

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

NORTHEASTERN INDIA

12 November – 3 December 2016

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: Chris Doughty and Peter Lobo

Our tour to Northeastern India proved to be extremely enjoyable, and hugely successful; the weather was kind to us, and we **saw**, a very respectable 377 different species of birds and 18 species of mammals. Throughout the tour, we birded two very different habitats; the lowlands of Assam, and the Himalayas of Arunachal Pradesh. We began the tour in the lowlands, at Guwahati, the capital city of Assam. Our first birding stop, was of all places, the Guwahati Rubbish Dump, which is undoubtedly, the best place in the world, to see the endangered Greater Adjutant, which we saw at very close quarters. The next birding stop was close to the bridge over the Brahmaputra River, at Tezpur. Highlights here, were Lesser Adjutant, Fulvous Whistling-Duck and White-vented Myna. Next, we birded the rivers and lowland forests of Nameri Tiger Reserve, where the avian highlight here, was the Indian Thick-knee. On to Kaziranga National Park, where avian highlights included Spot-billed Pelican, Oriental Darter, Black-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Pallas' and Grey-headed Fish-Eagles, White-rumped Vulture, Greater Spotted Eagle, Swamp Francolin, Kaleej Pheasant and the rarely encountered, Dark-rumped Swift. In the grasslands of the Brahmaputra Floodplain, highlights included Swamp Prinia, Marsh Babbler and the stunning Black-breasted Parrotbill. In the superb rainforest of the Jeypore Forest Reserve, highlights included White-throated Brown Hornbill, Silver-breasted Broadbill, Rusty-bellied Shortwing, Slaty-bellied Tesia, White-spectacled Warbler, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Fulvetta and Indian White-hooded Babbler. Highlights in the seasonally flooded forests, wetlands and grassy areas of Maguri Bheel, included Falcated and Ferruginous Ducks, Spotted Bush-Warbler, Smoky Leaf-Warbler, Himalayan Rubythroat, Jerdon's Babbler and Black-faced Bunting. At an Eco Park, within the huge metropolis of Kolkata, in West Bengal, the birding highlight was without doubt, the rarely observed Rusty-rumped Warbler. In the Himalayas, we birded the oak-rhododendron forests, and the alpine meadows above the treeline, in Arunachal Pradesh. We spent four and a half days birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, where avian highlights included, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Speckled Wood-Pigeon, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Large Bush-Warbler, Broad-billed, Black-faced and Grey-cheeked Warblers, Purple Cochoa, Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler, Yellow-throated, Golden-breasted and Brown-throated Fulvettas, Long-tailed and Beautiful Sibilias, Scaly-breasted, Rufous-throated, Spotted, Eyebrowed and Long-billed Wren-Babblers, White-breasted Parrotbill, Wallcreeper, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Collared Treepie and Scarlet Finch. Close to Tenga, we had a Wallcreeper, fly across the road, in front of us. We then enjoyed a full day of birding at Sela Pass, where highlights included Wood Snipe, Alpine Accentor, White-throated and White-winged Redstarts, Rufous-vented Tit and Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch. In the Mishmi Hills, highlights included Jerdon's Baza, Gould's Shortwing, Hume's

Bush-Warbler, Chestnut-headed Tesia, White-browed Bush-Robin, Fire-tailed Myzornis, White-naped Yuhina, Manipur Fulvetta, Streak-throated Barwing, Black-headed Shrike-Babbler, Mishmi and Bar-winged Wren-Babblers, Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler and Dark-rumped Rosefinch. The mammals were equally spectacular; highlights included the three specialities of Kaziranga National Park, all of which are endangered, Swamp Deer, Wild Water Buffalo and Indian Rhinoceros. We also had a good look at the very shy Indian Muntjac, and a quick encounter with the range restricted, Assam Macaque. Without doubt, the groups favourite mammal sighting, was of the Yellow-throated Marten, which we saw on two separate occasions. We also saw Smooth-coated Otter, a very close Black Giant Squirrel, we had great looks at a number of Asian Elephants and a good sighting, of the rarely encountered, Common Goral.

