

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

INDIA AND NEPAL

8TH February – 1ST March 2009

TOUR REPORT

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Our tour to India and Nepal proved to be extremely enjoyable and successful; we saw a total of 378 species of birds and 28 species of mammals. However, it was the sheer volume of birds wintering in the subcontinent that was the most astonishing aspect of the tour. During the winter months, large numbers of local birds are joined by an enormous number of wintering birds, from breeding grounds in northern Europe and Asia. Literally millions of birds are forced to leave their breeding grounds at the onset of winter, as during the big freeze, there is nothing for them to eat. A large percentage of birds choose to winter throughout the Indian subcontinent. We saw huge flocks of Painted Storks, Eurasian Spoonbills, Greater Flamingos, Long-legged Buzzards, Common and Demoiselle Cranes, enormous flocks of Greater Short-toed Larks and smaller flocks of gorgeously plumaged Rosy Starlings and large flocks of the *parkini* race of House Sparrows, from their breeding grounds in Pakistan and Tibet. We managed to find almost all the target species which included the localised Western Reef-Egret, a staggering 36 species of raptors, which included Jerdon's Baza and Lesser Fish-Eagle, we saw the endangered Macqueen's and Great Indian Bustards, the endangered Ibisbill, the spectacular Crab Plover, the beautiful Indian Courser, 9 species of owls, all seen during daylight hours, including the endangered Pallid Scops-Owl, the very uncommon Sykes' Nightjar, the endangered Grey Hypocolius, the recently described *nepali* subspecies of Rufous-vented Prinia, the endangered White-naped Tit and a new species for Nepal, a female Daurian Redstart. The mammals were equally spectacular; highlights included no less than three species of cats, Lion, Jungle Cat and the rarely observed Fishing Cat, as well as Bengal Fox, Golden Jackal the rarely observed Ratel, wild Water Buffalos and three extremely endangered species of mammals, the delightful Asiatic Wild Ass, the huge Indian Rhinoceros and the bazaar Ganges Dolphin.

Just prior to the tour I was beginning to wonder if any of us would actually make it to our respective airports in Melbourne, Australia and London, in England. Terrible bushfires surrounded Melbourne, cutting all the main roads leaving Melbourne, fortunately for Michael and I, the road to the airport was open and we were able to fly out of Melbourne. 200 plus people were not so lucky and perished in the bushfires. At the opposite end of the world; Britain was experiencing heavy snow falls, making it very difficult for people to access Heathrow Airport and even when they could, some flights were being canceled. Fortunately, Ruth, Doris and Dorothy were able to get to Heathrow and were very pleased to fly out to the 26 degrees Celsius weather of northern India.

We began our journey at Mumbai domestic airport, where we took a short flight northwestwards, to Bhuj, in the Indian desert state of Gujarat. Shortly after our arrival our airport bus was taxiing towards the very ornate airport terminal building when a flock of Rose-ringed Parakeets flew by; the tour was off and running. Here we met up with Ganesh, who was to be our guide, during most of our time in India. We then drove to Hodka, just a few kilometers from the border with Pakistan, where we had an overnight stay at the delightful community-owned Border Resort. We drove through desert country which consisted mainly of thorn scrub; as we drove along we passed several camels pulling carts and the drivers were dressed in white but sported very colourful large turbans. Shortly after leaving Bhuj, we stopped to do some birding at a small roadside wetland. Here we found Little Grebe, Great White Pelican, Little Cormorant, Intermediate Egret, Grey Heron, Painted Stork, Glossy Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Indian Black Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Comb Duck, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Red-wattled Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover, Green and Common Sandpipers, Temminck's Stint, Common Snipe, Feral Pigeon, Little Green Bee-eater, Crested and Greater Short-toed Larks, White-eared Bulbul, Rufous-tailed Shrike, Indian Black Robin, Desert Wheatear, Common Babbler, Black Drongo and House Crow.

In the late afternoon we took a short walk in the desert close to our resort, here we added Cattle Egret, Black-winged Kite, Eurasian and Long-legged Buzzards, Tawny Eagle, Grey Francolin, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Barn Swallow, Tawny Pipit, Black Redstart, Variable Wheatear, Lesser Whitethroat, Indian Silverbill and House Sparrow. We also saw our first mammal of the trip, the attractive Indian Grey Mongoose.

Early the following morning we were woken by loud speakers, which were calling the faithful to prayer, a reminder of just how close we were to the border with Pakistan. A good percentage of the people in this area are devout Muslims, however, they are outnumbered two-to-one by Hindus. An orange glow spread across the horizon as the sun began to rise in the east. After breakfast we drove towards Nakhatrana, but it was slow going, as we jumped out of the bus at every opportunity to observe new birds, which were many and varied. Along the roadside we saw Black Kite, Steppe Eagle, Eurasian Kestrel, Common Crane, Painted Sandgrouse, Laughing Dove, Eurasian Hoopoe, Southern Grey and Bay-backed Shrikes, Isabelline Wheatear, Pied Bushchat, Purple Sunbird and Brahminy Starling. At a small dam close to Nakhatrana we added Indian Pond-Heron, Eurasian Teal, Spot-billed Duck, Shikra, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Wood and Marsh Sandpipers, Ruff, Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark, Rufous-tailed Lark and White Wagtail. In and around the small town of Nakhatrana, we saw our first Dusky Crag-Martins, Small Minivets and Red-vented Bulbuls. We were to spend the next five nights staying at a small but comfortable bird watching lodge in Nakhatrana. Following lunch, there was much excitement and anticipation amongst the group, for we were going to look for the main target species of the whole tour, the endangered Grey Hypocolius; a rather shrike-like bird, which is in a family all of its own. The village of Fulay on the edge of the Banni Grasslands is the only location in India where this species can be seen with any certainty. It is a winter visitor here, from breeding grounds in Iraq and Iran, a part of the world, which it is probably best to avoid,

at this particular moment in time. At the village of Fulay we were joined by Mohammad, a local birder who took us to the daytime roost of a wintering Sykes' Nightjar. This grey coloured species of nightjar camouflaged extremely well with the leaf litter upon which it was sitting. Mohammad then took us to an area of *Salvadora persice* bushes, locally known as the toothbrush tree, as local people use sprigs from the tree, to clean their teeth. These bushes provide both food and roosting sites for the wintering Grey Hypocolius. We managed to find two birds, an adult male and an adult female, which we saw very well. Other birds of interest here included Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Indian Eagle-Owl, Eurasian Wryneck, Red-tailed Wheatear, Siberian Stonechat, Plain Prinia and Common Tailorbird. Mammals today included, Indian Hare, Northern Palm Squirrel, several Golden Jackals and Nilgai. After dark a few Small Indian Field Mice, came to feeders in the dining area. It was a real treat, to see them so well.

First light the following morning found us birding in a tropical thorn forest, searching for the highly localised White-naped Tit. We did not have to wait very long before a pair began to call, suddenly, a single bird flew to the top of a tree and began to feed. We all saw it very well, before it flew off, deep inside the forest. Other more widespread species included Great Egret, Barred Buttonquail, Greater Coucal, Indian Roller, Indian Bushlark, Sykes' Lark, Red-rumped and Wire-tailed Swallows, Western Yellow Wagtail, Common Woodshrike, the range restricted Marshall's Iora, Grey-breasted and Rufous-fronted Prinias and Bank and Common Mynas. Our main target bird had been seen very well, enabling us to enjoy our picnic breakfast beside a small stream. During breakfast small numbers of wintering Grey-necked Buntings came down to drink and bathe in the stream. It was a real delight to watch this uncommon species from just a few metres away from us. Their breeding grounds are located in Afghanistan and Pakistan. On our way to the nearby Bhimsar Dam, we drove past nomadic tribes people, who had all their worldly possessions packed on top of camels. At the dam new species included Western Reef-Heron, Little Egret, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Tufted and Ferruginous Ducks, Common Pochard, Short-toed Eagle, Western Marsh-Harrier, Eurasian Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Little Stint, White-throated and Common Kingfishers, Citrine Wagtail and Long-tailed Shrike. In the afternoon while driving to Saranath-Patio, we enjoyed our first views of the stunning Indian Peafowl. Saranath-Patio is a small rocky outcrop surrounded by desert plains and our main target species here was the highly localised Striolated Bunting. In no time at all the buntings were observed perched on the top of large boulders along with several Brown Rock Chats and a solitary Booted Eagle flew overhead, along with a small number of Little Swifts. At dusk, huge skeins of Common Cranes numbering many thousands were silhouetted against the orange glow of the setting sun.

Most of the following day was spent birding amongst the lagoons, ponds and mudflats, close to the town of Mandvi, on the Gulf of Kutch. While driving there, we passed through the small town of Gathsis, where we observed our first wintering flock of Rosy Starlings. On the outskirts of town we saw our first Demoiselle Cranes and Baya Weavers. We then made a birding stop at Don Dam, in the small village of Don. The birding here was very productive and new birds included Great Crested Grebe, Oriental Darter, Garganey, Curlew Sandpiper, Gull-billed, River and Caspian Terns and Tree

Pipit. We then arrived at the town of Mandvi, on the Gulf of Kutch. Our first birding spot was at Topinsar Dam, right in the middle of town. Here we found large wintering flocks of Great Cormorants, a huge flock of wintering Common Black-headed Gulls, a male Asian Koel, a few White-browed Wagtails and a large communal roost of Indian Flying Foxes. A quick stop in Mandvi Harbour, again in the heart of town, produced a small flock of endangered Dalmatian Pelicans, a solitary Brahminy Kite, a couple of Grey Plovers, a solitary Whimbrel and a few Common Redshanks and Little Terns. Along the beach at nearby Modhva, we found our main target bird, the very beautiful Crab Plover, 11 in total, as well as Eurasian Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden-Plover, Greater and Lesser Sandpipers, Kentish Plover, Terek and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderling and Heuglin's, Great Black-headed and Slender-billed Gulls. We enjoyed a late lunch at India's idea of fast food; here waiters came around piling all kinds of food on your plate. Mandvi is a very ancient city and was honeycombed with dozens of narrow streets and alleyways. So we could only drive our bus part of the way, then we had to proceed on foot. Walking through a bustling Indian city, is like walking through organised chaos; there are cars, motorbikes, rickshaws, cyclists, pedestrians and sacred cows to contend with, as well as a multitude of stall holders and shopkeepers. To make matters worse, Doris decided she need to purchase a pair of scissors, which caused much amusement in the marketplace. While walking through the city on our way back to the bus a pair of beautiful Oriental Honey-buzzards flew above our heads.

