road signs, the multitude of crazy tuc-tuc drivers and pedestrians we would not recommend that. Road conditions were very varying from good to gravel roads in strong need of repair.

Route



Accommodation

We had pre-booked accommodation for all nights in advance. The first and the last nights were spent in the aircrafts.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Thursday 13 th to Friday 14 th	Night in aircraft	
Friday 14 th to Saturday 15 th	CGH Casino Hotel Casino Building Willingdon Island, Cochin, 682 003 Tel: +91 484 301 1711, 301 1712	Modern, comfortable hotel with pool and a nice restaurant.
Saturday 15 th to Monday 17 th	The Hornbill Camp, Thattekad Tel: + 91 484 209 2280, 401 2700	Lodge with permanent tent houses with full comfort, excellently located with good birding already on the doorstep.
Monday 17 th to Wednesday 19 th	Olive Brook P. B. No: 62, Pothamedu, Munnar 685 612, Tel: +91 4865 230 588, 231 079	Nice, small hotel with excellent food.
Wednesday 19 th to Thursday 20 th	Houseboat, Backwaters	A houseboat trip is an experience not to be missed. Comfortable and very enjoyable.
Thursday 20 th to Sunday 23 rd	The Travancore Heritage, Chowara P.O., Trivandrum 695 501 Tel: +91 471 226 7828, 226 7829, 226 7830, 228 7831	Large beach resort with bungalows and a very good restaurant as well as possibility to try various Ayurveda treatments.
Sunday 23 rd to Monday 24 th	Night in aircraft	

Guides

Our driver and guide "Joji" was not a specialised birding guide but still a very good amateur birder with a large knowledge of the sites for important species and he actually found several of our targets. He was also very helpful to organize various practical issues during the trip, a good driver and a very nice person in general.

In Thattekad, Sathyan, a bird guide connected to the Hornbill Camp, also joined us during our birding there. This was very successful, as Sathyan had detailed local knowledge of the birds in the area including stakeouts for several important species such as Mottled Wood Owl and Jungle Nightjar.

Literature, trip reports and websites

There are a few field guides covering the area. We used the "A field guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent", second edition, by Krys Kazmierczak. Pictures and maps are quite good but the text is a bit brief. Another perhaps better option, which covers several of the proposed splits, is "Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide" by Rasmussen and Anderton.

There are several travel guides covering Kerala but with the trip set-up like ours, travelling in company of a local guide makes a guidebook almost unnecessary.

A good selection of trip reports are found at http://avibase.bsc-oc.org/links/links.jsp?page=g_reports

Red tape

For most foreign citizens, a visa is necessary for visiting India. In Sweden the application is done by filling out an online application form which then has to be printed and sent to the agent who is handling visa applications for the Indian Embassy, together with your passport, a copy of the passport, photo (format 5 x 5 cm) as well as a receipt of the paid visa fee and additional documentation, depending on type of visa.

The procedure is rather complicated and time consuming – make sure to do this well in advance of your trip! Please note that your passport has to be valid at least six months after your homebound travel date.

Food

Nowadays typical Indian food can be found all over the world and the taste is often excellent. However, the original stuff is always a bit better. Although we all enjoy strong food and spices, we were a bit worried since southern India is known for its relatively hot food. Overall, we did not find the food so hot, it was always very tasty even if strength differed a lot. Vegetarian food is of course found everywhere, chicken and lamb in many places and great fish food closer to the sea. Overall the food had a very good quality and was generally inexpensive.

Itinerary

Thursday 13th February

The group gathered at Kastrup airport in Copenhagen at noon for departure towards Kerala and more specifically Kochi. The flight with Emirates left at 2 pm and after a six hours flight we landed in Dubai for changing to our next flight. Dubai is both a very big airport and good for shopping but there is also a significant distance to move between the gates so with too long shopping lists you might miss your connection. We left Dubai 2:45 am for Kochi.

Friday 14th February

We landed in Kochi at 8 am after an eventless flight. After the usual passport and visa activities, we collected our luggage and waited for the driver/guide. After some looking around, we found each other, located the car, packed the luggage and ourselves in and drove to our hotel in Kochi. This first day was planned as a relax day. We spent some hours by the hotel pool and after lunch, the group split in a pool group and a sightseeing group. The latter group visiting the old part of Kochi, which was very interesting and gave a good feeling for the different architectural styles that one can find here. A nice walk along the river mouth produced a few sightings of some common birds.