Following a couple of long and tiring flights from Australia, we arrived at Kolkata Airport, late in the evening, and spent the night in a very fine hotel, close to the airport.

We were up very early the following morning, and headed back to the airport. At first light, as we were boarding our flight to Guwahati, we saw a small flock of Little Swifts flying around the airport. Following a short flight, we arrived at the airport at Guwahati, the capital city of Assam, in far northeastern India, where it was still early morning. We then spent the rest of the morning driving east to the Nameri Tiger Reserve. The drive yielded up a good variety of the more common birds of the small towns and agricultural areas of Assam. We saw small flocks of Eastern Cattle Egrets, good numbers of Asian Openbills, Black Kites circled above small villages, a few Red-wattled Lapwings patrolled the edges of a number of small wetlands, Feral Pigeons crowded the villages, along with plenty of Eurasian Collared and Spotted Doves, a small flock of Asian Palm-Swifts flew around the tops of a grove of palm trees, splendid White-throated Kingfishers sat on power lines and a Lesser Pied Kingfisher hovered above a small pond. Flying Indian Rollers dazzled us with their luminescent coloured wings, a few White Wagtails showed well, we admired a few Red-vented Bulbuls, as well as a couple of striking Brown Shrikes. Several Long-tailed Shrikes and a good number of Black Drongos dotted the roadside power lines. Along the roadside we saw a handful of Bank Mynas, which are uncommon birds in this area, along with much larger flocks of Common Mynas and beautiful Asian Pied Starlings. Mid-morning we visited the Baragaon Landfill, on the outskirts of Guwahati, in order to see the endangered Greater Adjutant, which feeds at the dump. We enjoyed very close looks, at this large species of stork, along with lots of House Crows. We then continued our drive to Nameri, we broke the long drive, with a short birding stop in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra Bridge at Tezpur. Here we saw a couple of Little Grebes, several Little Cormorants, a Purple Heron, lots of Indian Pond-Herons, we enjoyed close looks at an obliging Lesser Adjutant, who after having caught a fish, flew to the top of a nearby tree, and started eating it. The best find, was a small flock of uncommon Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, we also saw Common Kestrel, plenty of Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, a couple of Brown-headed Gulls, a few Little Green Bee-eaters, a Blue Rock-Thrush was observed on the roof of a nearby house, and we had close looks at a few uncommon White-vented Mynas. Just prior to entering the town of Tezpur, a flock of half a dozen or so Northern Lapwings, flew across the road, in front of our vehicles and we saw a Brown-headed Gull, in an area of flooded grassland. During the drive, we also saw a few Rhesus Macaques along the roadside, and an Indian Flying Fox flew across the road in front of us. Just prior to reaching our lodge, we also found a herd of Indian Elephants, right next to the road. After settling in at the Nameri Tiger Reserve, we did a little late afternoon birding around the camp and in nearby woodland. New birds for the tour included Great Cormorant, Great and Little Egrets, a splendid Peregrine Falcon, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Red-breasted Parakeet, Lineated Barbet, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, a beautiful male Little Pied Flycatcher, a handsome Grey-backed Shrike, the striking Hair-crested Drongo was much appreciated, we encountered a large flock of Eastern Jungle Crows, several flocks of Grey-headed Starlings and a single Common Hill Myna.