We spent the whole of the following day birding in the Naliya Grasslands, an extensive area of semi-desert grasslands, where our main quarry was the highly endangered Great Indian Bustard. New birds came thick and fast, we saw the endangered Greater Spotted Eagle, Eurasian Griffon, Pallid Harrier, Black Francolin, Common Quail, Red-collared Dove and Zitting Cisticola and we also saw small numbers of Indian Gazelles. A harsh call in a grove of acacias led us to a wintering Sykes' Warbler, which was enjoyed by all, but still no Great Indian Bustard. We continued to search the grasslands, then Chris shouted 'I have one'. We then enjoyed watching a pair of these stately but unfortunately, severely endangered birds, feeding a short distance from us. There were also many kinds of colourful butterflies in the grasslands.

Most of the following morning was taken up with the long drive to the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Reserve. A little roadside birding produced a few new birds, which included Ruddy Shelduck, Common Moorhen, Indian Courser, White-eyed Buzzard, Large Grey Babbler and Eastern Orphean Warbler. We spent the whole of the afternoon in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Reserve. It is a vast expanse of saline flats, which are inundated during the monsoon season and the large lakes slowly evaporate throughout the dry season. At this time of year few lakes remain and the huge number of wildfowl and other winter visitors from the far north are concentrated around the remaining wetlands, their numbers often reaching staggering proportions. The reserve is best known for its large flocks of Lesser Flamingos and much smaller numbers of the endangered Asiatic Wild Ass. We were not to be disappointed. A shimmering pink mass of birds adorned the edge of the lakes, made up of both Greater and Lesser Flamingos. There was also a large flock of wintering Greylag Geese and a few Common

Greenshanks. We watched a Peregrine Falcon plucking prey on a fence post and a stunning adult male Montagu's Harrier flew right past our bus. We searched and found the only wintering pair of Eastern Imperial Eagles in the reserve and also added Jungle Babbler and Chiffchaff. We also found a very rare visitor to the reserve; we enjoyed watching a flock of 15 Common Shelducks. Our local guides had not seen more than one or two Common Shelducks in the reserve, at any one time. Without doubt the highlight of our afternoon in the reserve, were the small groups of Asiatic Wild Ass, which we saw so very well. It was very enjoyable to watch them roaming free over the saline flats and very comforting to know that their numbers have been steadily increasing over the past decade. As we were driving back to our resort at dusk a few Black-crowned Night-Herons were observed flying to their feeding grounds and a solitary Barn Owl flew just in front of the bus.

We spent the whole of the following day birding in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Reserve. At dawn, during breakfast a small number of tiny Indian Pipistrelles, a very small species of bat, were observed flying into their daytime roosts, in the thatch of the dining room roof. In the morning we targeted the severely endangered Macqueen's Bustard which winter in small numbers in the reserve. Unfortunately, the reserve offers these birds very little protection, an extraordinarily level of persecution from falconers from Arabia, who train their birds to repeatedly strike at the head of the bustards until they are killed, have brought the bustards population to a perilously low number. Fortunately, we managed to find one, which flew off as soon as we detected it. Other species of particular note included a Short-eared Owl, which was flushed from cover, a few pairs of Oriental Skylarks, a wintering flock of Blyth's Pipits, a solitary Long-billed Pipit, a solitary Asian Desert Warbler, Clamorous Reed-Warbler and Black-breasted Weaver. Following lunch at our resort, we drove to a nearby lodge, on the way we saw several Spotted Owlets in a communal nesting tree. On our arrival at the lodge we were taken to a wintering pair of Pallid Scops-Owls. Although we were taken to the tree where a bird was roosting, it was still hard to see it, nestled up against the trunk of the tree. On arrival at the Little Rann of Kutch we spent the whole time birding along the edge of a few saline lagoons. New birds encountered included Purple Heron, Woolly-necked Stork, White-breasted Waterhen, Oriental Pratincole, White-tailed Lapwing, Common Tern, Spotted Dove, Lesser Pied Kingfisher and Bluethroat. There was also a very large flock of a hundred or so wintering Western Yellow Wagtails feeding on the ground in front of us. Chris also saw a Small Indian Mongoose. As the sun began to set we walked back to the bus as enormous flocks of Common Cranes were flying in to roost, silhouetted, against the setting sun.

Following breakfast we birded a small wetland at Dasada. Birds we had not seen previously on the tour included, Cotton Teal, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, a pair of superb Red-headed Falcons perched on telegraph wires and a solitary Black-rumped Flameback. We then had a long drive to the Gir Forest, in the far south of Gujarat. The long drive was livened up by the cultural events taking place along the roadside. We saw a few wedding parties, with lots of people dressed in their very colourful and costly apparel and we also observed a large group of pilgrims, who were making a pilgrimage to one of the many Hindu holy places. We enjoyed our picnic lunch along the banks of the Gadali

River at Gondal; we even added a new bird to our ever growing birdlist, as there was a large group of Whiskered Terns roosting on a small island in the river. We arrived at the Gir Forest Birding Lodge in the late afternoon and went for a walk along the boundary of the park. This was the first time on the tour that we had birded in any broadleaved forest and we added several more common forest inhabitants which included Crested Treeswift, Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, Oriental White-eye, Jungle Crow and Chestnut-shouldered Petronia.

Today we enjoyed a full days birding and mammal watching in the Gir Forest National Park, during morning and afternoon jeep rides. We saw lots of birds on the morning drive, but during the afternoon drive there were far fewer birds around. New birds today consisted of Crested Serpent-Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon, Plum-headed Parakeet, Coppersmith Barbet, Indian Pygmy Woodpecker, Grey Wagtail, Common Iora, White-browed Fantail, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Tichell's Blue-Flycatcher, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Greenish Warbler, Great Tit and best of all the uncommon Thick-billed Flowerpecker. The mammals were without doubt the highlight of the day; after all, this is the only place in Asia where the Lion occurs. We saw a few troops of Northern Plains Grey Langurs, a large party of Wild Boars and good numbers of Chital and Sambar. Some members of the group were fortunate to watch a Ruddy Mongoose foraging amongst the rocks in a dry stream bed; however this was eclipsed by the very unusual sighting of the normally nocturnal Ratel. Soon after it was first spotted we all left our jeeps and we enjoyed very close looks at the seldom seen Ratel, which was trying to hide under a shrub. This very handsome black-and-white animal is related to badgers and had not been observed in the park for over 20 years. Late in the afternoon as we were heading towards the park exit, we had still not seen a Lion, but most of us were still elated at seeing a Ratel. The park authorities decided that they would do a spot check, to ensure that all vehicles in the park that afternoon had the required permits. As we were having our permits checked a large lioness was spotted by Chris deep in the dry scrub. Amazingly, she started to walk towards us, closer and closer she came with every step. When she got within 12 meters of us, she suddenly dropped to the ground and just sat there looking at us. It was a thrilling site and a fitting end to a great day in Gir Forest National Park. Most people think of Lions as strictly African beasts. Ten thousand years ago they occurred from Albania to central India. Unfortunately, Lions now only occur in one place in Asia, Gir Forest National Park. A recent census of the Lions in the park, found that 40 Lions had wandered off the overcrowded sanctuary into the surrounding farmland. More than 2,000 Maldhari tribes people live within the park and there livestock make up a third of the Lions diet.

Today we had a long drive from Gir National Park to Ahmadabad. The only birding we had time for was during our picnic lunch, close to the town of Limdi. Surprisingly, a single White Stork flew over our heads; this was our only sighting of this species for the tour.

The following day was taken up by the flight from Ahmadabad to Delhi and the flight from Delhi to Kathmandu, in Nepal. Here we met Tika, who was to be our bird guide in Nepal and we also met his charming wife Gita.

The following day was another travel day, as we drove from Kathmandu to Chitwan National Park, in the lowlands of Nepal. We broke the long drive with some riverside birding above the town of Mugling, in the middle altitude range of the Himalayas. We saw an amazing four different species of vultures and enjoyed close looks at them both in flight and sitting on the ground, or feeding on a carcass. We saw White-rumped, Slender-billed, Himalayan and Red-headed Vultures. However, best of all were the four Ibisbills that we watched feeding along the edge of the river. Other new birds here included Alpine Swift, Himalayan Pied Kingfisher, House Swift, Grey-throated Sand Martin, Himalayan Bulbul, Brown Dipper, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Little Forktail, Plumbeous Water-Redstart, White-capped River-Chat, Black-lored Yellow Tit and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. We also saw our first Rhesus Macaques along the roadside.

Following our arrival at our lodge in Chitwan National Park, we went for a short walk in the park and added the following species, Osprey, Brown Crake, Alexandrine Parakeet, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Lineated Barbet, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Paddyfield Pipit, Red-whiskered Bulbul, White-tailed Stonechat, Verditer Flycatcher, Chestnut-capped Babbler, Hume's Leaf-Warbler, Velvet-fronted and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches, Black-hooded Oriole, Hair-crested Drongo, Jungle Myna, Rufous Treepie and Crimson Sunbird. As the light began to fade literally hundreds of White Wagtails were flying over our heads, heading for their roost site for the night, it was a spectacular sight to see them all flying in the same direction.

Chitwan National Park is made up of 976 square kilometres of sal forest and riverine woodland. A wealth of birds occur here; just some of the highlights today included Striated Heron, Black Stork, nesting Lesser Adjutant, Lesser Whistling-Duck, Common Merganser, Grey-headed Fish-Eagle, Collared Falconet, Red Junglefowl, Ruddy-breasted Crake, Greater Painted-snipe, Bronze-winged Jacana, Red-breasted Parakeet, Green-billed Malkoha, Jungle Owlet, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Emerald Dove, Sand Lark, Rosy Pipit, Ashy Woodswallow, Large Woodshrike, Pied Flycatcher-shrike, Black-winged and Large Cuckoo-shrikes, White-rumped Shama, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Yellow-eyed, Slender-billed and Striated Babblers, Striped Tit-Babbler, Grey-crowned Prinia, Smoky Leaf-Warbler, White-tailed Nuthatch, White-bellied Erpornis, Crested Bunting, Grey-headed Starling and Common Hill Myna. We also added a staggering seven species of Woodpeckers, Fulvous-breasted Pied, Streak-throated, Grey-faced and Rufous Woodpeckers, Greater Yellownape and Himalayan and Greater Flamebacks. New mammals today included Tarai Grey Langur, Indian Rhinoceros, Indian Muntjac and Hog Deer.