In the evening, we set out to see a show of the famous Kerala traditional Khatakali dance show. It is an old form of theatre with a very specific set of characters, costumes, masks and music. This show is very difficult to describe and must be seen but the main thing that caught our eyes were the mimics which include rapid eye movements. If you see it and are not impressed, try doing it yourself.

Saturday 15th February

We set off early in the morning in light rain towards Thattekad. The drive was not particularly long in distance, around 70 km, but took three hours due to heavy traffic. The trip was enjoyable still due to that there were many things to look at along the road.

We arrived for a late breakfast at the Hornbill Camp. The camp is a very delightful place, calm and peaceful. Accommodation is in permanent tents with high comfort. We had read about the tents

before our trip and it was difficult to imagine how they would be, but they were a very nice experience.



Hornbill camp tents

We were excited to arrive at the camp and of course, we immediately started to look around the area searching for birds, specifically we scanned the area across the river and the woods beyond. There we almost immediately found a suspect bird and we could soon confirm that it in fact was a **Black Baza**, one of our target birds! What a great start.

After breakfast, Hans-Åke and Thomas went birding while the rest of the team enjoyed the relaxed camp. It was very hot and birding was a bit slow as well. A short walk in some scrubby area produced a few passerines. We then walked further along a path into the forest and saw a variety of woodpeckers, e.g. **Black-rumped Flameback**, **Grey-headed Pygmy Woodpecker** and **Heart-spotted woodpecker**. The area is however also known as a stakeout for **Mottled Wood Owl**, which is normally roosting in an area with large trees. After a few minutes of searching our guides found the owl resting quite high up in a tree. Obviously, it can be found here rather often but several other birders we spoke with testified that it sometimes required several visits.



Early morning at the Hornbill Camp

Further along the road on a lakeside we looked for **Red Spurfowl**. We heard them but they could not be located for a sighting. Some new birds were added to the list especially when we could overlook the lake. Further on, just on the other side of the lake there is the famous Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary. Just inside the entrance is a well-known roosting site for **Brown Hawk Owl**. We found the pair and then headed back for the camp for dinner. The food was again very good with a variety of typical Indian dishes.

After dinner, the whole group headed for a nightjar watch. We walked to the site, which was an open area with small bushes and shrubbery and large blackish rock surfaces. We sat down on the rocks and waited. Just around dusk the nightjars started to appear. We felt enormously lucky since we managed to see all three potential species with **Greater Eared-nightjar** being the prize bird. Heading back, we spent the rest of the evening at the camp, outside our tents on the porch just enjoying the warm and calm evening, listening after whatever could be heard in the night.



Waiting for the nightjars

Sunday 16th February

This day was the only full day birding in Thattekad. The target area for the morning was Idamalayar, close to border of the national park. Along the road we soon saw our first **Grey Junglefowl**, a spectacular male, **White-bellied Treepie** as well as **Orange-headed Thrush**, the latter a potential split from the nominate race.

Well in place we parked the car and walked along a gravel road down into a valley through dry forest and scrub and it was soon clear to us that the different habitat, compared to the day before, also meant a different mix of birds. We had great views of **Rufous Babbler**, **Small** and **Scarlet Minivets**, **Jerdon's** and **Golden-fronted Leafbirds** as well as **Malabar Whistling Thrush**. We had a packed breakfast from the camp, which we enjoyed in the valley.

We then headed back for lunch and trying to avoid the hottest part of the day, resting at the camp. The Lindblad family enjoyed a canoe trip along the river. In this way, it is possible to reach the other side of the river where the national park begins. However, it is not allowed to enter the park so we only saw the shore with trees. Not many birds were seen but we got excellent views of **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters**. A sudden barking roar and a huge splash made our guide a bit worried. He told us that it was probably a "buffalo" but we did not see anything.

In the afternoon, we went to Urulanthanni, an area with nice high forest. We walked several different routes for a couple of hours. **Malabar Trogon**, **Rusty-tailed** and **Blue-throated Flycatchers** and various other forest species were seen. Several birds were quite confiding including a **Sri Lanka Frogmouths**, which we saw at very close distance without the bird seeming to be bothered by us at all.



Malabar trogon

At dusk, we waited in an open rocky area for about an hour, for owls. We were quite lucky with three different species heard: **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl**, **Brown Fish Owl** and **Brown Hawk Owl**. This was an excellent ending to this overall good day.

