

MYANMAR

1 – 16 DECEMBER 2003

TOUR REPORT

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Burma, now renamed Myanmar, has been closed to foreigners for a generation. In 1962 a military junta took control of the government. The harsh policies of this military regime and particularly the detention since 1990 of the democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, have attracted strong criticism from the international community. It was against this backdrop that a Peregrine Bird Tour group of 13 adventurous birders, became one of the first birding groups to be allowed entry into Myanmar.

The policies of the military junta have not all been doom and gloom, during decades of social and economic isolation Myanmar has escaped the erosion of both its culture and environment, which sadly, is all too evident elsewhere in Asia. Visiting Myanmar was like stepping back in time, providing a rare glimpse at Asia, as it used to be. Although still well off the beaten track, our local ground agents made our visit not only logistically feasible but almost comfortable, (well there was the jeeps) they certainly made the tour dusty, but memorable!

We began our adventure in the tree-lined avenues of the charmingly old-world capital of Rangoon, recently renamed Yangon, situated on the edge of the huge rice-producing delta of the Irrawaddy River. None of us will forget the visit to Shwedagon Pagoda, an ethereal complex of striking golden-spired temples and a mecca for Burmese Buddhists. Legend has it that Shwedagon enshrines eight hairs of the last Buddha, along with relics of three previous Buddhas. Its stupa is plated with solid gold, set with thousands of jewels and decorated with hundreds of gold and silver bells. The sightseeing tour provided us with a gentle introduction to the avifauna of Myanmar. Oriental Magpie-Robin was seen well in the grounds of our hotel as were Streak-eared Bulbuls, a Common Buzzard and a couple of Coppersmith Barbets. Parkland in the heart of the city yielded several Indian Pond Herons, a Black-crowned Night-Heron, Dusky Warbler, a small number of uncommon Asian Golden Weavers and a family party of uncommon Ashy Minivets. It also produced our first Irrawaddy Squirrels for the trip. Shwedagon Pagoda attracted large flocks of House Swifts and huge roosting flocks of Jungle Mynas and Black Drongos.

We spent the following morning at Hlawga National Park, on the outskirts of Yangon, which gave us our first taste of forest birding. Areas of wetlands harboured a Little Grebe, a small flock of Lesser Whistling-Ducks, a few Spot-billed Ducks, a secretive White-breasted Waterhen and a delightful Red-wattled Lapwing. We also added a migrant Osprey, great scope views of a Crested Serpent-Eagle and three species of spectacular bee-eaters, Green, Blue-tailed and the stunning Chestnut-headed. The dry scrubby woodland yielded a small flock of Olive-backed Pipits, Black-naped Monarch, Black-headed and Black-crested Bulbuls, Olive-backed Sunbird and an elusive pair of Asian Paradise-Flycatchers, which were absolutely stunning, when they momentarily appeared into view. We also enjoyed a good selection of mammals in the park, which included several troops of Rhesus Macaques, large numbers of Hog Deer and a few Sambar, the largest

species of deer in Asia. We also enjoyed great looks at the endangered Eld's Deer. During the heat of the day we drove northwards to Moyingyi Wetlands Reserve and in the late afternoon we enjoyed our first of two boat trips, which allowed us to get close to a wealth of wetland birds. Our visit here proved very rewarding and provided a great contrast to the forest birding, that predominated throughout most of the tour. Highlights of our first boat trip included huge numbers of Purple Swamphens, Whiskered Terns and Common Stonechats, large numbers of Little Cormorants, Cattle Egrets, Asian Openbills, Wood Sandpipers and Plaintive Cuckoos and smaller numbers of Purple Herons, Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets. Eastern Marsh Harriers were numerous but dowdy in comparison to the almost luminous male Pied Harriers. Small numbers of Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas were also seen along with Glossy Ibis, Brown Shrike, Sand Martin, Zitting Cisticola and best of all, a solitary Yellow Bittern lurking in the dense clumps of floating vegetation.

The following morning was taken up with another boat trip in the wetlands. Highlights this time included several Grey Herons, a solitary Black-headed Ibis, Cotton Pygmy-geese, a pair of Gadwall, a solitary Northern Pintail, a Black-shouldered Kite, Western Marsh- Harriers and a Greater Spotted Eagle soaring overhead. We also added a lone Common Coot, Common Snipe, Green and Common Sandpipers, Little Ringed Plovers, a splendid Eurasian Wryneck, Striated Swallow, Oriental Skylark, Oriental Reed-Warbler, Oriental Pipit and a pair of Large-billed Crows. The afternoon was taken up with a long drive to Pyay; during the drive we added Indian Roller and Indian Flying Fox.

Early in the morning we drove to the Irrawaddy River and took a boat to the opposite bank, where we did some birding in farmland and secondary forest. While crossing the river we observed small numbers of Red-rumped Swallows and a solitary Grey Wagtail. We created quite a stir when we arrived at a small village on the far bank of the river. Following a narrow trail we headed off into the scrub; here we enjoyed watching an adult Shikra perched in a tree and a very uncommon Besra circling overhead, Besras normally stay inside the forest, so it was very fortunate for us to see it so well. Continuing our walk we enjoyed great scope views of a splendid Banded Bay Cuckoo and the very localised Burmese Shrike and best of all, two birds endemic to Myanmar, the very long tailed White-throated Babbler and the uncommon Hooded Treepie. Other birds of note included Red-billed Blue-Magpie, Rufous Treepie, Red-vented Bulbul, Plain Prinia, Tickell's Leaf-Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler and Purple Sunbird. In the afternoon we had a long drive to the small town of Ma-gway, we broke the long drive with a couple of roadside birding stops which produced a few White-eyed Buzzards perched on telegraph poles, as well as Eurasian Collared-Dove, Ashy Woodswallow, Pied Bushchat and Striated Prinia. A stop at a small river produced Plain Martins, nesting under a bridge.