The following morning was devoted to birding in Nameri Tiger Reserve, we had a very enjoyable time, and the reserve was packed full of new birds. These included a very handsome Black Stork, a pair of Mallards, a Goosander, we enjoyed super looks at a Western Osprey, a hovering Black-winged Kite, a small flock of uncommon Indian Thick-knees, a pair of delightful Great Thick-knees, a pair of beautiful River Lapwings, a Little Ringed Plover, in full breeding-plumage, migratory Common Sandpipers and Common Greenshanks, two species of beautiful green-pigeons, Ashy-headed and the uncommon Pin-tailed. We enjoyed super close looks at a pair of Vernal Hanging-Parrots, Joy saw a Brown Hawk-Owl, we saw Common and Himalayan Pied Kingfishers, we had surprisingly good looks at the normally shy and elusive Blue-bearded Bee-eater, we enjoyed flight views of a Wreathed Hornbill, and much better looks, at the diminutive Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker, and a Greater Flameback, which popped into view. The range-restricted Sand Lark was observed well, and we watched a large flock of Grey-throated Sand-Martins, at their nesting colony, in the banks of the Jia Bhareli River. A Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike was greatly admired, a pair of Short-billed Minivets showed well, as did both Black-crested and Red-whiskered Bulbuls, and Golden-fronted Leafbirds were very obliging. Common Ioras were seen well, a Hume's Leaf-Warbler was busily gleaning the branches of a nearby tree, a splendid Verditer Flycatcher popped into view, and a Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher flitted around in the canopy. In the riverbed we saw both White-capped River-Chat and Plumbeous Water-Redstart, Siberian Stonechats proved plentiful, a Black-naped Blue Monarch was seen well, a male Ruby-cheeked Sunbird flitted through the flowering trees, a Black-hooded Oriole added a splash of colour to proceedings, a Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo proved popular with everyone, and there were plenty of Jungle Mynas on show. We also enjoyed very good, close looks, at a Black Giant Squirrel, a few Irrawaddy Squirrels, and we saw a small troop of uncommon Assam Macaques. Following lunch, we spent the afternoon driving to the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, passing lots of military camps as we did so. On the way, we saw a few Eurasian Tree Sparrows, in the village of Dett Elephant. On our arrival at Lama Camp, a permanent tented camp, which is completely surrounded by montane rainforest, we settled in to our quarters, and put on a couple of extra layers of clothing, at 2,400 metres, it was very cold, when the sun went down.

We spent the whole of the following day, birding around Lama Camp, where there were new birds in abundance. We very much enjoyed close looks at a Black Eagle, skimming over the top of the forest, while playing playback of the call of a Collared Owlet, in order to attract small passerines, a Collared Owlet flew in to investigate, and we all saw it very well. We saw our first Great Barbet, a small flock of Olive-backed Pipits, a few Striated Bulbuls showed well in the tops of the trees, small flocks of Himalayan Black Bulbuls were constantly on the move, Orange-bellied Leafbirds proved plentiful, a Rufous-breasted Accentor was seen well, a Black-throated Thrush was greatly appreciated, the normally shy Large Bush-Warbler showed surprisingly well, leaf-warblers were very active, and included Orange-barred, Grey-faced, Lemon-rumped and Blyth's. An attractive Black-faced Warbler, performed brilliantly for us, both Orange-gorgeted and Red-throated Flycatchers were eager to get themselves on the trip list, a splendid Himalayan Red-flanked Bush-Robin was seen well, we had a quick look at a Golden Bush-Robin, a stunning Blue-fronted Redstart was much appreciated, and the friendly Yellow-bellied Fantail, paid us a visit. We saw a staggering array of Himalayan babblers, which included Striated, Grey-sided, Scaly and Red-headed Laughingthrushes, which all showed surprisingly well, as did both Streak-breasted and Slender-billed Scimitar-Babblers. Other species of babblers we saw included Rufous-capped Babbler, the simply stunning Silver-eared Mesia, Green Shrike-Babbler, Blue-winged and Bar-throated Minlas, superb Yellow-throated and Rufous-winged Fulvettas, Beautiful Sibia and Whiskered, Stripe-throated and Black-chinned Yuhinas. Other new birds seen today, included Red-headed, Cinereous, Green-backed and Yellow-browed Tits, Green-tailed Sunbird, Fire-breasted

Flowerpecker and Oriental White-eye. New mammals today included Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, Northern Palm Squirrel and an Indian Muntjac.

We spent most of the next day, at a slightly lower altitude, but still within the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, which paid rich dividends, in the form of new birds for the tour. These included Himalayan Buzzard, Eurasian Woodcock, Speckled Wood-Pigeon, small flocks of Himalayan Swiftlets, a very obliging Greater Yellownappe, the stunning Long-tailed Broadbill, flocks of Nepal House-Martins, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, Blue Whistling-Thrush, White-throated Fantail, White-crested Laughingthrush, super looks at the simply stunning Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, the uncommon Rusty-fronted Barwing, the attractive Long-tailed Sibia, a small flock of White-breasted Parrotbills showed particularly well, a White-tailed Nuthatch was seen at length, a Rusty-flanked Treecreeper was a good find, we enjoyed watching a male Maroon Oriole, both Ashy and Bronzed Drongos, the superb Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, both male and female Scarlet Finch, and Little Bunting.