Monday 17th February

We again left the camp early with a packed breakfast and this time went to an area called Kallipara. We climbed some big rocks overlooking very nice forest habitat. On our way to the viewing area, we stopped to scan a tree for a **Jungle Nightjar**. It is a well-known stake-out but the bird is not always to be found there. However, we were lucky and saw the nightjar well. Our main target this morning was White-bellied Woodpecker, which is normally quite easy to see here. Unfortunately, we did not succeed but were instead lucky when Sathyan suddenly reacted on a distant call. We quickly moved towards the sound and got great views of a **Blue-bearded Bee-eater** calling from a large tree across the valley.

We headed back to the camp in mid-morning where we packed ourselves as well as our entire luggage into the car again to move to our next birding area, Munnar. The trip was again short in distance but still took several hours. Heavy traffic, narrow roads and sometimes rather steep climbs slowed us down. Munnar is situated about 1600 meters above sea level, in a cultivated highland area with many tea plantations. The climate is cooler than at Thattekad and Munnar is also a region where people try to reduce littering and have a more eco-oriented philosophy. It is apparently successful since the roadsides are much cleaner here than in the other areas that we visited.

We arrived at the Olive Brook hotel in the early afternoon, a nicely situated house in a steep slope with a very beautiful garden. After installing ourselves in our rooms, the birding part of the group went to Deshadan and walked along the entrance road. We spent two hours here enjoying the bird life and we had very good views of some of the special birds in this area, e.g. **Indian Scimitar Babbler** and **Nilgiri Flycatcher**. We also managed to repair the **Nilgiri Wood-pigeon** from Thattekad and saw one quite well in a tree in the slope. After a roadside stop for **Grey-breasted Laughingthrush**, we

went back to the hotel and had dinner there, just outside our rooms on the veranda. The food here was excellent, even better than in Thattekad.



Tea plantations close to Munnar

Tuesday 18th February

The morning started with stunning views of **Malabar Whistling Thrush** which obviously was nesting somewhere around the hotel. The birders then left early for a hunt for the special birds of this area. We started at a small creek with shrubs, bushes and some higher trees, which Joji called the “School-shola”. After a slow start, more birds began to appear and during the next hours many of our target birds were found, such as **Indian Blue Robin**, a male **Blue-capped Rock-thrush**, several **Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers** and **Black-lored Tits**. We then moved further in and came to a semi-open area with grassy meadows and in-between dense shrubs. After some hard work, we finally managed to see a male **Black-and-rufous Flycatcher** well and the mission was completed for this site.

We then moved to the area close to the entrance of the Eravikulam National Park. The park itself is closed to visitors from February 1st in order not to disturb the Nilgiri Tahrs during their calving time. Right next to the entrance there was a creek flowing along the road and after a short while, a **White-bellied Shortwing** was found and gave really good views.

As we still had some time left before lunch, we went to a viewpoint along the road towards Periyar, approximately 14 km from Munnar, which according to Joji was a good place for **Nilgiri Pipit**. Once there, we found the place to be full of people, buses, food- and fruit stands etc. and we spent some quite frustrating time watching virtually every bush, grass area and open spot to find the pipits. We started to get a bit worried before Joji suddenly found a pipit, ironically sitting just a few meters away from the busy road in a small, dry bush. After a while, the bird moved out in the open and we got excellent views. After this success, we hurried back to the hotel for a late lunch, again great food. The whole group then went for a shopping tour to Munnar. Spices, tea, shoes and souvenirs became the catch of that trip.



Street view in Munnar

In the late afternoon, we decided to try for the Broad-tailed Grassbird on the slopes above the Deshadan Resort. We knew that it would be very difficult and, to make it short, we did not succeed to see the bird although we spent an hour walking around on the steep slopes in the high very dense grass. It was difficult to walk, as it was difficult to see where it was safe to step. Two **Nilgiri Wood-pigeons** was a consolation price. We then headed back to the hotel for a great dinner and some beer.

Wednesday 19th February

This day was mainly dedicated to transportation. After an early breakfast, we packed ourselves into the car and headed for Alappuzha, a five hour drive. Some birds were seen along the road but after having left the Munnar area, birds became sparse. Highlights during this transport was at a small traffic jam not so far from Munnar where many Bonnet's Macaques were feeding on various roadside things and also the only elephant of the trip, passing by being transported on a lorry. Closer to the coast, Black and Brahminy Kites started to get really common.