The early morning found us once again on a boat on the Irrawaddy River, heading for a large sandbank in the middle of the river. We were hoping to find some very specialised birds, which only occur, along the major rivers in the north of the Indian subcontinent. While watching a close pair of Ruddy Shelducks, a pair of Sand Larks, one of the specialist birds, flew past us. We were able to get close to them and enjoy superb looks. As we were watching them another of the specialities popped into view, we then had great looks at two pairs of White-tailed Stonechats, a very uncommon and highly localised species. Next, we spotted a small group of waders feeding on a narrow spit, along the edge of the sandbank. Closer examination produced a few Temminck's

Stints, several Little Ringed Plovers and best of all, yet another of the river specialities, the very rare Long-billed Plover. We all enjoyed scope views of an immature bird, who allowed us to get quite close. Following lunch, the afternoon was spent driving to the ancient capital of Bagan. A couple of roadside stops produced a family party of Rufescent Prinias, an Oriental Honey-buzzard, several Long-tailed Shrikes and a pair of charming Small Minivets.

Our very nice hotel in Bagan was situated on the banks of the Irrawaddy River and following breakfast we had a stroll along the river. We enjoyed splendid views of Kentish Plover, Pied Kingfisher and a large flock of Small Pratincoles, another of the river specialities, roosting on a large sandbank. A close Citrine Wagtail was an added bonus. We then divided ourselves amongst five open jeeps and steeled ourselves for the long, dusty, bumpy ride up into the Chin Hills. We were to break the long drive with an overnight stop, at the small village of Kazunma, where we stayed with the local villagers. In the late afternoon, we went for a walk along a dry riverbed, in the scrubby areas and small fields we coaxed out Black-hooded Oriole, and a pair of Yellow-eyed Babblers. Some bushy thickets provided cover for Red Collared-Doves and a Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon. Large flocks of Rose-ringed Parakeets were flying all around us and there was also a few of the much larger Alexandrine Parakeets amongst them. We also found a large flock of the very range restricted Blossom-headed Parakeets which very obligingly perched in a dead tree, allowing us to enjoy good scope views of them. A Streak-throated Woodpecker showed well in an old gnarled tree, the very beautiful Common Hoopoe hopped into view and a Crested Treeswift flew overhead. The flock of Blossom-headed Parakeets in the dead tree were replaced by a large flock of Common Rosefinches, the males looked particularly handsome in the scope.

Following breakfast served to us by our gracious hosts, we drove to a nearby large dam. Here we turned up several Red-breasted Parakeets, a superb Green-billed Malkoha, which can often be very difficult to get a good look at. We had great looks at a Stork-billed Kingfisher and a beautiful male Golden-fronted Leafbird, a Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike showed briefly and a pair of White-bellied Minivets, a highly localised and infrequently seen species, popped out of the acacias. A White-browed Fantail flitted in the treetops and a superb Greater Racket-tailed Drongo flew across an opening. A Blyth's Reed-Warbler and a Thick-billed Warbler skulked around in dense cover, superb Wire-tailed Swallows flew over the lake and a male Plain-backed Sparrow perched in an overhanging tree. In the afternoon we had a long, dusty drive through the arid central plain and up into the Chin Hills, the southern extension of the great Himalayas. On the way a couple of roadside stops produced a superb male Red Junglefowl, the very range restricted Grey-headed Parakeet, a soaring Mountain Hawk-Eagle, great looks at the rarely seen Ferruginous Flycatcher and good looks at the far commoner Verditer Flycatcher. Other species of interest included Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, a small party of Grey-breasted Prinias, a smart Greenish Warbler and the very uncommon Yellow-bellied Warbler. The afternoon was rounded off perfectly with good close looks at a male Ruby-cheeked Sunbird.

We spent the next three days birding Mount Victoria, in Natmataung National Park, which was to be the major focal point of the tour. We were hoping to find a wide range of Himalayan specialities, we were not to be disappointed. Whilst birding the oak-rhododendron forests of Mount Victoria we were staggered by the wealth of birds inhabiting the wooded slopes, which appeared to magically produce new birds at every turn. The star attraction of Mount Victoria is the beautiful and little known White-browed Nuthatch, known from the top of this mountain and only one other.

This was to be our main quarry on the first morning. Following a little searching amongst the native pines and stunted rhododendrons, Peter spotted a White-browed Nuthatch in a stunted tree, we enjoyed great views of a bird clambering around the branches. While watching this bird we also obtained good looks at a diminutive Yellow-browed Tit. We admired a Brown-throated Treecreeper and a dazzling Chestnut-bellied Rockthrush, we coaxed a White-throated Fantail into the open, observed a couple of Eyebrowed Thrushes in the canopy and added two more species of Nuthatches, Chestnut-vented and White-tailed.

Birding in the mid-altitude oak rhododendron forests of the mountain held the greatest diversity of species, highlights here included a superb Black Eagle flying just overhead at treetop height, we enjoyed watching a pair of Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers and a large flock of Chestnut-flanked and Japanese White-eyes, as well as an excellent Changeable Hawk-Eagle sitting in a large tree, feeding on a small bird. A male Daurian Redstart was a pleasant surprise, as it is a very uncommon winter visitor here. The flowering rhododendrons attracted Yellow-bellied and Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers and Mrs. Gould's, Green-tailed and Fire-tailed Sunbirds. A perky little Chestnut-headed Tesia appeared briefly and we were able to observe a family party of the extremely localised Brown-capped Laughingthrushes and we were very pleased to find a pair of Chestnut Buntings, a very uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar. Other birds observed at this altitude included Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Great and Golden-throated Barbets, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Eurasian Jay, Grey Treepie, Slender-billed and Maroon Orioles, Large Cuckoo-shrike, Yellow-bellied Fantail, Hair-crested Drongo, Slaty-backed and Rufous-gorgeted Flycatchers, Orange-flanked Bush-Robin, Hill Myna, Green-backed, Black-throated and Black-browed Tits, Crested Finchbill, Striated Bulbul, huge numbers of Buff-barred Warblers and a solitary Ashy-throated Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, Black-headed and Black-eared Shrike-Babblers, Rusty-fronted Barwing, Blue-winged, Chestnut-tailed and Red-tailed Minlas, Rufous-winged and White-browed Fulvettas, Rufous-backed and Grey Sibilas and Whiskered and Stripe-throated Yuhinas

Amongst the farmland and scrub at the base of the mountain we added Grey-chinned, Long-tailed and Short-billed Minivets, Scaly Thrush, Blue-fronted Redstart, Grey Bushchat, Flavescent Bulbul, Hill Prinia and Grey-hooded Warbler. We also encountered some of the less common inhabitants of this area, which included the secretive Golden Babbler, the very beautiful Silver-eared Mesia and seldom encountered species which included Buff-throated Warbler, Striped Laughingthrush and Long-tailed Wren-Babbler. We also found large flocks of Yellow-breasted Greenfinch and Little Buntings feeding on flowering thistles. Mammals included good sightings of Himalayan Striped and Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrels and best of all a pair of Yellow-throated Martens.