Another full days birding in Chitwan National Park produced Asian Openbill, Northern Goshawk, Indian Spotted Eagle, River Lapwing, Oriental Turtle-Dove, Brown Hawk-Owl, Asian Barred Owlet, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Olive-backed Pipit, Gold-fronted Leafbird, Grey-backed Shrike, Blyth's Reed-Warbler and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo. In dugout canoes along the Rapti River, we got very close to several Marsh Muggers, a large species of crocodile and the extremely endangered Gharial, a much smaller species of crocodile. We also greatly enjoyed our safari on elephant back.

A morning birding in sal forest in Chitwan National Park was a spectacular success, with a sighting of a sub-adult Lesser Fish-Eagle, the first sighting of this species in Chitwan National Park, for 12 years. Later in the morning we enjoyed super looks at a very uncommon bird in Chitwan, a diminutive Blue-eared Kingfisher. Other new birds included Scarlet Minivet, Small-billed Scaly-Thrush, Puff-throated Babbler, Thick-billed Warbler, Ashy and White-bellied Drongos and Asian Pied Starling. A walk in mixed forest in the late afternoon added Lesser Yellowthroat, Red-throated Flycatcher and Tickell's Leaf-Warbler. However, the highlight of the afternoon was watching large numbers of Hair-crested Drongos and Rufous Treepies bathing in the river.

The following day was another long travel day; it was also a holy day for the local people, who were celebrating Lord Shiva, the main Hindu God. There were many road blocks along the way, where our driver had to offer a small donation, before we were allowed through. The real challenge came in the late afternoon, when one of the bridges on the main east-west highway of Nepal was barricaded by protesters whose farms and homes had been washed away when the Koshi Barrage gave way in the last monsoons and their petition to the government to be recompensed had fallen on deaf ears. We made a large detour on dirt roads, passing by virgin forest, which we knew, had never been birded! We were heading for a ferry, further up the river, unfortunately dozens of truck drivers had the same idea and on reaching the ferry, we found over 100 trucks ahead of us, waiting in line to cross the river! Fortunately for us, there was a much smaller line for small vehicles, as the ferry could take one large truck and one small vehicle. Our guides talked to the police, pointing out that we were foreign tourists and as such should not be held up in this way, a few palms were greased and we were sent to the front of the line. Some of the drivers, who had been waiting there for two days, were not impressed, but they were no match for Tika and we crossed the river and passed by another 100 trucks waiting to cross in the other direction. As we neared the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, we added a new bird to the trip, the very impressive Eurasian Stone-Curlew. As the light began to fade, great spotting by Tika, enabled us to watch a superb adult Bengal Fox, sitting at the entrance to its den, with a puppy by its side. This is a very beautiful animal.

We spent the next few days at Koshi Camp, birding in and around the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. The reserve was established in 1976 to protect the last remaining wild population of Water Buffaloes in Nepal. A wealth of birds occur here; just some of the highlights on our first day included, Yellow Bittern, Swamp Francolin, Small Pratincole, Grey-headed Lapwing, Brown Fish-Owl, Blue-throated Barbet, Richard's Pipit, Brown Shrike, White-throated Fantail, a male Siberian Rubythroat in full breeding plumage, Bright-capped Cisticola, Striated Grassbird, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Dusky Warbler and Scaly-breasted Munia. However, without doubt the best bird of the day was a completely new sub-species to science, which the bird guides at Koshi Camp had recently discovered. This was *Prinia burnesii nepali*, a new subspecies of Rufous-vented Prinia, which was previously thought to only occur in Pakistan. We also saw several wild Water Buffalos.

The following day we spent several hours slowly drifting down the Koshi River in an inflatable zodiac. Just some of the many highlights included two very good sightings of the uncommon Crested Goshawk, a solitary Cinereous Vulture circling overhead, a single Black-bellied Tern in full breeding plumage flew by our zodiac at very close range, we found a flock of Steppe Gulls and watched a Peregrine Falcon fly down the river and stoop at a Little Cormorant swimming in the river, fortunately, the Little Cormorant dived just in time. The Peregrine kept flying and then stooped on a Great Egret, which surprisingly very deftly outmaneuvered the falcon. The bird guides at Koshi Camp had recently found a new bird for Nepal, a female Daurian Redstart and not surprisingly we were keen to see if we could relocate it. We were thrilled that she was still there, but she was very flighty and it took a while for us all to see the bird well. Without doubt one of the great highlights of the day was several close encounters with one of the world's most endangered mammals, the Ganges Dolphin. We were pleased to leave the Koshi River behind, as a terrible sandstorm had blown up and we were warmly welcomed back at Koshi Camp. In the late afternoon we decided to try for the very rarely seen Fishing Cat. While it was still light we took up our position in the hide, which overlooks the two ponds, where this very rare mammal frequently comes to fish. We were more than happy when a male Chestnut Bittern flew into one of the ponds and began to hunt for fish. Then suddenly, still in broad daylight, a large cat walked between the ponds towards us, totally unaware of our presence, we could see every marking on the animal! However, it was not a Fishing Cat; it was a superb Jungle Cat, which we all saw very well. Later in the evening after dark some lucky members of the group just happened to be in the right place at the right time. An adult female Fishing Cat and a kitten were observed briefly in the spotlight, within a few metres of the dining room. This was a great thrill for those who were fortunate enough, to be there at the time.

Much of our last day at Koshi Camp was spent birding in the nearby Patnali Forest, a superb, community owned forest. Forest birding is not easy, even so, Tika and Badri managed to find a good number of new birds for us, which included the stunning Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, a rather furtive Black-naped Blue Monarch, an adult Blue Rock-Thrush, a few very wary Tichell's Thrushes, Ruth pointed out a beautiful male White-tailed Blue Robin, which is a very uncommon bird, Ruth also saw an Orange-headed Thrush and we all saw a female Little Pied Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Leaf-Warbler, Maroon Oriole, Bronzed Drongo, Long-tailed and Rosy Minivets and Blyth's Leaf-Warbler. This was a very impressive group of birds, but without doubt the highlight of Patnali forest was the two sightings of the rarely encountered Jerdon's Baza. On two separate occasions an adult bird circled above the treetops directly overhead. This is one of the rarest birds in Nepal and only occurs in this southeastern corner of the country. We spent the late afternoon birding around Koshi Camp, where we added our last two birds of the tour, a superb Black Bittern, a rare bird in Nepal and a small flock of Asian Palm-Swifts, which flew overhead.

Sadly, it was time to leave Koshi Camp and fly back to Kathmandu. Once again Tika was working hard for us and managed to get us all seats on the right hand side of the plane, the weather was also very kind to us and we enjoyed clear views of the entire Himalayan Range, including Everest with its usual plume of clouds drifting off to the

east. This was a fitting climax to a very productive and immensely enjoyable tour to the Indian subcontinent.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A common and widespread resident throughout

India but not seen in Nepal.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A fairly common winter visitor which we saw well, in both India and Nepal.

PELECANIDAE

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* An uncommon winter visitor to northern India, we saw a few small flocks during our time in Gujarat.

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* A very uncommon winter visitor to northern India, where we saw three small flocks.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* A common resident and winter visitor, which we saw on many occasions in both India and Nepal.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* A common resident throughout both India and Nepal.

ANHINGIDAE

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* An uncommon resident, which we saw well in both India and Nepal.

ARDEIDAE

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A widespread and locally common resident and winter visitor, which we saw well in both India and Nepal.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* This uncommon resident and winter visitor was observed on once occasion in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India and on a few occasions in Nepal.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* A widespread and locally common resident throughout both India and Nepal.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Another widespread and locally common resident which we saw on many occasions in both India and Nepal.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal.

Western Reef-Heron *Egretta gularis* A localised and uncommon resident and winter visitor along the west and southeast coasts of India. We enjoyed many good sightings along the Gulf of Kutch.

Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayi* A very common and widespread species, which we saw almost daily in both India and Nepal.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* This species is an uncommon resident in both India and Nepal, we saw it well on several occasions, but only in Nepal.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A fairly common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal, we saw it well on a few occasions.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* This attractive species of bittern does not occur in Gujarat and is an uncommon summer visitor to Nepal. Fortunately for us, one

bird was present on one of the ponds at Koshi Camp, throughout our stay there.

Chestnut Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* Yet another attractive species of bittern; this species does not occur in Gujarat and is an uncommon resident in Nepal. We were very fortunate to enjoy a couple of sightings of an adult male on one of the ponds at Koshi Camp.

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* This larger species of bittern does not occur in Gujarat and is a very uncommon summer visitor to Nepal. Once again we were very fortunate to enjoy a single sighting of this bird, on one of the ponds at Koshi Camp.

CICONIIDAE

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* In India this is a widespread and locally common resident, which we saw well on many occasions. It does not occur in Nepal.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* This bird is a fairly common resident and winter visitor in both India and Nepal. We only saw it in Nepal, where we saw small numbers on most days of the tour.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* An uncommon winter visitor to the subcontinent; we enjoyed a few good sightings in both Chitwan and Koshi Tapu, during our time in Nepal.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* A fairly common resident in both India and Nepal. We enjoyed good sightings on one occasion in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India and on a couple of occasions in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* This species of stork is a localised and very uncommon winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We were very fortunate to observe a bird flying overhead while eating our picnic lunch, just outside the town of Limdi, in India.

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* Unfortunately, this uncommon resident is declining rapidly throughout its entire range. It breeds in small numbers in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal, this is the last stronghold for this species in Nepal. We saw it well in both Chitwan and Koshi Tapu. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threat to this species is the continued draining of wetlands, increased pesticide use and disturbance at nesting sites.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* A widespread, locally common resident, which we saw well in both India and Nepal

Indian Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* A widespread, locally common resident, which we saw very well in both India and Nepal.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* This is an irregular winter visitor to India, in small numbers and does not occur in Nepal. We enjoyed many good sightings throughout wetland areas of Gujarat.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* In Gujarat this is a fairly common winter

visitor, where we saw a few large flocks. In Nepal it is an uncommon winter visitor, which we saw on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

PHOENICOPTERIDAE

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to western India and does not occur in Nepal. We saw some very nice flocks throughout wetland areas of Gujarat.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* An uncommon and highly localised resident and winter visitor to northwestern India. We saw one large flock of this beautiful bird, in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

ANATIDAE

Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* A common resident throughout both India and Nepal. We saw it well on several occasions in Chitwan National Park and at Koshi Camp, in Nepal.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to both northern India and Nepal. We saw a few wintering flocks during our time in Gujarat. One flock proved to be fairly tame and allowed us to observe them very well.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* A common winter visitor to both India and Nepal, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* This attractive species is a rare vagrant to both India and Nepal. Therefore, we were very fortunate to find a flock of 15 birds wintering in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary. Our local guides were very excited, as they had never seen more than three birds together in the sanctuary.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* An uncommon resident of both India and Nepal; we saw small numbers at a small wetland, close to Bhuj and again at Don Dam near Nakhatrana.

Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus* An uncommon resident in both India and Nepal. We saw a small flock on one occasion at a small wetland at Dasada, close to the Little Ram of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A common winter visitor, which we saw well in both India and Nepal

Gadwall *Anas strepera* A locally common winter visitor, which we saw in small numbers in both India and Nepal.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* A widespread and common winter visitor, which we observed in small numbers in both India and Nepal.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* An uncommon winter visitor, which we saw in very small numbers at a small wetland, close to Bhuj, in Gujarat and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* Small numbers of this fairly common resident were observed throughout Gujarat and a small flock was also present in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* A common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We

recorded small numbers at a number of places in India, but failed to find it in Nepal.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* Another common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. Once again, we recorded small numbers in a number of places in India, but failed to find it in Nepal.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* This very common winter visitor was observed well on several occasions in India and on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* This fairly common winter visitor was observed in small numbers throughout Gujarat, in India and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* An uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We observed a small flock at Bhimsar Dam, near Nakhatrana and a second small flock at a small wetland at Dasada, close to the Little Ram of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* This species is also an uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We observed small numbers on a few dams, during the Indian portion of the tour.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* A fairly common winter visitor to Nepal, we saw small numbers in Chitwan National Park and in Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

PANIDIODAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A fairly common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We saw it well in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve of Nepal.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* One of the rarest breeding birds in Nepal, it has only been recorded from the Patnali Forest, near Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. This is exactly where we saw a solitary bird flying directly above us on two occasions. It was a great thrill to observe this very uncommon species.

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* A fairly common resident throughout India and Nepal, which we saw well on a number of occasions.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal, which we saw well on many occasions.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Another common and widespread resident, which we saw on several occasions in both India and Nepal.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* An uncommon resident of both India and Nepal, which we saw on only one occasion. We enjoyed super looks at an adult bird flying over Mandvi Harbour, in the Gulf of Kutch.

Lesser Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* This is one of the rarest breeding birds in Nepal; we were extremely fortunate to observe a sub-adult bird in Chitwan National Park, we saw the bird in flight and when perched, we enjoyed good scope views. This is the first time this species has been observed in

Chitwan National Park for over 12 years and it was a very important observation of this rare species.

Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* A rare resident of both India and Nepal, we were fortunate to enjoy a few sightings of this beautiful eagle, during our time in Chitwan National Park.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* In the past this species has been common and widespread throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw a few birds close to the town of Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park. Unfortunately, in India numbers of this species have crashed dramatically in the last few years, due to widespread use of a locally produced pesticide. This pesticide is now banned by the Indian government and hopefully numbers will start to improve markedly, over the next few years. This bird is classified as 'critical' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threat to this species is the now illegal use of pesticides, combined with deliberate poisoning, the lack of wild mammals and human consumption of diseased livestock.

Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris* A fairly common resident of Nepal, we saw small numbers close to the town of Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* A fairly common breeding species in the higher altitudes of Nepal. In the last couple of years it has been found wintering throughout the lowlands, in the past these birds were almost certainly misidentified as Eurasian Griffons. We saw up to a dozen birds, close to the township of Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan and we observed a few birds in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* An uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We very much enjoyed watching a few birds circling above the Naliya Grasslands, near Nakhatrana, in Gujarat.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* This species is also an uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We observed a solitary individual in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, circling overhead amongst a mixed flock of Slender-billed and Himalayan Vultures.

Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* A fairly common resident of both India and Nepal, we observed a small number extremely well, amongst a large number of vultures, which we observed close to the township of Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* This attractive species of eagle is a fairly common resident of India and a rare resident of Nepal. We enjoyed a few good sightings in India and surprisingly, enjoyed good sightings of this species in both Chitwan National Park and the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* A common resident throughout both India and Nepal, which we saw very well on numerous occasions.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A fairly common winter visitor throughout India and Nepal; we saw it well on several occasions during our time in Gujarat, in India.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* An uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal.

We enjoyed a few good sightings in India, followed by the sighting of an adult male in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* This very beautiful species of harrier is an uncommon winter visitor to India and a rare visitor to Nepal. We were very excited to observe an adult male flying towards a harrier roost, late one afternoon in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* This species is an uncommon resident of Nepal, where we were very fortunate to observe it on two separate occasions, both of them in flight. The first sighting occurred in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, where we played hide-and-seek with one and the second sighting occurred in the Patnali Forest.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* A common and widespread resident of both India and Nepal, which we recorded on almost a daily basis.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* An uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal, where surprisingly, we enjoyed an unusually high number of sightings in both Chitwan National Park and the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* A fairly common resident of both India and Nepal. We saw it on a few occasions in India and on a couple of occasions in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Eurasian Buzzard *Buteo buteo* A fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor throughout India and Nepal. We observed it close to Hodka, in Gujarat, India and on a few occasions in both Chitwan National Park and Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* This attractive species of buzzard is a very common winter visitor to northwestern India, where we saw it on many occasions and an uncommon winter visitor to Nepal, where we saw it on one occasion, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastata* This species does not occur in Gujarat and is a rare resident of the lowlands of Nepal. Some members of our tour party were fortunate to observe a bird in flight during our elephant back safari in Chitwan National Park and we all saw a bird in flight, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* This very large species of eagle is an uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We observed one bird circling overhead in the Naliya Grasslands, near Nakhatrana, in Gujarat, followed by two sightings in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threats to this species are the continued loss of habitat and persistent persecution.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* This species is an uncommon resident throughout India and does not occur in Nepal. We enjoyed two sightings during our time in India. The first, occurred close to the town of Hodka and the second occurred in the Naliya Grasslands.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* A common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We

enjoyed many good sightings of this species during our time in India.

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* This species is a rare winter visitor to both India and Nepal. Therefore, we were very pleased when our local guides took us to a part of the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, where they knew a pair was wintering. We were able to enjoy very good looks at a solitary bird both in flight and perched. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threats to this species are the continued replacement of mature native forest with exotic species and persistent persecution, such as nest robbing, shooting and poisoning.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennatus* A fairly common winter visitor to India, where we recorded it first at a rocky outcrop at Saranath-Patio, near Nakhatrana and secondly in the Gir Forest National Park. It is an uncommon winter visitor to Nepal; where we recorded it on one occasion, in Chitwan National Park.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* This attractive species is an uncommon resident throughout much of India and the lowlands of Nepal. Our first sighting occurred in the Gir Forest National Park, in India; followed by two additional sightings in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

FALCONIDAE

Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens* This species is an uncommon resident of southern Nepal, we enjoyed great close looks at this very beautiful and diminutive species of falcon on two occasions in Chitwan National Park and on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, which we saw on almost a daily basis.

Red-headed Falcon *Falco chicquera* This beautiful species of falcon is now unfortunately becoming increasingly rare in both India and Nepal. We were extremely fortunate to enjoy a sighting of a pair of birds perched on telegraph wires at Dasada, close to the Little Ram of Kutch.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* A fairly common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We enjoyed two spectacular sightings of this species; the first was of an adult bird sat on a fence post plucking prey in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India; followed by a second sighting, of an adult bird hunting prey over the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. This individual stooped on a Little Cormorant and a Great Egret, but missed both.

PHASIANIDAE

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* A fairly common resident of northern India and Nepal. We enjoyed good sightings of this species in the Naliya Grasslands, near Nakhatrana, in India and again in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* A common resident of dry grassland and thorn scrub in India, where we saw it on a daily basis.

Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis* This is a rare resident in the lowlands of Nepal, therefore, we were very pleased to observe a pair of birds in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of

the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 10,000 birds and is declining. The main threats to this species are the continued draining of wetlands, increased agriculture, human encroachment, and grass harvesting.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to India. We were very fortunate to flush a solitary bird while we were birding in the Naliya Grasslands, near Nakhatrana. We managed to find and flush it a second time, enabling most members of the group to see it fairly well.

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* A locally common resident in the lowlands of Nepal and northeastern India. We enjoyed good sightings of both males and females on a few occasions during our time in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* A very common resident throughout India and Nepal, wherever it is protected. We saw it on many occasions in both India and Nepal.

TURNICIDAE

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* A fairly common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal. It is a shy bird and often overlooked. We were extremely fortunate to observe a particularly tame pair of birds along the roadside, in thorn scrub, close to Nakhatrana, in India.

GRUIDAE

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo* This very beautiful species is a fairly common but highly localised winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We enjoyed many good sightings of often large flocks of these graceful birds, during our time in India.

Common Crane *Grus grus* A fairly common winter visitor to India, but a very rare visitor to Nepal. We enjoyed observing huge flocks of wintering birds flying to and from their nighttime roost sites in the wetlands of Gujarat, in India.

RALLIDAE

Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool* A common resident of India and Nepal; we enjoyed two very good sightings of this species, during our time in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* This species is a fairly common resident of both India and Nepal, where we saw it very well, on a number of occasions.

Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca* A fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal; we saw an immature and an adult very well indeed, during our time in Chitwan National Park.

Purple Swampfen *Porphyrio porphyrio* another fairly common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it in a number of wetlands in India and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in Nepal.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A common and widespread resident, which we saw throughout all wetland areas of both India and Nepal.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* A fairly common winter visitor to northern India, where we saw good sized flocks on a number of occasions. In Nepal it is an uncommon winter visitor, we saw a solitary bird, in Chitwan National Park.

OTIDIDAE

Great Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* A very uncommon resident of the more arid areas of India. Following a great deal of searching in the Naliya Grasslands, we were very pleased to watch a pair of these very stately looking birds feeding in the grasslands. This bird is classified as 'endangered' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of between 250-1,000 birds and is declining. The main threats to this species are widespread hunting for sport, particularly by Arab falconers; hunting as a food item and habitat loss due to widespread agricultural development.

Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii* A rare winter visitor to northwestern India. Small numbers of this critically endangered species winter in ever decreasing numbers in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary. Following a great deal of searching here, we managed to find one individual, who took flight the second our vehicle stopped. This bird is classified as 'critical' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 2,000 birds and is declining. The main threat to this species is widespread hunting for sport, particularly by Arab falconers, other threats include hunting as a food item and habitat loss due to widespread agricultural development.