At lunchtime, we embarked one of the famous houseboats and went off for an overnight cruise through the maze of lagoons, channels and lakes in Backwaters. This area is difficult to get a grasp on without having seen it in real life. The area is cultivated with rice fields, and people live from the rice fields and fishing. A large number of former rice barges nowadays make these cruises and the one we hired could take eight people in four different bedrooms.



Fishermen in Backwaters

We were very excited for the birding potential but it was a bit disappointing to bird from the boat. We saw loads of herons, many **Little Cormorants** and among them, we identified a few **Indian**

Cormorants. Other birds included a **Spotted Eagle**, large numbers of **Lesser Whistling Ducks**, **Whiskered Terns** and a few **Baya Weavers**.

Around 6 pm, we anchored along the riverbank. On the other side of the bank there was a huge rice field. We birded there and saw many good species; **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, **Black-headed Ibis** and **Cotton Pygmy Goose** just to mention a few. We also saw a water snake of some sort swimming in the rice field.

We had dinner on the boat – again very good food. And for those who are worried about those things, yes, they do serve beer.

Thursday 20th February

A lazy morning on the boat! We birded in the morning overlooking the same rice field as yesterday. More or less the same birds were seen again albeit in lower numbers. We left that place, slowly cruising back to the Alappuzha where we arrived mid-morning. We then continued south to our final destination of the trip, Kovalam, after a three-hour drive.

We checked in at the Travancore Heritage beach resort and spent the rest of the day in the pool area. There were not that many birds around but a walk down to the sea revealed a group of waders, including **Lesser Sand-plovers** and **Sanderlings**. Dinner at the hotel.

Friday 21st February

After a short visit to the pool with the children and a great breakfast buffet, we went for a shopping tour to Lighthouse Beach in Kovalam. There we spent several hours walking the short distance from one end to the other. This area is most certainly not the cheapest but to us it was still very agreeable prices. A clothes shop also included a tailor and we asked for some small changes to the clothes, went for lunch and then they were ready when we came back. We had lunch at a seaside restaurant and of course we all had fish for lunch, great food.



We also scanned the sea several times for any birds but except from two **Western Reef Herons**, very few were seen. Therefore we were a bit surprised when suddenly a **Bridled Tern** came sweeping close to the shore, heading north. In the afternoon, we went back to the hotel and relaxed by the pool. We also went down to the sea for a stroll and to search for birds. Although we had read that very few birds normally are to be seen over the sea we were still surprised by the low number of birds we saw. Only very distant terns could be observed but hardly identified. In the evening, we had

dinner at the hotel where there was also a dance show of traditional dancing, very colorful and enjoyable.

Saturday 22nd February

This was our last full day and the theme for the day was bathing, both in the sun and in the pool. After breakfast we went down to the beach. The waves were not very large but still impressive. They anyway had enormous power, especially when you are a small kid. We therefore had to hold tight to our children to assure they would not tumble away into the sea.

There was a swampy area between the hotel exit towards the beach and the beach itself with small streams, grassy areas and wet bogs. We walked around in the area to see if there were any interesting birds but few were seen and all were "the usual stuff". Lunch and dinner at the hotel.



Fishermen on the beach in Kovalam

Sunday 23rd February

We went to the beach in the morning. The other days we had seen fishing nets lying on the beach with a distance of maybe 300 meters between them, but we had not seen any being used. This morning however there was a large group of fishermen doing this traditional and old-style type of fishing. About 25 people were engaged in pulling the net in, ten on each arm of the net, two in a boat outside the net and two or three people in the water, slamming it to scare the fish in the direction of the net. We were very excited to see the result, not knowing if the catch would be enormous or just modest. It proved to be very modest, about half a bucket for all to share and moreover, they spent about two hours to pull the net in.

Due to the learnings about traffic, distance and time we decided to leave the hotel at 3 pm to head for the airport in Kochi. It took approximately six hours to drive the 240 km only including a short break for coffee and soda. The departure was not until 4:35 on Monday morning so the waiting at the airport was rather long, especially since they did not let us check in until three hours before departure. Once checked-in the passport and emigration control was very thorough.

Monday 24th February

The flight was late coming in to Kochi due to a sandstorm in Dubai. We therefore left an hour late for Dubai and our relatively short transition to the connecting flight to Copenhagen became even shorter. However, the airline staff sorted it out very nicely and guided us directly to our next flight so

we made it just in time. Unfortunately, it meant no shopping but rather getting home without shopping than to miss the flight. The rest of the trip was eventless and we arrived safely in Copenhagen after a very relaxing and rewarding trip.