Leaving the mountains behind, we reluctantly bid farewell to the Chin Hills and set off on the long and dusty drive back to the ancient capital of Bagan. On reaching the central arid plains, we broke the long drive with birding stops at a couple of the larger rivers, which slowly meandered their way across the open plains. A Common Greenshank stalked the shallows, a Blue Rock-Thrush perched on top of a large boulder along the edge of the river and a pair of beautiful Bar-headed Geese flew along the river. A small flock of White-vented Mynas landed in a nearby tree, a pair of Black-collared Starlings foraged in farmland and an Asian House Martin flew overhead.

The following morning we drove across the Myingyan Plains to Mount Popa, an isolated 'forested island' in the middle of the arid central plains. Rising to 1,520 meters, Mount Popa is a steep sided extinct volcano, which was last active 250,000 years ago. During our visit here we added a number of new species for the trip. We enjoyed watching a couple of Blue-throated Barbets through the telescope. While we were doing so, another bird flew into the same tree it was a superbly plumaged Spot-winged Starling, which is a rare winter visitor to Myanmar. Fortunately, the bird stayed for a while and we were able to enjoy good scope views of it. Later in the morning, an Emerald Dove put in a brief appearance, before flying off into the forest. In the late morning we came across a small mixed-species feeding flock, which contained two new species for us, we observed a large number of Striped Tit-Babblers, which were fairly difficult to get a good look at and a few Oriental White-eyes, which were much easier to observe.

In the afternoon we explored Old Bagan, this was an unforgettable experience as we wandered around one of the world's most remarkable religious and archaeological sites. In the two centuries before Kublia Khan overran the region in 1287, some 13,000 temples, pagodas and other religious structures were built on the vast plain east of the Irrawaddy River. This was once a vast, populous and thriving royal capital, built between 1057 and 1287. It then mysteriously declined at the end of the 13th century and all that remains are the religious buildings that are made of permanent materials. All other buildings, including the king's palaces and monasteries were made of wood and have disappeared. Old Bagan is also an excellent place to go birding and we managed to add two new species for the trip. Surprisingly, we found Radde's Warblers to be quite common in the acacia thickets surrounding the temples. In the late afternoon, a small flock of Oriental Turtle-Doves flew by the group. Owls are always welcome and just prior to dinner our very excited local guide, Moe Aung was thrilled to find a Spotted Owlet in the grounds of the hotel, which we all saw very well.

Following breakfast at our hotel, we did a little birding along the banks of the Irrawaddy River and to our surprise added still more birds to the trip list. We enjoyed good scope views of a female Northern Shoveler, followed by an immature Pallid Harrier which flew directly above us and last but not least, a small flock of Spotted Redshanks, in non-breeding plumage. We then flew from Bagan to Yangon, where we spent the night, before flying back home.

During our time in Myanmar we visited a wonderful array of habitats, from the arid central plain to the splendid wetlands at Moyingyi Lake and the stunning oak and rhododendron forests of the mighty Himalayas. We visited ancient pagodas and temples, birded one of the world's major rivers, the Irrawaddy, often referred to as 'the Road to Mandalay' but most of all, we met some of the friendliest people on earth and enjoyed a very pleasant and rewarding tour.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The names used in this birdlist are those used in A Field Guide to the Birds of South-east Asia, by Craig Robson. Where they differ from those used in Clements Birds of the World Checklist, the Clements name is given in brackets.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* This common resident was observed very well on several occasions.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* A fairly common resident of southern Myanmar, we saw it very well on many occasions.

ANHINGIDAE

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* Another fairly common resident of southern Myanmar, we enjoyed good close looks on several occasions.

ARDEIDAE

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* This very large species of heron is an uncommon resident throughout Myanmar, we observed it well on several occasions.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* An uncommon resident of southern Myanmar, we enjoyed many very close sightings, during boat trips at the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Another uncommon resident of southern Myanmar, we enjoyed a few good looks during our boat trips at the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Yet another uncommon resident of southern Myanmar, where we enjoyed several good sightings.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A common resident, which we observed in most wetland areas.

Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii* A common resident throughout Myanmar, we enjoyed many good sightings of this species. At this time of year all the birds had already moulted into non-breeding plumage.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A common resident throughout the lowlands of Myanmar, we enjoyed many sightings.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* This uncommon resident of southern Myanmar, was only seen on one occasion. An adult bird was observed from the bus as it flew along the edge of a large lake, in the suburbs of Yangon.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* This uncommon resident was seen well on three separate occasions during our boat trips in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve. It is always a thrill to see a bittern, as they are always difficult to find.

CICONIIDAE

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* This species is a fairly common non-breeding visitor to Myanmar. A large flock was present at the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve, in southern Myanmar.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* This species is not unlike the Australian Ibis, it is a rare winter visitor to southern Myanmar. We were very fortunate to observe one of these birds flying overhead during our second boat trip in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Another rare winter visitor to southern Myanmar. Once again we enjoyed a good sighting of this species during one of the boat trips in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

ANATIDAE

Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* This species is a fairly common resident, we observed several large flocks.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* This very handsome species of goose breeds on high elevation lakes in central Asia, from the former Soviet Central Asia, Ladakh, Tibet, Mongolia and Northern China. It is a scarce winter visitor to Myanmar. Good spotting by Rob enabled us to enjoy a pair of birds flying along a small river at the foot of the Chin Hills, close to the village of Tawsalun. Unfortunately, this species is critically endangered, there are only something like 40,000 birds remaining in the wild. Its main threat is persistent human persecution, through shooting, egg-collecting and habitat destruction.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Large numbers wintering along the Irrawaddy River.

Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* Small numbers of this fairly common resident where present in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* A scarce winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed a pair of birds flying overhead, in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* An uncommon resident throughout Myanmar, we observed several small flocks throughout the tour.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* An uncommon winter visitor, we observed a solitary bird in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve, followed by a pair of birds on the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Another uncommon winter visitor, which we only observed on one occasion. A female was observed amongst a small flock of Spot-billed Ducks on the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A scarce winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed a solitary bird very well in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* This fairly common resident was observed on two occasions. On the second occasion, we enjoyed good scope views of this attractive raptor.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Similar in appearance to our Australian Kite, this common resident was observed well on a few occasions.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* This widespread species, is a fairly common resident in Myanmar, we enjoyed several good sightings.

Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* This fairly common resident was only observed on one occasion. We enjoyed good scope views of a bird perched at the top of a tree, overlooking a lake in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we enjoyed good close looks at a couple of female birds in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus* This is a fairly common winter visitor to Myanmar, we enjoyed many good sightings of both male and female birds in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* A scarce winter visitor to Myanmar, an immature bird flew over our heads at our hotel, on the east bank of the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we enjoyed a few very good, close sightings of this superbly plumaged harrier. We observed both male and female birds during the boat trips in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* We enjoyed a couple of very good looks, including scope views, of this common resident.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus* On two separate occasions we enjoyed good flight views of this uncommon resident.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* We enjoyed good scope views of this uncommon winter visitor, on two separate occasions and a good flight view on another occasion.

White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* A common resident of the drier areas of Myanmar, we enjoyed very good scope views of a couple of birds perched on telegraph poles, close to the village of Aunglan, in central Myanmar.

Common Buzzard (Eurasian Buzzard) *Buteo buteo* The literature states that this large raptor is an uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar. However, we found it to be a very common winter visitor throughout Myanmar, even wintering in the heart of Yangon, the capital city.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* We all enjoyed great views of this magnificent eagle flying at tree-top height, directly overhead in the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills. It is an uncommon resident throughout Myanmar.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* A very uncommon winter visitor to southern and central Myanmar, we enjoyed a few good looks at soaring birds in both these areas. They included adult dark morph birds and an immature pale morph bird. Although this species breeds over a vast area of northern Eurasia, it is estimated that there are less than 5,000 breeding pairs and the population is declining rapidly.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* This fairly common resident was only observed on one occasion, we had fairly distant scope views of a bird feeding on prey, in a large tree, in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis* A scarce resident of western Myanmar, we enjoyed good looks at a soaring bird, at the foot of the Chin Hills, close to the village of Saw.

FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel (Eurasian Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus* A fairly common winter visitor throughout Myanmar, which we saw well on several occasions.

PHASAIIANIDAE

Mountain Bamboo-Partridge *Bambusicola fytchii* This common resident was observed well by some members of the group, close to our lodge in Natmataung National Park.

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* Surprisingly, this common resident was only observed on one occasion. While in jeeps, travelling to the Chin Hills, the front two jeeps enjoyed good looks at a superb male bird, feeding on the road, close to the village of Ainggyi.

RALLIDAE

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* We observed this common resident on one occasion, a solitary bird was observed very well along the edge of a large lake in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* This locally common resident was observed in very large numbers in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* This uncommon resident was seen well on a few occasions.

Common Coot (Eurasian Coot) *Fulica atra* This species is a rare winter visitor to Myanmar, the warden at the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve, where we saw a solitary bird, had never seen this species before.

JACANIDAE

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* This uncommon resident was observed very well in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* This species is also an uncommon resident, which we observed very well in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

GLAREOLIDIDAE

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* This diminutive species of pratincole, is an uncommon resident which occurs on sandbanks in the larger rivers of Myanmar. On two separate occasions we recorded large flocks of a few hundred birds on sandbanks in the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

CHARADRIIDAE

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* This uncommon resident was observed well in the Hlawga National Park, near Yangon. Michael also observed this bird on two other occasions.

Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus* One of the highlights of the trip; there has only been a handful of sightings of this species in Myanmar, where it is a very rare winter visitor. In fact, it is rare everywhere, it is even rare on its breeding grounds in China, Korea and Japan. The total mainland population probably numbers less than 10,000 birds, nowhere is it found in large numbers and the population is declining. The small population breeding in Japan is sedentary. We enjoyed good scope views of an immature bird on a large sandbank in the Irrawaddy River, close to Ma-gway.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A common resident, numbers increase during the winter months, with the arrival of winter visitors from farther north in Asia. We observed many resident birds and smaller numbers of migratory birds.

Kentish Plover (Snowy Plover) *Charadrius alexandrinus* Small numbers of this species breed along the coast. We observed a number of migratory birds from further north in Asia, which winter on sandbanks in the larger rivers of Myanmar.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed a couple of birds during our boat trips in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, John pointed out a small flock of four birds feeding along a sandbank, in the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* This fairly common winter visitor was observed on two occasions, feeding on sandbanks, in a couple of the rivers.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* This uncommon winter visitor was seen well on several occasions.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Another uncommon winter visitor which was seen well on several occasions, we found large numbers wintering in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A common winter visitor throughout Myanmar.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* We recorded this fairly common winter visitor on a few occasions throughout the tour.

STERNIDAE

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* We encountered a large flock of this uncommon winter visitor in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve, the birds had already moulted into winter plumage.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove) *Columba livia* Feral populations are abundant throughout the towns and villages of Myanmar. However, central Myanmar is the only place in South-east Asia where there is a population of pure stock, breeding in the hills. We observed one of these birds feeding alone, in farmland on the outskirts of Bagan.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* A small flock of this uncommon resident was observed in flight, at old Bagan.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* A common resident of the drier areas of Myanmar.

Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Another common resident of the drier areas of Myanmar.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* A common resident throughout Myanmar.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* This uncommon resident was observed briefly on one occasion, when a bird landed on the ground and then immediately took off again, in Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon (Yellow-footed Pigeon) *Treron phoenicoptera* This uncommon resident was observed well in the scope, close to the village of Kazunma.

PSITTACIDAE

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* Small flocks of this uncommon resident were observed both perched and flying, close to the village of Kazunma.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* We observed several large flocks of this fairly common resident, throughout the tour.

Grey-headed Parakeet *Psittacula finschii* A solitary bird of this uncommon resident was observed very well, in the top of a large tree, close to the village of Aingyi.

Blossom-headed Parakeet *Psittacula roseata* A large flock of this fairly common resident was observed both flying and perched, close to the village of Kazunma.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* A few small flocks of this common resident were observed in flight, close to the village of Kazunma.

CUCULIDAE

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii* We enjoyed great scope views of this uncommon resident, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy River, opposite Pyay.

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* Large numbers of this common resident were observed during our boat trips in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis* This very large species of cuckoo is a common resident throughout Myanmar. We saw it particularly well at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Another large species of cuckoo, this fairly common resident was observed on a couple of occasions by Rob in the grounds of our lodge in Natmatoung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

STRIGIDAE

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* Thanks to Moe Aung, our local guide, we enjoyed great views of this common resident, in the grounds of our hotel at Bagan.

APODIDAE

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* This abundant resident, was observed on most days of the tour, with the exception of the Chin Hills.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* We enjoyed several good sightings of this common resident.

HEMIPROCENIDAE

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* This uncommon resident was observed in flight on two separate occasions, both sightings were close to the village of Kazunma.

ALCEDINIDAE

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* An uncommon resident of Myanmar, numbers swell greatly in winter, with an influx of birds from northern Asia. We enjoyed many sightings in most wetland areas.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* This uncommon resident was only recorded on one occasion, we enjoyed good scope views of a bird at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* This common resident was found throughout all wetland areas.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Another common resident, which we saw well on several occasions.

MEROPIDAE

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* This common resident, is by far the commonest bee-eater in Myanmar. We recorded it on most days of the tour, with the exception of the Chin Hills.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* This species is an uncommon resident of southwestern Myanmar, where we saw it very well.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* We only recorded this uncommon resident in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon, where we saw it very well.

CORACIIDAE

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* This beautiful bird is a common resident throughout the drier areas of Myanmar, where we saw it very well.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* We enjoyed several sightings of this uncommon resident and winter visitor. It is a very spectacular species.

CAPITONIDAE

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* This very large species of barbet is a fairly common bird of the Himalayas, it proved to be common in the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii* We only observed this common resident in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills. With some persistence, we all managed to enjoy good scope views of one.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica* Our experience with this common resident, was similar to the above species. After some persistence, we all managed to enjoy good scope views of this species in Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* This common resident proved much easier to observe and was seen well on several occasions, including downtown Yangon.

PICIDAE

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* We enjoyed a couple of great looks at this uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar. It is the strangest looking woodpecker in the world.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos hyperythrus* This very attractive and common resident was observed well on two occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* This uncommon resident was seen very well on one occasion, in a large tree, close to the village of Kazunma.

ALAUDIDAE

Sand Lark *Calandrella raytal* Endemic to sandbanks in large rivers, in the north of the Indian subcontinent. We enjoyed very close looks at several individuals of this uncommon resident, on large sandbanks in the Irrawaddy River, at Ma-gway.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* This uncommon resident and winter visitor, was observed well on two separate occasions. Firstly, in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve and again in the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Sand Martin (Common Sand Martin) *Riparia riparia* We enjoyed several sightings of this uncommon winter visitor, all sightings were of birds flying over lakes or rivers.

Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola* Similar in appearance to the above species, the Plain Martin is an uncommon resident of Myanmar, we found it in the same habitat as the Sand Martin, but not at the same places, the Plain Martins were in larger numbers.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* This common winter visitor was found throughout all lowland areas, it was particularly fond of open areas, often near water. It was not present in the Chin Hills.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* We enjoyed several good looks of this uncommon resident, it was always found flying over lakes or rivers.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* We enjoyed many good sightings of this common winter visitor, it could often be found in large flocks.

Striated Swallow *Hirundo striolata* Very similar in appearance to the above species, surprisingly, this common resident was only observed on one occasion, when a solitary bird flew by the observation platform in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Asian House Martin (Asian Martin) *Delichon dasypus* This uncommon winter visitor was only seen on one occasion, a solitary bird was observed flying along a large river, close to the village of Tayngtet, at the foot of the Chin Hills.

MOTACILLIDAE

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* A common and widespread resident throughout Myanmar, with the exception of the Chin Hills.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed a couple of individuals very well, on the bank of the Irrawaddy River, at Bagan.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* This species of wagtail is a common winter visitor, we enjoyed several good sightings.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Another common winter visitor, which we saw on several occasions.

Oriental Pipit *Anthus rufulus* This pipit is a common resident throughout the lowlands of Myanmar, we observed it on most days of the tour.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Small flocks of this species commonly winter throughout southern Myanmar. Unlike most other species of pipits, which prefer open areas, this species prefers to inhabit forested areas.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Large Cuckooshrike (Large Cuckoo-shrike) *Coracina macei* A common resident of Myanmar, we observed it well in the scope on one occasion in the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-winged Cuckooshrike (Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike) *Coracina melaschistos* This species is a fairly common resident, we had a brief look at a bird, at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* A very uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we were extremely fortunate to enjoy great looks at a family party, in parkland at Yangon, on the first day of the tour.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* We enjoyed watching a pair of this common resident on one of our travel days, close to the village of Yenan-gyaung.

White-bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygius* We were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at a pair of this very uncommon resident, at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* We enjoyed watching a couple of pairs of this stunning looking species. It is a common resident, we only saw it in the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris* Similar to the above species, it is a far less common resident and occurs at a lower altitude than the Long-tailed Minivet. We saw a couple of pairs very well on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* Another common resident, we observed a couple of pairs in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Crested Finchbill *Spizixos canifrons* The literature states that this delightful species is an uncommon resident of Myanmar. We found it to be common, on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus* Another uncommon resident, which we saw very well on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus atriceps* Another uncommon resident, we only recorded this species in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* This smart species of bulbul, is a common resident, we saw it in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon and again on Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* A common and widespread resident throughout Myanmar.