We spent the next two nights at Bompou Camp situated at an altitude of 1,900 metres, within the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. The camp is in a small valley and is surrounded by an almost unbroken vista of montane forest, which is often shrouded in cloud and mist. Unfortunately, large areas of mature forest are becoming a rare sight in the eastern Himalayas. It is undoubtedly, one of the finest birding areas in the whole of India and we arrived with much anticipation, looking forward to a completely new set of rainforest inhabiting birds. We spent the day birding in the area surrounding the campsite, and new birds for the tour, continued at a steady flow. They included the rarely observed Rufous-bellied Eagle, a few Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeons, we enjoyed prolonged scope views of a perched, adult female Rufous-necked Hornbill, a Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker flew onto a tree right next to us, we saw our first Lesser Yellownappe, we were dazzled by a pair of Scarlet Minivets, both White-throated and Mountain Bulbuls showed brilliantly, and a colourful Mountain Tailorbird got the nod of approval. A mixed-species feeding flock, contained Grey-cheeked and Yellow-bellied Warblers, the gorgeous Red-faced Liocichla, Buff-breasted Babbler, Himalayan Cutia, Blue-winged Minla, Rufous-backed Sibia and Black-breasted Sunbird. Undoubtedly, a couple of the highlights today, were the amazing close-ups of both the Long-billed and the Eyebrowed Wren-babblers, simply stunning. We also very much enjoyed a sighting of the attractive Yellow-throated Marten.

Our final day based at Bompou, proved just as rewarding as the others; we watched a soaring Mountain Hawk-Eagle, a Golden-throated Barbet, a pair of Barred Cuckoo-Doves, we finally had a fairly good sighting of the somewhat maniacal Bay Woodpecker, a small flock of Grey-chinned Minivets showed well, a Broad-billed Warbler was much appreciated, a flock of White-throated Laughingthrushes, were observed remarkably well, the very uncommon Blue-winged Laughingthrush begrudgingly showed itself, as did the delightful Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler, both the Himalayan Shrike-Babbler and the Black-eared Shrike-Babbler were seen well, the uncommon Hoary-throated Barwing was well received, several stunning Golden-breasted Fulvetas, were real show-stoppers, a White-bellied Erpornis was seen well in the canopy, and a couple of Black-throated Parrotbills were seen by Bill. We saw the beautiful Mrs. Gould's Sunbird very well, and the range-restricted Collared Treepie, was an added bonus. However, the highlight of the day, has to go to the rarely observed Purple Cochoa, which we eventually saw very well.

We spent the following morning birding in rainforest, on the lower slopes of the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. New birds for the tour included a beautiful Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, we very much enjoyed good close looks at a Spotted Wren-Babbler, a Brown-throated Fulvetta showed well, a small flock of Rufous-vented Yuhinas were not at all concerned by our presence, we found a small flock of Scaly-breasted Munias, and enjoyed good looks at a small flock of Spotted Nutcrackers,

which flew over our heads. In the afternoon, we left Eaglenest behind, and began the long drive to Dirang, via Tenga. Close to Tenga we saw a Wallcreeper, in flight, and our first of many, Large-billed Crows.

Today was spent birding at the lofty Sela Pass, which at 4,176 metres, is one of the highest motorable passes in the Himalayas. It was a super day, firstly, the weather was very kind to us, which believe me, is not always the case here, and secondly, we saw a splendid cast of new birds for the tour. They included a very close soaring group of Himalayan Vultures, a particularly cooperative Wood Snipe, we were constantly surrounded by flocks of dazzling Snow Pigeons, we saw several of the very dark *nipalensis* race of Eurasian Wren, a migrating flock of Blyth's Pipits, were well received, we were stunned by the beauty of a few male White-throated Redstarts, several Alpine Accentors foraged on the open ground, a Rufous-vented Tit showed well, sitting atop a small bush, we saw small flocks of beautiful Red-billed Choughs, both male and female Himalayan White-browed Rosefinches, and best of all, a female, of the rarely observed White-winged Redstart. We also enjoyed scope views of a solitary Common Goral, standing on a nearby cliff top.