List of species

1. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis capensis*
c.50 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
2. **Indian Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
5 Thattekad 16.2, 6 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
3. **Little Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax niger*
Common at freshwater locations. Totally 163 birds recorded 15-22.2.
4. **Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*
Rather common. Totally 29 birds recorded 14-21.2.
5. **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
1 Thattekad 15.1, 5 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
6. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea manilensis*
2 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 16.2, 4 Backwaters Boat trip 19-20.2.
7. **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis*
4 Lighthouse Beach, Kovalam 21.2.
8. **Great Egret** *Ardea alba modesta*
Rather common. Totally 44 birds recorded 14-23.2.
9. **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*
Rather common. Totally 37 birds recorded 14-20.2.
10. **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
Common. Numerous in Backwaters and along the coast.
11. **Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*
Common. Daily figures of 10-50 birds.



12. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis coromandus*
Common. Recorded daily.
13. **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata chloripes*
1 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
14. **Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 17.2, 2 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
15. **Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus*
2 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2, 6 roadside Alappuzha-Kovalam 20.2.
16. **Lesser Whistling-duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*
c.400 daily Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
17. **Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus*
3 Thattekad 17.2, at least 5 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
18. **Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*
2 Munnar 19.2, 1 Backwaters boat trip 20.2.
19. **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
3 males Backwaters boat trip 20.2.
20. **Black Baza** *Aviceda leuphotes*
3 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 15.2.



21. **Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis*
2 Fort Kochin 14.2, 2 Thattekad 15.2.
22. **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Common, except in the highlands.
23. **Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*
Common. Totally c.160 birds recorded 14-23.1.

24. **Short-toed Eagle** *Cicetus gallicus*
1 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2.
25. **Crested Serpent-Eagle** *Spilornis cheela melanotis*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
26. **Eurasian Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*
6+3 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
27. **Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*
1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 Munnar 18.2.



28. **Shikra** *Accipiter badius*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1+1 heard Thattekad 16.2, 1 Kovalam 22.2.
29. **Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis perniger*
2 Munnar 17.2, 3 Munnar 18.2.
30. **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*
1 adult Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
31. **Booted Eagle** *Aquila pennata*
1 dark morph roadside Alappuzha-Kovalam 20.2.
32. **Red Spurfowl** *Galloperdix spadicea*
c.10 heard Thattekad 15.2, 3 heard Thattekad 16.2, 1 heard Munnar 18.2.
33. **Grey Junglefowl** *Gallus sonneratii*
c.5 heard Thattekad 15.2, c.15 Thattekad 16.2, 1 heard Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 heard Munnar 18.2.
34. **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
1 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 15-17.2, 1 Backwaters boat trip 19.2, 2-3 Kovalam 21-23.2.

35. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
1 close to Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 17.2.
36. **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*
c.10 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
37. **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
At least 40 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
38. **Bronze-winged Jacana** *Metopidius indicus*
1 close to Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 17.2.
39. **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*
c.5 daily in the Thattekad area 15-17.2, 1 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
40. **Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius mongolus*
c.15 Kovalam 20-23.2.



41. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
2 Fort Kochin 14.2, 4 Kovalam 20-22.2.
42. **Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*
3 Fort Kochin 14.2.
43. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
c.10 Fort Kochin 14.2.
44. **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
c.5 Fort Kochin 14.2, 1 Kovalam 22.2.
45. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
1 Fort Kochin 14.2, 1 Munnar 18.2.

46. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
2 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
47. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
1 Fort Kochin 14.2, 7 roadside Alappuzha-Kovalam 20.2.
48. **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
c.10 Kovalam 20-22.2.
49. **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
c.5 Fort Kochin 14.2.
50. **Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*
3 Thattekad 16.2.
51. **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
1 Fort Kochin 14.2.
52. **Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*
1 Kovalam 23.2.
53. **Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus*
1 Lighthouse Beach, Kovalam 21.2.
54. **Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*
2 Fort Kochin 14.2, 2 Thattekad 15.2.
55. **River Tern** *Sterna aurantia*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 16.2.
56. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*
Common. Recorded during 8 days 14-22.2. Highest count 300 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
57. **Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*
Recorded daily.
58. **Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon** *Columba elphinstonii*
1 Dshadan, Munnar 17.2, 2 Dshadan, Munnar 18.2.
59. **Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis suratensis*
Rather common inland. Recorded 15-19.2.
60. **Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1+1 heard Thattekad 16.2, 1+2 heard Thattekad 17.2, 1 Munnar 18.2.
61. **Pompadour Green Pigeon** *Treron pompadora*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
62. **Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea pusilla*
5+5 heard Thattekad 16.2, 1 Thattekad 17.2.
63. **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri manillensis*
5+1 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2, 2 Kovalam 21.2.
64. **Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala*
8 Thattekad 15.2, 5 Thattekad 16.2, 5 Thattekad 17.2.
65. **Malabar Parakeet** *Psittacula columboides*
4 Thattekad 15.2, 10 Thattekad 16.2, c.10 Thattekad 17.2.
66. **Vernal Hanging Parrot** *Loriculus vernalis*
8 Thattekad 15.2, 5 Thattekad 16.2, 1 Thattekad 17.2.

67. **Common Hawk Cuckoo** *Cuculus varius*
1 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 15-17.2, 1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.



68. **Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*
1 Thattekad 17.2.
69. **Asian Koel** *Eudynamys scolopacea*
Common. Totally 33 birds recorded 14-23.2.
70. **Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis parroti*
Common. Totally 42 birds recorded (mainly heard) 15-23.2
71. **Indian Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*
1 Thattekad 15.2.
72. **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** *Bubo nipalensis*
2 birds calling Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
73. **Brown Fish Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis*
1 calling Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2. A big owl seen at the Hornbill Camp 17.2 probably also belonged to this species.
74. **Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum malabaricum*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 16.2.
75. **Mottled Wood Owl** *Strix ocellata*
1 on day roost Thattekad 15.2.
76. **Brown Hawk Owl** *Ninox scutulata hirsuta*
2 on day roost close to the entrance of the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Thattekad, 1 calling Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
77. **Sri Lanka Frogmouth** *Batrachostomus monileger*
1 on day roost Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.

78. **Great Eared-nightjar** *Eurostopodus macrotis*
1 displaying Thattekad 15.2.
79. **Jungle Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*
1 on day-roost Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
80. **Jerdon's Nightjar** *Caprimulgus atripennis*
4 displaying Thattekad 15.2, 1 flushed in the forest, Thattekad 16.2.
81. **Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*
2 birds displaying Thattekad 15.2.
82. **Indian Swiftlet** *Aerodramus unicolor*
c.100 Thattekad 15.2, c.50 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, c.30 Munnar 18.2.
83. **White-rumped Needletail** *Zoonavena sylvatica*
2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
84. **Brown-backed Needletail** *Hirundapus giganteus indicus*
5 Thattekad 15.2, 5 Thattekad 16.2, 3 Thattekad 17.2.
85. **Asian Palm-Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis*
1 Thattekad 17.2, 5 Backwaters boat trip 20.2, c.5 birds daily Kovalam 21-23.2.
86. **Little Swift** *Apus affinis*
10-20 birds daily Thattekad 15-17.2, c.10 Munnar 18.2, c.20 Kovalam 21.2.
87. **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*
5 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, c.10 Munnar 17.2, 3 Munnar 18.2.
88. **Crested Treeswift** *Hemiprocne coronate*
4 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 15.2, 2 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 16.2.
89. **Malabar Trogon** *Harpactes fasciatus malabaricus*
3 heard Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 1 heard Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
90. **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis taprobana*
1 Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 15.2 and 17.2, 4 Munnar 18.2, a few during the Backwater boat trip 19-20.2.
91. **Stork-billed Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis capensis*
1 Thattekad 15.2.
92. **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis fusca*
Common. Totally 39 birds recorded 14-23.2.
93. **Blue-bearded Bee-eater** *Nyctyornis athertoni*
1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
94. **Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis*
c.10 Thattekad 15.2.
95. **Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*
8 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Thattekad 16.2, c.50 Munnar 18.2, c.10 Backwaters Boat trip 19-20.2, 1 roadside Kovalam-Kochin Airport 23.2.
96. **Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis indicus*
1 close to Hornbill Camp, Thattekad 16.2.
97. **Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis*
3 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 16.2.

98. **Malabar Grey Hornbill** *Ocyceros griseus*
2 Thattekad 15.2, 8 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 3 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.