Flavescent Bulbul *Pycnonotus flavesces* A common resident of Myanmar, we saw it very well on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Streak-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus blanfordi* Endemic to South-east Asia, this rather plain species is a common resident throughout Myanmar, which we saw on most days of the tour.

CHLOROPSEIDAE

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* This attractive species is a common resident, we observed a couple of birds very well at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* We observed a female of this uncommon resident in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

AEGITHINIDAE

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* This attractive species is a common resident throughout Myanmar, we observed it on many occasions.

TURDIDAE

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* This attractive and uncommon resident was observed very well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* A common winter visitor to Myanmar, which we saw well on a few occasions, we saw it particularly well at our hotel in Bagan.

Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma* A scarce resident of Myanmar, we had a couple of glimpses of this species in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* This fairly common winter visitor was recorded in small numbers in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills and a solitary bird was observed in the grounds of our hotel at Bagan.

CISTICOLIDAE

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* The same species that occurs in northern Australia, however, in Myanmar it is much commoner than in Australia. We enjoyed many good looks, especially in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger* This uncommon resident was only seen on one occasion, we observed a small family party at a roadside stop, close to the village of Aunglan.

Hill Prinia *Prinia atrogularis* Another uncommon resident, we observed it in the lower hills of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens* A common resident of Myanmar, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* This species is also a common resident, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* A common and widespread resident throughout Myanmar.

SYLVIIDAE

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Tesia castaneocoronata* Chris just happened to be watching a small area on the forest floor, when this rarely observed and uncommon resident, walked into view.

This occurred in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Blyth's Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* This sulking and uncommon winter visitor, was observed by some members of the group at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

Oriental Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* This fairly common winter visitor was seen well on a few occasions in the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.

Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* This common winter visitor was observed by some members of the group at a large dam, close to the village of Kazunma.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* Common and widespread throughout Myanmar.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* We enjoyed a few good looks at this common winter visitor, which we saw surprisingly well.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* The only country in South-east Asia where this species winters, is Myanmar. Where it is an uncommon visitor, we enjoyed a couple of good sightings.

Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus subaffinis* This uncommon species breeds in a small area of central China. It is an uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we saw it very well on a few occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii* Another *phylloscopus* warbler which breeds exclusively in China. It is an uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we saw it well on several occasions.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* This *phylloscopus* warbler breeds exclusively in Mongolia and China. It is a fairly common winter visitor to Myanmar. We only found it wintering in the dry scrub around the temples in Old Bagan.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* In Myanmar, this species only occurs in the Chin Hills, where we found it to be an abundant resident.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* An uncommon resident of Myanmar, we observed it very well on one occasion in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A fairly common winter visitor to Myanmar, which we saw well on a couple of occasions.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos* This attractive species is a common resident, we saw it well on a couple of occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Yellow-bellied Warbler *Abroscopus superciliaris* A common resident of Myanmar, we recorded it only once, in the foothills of the Chin Hills, close to the village of Ainggyi.

MUSCICAPIDAE

- Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea* A rare winter visitor to Myanmar, this very uncommon species was observed extremely well in the foothills of the Chin Hills, close to the village of Ainggyi.
- Slaty-backed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hodgsonii* We observed this fairly common resident on several occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.
- Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophinata* A common resident of the Chin Hills, in western Myanmar. We enjoyed several good sightings in Natmataung National Park.
- Red-throated Flycatcher (Red-breasted Flycatcher)** *Ficedula parva* A common winter visitor to Myanmar, which we saw on many occasions.
- Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassina* A common resident of Myanmar, which we saw well on many occasions.
- Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* We saw this common resident on a couple of occasions, close to the village of Ainggyi.
- Orange-flanked Bush-Robin (Red-flanked Bluetail)** *Tarsiger cyanurus* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we saw it well on a few occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis* We recorded this common resident on a few occasions.
- Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus* We recorded males of this very attractive but uncommon winter visitor, on two separate occasions. Firstly, in Natmataung National Park and again between Bagan and Mount Popa National Park.
- Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis* The literature states that this bird is a scarce winter visitor to Myanmar. We found it to be fairly common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.
- Common Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* A fairly common winter visitor to Myanmar, we recorded this species in surprisingly large numbers at the Moyingyi Wetland Reserve.
- White-tailed Stonechat** *Saxicola leucura* This attractive species is endemic to the larger rivers in the north of the Indian subcontinent. In Myanmar it is an uncommon resident, we were extremely fortunate to enjoy good close looks at several birds on a large sandbank in the Irrawaddy River, close to Ma-gway
- Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata* We saw this common resident on many occasions throughout the tour.
- Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea* This common resident, proved very common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

RHIPIDURIDAE

- Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Rhipidura hypoxantha* An uncommon resident of Myanmar, we only encountered this species in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.
- White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis* Once again, this common resident was only observed in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.
- White-browed Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola* This uncommon resident was only observed on one occasion, it was seen well at a large dam, near the village of Kazunma.

MONARCHIDEA

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* This uncommon winter visitor was glimpsed by one or two tour members, in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* A fairly common resident of Myanmar, once again this species was observed by some members of the group, in Hlawga National Park, near Yangon.

TIMALIIDAE

Striped Laughingthrush *Garrulax virgatus* This very uncommon species is endemic to southern Assam and western Myanmar. We were very fortunate to obtain good looks at a family party of birds, on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Brown-capped Laughingthrush *Garrulax austeni* This more common species, is endemic to southern Assam and the upper slopes of Mount Victoria in western Myanmar. We were very fortunate to obtain good looks at a family party of birds, in the sub-alpine pine and rhododendron forests of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax erythrocephalus* A common resident of Myanmar, we observed a couple of family parties in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Long-tailed Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis chocolatinus* This uncommon species is endemic to southern Assam, Manipur and northern Myanmar. A couple of tour participants glimpsed this species in dense cover, on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea* This common but skulking resident, was observed surprisingly well, in dense cover on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis* A large party of this common resident was observed fairly well in Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* This common resident, responded well to pishing, allowing good looks, close to the village of Kazunma.