JACANIDAE

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* A fairly common resident of both northern India and Nepal. We only observed this species on one occasion. A small number were seen very well at a small wetland at Dasada, close to the Little Rann of Kutch.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* This species is also a fairly common resident of northern India and Nepal. We saw it very well on a number of occasions in Chitwan National Park and the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, all sightings were in Nepal.

ROSTRATULIDAE

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* An uncommon resident of both India and the lowlands of Nepal. We enjoyed two very good sightings, both of which occurred in Nepal. The first, took place in Chitwan National Park and the second occurred in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

DROMADIDAE

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* This delightful species is a very uncommon and highly localised winter visitor to certain parts of coastal India. We were very pleased to find a flock of 11 Crab Plovers wintering along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

HAEMATOPODIDAE

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* A highly localised and uncommon winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We were fortunate to observe a pair of Eurasian Oystercatcher along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

IBIDORHYNCHIDAE

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* This splendid bird is an uncommon resident of Nepal, it breeds in the high Himalayas and winters along the larger rivers in the lowlands. During the drive to Chitwan National Park we made a picnic lunch stop along the edge of the Trasuli River, north of Mugling. Here we enjoyed very good close looks at four Ibisbills. This was a real treat.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* This species is a common resident and winter visitor throughout India, but does not occur in Nepal. We saw it almost every day in India.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* This is an uncommon winter visitor, mainly to coastal areas of India, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

BURHINIDAE

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* This species is an uncommon resident throughout India and Nepal. We enjoyed two very good sightings of this species, both were in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

GLAREOLIDAE

Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* This is an uncommon resident in India, where we saw it very well, close to Halvad. In Nepal it is a rare resident, which we saw very well on one occasion, close to the Koshi Barrage.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* This species is a very localised and uncommon summer visitor to India. Some members of the group saw two birds in flight, in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lacteal* A localised but common resident throughout India and Nepal. We very much enjoyed observing large numbers of this species, roosting on the sandbanks of the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

CHARADRIDAE

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* This is a common resident in the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it well in Chitwan National Park and again at the Koshi Barrage.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus* An uncommon resident throughout India, where we saw it well on a few occasions. In Nepal, it is an uncommon winter visitor, we saw a pair very well, close to Koshi Barrage.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal. We observed a pair very well in farmland, not far from Koshi Camp.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* A common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal, which we saw on almost a daily basis.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* An uncommon winter visitor to northern India. Small numbers were present in wetland areas of the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a very smart looking bird.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* A fairly common winter visitor to coastal India; a pair of birds were observed along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* An uncommon winter visitor to the coasts of India, small numbers were present in Mandvi Harbour and along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A common resident throughout India and Nepal, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* This species is both a common resident and a common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well in both areas, on numerous occasions.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* A fairly common winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We saw small numbers along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii* A common winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We saw good numbers of this species along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* A fairly common winter visitor to both India and Nepal, where we saw it very well on a number of occasions.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* A fairly common winter visitor to northwestern India, where we saw it well in several wetland areas.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* This species is also a fairly common winter visitor to the coasts of India. We saw a solitary individual in Mandvi Harbour, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Another fairly common winter visitor, mainly to coastal areas of India, where we saw it very well on a few occasions.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* An uncommon winter visitor to northern India, we saw small numbers at a number of wetland areas.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* A common winter visitor throughout the whole of India, where we saw it very well on numerous occasions.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Another common winter visitor to India, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well in most wetland areas, up to 100 birds were observed wintering along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well in most wetland areas, in both countries.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A fairly common winter visitor throughout India, where we saw it well on numerous occasions.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* A fairly common winter visitor to coastal India. We saw good numbers along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, which we saw on numerous occasions.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A common winter visitor to coastal areas of

India. Small numbers were observed along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* A locally common winter visitor to coastal areas of India; good numbers were wintering along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* A common winter visitor to both India and Nepal, where we saw it well on a number of occasions.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* This is also a common winter visitor to India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on several occasions.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* A fairly common but localised winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We saw it at Don Dam, near Nakhatrana and again along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* A fairly common winter visitor along the coast of northern India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw small numbers along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch, followed by a second sighting of a small flock on a sandbank along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* A rare winter visitor to coastal areas of India. We were very fortunate to observe three individuals wintering along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* A common winter visitor and passage migrant throughout India, where we saw it well on many occasions.

LARIDAE

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini* This species is a common winter visitor to the west coast of India. We found large numbers along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Steppe Gull *Larus barabensis* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to India and Nepal. We found small numbers wintering along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We saw it regularly in India and we saw a couple of birds wintering along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* This attractive species of gull is a common winter visitor to India. We found a very large flock wintering at Topinsar Dam, in downtown Mandvi, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* In Gujarat the Slender-billed Gull is a resident, breeding species. In other parts of India it is only a winter visitor. We found small numbers along the beach, at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch.

STERNIDAE

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica* A common winter visitor to India, we saw it very well at a couple of the dams we visited and also along the coast, on the Gulf of Kutch.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* A fairly common winter visitor to coastal India; we saw our first at Don Dam, not far from Nakhatrana, there were also a few along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch. A third sighting, took place at a large dam in the Gir Forest National Park.

River Tern *Sterna aurantia* A fairly common resident of northern India, we saw it very

well at a few of the dams we visited and at the Gadali River, at Gondal.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to parts of the India coast. We enjoyed good scope views of a couple of birds at a large wetland in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* This diminutive species of tern is a common winter visitor to the coast of northwestern India; small numbers were present in Mandvi Harbour and along the beach at Modhva, on the Gulf of Kutch. In Nepal, it is a fairly common resident and breeding bird along the larger rivers in the lowlands of the south. We found small numbers along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda* A common resident along the larger rivers in the lowlands of southern Nepal. We saw a single bird in full breeding plumage, flying above the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* In Gujarat this species is predominantly a passage migrant, wintering mainly in the south of India. However, some birds do winter here, in very small numbers. We enjoyed good scope views of small flock of this species roosting on a small island in the Gadali River, at Gondal, while we were having our picnic lunch.

PTEROCLIDAE

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* A common resident throughout much of India, we enjoyed many close looks at this very beautiful bird.

Painted Sandgrouse *Pterocles indicus* Throughout much of India this is a widespread but uncommon species. Therefore, we were very fortunate to find a pair of birds along the roadside, not far from the town of Hodka.

COLUMBIDAE

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* Large feral populations present in all towns and villages in both India and Nepal.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* In Nepal this species is a common altitudinal migrant. We saw one very large flock in Chitwan National Park. The flock was at the elephant training camp, where they feed on the scraps that are left over after the elephants have been fed.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* A very widespread and common resident throughout the whole of India and the lowlands of Nepal.

Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* A common and widespread resident throughout northern India and the lowlands of Nepal.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* This species is also a common and widespread resident throughout the whole of India and the lowlands of Nepal.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* A common and widespread resident throughout the whole of India, where we saw it on almost a daily basis.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* This species is a common localised resident of the lowlands of Nepal. We saw small numbers on a daily basis during our stay in Chitwan National Park.

Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera* A common and widespread resident in both India and the lowlands of Nepal. We enjoyed some good very

close looks in the Gir Forest National Park, in India and in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

PSITTACIDAE

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* This large species of parakeet, is absent from Gujarat but is a common resident in the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it on a daily basis in Chitwan National Park.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* A common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it on most days of the tour.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* A fairly common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal. We enjoyed many good sightings in the Gir Forest National Park, in India and in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* A fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal, we enjoyed some very good sightings, in Chitwan National Park.

CUCULIDAE

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus varius* This widespread and locally common resident of both India and the lowlands of Nepal, is often heard but seldom seen. Fortunately for us, this species was particularly common around Tika's lodge at Chitwan, where we saw it well on a few occasions. We also saw it well on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* A common resident of both India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw three solitary adult males during the Indian section of the tour.

Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis* This very large species of cuckoo is a fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal. It is always shy and retiring, even so, we enjoyed good sightings in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* A common resident of both India and the lowlands of Nepal; we saw it very well in both India and Nepal.

TYTONIDAE

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* A fairly common resident throughout India; one flew in front of our bus, just after dark, close to the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

STRIGIDAE

Pallid Scops-Owl *Otus brucei* The Pallid Scops-Owl is one of the rarest owls in the world. It has a small breeding range in southwestern Asia and winters in northwestern India. We were very fortunate that our guide knew a daytime roost site in the grounds of a nearby lodge, at the Little Rann of Kutch. Even when the

tree where a bird was roosting was pointed out to us, the bird was still hard to find, because it camouflaged so well against the trunk of the tree.

Indian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bengalensis* A fairly common resident throughout much of India; we enjoyed splendid looks at this large species of owl in the Banni Grasslands, close to Fulay.

Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* This species does not occur in Gujarat and in Nepal it is an uncommon resident of the lowlands. Fortunately, Tika knew where there was a day time roost of this species in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* A common resident of Nepal; this species is often active during daylight hours and we managed to find one during the day, in Chitwan National Park.

Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* A common resident in the lowlands of Nepal, we enjoyed good sightings of this small species of owl in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* A common resident of both India and the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it very well on many occasions. There were up to 12 resident birds nesting in the grounds of Koshi Camp, they proved to be rather noisy, when we were trying to get to sleep!

Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* A fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it well in both Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to India, we saw one very well as it flushed from cover in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary. In Nepal, it is a rare winter visitor to the lowlands, so we were very fortunate to see one in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Sykes' Nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* This beautiful species of nightjar is a rare winter visitor to the deserts of northwestern India. A local guide from the village of Fulay, in the Banni Grasslands, took us to see one, roosting on the ground during daylight hours. This species is poorly illustrated in every bird book it appears in. In reality it is much greyer, than shown in any illustration.

APODIDAE

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasienis* This species is an uncommon resident of the lowlands of Nepal. On the last day of the tour a small flock flew over Koshi Camp.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* A fairly common summer visitor throughout Nepal. We saw a small flock flying overhead, not far from Mugling, in the middle altitude of the Himalayas.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* A common resident throughout India, which we saw well on a few occasions.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* This very similar species is a common resident of Nepal, which we saw well on a few occasions.

HEMIPROCINIDAE

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* In Gujarat, this species only occurs in the Gir Forest National Park, where we saw it very well. In Nepal, it is a common resident of the lowlands, we enjoyed some very good sightings, in Chitwan National Park.

ALCEDINIDAE

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A fairly common resident throughout both India and Nepal, we enjoyed numerous sightings in both countries.