99. **White-cheeked Barbet** *Megalaima viridis*
Common. 5-30 birds recorded daily 14-23.2.
100. **Crimson-fronted Barbet** *Megalaima rubricapillus malabarica*
2 heard Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 heard Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 2 heard Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
101. **Brown-capped Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos moluccensis cinereigula*
5 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
102. **Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus chlorigaster*
1 Thattekad 16.2, 2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
103. **Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium benghalense puncticolle*
Rather common. Totally 13 birds recorded Thattekad 15-17.2, 2 Kovalam 20-22.2.



104. **Greater Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes lucidus socialis*
1 Thattekad 15.1, 2 heard Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 Munnar 18.2.
105. **Heart-spotted Woodpecker** *Hemicircus canente*
2 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
106. **Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyurus*
1 heard Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
107. **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
c.20 Fort Kochin 14-15.2, 10 Munnar 18.2, c.300 daily Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2.
108. **Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica domicola*
5 Gap Road viewpoint, Munnar 18.2.
109. **Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica erythropygia*
4 Munnar 18.2.
110. **Dusky Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne concolor*
Up to 10 birds daily Munnar 17-19.2.
111. **Nilgiri Pipit** *Anthus nilghiriensis*
1 Gap Road Viewpoint, Munnar 18.2.



112. **White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla madaraspatensis*
3 Fort Kochin 14.2, 1 Idamalayar Thattekad 16.2, 2 Munnar 17.2, 5 Munnar 18.2, 1 Backwaters boat trip 20.2.
113. **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
3 Backwaters boat trip 19-20.2, 7 roadside Alappuzha-Kovalam 20.2, 3 Kovalam 22.2.

114. **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
2 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 8 Munnar 18.2, 5 Munnar 19.2.
115. **Large Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina macei*
5 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2.
116. **Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus malabaricus*
c.10 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
117. **Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, c.10 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2.
118. **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus*
1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
119. **Black-crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus melanicterus gularis*
5 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 4 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 4 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2,
3 Valpara Waterfall 19.2.
120. **Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus fuscicaudatus*
Common at inland locations. Totally c.80 birds recorded 15-19.2.



121. **Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer pusillus*
5 Thattekad 15.2.
122. **Yellow-browed Bulbul** *Iole indica*
3 Thattekad 15.2, 10 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 3 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 2 Munnar 18.2.
123. **Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus ganeesa*
1 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, c.15 Munnar 18.2.
124. **Jerdon's Leafbird** *Chloropsis jerdoni*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
125. **Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons insularis*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 2 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
126. **Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia multicolor*
1 heard Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
127. **Blue-capped Rock-thrush** *Monticola cinclorhynchus*
1 male Munnar 18.2.

128. **Malabar Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus horsfieldii*
2 + 1 heard Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 3 Munnar 17.2, 6 Munnar 18.2, 1 + 1 heard Munnar 19.2.

129. **Orange-headed Thrush** *Zoothera citrina cyanota*
1 Thattekad 16.2, 1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.



130. **Indian Blackbird** *Turdus simillimus*
1 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 3 Munnar 18.2.

131. **White-bellied Shortwing** *Brachypteryx major*
1 along the stream next to the entrance to the Eravikulam National Park, Munnar 18.2.

132. **Gray-breasted Prinia** *hodgsonii*
4 Thattekad 15.2.

133. **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola*
1 Thattekad 15.2.

134. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 3 Munnar 18.2.

135. **Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius guzuratus*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Kovalam 23.2.

136. **Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
Rather common. Totally 44 birds recorded (mainly heard) 15-23.2.

137. **Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.

138. **Rusty-tailed Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ruficauda*
1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Valpara Waterfall 19.2.

139. **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula muttui*
2 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.

140. **Black-and-rufous Flycatcher** *Ficedula nigrorufa*
1 male Munnar 18.2.



141. **Nilgiri Flycatcher** *Eumyias albicaudata*
2 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 5 Munnar 18.2.



142. **Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides*
1 second year male Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.

143. **Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
3 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 5 Munnar 18.2.



144. **Indian Blue Robin** *Luscinia brunnea*
1 Munnar 18.2.

145. **Oriental Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*
Rather common. Totally 16 birds recorded 14-20.2.

146. **Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata atratus*
2 Munnar 17.2, 7 Munnar 18.2, 1 Munnar 19.2.