As we were leaving Dirang, the following morning, the valley opened out, and became a patchwork of rice and crop fields, through which the icy blue Dirang River flowed. We did a little birding along the river, and although there were plenty of birds around, the only new bird for the tour was the attractive Daurian Redstart. We continued on to the Sangti Valley, where new birds included Gadwall, Green Sandpiper, Paddyfield Pipit, White-browed Wagtail, Brown Dipper, and a female Hodgson's Redstart. Late in the afternoon, we arrived at our very fine lodge, on the outskirts of the world famous Kaziranga National Park, where we settled ourselves in, and then enjoyed a particularly fine Assamese meal.

We spent the whole of the following day birding in Kaziranga National Park, where we concentrated on the wetlands, where 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. Where 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 these birds, choose to winter throughout the Indian subcontinent. We travelled in open-topped Jeeps and we enjoyed great looks at the big three, three species of highly localised, and special mammals, of the park, Indian Rhinoceros, Swamp Deer and Wild Water Buffalo. Wetland birds came thick and fast, we saw large numbers of the endangered Spot-billed Pelican, several Oriental Darters, a few Grey Herons, we observed several Woolly-necked Storks, a few Black-necked Storks, a small number of Black-headed Ibis, and very large flocks of wintering wildfowl, which included Lesser Whistling-Duck, Ruddy Shelduck and Eurasian Teal. We enjoyed close looks at a good number of Indian Spot-billed Ducks and raptors put in a particularly good showing, with great looks at the endangered Pallas' Fish-Eagle, Grey-headed Fish-Eagle, Crested Serpent-Eagle, and a splendid male Hen Harrier. We encountered a small covey of endangered Swamp Francolins, both male and female Red Junglefowl showed well, as did a splendid White-breasted Waterhen. Waders included Common Snipe, and both Green and Wood Sandpipers. We enjoyed super looks at small flocks of Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets. A Green-billed Malkoha was greatly appreciated, a pair of Common Hoopoes performed well for us, we saw large flocks of Barn Swallows, a few Rosy Pipits, a few smartly attired Citrine Wagtails, a Bright-capped Cisticola showed well briefly, a Common Tailorbird flitted around in a nearby shrub, a pair of Oriental Magpie-Robins were greatly admired, a few very beautiful Rufous Treepies showed well, and a small flock of Baya Weavers, were also observed. The bird of the day, was without doubt, the rarely observed Dark-rumped Swift, of which we saw a couple of small flocks. It breeds in the Himalayas of Bhutan and Northeastern India, in very small numbers, the wintering grounds are still unknown. Apart from the big three, other mammals which we saw in the park, included a family party of Smooth-coated Otters, several

Eurasian Wild Boars and good numbers of Hog Deer.

On our second full day of birding in Kaziranga National Park, we spent the whole day birding in the Eastern Ranges, where we birded some wetland areas, and a large patchwork of forest. In the wetlands, we saw a handful of Intermediate Egrets, enormous flocks of wintering Bar-headed Geese, with a small number of Greylag Geese scattered amongst them. Wintering ducks, included Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, and the very beautiful Common Pochard. A superb Western Marsh-Harrier was observed flying above a reedbed, and a couple of very uncommon Greater Spotted Eagles, were loafing along the edge, of one of the larger lakes in the park. Bronze-winged Jacanas were seen very well, as they trotted along on the water lilies, a family party of Black-winged Stilts waded in the shallows, a few Grey-headed Lapwings dotted the lakeside, there were also a handful of wintering Common Redshanks, and attractive River Terns, were observed flying above one of the lakes. In the forested areas of the Eastern Ranges, new birds included a couple of endangered White-rumped Vultures, the stunning Crested Goshawk, a beautiful pale morph Booted Eagle, a handsome Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Oriental Turtle-Dove, Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon, a very confiding Spotted Owlet, both Blue-throated and Copper-smith Barbets, a small flock of Red-rumped Swallows, many Western Yellow Wagtails, a splendid Large Cuckoo-shrike, the very unobtrusive Dusky Warbler, House Sparrow and Scaly-breasted Munia.