White-throated Babbler *Turdoides gularis* Endemic to Myanmar and found nowhere else in the world. We enjoyed many good sightings, it was surprisingly very common throughout the arid plains of central Myanmar.

Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris* This magnificently plumaged bird is a common resident of northern Myanmar. We observed a small party on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-headed Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius rufiventer* An uncommon resident of northern and western Myanmar, we enjoyed good looks at an adult male in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-eared Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius melanotis* An uncommon resident of northern Myanmar, we enjoyed super looks at a male bird in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Rusty-fronted Barwing *Actinodura egertoni* A common resident of northern and western Myanmar, we saw a few family parties in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera* A common resident of northern Myanmar, we enjoyed good looks at several birds in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Chestnut-tailed Minla *Minla strigula* Another common resident of northern Myanmar, it proved to be common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Red-tailed Minla *Minla ignotincta* A common resident throughout Myanmar, we saw this species very well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta *Alcippe castaneiceps* A common resident throughout northern Myanmar, we enjoyed good looks at this attractive species in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

White-browed Fulvetta *Alcippe vinipectus* A common resident of northern and western Myanmar, we observed it very well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Rufous-backed Sibia *Heterophasia annectens* A fairly common resident of northern Myanmar, Chris observed a pair of birds in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Grey Sibia *Heterophasia gracilis* A common resident of northern and western Myanmar, it proved to be very common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis* A common resident throughout the forests of northern Myanmar, it proved to be common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis* This species is also a common resident throughout the forested north. We saw it very well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

AEGITHALIDAE

Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus* An uncommon resident of the forested north, this attractive species was observed very well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos iouschistos* Another uncommon resident of the forested north, we enjoyed an encounter with a family party on the higher slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

PARIDAE

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* A common resident of the forested north, it proved to be common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* An uncommon resident of the forested north, this very plain-coloured species, was seen well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

SITTIDAE

Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *Sitta nagaensis* A common resident throughout the forested north, it proved to be common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* A very uncommon resident of the highest slopes in Myanmar. We were very fortunate to observe good views of a solitary individual, on the higher slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

White-browed Nuthatch *Sitta victoriae* This scarce; beautiful species of nuthatch, is endemic to Myanmar, it is only known from the tops of two mountains in the southern Chin Hills. During a two weeks study of this species on Mount Victoria in April 2000, by Bird Life International, there were only five sightings. Thanks to Peter's great spotting we were able to enjoy a good look at this bird on the higher slopes of Mount Victoria, in Natmataung National Park.

CERTHIIDAE

Brown-throated Treecreeper *Certhia discolor* An uncommon resident of Myanmar, we enjoyed a couple of good sightings in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

NECTARINIIDAE

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis* We saw this common resident only once, we enjoyed watching a superbly plumaged male bird, close to the village of Aingyi, at the foot of the Chin Hills.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Once again, we saw this common resident only once. We observed a male in partial breeding plumage, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy River, opposite Pyay.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* A common resident of southern Myanmar, which we saw well in the grounds of our hotel at Yangon and again in Hlawga National Park.

Mrs Gould's Sunbird (Gould's Sunbird) *Aethopyga gouldiae* This common resident is one of the most beautiful birds in the world. First discovered by the legendary British ornithologist Sir John Gould; he thought the bird so beautiful that he named it in honour of his wife and the bird was named Mrs Gould's Sunbird. I personally do not like the recent change, where many present day ornithologists have decided to drop the word Mrs, from the bird's name. This stunning bird proved to be common in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* This uncommon resident was seen well on a couple of occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda* A common resident of northern and western Myanmar, it is another very stunning bird, once again, we saw it well on a couple of occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

DICAEIDAE

Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum melanoxanthum* A scarce resident of Myanmar, which we only saw on one occasion. It was found within a mixed-species feeding flock on the upper slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus* This common resident was seen well on a couple of occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum* A common resident throughout Myanmar, which we saw well on several occasions.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythropleurus* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, we saw good numbers in the mixed-species feeding flocks in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* A common resident throughout Myanmar, we recorded a few birds in Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* A common winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed small numbers amongst the mixed-species feeding flocks in Natmataung National Park, they were always within the same flocks as the Chestnut-flanked White-eyes.

ORIOOLIDAE

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* An uncommon resident of southwestern Myanmar, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus tenuirostris* A fairly common resident of Myanmar, we saw it well in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* We observed this common resident on a few occasions, in the foothills of the Chin Hills.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* A fairly common resident throughout Myanmar, we had a quick look at a small family party in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

LANIIDAE

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A common winter visitor throughout Myanmar, which we observed on many occasions.

Burmese Shrike *Lanius colluriooides* This very attractive species of shrike has a very small world range, but it is a common resident throughout the northern half of Myanmar, where we saw it on many occasions.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* In total contrast to the above species, this species of shrike has an exceptionally large world range, which extends from Afghanistan to Papua New Guinea. It is a common resident throughout the northern half of Myanmar, where we saw it very well on many occasions.

DICRURIDAE

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* A common resident throughout the whole of Myanmar.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Not as common as the above species, but it is still a common resident throughout the whole of Myanmar.

Spangled Drongo (Hair-crested Drongo) *Dicrurus hottentottus* This uncommon resident was seen well on several occasions in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* We saw this uncommon resident only once, near the village of Kazunma. It was great to see it flying, with its long tail streamers following behind.

ARTAMIDAE

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* Another common resident, which we saw well on several occasions.

CORVIDAE

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* A fairly common resident throughout northwestern Myanmar, it was seen well on one occasion in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Red-billed Blue Magpie (Blue Magpie) *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* This uncommon resident was observed only in flight, on a couple of occasions.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* A common resident, which we saw well on several occasions throughout the tour.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* A fairly common resident of Myanmar, we only observed it in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Hooded Treepie *Crypsirina cucullata* This uncommon bird is endemic to Myanmar and occurs nowhere else on earth. We enjoyed good looks at this very special bird on a few occasions.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* We observed this common resident throughout all lowland areas of Myanmar.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* We saw this uncommon resident on several occasions.