147. **Asian Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi paradise*
3 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
148. **Grey-breasted Laughingthrush** *Garrulax jerdoni*
4 Munnar 17.2, 12 Munnar 18.2.
149. **Indian Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii travancoreensis*
4 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 4 Olive Brook, Munnar 19.2.
150. **Dark-fronted Babbler** *Rhopocichla atriceps*
3 Thattekad 15.2, 5 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 5 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2.
151. **Rufous Babbler** *Turdoides subrufus*
c.15 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
152. **Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striatus malabarica*
c.25 Thattekad each 15.2 and 16.2.
153. **Yellow-billed Babbler** *Turdoides affinis*
5 Thattekad 17.2.
154. **Brown-cheeked Fulvetta** *Alcippe poioicephala*
1 heard Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 1 heard Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 5 Deshadan, Munnar 18.2.
155. **Great Tit** *Parus major mahrattarum*
2 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
156. **Black-lored Tit** *Parus aplonotus (xanthogenys)*
4-5 Munnar 18.2.
157. **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis*
2 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 2 Munnar 18.2.
158. **Purple-rumped Sunbird** *Leptocoma Zeylonica flaviventris*
1 Fort Kochin 14.2, 3 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 16.2.
159. **Crimson-backed Sunbird** *Leptocoma minima*
2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
160. **Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticus*
1 Urulanthanni, Thattekad 16.2, 3 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 Kovalam 21.2.
161. **Long-billed (Loten's) Sunbird** *Cinnyris lotenius hindustanicus*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Kovalam 22.2 and 23.2.
162. **Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus egregius*
c.20 Deshadan, Munnar 17.2, 5 Munnar 18.2.
163. **Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus Sommargylling*
1 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
164. **Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis diffusus*
2 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
165. **Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus maderaspatanus*
c.15 Thattekad 15.2, c.5 Thattekad 16.2.
166. **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*
2 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 1 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 Roadside Thattekad-Munnar 17.2, 1 Munnar 18.2, 3 Munnar 19.2.

167. **Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach caniceps*
1 Thattekad 16.2, 4 Munnar 18.2, 2 Munnar 19.2.



168. **Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis gularis sylvicola*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 6 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2, 2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2.
169. **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Common. c.100 birds recorded 14-23.2.
170. **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus longicaudatus*
3 Thattekad 15.2.
171. **Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus*
2 Thattekad 15.2, 3 Thattekad 16.2, 1 Thattekad 17.2.
172. **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus*
Common at Thattekad. 10-20 birds recorded daily 15-17.2.
173. **Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*
4 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Thattekad 16.2, 2 Kallipara, Thattekad 17.2, 1 Munnar-Alappuzha 19.2.
174. **Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda parvula*
c.10 Thattekad 15.2, 2 Munnar 18.2.
175. **White-bellied Treepie** *Dendrocitta leucogastra*
c.10 Idamalayar, Thattekad 16.2.
176. **Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus*
Rather common. Totally 17 birds recorded 14-20.2.

177. **House Crow** *Corvus splendens*
Abundant. Recorded daily.



178. **Southern Hill Myna** *Gracula indica*
c.15 Thattekad 15.2, c.10 Thattekad 16.2, 5 Thattekad 17.2.
179. **Jungle Myna** *Acridotheres fuscus*
5 Munnar 18.2.
180. **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*
Common. Recorded daily.
181. **Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnia malabarica*
7 Thattekad 15.2, c.15 Thattekad 16.2, 5 Thattekad 17.2.
182. **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus*
c.10 Kochin 14.2.
183. **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus indicus*
Recorded in Kochin 14-15.2 and in Munnar 18.2.
184. **Baya Weaver** *Ploceus philippinus*
3 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.
185. **Black-throated Munia** *Lonchura kelaarti*
c.10 Thattekad 15.2.
186. **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*
c.10 Munnar 17.2.

Mammals

- Indian Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus*
7-8 Kovalam 20.2, 1 Kovalam 21.2, c.10 roadside Kovalam-Kochi Airport 23.2.
- Common Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus palmarum*
1 Kochi 14.2, 3 Munnar 18.2, 1 Kovalam 21.2, 5 Kovalam 22.2.
- Nilgiri Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus sublineatus*
1 Thattekad 15.2, 1 Thattekad 17.2.

Malabar Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica*
7 Thattekad 15.2, 1 heard Thattekad 17.2.

Bonnet's Macaque *Macaca radiata*
c.30 roadside Munnar-Alappuzha 19.2.

Herptiles

Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*
1 roadside Thattekad 16.2.

Watersnake spp.
2 Backwaters boat trip 19.2.

Indian Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*
A few Thattekad and Munnar.