The first half of the following morning, was spent birding in Kaziranga National Park, new birds for the tour included a Shikra, which was seen in flight, a small flock of brightly coloured Tickell's Leaf-Warblers, and a small flock of Ashy Woodswallows. We then began the long drive to Tinsukhia, a large provincial town, in the far northeast of Assam. The only new birds during the long drive, were Purple Swamphen and Eurasian Coot, which were observed at a small wetland, close to Sivasigar.

Before breakfast, the following morning, Bill saw a Common Chiffchaff, from his bedroom window. Leaving civilisation behind once more, we set off for the Mishmi Hills, but in order to get there, we had to take a vehicle ferry across the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat. On what must surely be, one of the world's most primitive ferries, it was quite an experience! It also gave us a good opportunity to look for birds, on the sandbanks, in the river. Rather than just killing time, we actually found a few new birds for the tour. We saw a small flock of Pacific Golden-Plovers, several Kentish Plovers, a few Little Stints, an immature Steppe Gull, a very close Richard's Pipit, and a few Common Starlings, an uncommon winter visitor, to northwestern India, and a vagrant to northeastern India. While driving to our rather basic government rest-house, at Mayodia, situated at 2,600 metres, in the Mishmi Hills, we enjoyed good looks at a Jerdon's Baza, which was a new bird for the tour. Once again, it was extremely cold, once the sun went down.

Although the rest-house was rather basic, it was situated in an ideal location, on the remote Roing to Hunli road, a few kilometres before Mayodia Pass. From this base, it was easy to explore the seemingly endless stretches of forest, between 600 and 3,000 metres elevation. We spent all of the following day birding in the Mishmi Hills, mainly around Mayodia Pass, and beyond. It was a great birding day and we were soon watching a good number of the specialities of this area. We enjoyed good looks at a Long-legged Buzzard, a female White-browed Bush-Robin showed very well, the uncommon and range-restricted Streak-throated Barwing duly obliged, and the much sought after Mishmi Wren-Babbler, which only occurs in this area, gave itself up all too easily, and in no time at all, we were enjoying super looks, at this very special bird. We also enjoyed very good looks at what must surely be, the most attractive of all the wren-babblers, the stunning Bar-winged Wren-Babbler. Other new birds today included, Manipur Fulvetta, the stunningly attractive Fire-tailed Myzornis and Yellow-billed Blue Magpie. Along a fast-flowing mountain stream, we enjoyed good looks at a particularly obliging Little Forktail. We also saw another new mammal

today, the rather shy Pig-tailed Macaque.

Another full day of birding in the Mishmi Hills, produced even more new birds for the tour; highlights included, a small flock of Blyth's Swifts, we enjoyed super close looks at the rarely encountered Gould's Shortwing, we saw the range-restricted Hume's Bush-Warbler very well, a Spotted Forktail suddenly appeared, along a tiny stream in the forest, the much sought after Cachher Wedge-billed Babbler was observed extraordinarily well, and there was a supporting cast of Golden and Grey-throated Babblers, White-naped Yuhina and the beautiful Dark-rumped Rosefinch.

We spent our final full day in the remarkable Mishmi Hills, birding at lower altitude, towards Roing. New birds included a wintering Grey Wagtail, a splendid Grey-winged Blackbird which we saw very well, the diminutive Chestnut-headed Tesia was a real treat, and the attractive Black-headed Shrike-Babbler, was very much appreciated. While eating lunch today, a couple of women from the local hill tribe, came walking along, and one of them jumped down from the road, to check one of their snare traps. She jumped back on to the road with a huge, but unfortunately, dead rat in her hands. We asked if we could have a look at it; the two women had a giggle and then showed us the rat. It was huge, with bright chestnut pelage above, and pure white below, it was a stunning looking mammal. It was a fine example of the range-restricted, Edward's Long-tailed Giant Rat.