STURNIDAE

Spot-winged Starling *Saroglossa spiloptera* An exceptionally rare winter visitor to Myanmar. This is one of the few species of birds in the world, which migrates from west to east and not north to south. It breeds in the western Himalayas, migrating eastwards along the lower foothills of the Himalayas in March and April, passing through Nepal and Sikkim, to its main wintering grounds in Assam. Only the occasional straggler reaches Myanmar. We were very fortunate to enjoy good scope views of a solitary bird sitting in the top of a tree in Mount Popa National Park, near Bagan.

Hill Myna (Common Hill Myna) *Gracula religiosa* Sheila pointed out a flock of this uncommon resident in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills. We very much enjoyed watching them fly past at close quarters.

White-vented Myna *Acridotheres grandis* We only observed this common resident on one occasion, once again Sheila spotted a small flock near the village of Tayngtet, in a large floodplain, at the foot of the Chin Hills.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* We observed this common resident on many occasions.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* A common resident throughout Myanmar.

Vinous-breasted Starling *Acridotheres burmannicus* Endemic to South-east Asia, where it is a common resident throughout Myanmar. We observed this very attractive species of starling on many occasions throughout the tour.

Black-collared Starling *Gracupica nigricollis* We only observed this common resident on one occasion. Michael pointed out a pair of birds in farmland, close to the village of Tayngtet, at the foot of the Chin Hills.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* A common resident throughout the towns and villages of Myanmar.

Plain-backed Sparrow *Passer flaveolus* We only observed this uncommon resident on one occasion, a male bird was observed well, close to the village of Kazunma.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* A common resident throughout Myanmar, which we observed on many occasions.

PLOCEIDAE

Asian Golden Weaver *Ploceus hypoxanthus* A scarce resident of southern Myanmar, which we only observed on the first day of the tour, while sightseeing in the centre of Yangon. One bird was observed in parkland and some members of the group observed small numbers along the edge of the Irrawaddy River, all were in non-breeding plumage.

ESTRILDIDAE

Scaly-breasted Munia (Nutmeg Mannikin) *Lonchura punctulata* A common resident throughout Myanmar, we observed many small flocks.

FRINGILLIDAE

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* A fairly common winter visitor to northern Myanmar, where we observed several large flocks.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Carduelis spinoides* A fairly common resident of western Myanmar, we observed a very large flock, numbering approximately 60 birds, mixed in with similar numbers of Little Buntings feeding on thistles, on the lower slopes of Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

EMBERIZIDAE

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* A fairly common winter visitor to Myanmar, we observed a very large flock, numbering approximately 50 birds, mixed with similar numbers of Yellow-breasted Greenfinches, feeding on thistles, on the lower slopes of the Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila* An uncommon winter visitor to Myanmar, numbers vary from year to year, in some years no Chestnut Buntings are found wintering in Myanmar. We were very fortunate to observe a pair of birds along the edge of the track in Natmataung National Park, in the Chin Hills.

MAMMALS

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* We observed two small colonies of this species, which is the world's largest bat, having a wingspan of over 1.5 meters. Their daytime roosts are known as 'camps', here dominant males gather a harem of up to 10 females, with which he roosts and mates. At night the bats forage in dry woodland for a selection of native fruits including tamarinds, rose-apples, mangoes, palms and figs.

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* Large numbers present in Hlawga National Park. This gregarious animal occurs in large troops of 50 or more and is often found around villages, towns or temples. Like other species of macaques, this species can climb well but often forages on the ground, escaping from predators by running through the undergrowth or climbing trees.

Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula* We very much enjoyed watching a pair of Yellow-throated Martens in Natmataung National Park. Martens are excellent climbers but also spend much time on the ground. Their varied diet includes fruit, insects, eggs and nectar, as well as frogs, birds and squirrels. They are most active during the daytime and inhabit a wide range of woodland and occur from the lowlands to high in the mountains.

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Some members of the group observed a couple of Wild Boars close to our lodge in Natmataung National Park. This species is the ancestor of the domestic pig.

Eld's Deer *Cervus eldii* Undoubtedly, the mammalian highlight of the trip. While driving in Hlawga National Park, we came across a solitary stag standing in the middle of the road. In Myanmar this species lives mainly in low-lying swamps. Adult males are solitary outside the breeding season, mating takes place between February and May. Formerly widespread in mainland South-east Asia north of the peninsula, this species is now restricted to isolated herds in eastern India, Myanmar, Cambodia and Hainan Island, in China. This is a critically endangered species due to habitat loss and illegal hunting.

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* The most widespread and common large deer of Myanmar. We enjoyed very good close looks at this species, including some superb males in Hlawga National Park. They are most active at dusk and at night, resting up during the day in thick vegetation. During the mating season, males fight for territories, they then mate with any females that enter their territory.

Hog Deer *Cervus porcinus* We saw a good number of this species in Hlawga National Park, where its typical habitat includes floodplains along rivers and marshes with tall grass. Pairs come together to mate in September and October, the fawns are born about eight months later, at the beginning of the rainy season. The tendency to run through and under low underbrush, like a hog, rather than jumping and bounding like other species of deer, gives this species its name.

Irrawaddy Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus* Endemic to eastern Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. This is the common squirrel of Myanmar and we enjoyed good looks on many occasions. It differs from other plain-coloured squirrels by having a pale bar on the side of each hip.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops maccllellandi* We enjoyed several good sightings of this small but attractive species of squirrel in Natmataung National Park. Mainly arboreal, they are found in the middle and upper layers of the forests. Their diet includes many insects as well as fruit and other vegetable matter. They shelter and build their nests in holes in trees.

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah* Another attractive species of squirrel, this species is also endemic to eastern Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. We saw it well on several occasions in Natmataung National Park. This species has a pointed snout and occurs in forested areas above 1,525 meters. Though arboreal, it finds its food on the ground, a favorite being fallen fruit.