Blue-eared Kingfisher *Alcedo meninting* This is one of the rarest breeding birds in Nepal, only a handful of birds breed here. We were very fortunate to enjoy two prolonged sightings of this species in Chitwan National Park.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* An uncommon resident of the lowlands of Nepal, we enjoyed a few good sightings in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* A common resident throughout India and Nepal, which we saw on a daily basis.

Himalayan Pied Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* An uncommon resident of montane rivers throughout the Himalayas of Nepal. We were very fortunate to have a bird fly right past us, along the Trasuli River, not far from Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A widespread resident of both India and Nepal, which we saw at most wetland areas.

MEROPIDAE

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni* An uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We very much enjoyed good sightings of this attractive bee-eater, in Chitwan National Park and in Patnali Forest, close to Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* A very common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* A fairly common summer visitor to the lowland forests of Nepal. They had just arrived into Nepal for the summer months and we saw a few very well in Patnali Forest, near to the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

CORACIIDAE

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* This common and widespread resident occurs throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal; we saw it on almost every day of the tour.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* In Gujarat this species is a common winter visitor, which we saw well on a number of occasions. In Nepal it is a fairly common resident of the lowlands, where we saw it well on several occasions.

BUCEROTIDAE

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* A fairly common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We enjoyed good sightings in Chitwan National Park and in the Patnali Forest, close to Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

CAPITONIDAE

Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata* A common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal; we saw it very well on a few occasions in Chitwan National Park.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica* This species is also a common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal; we enjoyed good looks at this species in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve and in the nearby Patnali Forest.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* A common and widespread resident of both India and Nepal. Somewhat surprisingly, we only saw this species on two occasions; firstly, in the Gir Forest National Park and secondly in the mid-Himalayas, above the town of Mugling.

PICIDAE

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* An uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal, which we saw surprisingly well on a few occasions.

Indian Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nanus* In India this species is a common resident, which we saw well in Gir Forest National Park. In Nepal it is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands, which we saw well on one occasion, in the Patnali Forest.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus* A fairly common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well during our time in Chitwan National Park.

Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei* A common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal; we saw it very well on a few occasions in Chitwan National Park.

Rufous Woodpecker *Celeus brachyurus* This species of woodpecker is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal; we saw it very well on a couple of occasions, while birding in Chitwan National Park.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* Another uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions, in Chitwan National Park.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha* Similar to the above species, it also is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well on one occasion in Chitwan National Park.

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* Yet another uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. Once again, we saw it well on a couple of occasions in Chitwan National Park.

Grey-faced Woodpecker *Picus canus* This species of woodpecker is a fairly common resident throughout all forested areas of Nepal. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions, during our time in Chitwan National Park.

Himalayan Flameback *Dinopium shorii* A fairly common resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. Once again, we enjoyed a couple of good sightings in

Chitwan National Park.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* In India this is a common and widespread resident, which we saw at Dasada. In Nepal it is an uncommon resident of lowland forests, which we saw well in Chitwan National Park and again in the Patnali Forest.

Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus* This very large species of woodpecker is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well on one occasion, in Chitwan National Park.

ALAUDIDAE

Indian Bushlark *Mirafra erythroptera* A widespread and locally common resident of the plains of northern India. We saw it well in thorn scrub close to Nakhatrana and on a second occasion in the Naliya Grasslands.

Ashy-crowned Finch-Lark *Eremopterix grisea* A common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well on most day of the tour.

Rufous-tailed Lark *Ammomanes phoenicurus* This is a common resident in India, which we saw very well on many occasions.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* A very common winter visitor to India, we saw enormous wintering flocks, on almost a daily basis.

Sand Lark *Calandrella raytal* Endemic to the Indian subcontinent, where it only occurs along the edge of the major rivers. We saw it very well along the Rapti River in Chitwan National Park and along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* A common resident of the more arid, northern areas of India, we saw it well on many occasions.

Sykes' Lark *Galerida deva* A fairly common but range restricted resident of northwestern India. We saw it very well in thorn scrub close to Nakhatrana and again in the Naliya Grasslands.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* A fairly common resident of both India and Nepal. We enjoyed good looks in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India. This was followed by a second sighting, at the Koshi Barrage, in Nepal.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Grey-throated Sand Martin *Riparia chinensis* A common resident of both India and Nepal. However, we failed to find it in India and it proved to be very common in Chitwan National Park and the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Dusky Crag-Martin *Hirundo concolor* A resident bird of cliffs and gorges, which will also use old forts and old buildings in towns and cities. It proved to be fairly common throughout northern India.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Seen on almost every day of the tour; in India it is a common and widespread winter visitor and in Nepal it is a common and widespread summer visitor and passage migrant.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* This attractive species of swallow is a fairly common resident throughout most of India, we saw it well on several occasions.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* In Gujarat this species is a common resident, which we saw almost daily. In Nepal it is a common and widespread summer visitor and passage migrant. In Nepal we only saw this species along the Trasuli River, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

MOTACHILLIDAE

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* An incredibly common winter visitor to both India and Nepal, which we saw almost daily. At dusk on a couple of occasions in Chitwan National Park, we saw flocks of thousands of birds flying towards their night time roost.

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla madaraspatensis* A fairly common resident of both India and Nepal, which we saw well on many occasions.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* An uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal, which we saw well on several occasions.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* A fairly common winter visitor to India, where we saw it in thorn scrub close to Nakhatrana and on one occasion, in the Little Rann of Kutch, we found a large flock of 100 or so birds, feeding together in the grassland, on the edge of a large lake.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* A common and widespread winter visitor to India and the lowlands of Nepal. Surprisingly, we only saw this species in the Gir Forest National Park, however, we did see it very well.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* A common and widespread resident throughout India and Nepal. Somewhat surprisingly, we failed to find it in India, perhaps the areas we visited were too arid for this species. It proved to be common in Nepal.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* This species does not occur in Gujarat and is a common winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on one occasion, in farmland, close to Koshi Camp.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* A very common winter visitor to India, which we saw on almost every day of the tour. In Nepal it is a very rare winter visitor, however, we did see one individual, in farmland, close to Koshi Camp.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* An uncommon winter visitor to India, we were very fortunate to observe a large flock of this species in agricultural land, close to the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* A rare winter visitor to the plains of northern India. We enjoyed prolonged, very good looks at a single bird, in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* A fairly common winter visitor to India. Even so, we only saw one bird, it was perched on telegraph wires at Don Dam, near Nakhatrana. Fortunately it stayed on the wires and we were able to enjoy good scope views of it.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* A common winter visitor to the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw small flocks in Chitwan National Park and in the Patnali Forest.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* This is a fairly common winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal. We saw a few small flocks in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Large Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina macei* This very large species of cuckoo-shrike is a common resident in both India and Nepal. We saw it very well on a few occasions in Chitwan National Park.

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos* The Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike is a common altitudinal migrant, breeding in the high Himalayas during the summer months and dispersing to the lowlands of Nepal and the plains of northeastern India. We saw it very well in Chitwan National Park and in the Patnali Forest.

Rosy Minivet *Pericrocotus roseus* This uncommon species is a summer visitor to Nepal, we were very fortunate to observe a pair of birds in Patnali Forest.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* This species is a common resident of India and an uncommon resident in Nepal. We saw it well on several occasions in both India and Nepal.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* This is a common altitudinal migrant; nesting in the Himalayan forests during the summer months and spreading out into the lowlands of Nepal and the plains of northern India during the winter months. We saw one pair well in the Patnali Forest.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* This species does not occur in Gujarat and in Nepal it is a common resident. We saw it well in Chitwan National Park and in the Patnali Forest.

Pied Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* A common resident of Nepal, we only saw it on one occasion, in a mixed species feeding flock, in Chitwan National Park.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Not found in Gujarat, but in Nepal it is a common resident of the lowlands, which we saw on a daily basis.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* A very common resident of Gujarat, which we saw on a daily basis. It does not occur in Nepal.

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys* A common resident of Nepal, we enjoyed watching them while we ate our picnic lunch in the middle altitude of the Himalayas, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* A common and widespread resident throughout India and Nepal. We saw it on almost every day of the tour.

CHLOROPSEIDAE

Gold-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* This attractive species is a fairly common resident of Nepal. We saw it very well in Chitwan National Park and again in the Patnali Forest.

AEGITHINIDAE

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* A common and widespread resident throughout both India and Nepal. We saw it very well on a number of occasions.

Marshall's Iora *Aegithina nigrolutea* An uncommon and very localised resident of northwestern India. We enjoyed incredibly good looks at a couple of pairs in

tropical thorn forest near Nakhatrana.

HYPOCOLIIDAE

Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* This was the main target bird of the whole tour and I am pleased to be able to say that we saw it so very well. The Grey Hypocolius breeds during the summer months in Iran and Iraq. During the winter months it migrates southwards wintering mainly on the Arabian peninsula. There is only one place in the whole of India where this species winters and this is in the Banni Grasslands, close to the village of Fulay. We were very fortunate to enjoy very good looks at an adult male and an adult female feeding on berries of the toothbrush tree. This bird was voted bird of the trip by tour participants.



CINCLIDAE

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasi* A common and widespread resident of the mountain streams and rivers of Nepal. We were very fortunate to watch a couple of birds along the Trasuli River, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

TURDIDAE

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to both India and Nepal. We enjoyed great scope views of a single bird in the Patnali Forest, while eating our picnic lunch.

Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina* This beautiful species of thrush is a fairly common summer visitor to Nepal. Ruth managed to see one in the Patnali Forest.

Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* A common and widespread resident of the lower Himalayas throughout Nepal. We saw one bird along the edge of the Trasuli River, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

Small-billed Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma* A fairly common altitudinal migrant; breeding in the mountain forests of Nepal during the summer months and disperses to the northern plains of India during the winter months. We saw one bird very well during our time in Chitwan National Park.

Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor* This is an uncommon altitudinal migrant; it also

breeds in the mountain forests of Nepal during the summer months and disperses to the lowlands of Nepal and the plains of northern India during the winter months. We found a small wintering flock, while birding in the Patnali Forest.

CISTICOLIDAE

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A fairly common resident of both India and Nepal, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* A fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it on one occasion, while birding in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Rufous-vented Prinia *Prinia burnesii* Until recently, this species was thought only to occur in grassland along the edge of the Indus River, in Pakistan. However, the excellent birding guides at Koshi Camp recently discovered a completely new subspecies to science, the *napali* race of the Rufous-vented Prinia, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. It is a skulking bird of tall grassland and it was not easy to see well. Eventually, we all managed to see it fairly well.

Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* This very uncommon species is an endemic resident of the lowlands of Nepal and Bhutan. It occurs in grassland in forest clearings; it was exactly this habitat where we observed this species, in Chitwan National Park. This species is classified as 'vulnerable', in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 10,000 birds and is unfortunately declining rapidly. The main threat to this species is habitat loss as the terai of southern Nepal is being rapidly converted to agricultural land.

Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani* A locally common resident of semi-desert thorn scrub, of the plains of northern India. We saw it very well in thorn scrub, close to Nakhatrana and in the Naliya Grasslands.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsoni* A widespread and fairly common resident from the Himalayan foothills to peninsular India. We enjoyed a few good sightings throughout the tour.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* This species is a widespread and common resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well on many occasions.

SYLVIIDAE

Blyth's Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to Nepal. We saw one bird very well, in Chitwan National Park.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* A fairly common winter visitor throughout India and Nepal. We only saw it on one occasion; a small flock was observed very well in the reeds surrounding a small pond, close to our lodge, on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* This very plain species of warbler is an uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal. We were extremely fortunate to enjoy good looks at one of these birds skulking around in the undergrowth in Chitwan National Park.

Sykes' Warbler *Hippolais rama* This small *Hippolais* warbler is a common winter

- visitor to northwestern India, where we saw it well on a few occasions.
- Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius* A common and widespread resident throughout the Indian subcontinent, we saw it well on many occasions in both India and Nepal.
- Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* This species is a common winter visitor to India and an uncommon winter visitor to Nepal. We saw it very well on a few occasions in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, in India and on one occasion in the Patnali Forest, in Nepal.
- Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to the Himalayan foothills and lowlands of Nepal. Its breeding grounds are in far away Siberia. We were fortunate that one bird was wintering in vegetation along the edge of one of the ponds at Koshi Camp and we were able to observe it every time we sat in the hide looking at birds. This was however, the only one we saw.
- Smoky Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus fulgiventis* This species is an uncommon altitudinal migrant of the Himalayan mountain range. In the summer months it breeds in the high montane forests and spends the winter months in the lowlands. We saw it very well on one occasion in Chitwan National Park and on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.
- Tickell's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis* This very attractive species is a common altitudinal migrant. In Nepal it breeds above the treeline, in stunted shrubs and bushes and winters mainly in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia. In spring and Autumn it is a passage migrant through the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well in Chitwan National Park, Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve and the Patnali Forest.
- Yellow-browed Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* This species is a very uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands of southeastern Nepal. Therefore, we were somewhat fortunate to enjoy good looks at one individual in the Patnali Forest.
- Hume's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* Yet another common altitudinal migrant, which breeds in the upland forests of the Himalayas and winters in the low foothills and plains of southern Nepal. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions on its wintering grounds in Chitwan National Park.
- Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well on several occasions in both India and Nepal.
- Blyth's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* This common altitudinal migrant breeds in the high Himalayas and winters in the adjacent foothills. We only saw it on one occasion; a small wintering flock was observed very well in the Patnali Forest.
- Striated Grassbird** *Megalurus palustris* A fairly common but localised resident of the lowlands of Nepal. We saw a couple of birds very well at a small swamp in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* This species is a very common winter visitor to the plains of northern India. In Nepal, it is an uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands. We saw it almost daily in India and we saw it once in Nepal, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, while we were searching for the Daurian Redstart.
- Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* An uncommon winter visitor to the arid plains of

northwestern India. We had a fleeting glimpse of one of these birds while we were in our bus in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* A fairly common winter visitor to much of India. We saw it very well on two separate occasions; firstly, we saw an immature bird in thorn scrub along the roadside, close to Halvad and secondly, we saw an adult bird in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* A common winter visitor throughout much of India and the lowlands of Nepal. Surprisingly, we only saw it once in India, in the Gir Forest National Park. We saw it on many occasions in Nepal.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* A fairly common winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it well on one occasion while birding in Chitwan National Park.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* In Nepal this species is an uncommon altitudinal migrant; breeding in upland forests of the Himalayas during the summer months and wintering throughout the lowlands of Nepal. We saw a female very well on one occasion, while we were birding in the Patnali Forest.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina* Once again, in Nepal this species is a common altitudinal migrant, breeding in mountain forests during the summer months and wintering in the lowlands. We saw it regularly in the lowlands of Nepal.

Pale-chinned Flycatcher *Cyornis poliogenys* A common resident of the forested lowlands of eastern Nepal. We saw it well in Chitwan National Park and again in the Patnali Forest.

Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* A common resident and winter visitor throughout most of India. We saw a beautiful adult male on one occasion, in the Gir Forest National Park.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* A common altitudinal migrant; breeding in the montane forests of Nepal during the summer months and wintering in the lowlands. We saw it very well on one occasion in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* This beautiful species is an uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands of Nepal and eastern India. We were very fortunate to enjoy good sightings of two beautiful males; the first, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, followed by a second sighting, in the Patnali Forest.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* A fairly common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw two beautiful adult males; the first was seen very well in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, followed by a second sighting, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* A common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well on many occasions.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* This species is an uncommon resident of the lowland forests of Nepal. We enjoyed two good sightings, of stunning,

singing males. The first was observed in Chitwan National Park and the second sighting occurred in the Patnali Forest.

- Indian Black Robin** *Saxicoloides fulicata* This species is a common and widespread resident throughout India, where we saw it well almost daily.
- Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* In the summer months this bird breeds in the forests of Nepal and in the winter months, it winters throughout the whole of India. We saw it very well on numerous occasions, both in India and Nepal.
- Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureoreus* This species has not previously been observed in Nepal. The excellent resident birders at Koshi Camp had located a female wintering in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. Fortunately for us, it was still there and Tika was able to take us straight to it. It was very skittish but in the end, we all saw it very well.
- White-capped River-Chat** *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus* A common resident of the rivers and streams of the Himalayas. We were very pleased to observe this stunningly plumaged bird, on a mountain stream, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.
- Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus* This species is also a common resident of the rivers and streams of the Himalayas. We were very pleased to observe this very attractive bird, both males and females, on a mountain stream, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.
- White-tailed Blue Robin** *Myiomela leucura* This very uncommon altitudinal migrant breeds in the forested mountains of Nepal, wintering in very small numbers in the lowland forests of Nepal. It was extremely fortunate that Ruth pointed out this very shy and elusive species on the forest floor, in the Patnali Forest.
- Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* A fairly common resident of Nepal. We were very fortunate to find one of these beautiful birds along a mountain stream, above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.
- Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maura* This species is a common winter visitor throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, which we saw on almost everyday of the tour.
- White-tailed Stonechat** *Saxicola leucura* This uncommon species is endemic to Pakistan, northern India and Nepal. This species only occurs in tall grassland adjoining large rivers; we were very fortunate to enjoy good looks in tall grassland close to the Rapti River, in Chitwan National Park.
- Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata* A common and widespread resident of the plains and hills throughout both India and Nepal, which we saw well on several occasions.
- Variable Wheatear** *Oenanthe picata* A common winter visitor to northwestern India, we saw this beautiful bird almost daily, during the Indian section of the tour.
- Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrna* A very uncommon winter visitor to northwestern India. We saw one bird very well indeed, in the Banni Grasslands.
- Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* A very common winter visitor to northwestern India, which we saw on a daily basis.
- Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* Yet another common winter visitor to northwestern India. We also saw this bird almost daily, during our time in India.
- Brown Rock-Chat** *Cercomela fusca* This fairly common species is endemic to northern India, where it inhabits rocky hills, cliffs, old forts and walls and houses in town and cities. We enjoyed one good look at this species at a rocky outcrop at

Saranath-Patio, near Nakhatrana.

RHIPIDURIDAE

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* A fairly common altitudinal migrant; breeding in the high Himalayas and wintering in the lowlands. We saw wintering birds in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve and in the Patnali Forest.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* A common and widespread resident throughout India; we only saw it in the Gir Forest National Park, where we saw it very well.

MONARCHIDEA

Black-naped Blue Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* This species is an uncommon resident throughout much of India and the lowlands of Nepal. We only saw it on one occasion, fortunately we saw it very well, this sighting occurred in the Patnali Forest.

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* This very attractive but uncommon species was observed on its wintering grounds in the Gir Forest National Park, in India.

TIMALIIDAE

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* This shy and illusive species is an uncommon resident of the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw it on two separate occasions; firstly, in Chitwan National Park, followed by a second sighting, in the Patnali Forest.

Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra* An uncommon resident throughout much of India. We saw a small party very well in the Gir Forest National Park.

Striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis* A common resident of the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw it in a mixed species feeding flock in Chitwan National Park and again in the Patnali Forest.

Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata* In Nepal this fairly common species only occurs in the lowlands. It frequents tall grass and reedbeds and normally occurs in small flocks. We enjoyed watching two such flocks, in tall grassland in Chitwan National Park.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* A fairly common resident which occurs throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it on only one occasion; a large flock of this species were moving quickly through tall grassland in Chitwan National Park.

Common Babbler *Turdoides caudatus* A very common resident of the drier areas of India, it proved to be abundant throughout Gujarat.

Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei* A common resident of the lowlands of Nepal, we saw it very well on one occasion in Chitwan National Park.

Slender-billed Babbler *Turdoides longirostris* This illusive and very uncommon species is endemic to central Nepal, northeast India and Bangladesh. In Nepal, it is only known from Chitwan National Park, occurring in tall grasslands and reeds associated with water. Normally a skulking species, we were extremely fortunate while in Chitwan National Park, to enjoy good looks at a few birds sat on top

of reeds, at the same time we were watching the Yellow-eyed Babblers. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threat to this species is the rapid and extensive loss and modification of tall grasslands and reed swamp throughout its limited range.

Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi* This species is a fairly common resident throughout much of India. We first saw it along the roadside at Halvad and again along the roadside, close to Limdi.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus* A fairly common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on many occasions.

White-bellied Erpornis *Yuhina zantholeuca* A fairly common resident in the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw a couple of birds in a mixed species feeding flock in Chitwan National Park.

PARIDAE

Great Tit *Parus major* A common and widespread resident throughout India and Nepal, where we enjoyed many good sightings.

White-naped Tit *Parus nuchalis* This very uncommon species is endemic to India, where it occurs in two isolated populations; one in Rajasthan and the other in Kutch, in northern Gujarat. We saw one of these birds very well early one morning in tropical thorn forest, close to Nakhatrana, in northern Gujarat. This bird is classified as 'vulnerable' in Threatened Birds of the World. It is estimated that it has a population of 5,000 birds and is declining. The main threat to this species is degradation and fragmentation of tropical thorn forest. The local people chop down the forest for firewood and illegal charcoal making. Over-grazing by goats is also a problem.