The following morning, we were taken to an extensive area of grassland, which was part of the Brahmaputra floodplain, and we saw a series of exceptional and highly localised grassland specialities. These included Striated Heron, Oriental Honey-buzzard, a splendid Eurasian Wryneck, the very uncommon Swamp Prinia showed remarkably well, as did the Yellow-bellied Prinia, there were several Paddyfield Warblers and Indian Reed-Warblers. We also found a very fine Marsh Babbler and a few more common Striated Babblers. By far the best two birds of the day, were an endangered Jerdon's Babbler and the beautiful, but all too rare, Black-breasted Parrotbill. In the afternoon we drove to Tinsukia, where the wondrous delight of civilisation awaited us, at the remarkable, Hotel Centre-point.

The following day, we spent the morning birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve, close to Naharkatia. I think it was probably the best mornings birding, that I have ever participated in. It is a superb area of rainforest, situated in the foothills of the Himalayas. New birds popped into view throughout the whole morning, they included Common Emerald Dove, a very handsome Collared Scops-Owl, which we disturbed from its daytime roost site, a splendid Red-headed Trogon sat out in the open for us, we saw a small flock of endangered White-throated Brown Hornbills, a Grey-faced Woodpecker, a large flock of very obliging Silver-breasted Broadbills, Ashy Bulbul, Blue-winged Leafbird, the rarely observed Rusty-bellied Shortwing showed briefly, the elusive Slaty-bellied Tesia, reluctantly showed well, as did a Greenish Warbler. A Black-backed Forktail, was observed on the forest trail, the uncommon White-spectacled Warbler was seen well, a pair of Snowy-browed Flycatchers co-operated very well with us, the Small Niltava showed particularly well, both Pale Blue and White-tailed Blue-Flycatchers duly obliged, the beautiful White-rumped Shama, was lurking in the undergrowth, we saw both Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes, and a Puff-throated Babbler. A White-browed Scimitar-Babbler, foraged in a nearby tree, a small flock of range-restricted Indian White-hooded Babblers, were added to the morning's list, we also saw a Rufous-throated Fulvetta, and last but by no means least, we were entertained by a simply stunning flock, of Sultan Tits.

In the afternoon, we took a boat trip on the lakes at nearby Maguri Beel, on the south bank of the Dibru River, which is a channel of the mighty Brahmaputra River. The area is very rich in aquatic life and although it has no formal protection, and is heavily used by the local people for fishing and grass collecting, it is still an important area for both waterfowl and grassland birds. Birding

from boats is always enjoyable, and during the boat trip, we found several new birds for the tour. They included, a fine flock of Glossy Ibis, a pair of Cotton Pygmy-geese, a stunning male Falcated Duck, a rare winter visitor to India, with only a handful occurring in India each year, we saw several Ferruginous Ducks, an erratic winter visitor to India, a few pairs of Eurasian Moorhens, a few Temminck's Stints, and a couple of Plain Prinias.

The following morning we returned to Maguri Beel, and this time we focused all of our attention on the extensive areas of grassland. We were well rewarded for our efforts, as new birds for the tour included, the very shy Spotted Bush-Warbler, the almost as shy Smoky Leaf-Warbler, we enjoyed good looks at the more co-operative Striated Grassbird, the skulking Himalayan Rubythroat, even showed well for us, a Chestnut-capped Babbler was lured into view, and we enjoyed good looks at a wintering Black-faced Bunting. In the afternoon, we drove to Dibrugarh, and from there we flew to Kolkata, in West Bengal, where we spent the night at a splendid hotel.

On the last day of the tour, we spent most of the day birding at the suburban Eco Park; the park is situated on a 240 hectare plot and is divided into three sections, wetlands, grasslands, and urban forest, theme gardens and open spaces, and urban recreational spaces. We birded mainly in the wetlands, grasslands and urban forest areas, and somewhat surprisingly, we managed to find several new birds for the tour; we saw a Besra Sparrowhawk in flight, a Pintail Snipe, a Greater Coucal, a few Black-rumped Flamebacks, a rather skulking Blyth's Reed-Warbler, and a female Purple Sunbird. All of these new birds were greatly appreciated, particularly so, considering that it was the last day, of a three week birding tour. However, we did even better, we also enjoyed good, prolonged looks, at one of the world's greatest skulkers, the Rusty-rumped Warbler, which is a very scarce winter visitor to India.