Black-lored Yellow Tit *Parus xanthogenys* A common resident throughout the forests of Nepal. We observed a bird very well in forest above Mugling, during the drive to Chitwan National Park.

SITTIDAE

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea* A common resident throughout the forests of Nepal, where we saw it very well on many occasions.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* A common altitudinal migrant throughout Nepal. We saw one bird very well, on its wintering grounds in Chitwan National Park.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* A fairly common resident of the lowland forests of Nepal, where we saw it very well on a few occasions.

NECTARINIIDAE

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* A common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* A fairly common resident throughout the lowland forests of Nepal, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

DICAEIDAE

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile* An uncommon resident of India and Nepal. We saw two birds, one adult and one immature, feeding on mistletoe berries, in the Gir Forest National Park.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* A common resident throughout India and Nepal, which we saw well on a few occasions.

ORIOOLIDAE

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* A common resident throughout India and the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw it on many occasions during our time in Nepal.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* This beautiful species is a fairly common altitudinal migrant in Nepal. We saw a pair on their wintering grounds in the Patnali Forest.

LANIIDAE

Rufous-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* A common winter visitor to northwestern India, where we saw it on a daily basis.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A fairly common winter visitor to eastern Nepal, where we saw it very well on several occasions.

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* In India this is a very common resident, where we saw it well on many occasions. In Nepal it only occurs in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, where we also saw it very well.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* In India the Long-tailed Shrike is a common resident, which we saw well on many occasions. In Nepal it is a common altitudinal migrant, we also saw it well here on several occasions.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* This is a fairly common altitudinal migrant in Nepal. We saw it very well on its wintering grounds in the lowlands of Nepal.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* A fairly common resident throughout much of India where we saw it very well on several occasions.

PRIONOPIDAE

Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis gularis* A fairly common resident in the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw a couple of birds very well during our time in Chitwan National Park.

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* A common resident of open woodland throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well in both countries on a few occasions.

DICRURIDAE

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* A common and widespread resident throughout India and Nepal. It was the only bird that we saw on every day of the tour.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* A common winter visitor to India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well on a number of occasions in the lowland forests of

Nepal.

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* A fairly common resident of India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it well in Chitwan National Park and in the Patnali Forest.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* This species is a fairly common resident of the lowland forests of Nepal. We saw this species very well on one occasion while birding in the Patnali Forest.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* A fairly common resident of the lowland forests of Nepal, where we saw it very well on numerous occasions.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Another fairly common resident of the lowland forests of Nepal. It was seen during the elephant back safari in Chitwan National Park and Chris saw one at Koshi Camp.

ARTAMIDAE

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* This species is a fairly common resident throughout the forests of the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well in Chitwan National Park and again in the Patnali Forest.

CORVIDAE

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* A common resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We only saw it in Nepal, where it proved to be very common.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* A common and widespread resident of villages and towns throughout the whole of India and the lowlands of Nepal. It was seen on almost every day of the tour.

Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* The common resident crow of both India and Nepal. We saw it well in the Gir Forest National Park, in India and on a daily basis in Nepal.

STURNIDAE

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* An uncommon resident in the lowlands of Nepal, we observed a few birds in Chitwan National Park.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* A common and widespread resident throughout much of India and the lowlands of Nepal. It proved to be common in Nepal but we failed to find it in India.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* A fairly common resident throughout India, which we saw on a daily basis. However, we failed to find it in Nepal, where for some reason, it has started to decline in numbers.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* A common and widespread resident throughout towns and villages of both India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it on almost every day of the tour.

Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra* A fairly common resident of the lowlands of Nepal where we saw it well on many occasions.

Grey-headed Starling *Sturnia malabarica* A fairly common summer visitor to the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on several occasions.

Brahminy Starling *Temenuchus pagodarum* A fairly common resident throughout

India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we saw it well on several occasions.

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* This stunning looking bird is a common winter visitor to northwestern India, where it occurs in large flocks. It normally winters in towns and cities and adjacent agricultural land. We enjoyed watching many flocks during our time in India.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* A common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, which we saw on numerous occasions.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* A common resident of Nepal, which we saw well on several occasions.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* This species is a common and widespread resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. We saw it very well in the Gir Forest National Park, in India and in Chitwan National Park, in Nepal.

PLOCEIDAE

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* A common resident throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal. Somewhat surprisingly we only observed this species on one occasion, when we observed a small flock along the roadside, close to Gathsis, in Gujarat.

Black-breasted Weaver *Ploceus benghalensis* A fairly common resident throughout northern India and the lowlands of Nepal. Once again, we only observed one flock of this species; a small flock was observed in a reedbed surrounding a small pond, close to our lodge, on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

ESTILDIDAE

Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* A common resident throughout much of India; it proved to be common throughout Gujarat.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* A fairly common resident throughout much of India and the lowlands of Nepal. The only time we saw this species was as the bird feeders in Koshi Camp, where we saw them very well.

EMBERIZIDAE

Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* A fairly common altitudinal migrant of Nepal; we saw it on two occasions on its wintering grounds. The first sighting occurred in Chitwan National Park and the second sighting occurred at Koshi Camp.

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* An uncommon winter visitor to western India; we enjoyed many good sightings of this beautiful bird during our time in Gujarat.

Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata* An uncommon resident of arid rocky areas of northwestern India. We saw a small flock very well at a rocky outcrop at Sarannath-Patio, close to Nakhatrana.

MAMMALS

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* Common and widespread throughout northern India and the lowlands of Nepal, we enjoyed many sightings.

- Northern Plains Grey Langur** *Semnopithecus entellus* The Hanuman Langur has very recently been split into three species. We enjoyed many sightings of this species during our time in India.
- Tarai Grey Langur** *Semnopithecus hector* This species proved to be very common in Chitwan National Park.
- Golden Jackal** *Canis aureus* We enjoyed good looks at this species throughout northwestern India, as well as a surprise sighting, close to Koshi Barrage, in Nepal.
- Bengal Fox** *Vulpes bengalensis* This very beautiful animal was seen twice at dusk at the entrance to its den at Koshi Barrage, in Nepal.
- Ratel** *Mellivora capensis* This beautiful animal is nocturnal, shy and rarely seen, therefore; we were very fortunate to see one hiding under a bush in broad daylight, in the Gir Forest National Park. It is very aggressive when threatened and fearless against bigger adversaries, being armed with sharp teeth, tough, loose hide and large stink glands. It had not been seen in the park for over 20 years.
- Small Indian Mongoose** *Herpestes auropunctatus* This widespread species was observed on one occasion in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Indian Grey Mongoose** *Herpestes edwardsii* This large and attractive species of mongoose was seen regularly throughout the tour, in both India and Nepal.
- Ruddy Mongoose** *Herpestes smithii* Endemic to India and Sri Lanka, this uncommon mammal was observed by part of the group, in the Gir Forest National Park.
- Jungle Cat** *Felis chaus* We were all sat in the hide at Koshi Camp, late in the afternoon, hoping that we might get a glimpse of a Fishing Cat. Suddenly, an adult Jungle Cat came walking along towards us, it had no idea that we were watching it and we enjoyed superb looks at this very handsome creature.
- Fishing Cat** *Felis viverrina* As its name implies, the Fishing Cat is a semi-aquatic hunter of fish, frogs, snakes, water insects, crabs, crayfish and shellfish. It scoops prey from the water with its paws. Some members of our tour party just happened to be in the right place and the right time and were able to see a mother with a kitten in the spotlight, at Koshi Camp.
- Lion** *Pantera leo* The Asian race of Lion now only occurs in the Gir Forest National Park, of India. We were very fortunate to have an adult female come and sit close to our jeep, towards the end of our afternoon drive.
- Ganges Dolphin** *Platanista gangetica* One of the worlds most endangered mammals, we were very fortunate to enjoy very good sightings of a small group during the boat trip along the Koshi River, in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve. They showed very well, they are often not very co-operative.
- Asiatic Wild Ass** *Equus hemionus* The southern form of this species only occurs in the Little Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary. Over the past decade numbers have slowly increased and we were all very pleased to find good numbers present in the reserve. It is a very attractive looking animal.
- Indian Rhinoceros** *Rhinoceros unicornis* During our elephant back safari in Chitwan National Park, we enjoyed very close sightings of this endangered animal.
- Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa* Common and widespread throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, we enjoyed good sightings in the Gir Forest National Park and in Chitwan

- National Park.
- Indian Muntjac** *Muntiacus muntjac* This small and very shy species of deer usually remains hidden in dense jungle, only venturing out into the open in the early morning. Fortunately, we enjoyed a couple of good sightings in Chitwan National Park.
- Chital** *Cervus axis* Common and widespread throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, where we enjoyed many good sightings.
- Hog Deer** *Cervus porcinus* We were very fortunate to see this very shy and elusive species of small deer, on a couple of occasions in Chitwan National Park.
- Sambar** *Cervus unicolor* This very large species of deer is common and widespread throughout India and the lowlands of Nepal, it is the favorite food of the Tiger.
- Nilgai** *Boselaphus tragocamelus* This species is common and widespread throughout India where we enjoyed many sightings, it is considered sacred by Hindus because it resembles a cow in appearance.
- Water Buffalo** *Bubalus arnee* Almost all Water Buffaloes have been domesticated and it is now very hard to find them in the wild. The Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve was specifically created to preserve the last of Nepal's wild Water Buffaloes. During our time there we were able to see a few, but they are always shy and fortunately for us, they always kept their distance.
- Indian Gazelle** *Gazella bennettii* This delightful animal proved to be fairly common in the more arid areas of northwestern India.
- Northern Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus pennantii* We enjoyed many sightings of this common animal, throughout northern India and in Chitwan National Park.
- Small Indian Field Mouse** *Mus booduga* It was great to be able to see this very small native mouse, coming into feeders at our dining room, in our lodge at Nakhatrana.
- Indian Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus* We observed a small colony of this species of flying-fox, at Topinsar Dam, in Mandvi. We also saw this species flying over Koshi Camp every evening, at dusk.
- Indian Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus coromandra* This very common and diminutive species of bat was observed early one morning, returning to its roost in the thatch on the roof of our dining room at our lodge in the Little Rann of Kutch. We also saw it at dusk in Chitwan National Park and in the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve.
- Indian Hare** *Lepus nigricollis* This species of hare is common and widespread throughout India, where we enjoyed a few good sightings.