India is so unique, in this rapidly changing world, it is without doubt, one of the world's greatest havens for birds, and long may it remain so. We experienced a very productive and immensely enjoyable tour to the India subcontinent, which had gone like clockwork from start to finish. All this was due to the effort of our local leader Peter Lobo, who had worked tirelessly on our behalf and who was great company throughout the tour.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

GREBES *PODICIFEIDAE*

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A locally common to abundant resident; we saw a pair of birds in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra River Bridge, south of Tezpur. This was followed by a second sighting of a few pairs, at Maguri Beel.

PELICANS *PELECANIDAE*

Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* We found several small flocks during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species was formerly common across much of Asia, but unfortunately has suffered a widespread decline, in the last 50 years. Breeding populations are now confined to India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia. Kaziranga National Park, in Assam, is one of a handful of breeding sites in India. It is estimated that there are approximately 3,000 birds in Assam. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its total world population is estimated to be between 8,800-12,000 individuals and declining. The main threats to this species are the usual ones, habitat destruction and human disturbance at nesting colonies.

CORMORANTS *PHALACROCORACIDAE*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* In northeastern India this species is a common resident and a widespread winter visitor, we saw large numbers, mainly in breeding plumage, at most of the wetlands we visited.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* A common resident which we saw well at most wetland areas we visited.

DARTERS *ANHINGIDAE*

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* An uncommon resident of northeastern India, which we saw very well during our time in Kaziranga National Park, and Maguri Beel. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its total world population is estimated to be approximately 22,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing. The main threats to this species are loss of habitat, disturbance at its breeding colonies, hunting, and pollution.

HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNES *ARDEIDAE*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* An uncommon resident of northeastern India, small numbers were present at a number of the wetlands we visited.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Another uncommon resident of northeastern India, we saw a bird in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra River Bridge, south of Tezpur, and we also saw small numbers in Kaziranga National Park.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* A widespread and common resident, which we saw very well at all of the wetland areas we visited.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* An uncommon resident, which we saw well in small numbers, at some of the wetlands we visited.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A common and widespread resident, which was present in good numbers, at all of the wetlands we visited.

Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii* An abundant and widespread resident, which was present at any kind of wetland habitat.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A common and widespread resident of wetlands and farmland.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* An uncommon but widespread resident, which we saw well in grassland on the Brahmaputra Floodplain, and at Maguri Beel.

STORKS *CICONIIDAE*

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* A fairly common and widespread resident, it proved to be plentiful in all wetlands, throughout the tour.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* An uncommon winter visitor to the subcontinent, we saw a single individual flying over the Jia Bhareli River, in Nameri National Park, and this was followed by a second sighting, in Kaziranga National Park.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* A fairly common resident, we enjoyed several good sightings of a few pairs of birds, during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* A very uncommon resident of the Indian subcontinent, we saw up to half a dozen individuals in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. Its total world population is unknown, but thought to be decreasing.

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* An uncommon resident of northeastern India, we saw a single bird in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra Bridge, at Tezpur. This was followed by small numbers liberally scattered in and around Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. The estimated world population is between 5,500 – 10,000 individuals and unfortunately, decreasing. Several threats are contributing to this birds decline, with their relative importance varying across its range. The loss of nest-sites through the felling of colony nest-trees is a major threat, particularly in Assam. Extensive nesting colonies outside protected areas in the 1990s recorded drastic declines owing to the cutting down of trees and drying up of some feeding sites. In many areas, the threats to this species include drainage and conversion of wetland feeding areas, agricultural intensification, increased pesticide use, the collecting of eggs and chicks and the hunting of adults. A recent and very serious threat, recorded in Nepal and Cambodia, is the practice of poisoning pools to catch fish, which leads to incidental mortality of this species.

Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius* In India this species only occurs in Assam, where it is a very uncommon resident. We observed a large flock at the Baragaon Landfill, on the outskirts of Guwahati, and a couple of individuals in flight, in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Endangered' by Birdlife International and the total population is estimated to be between 800 – 1,200 individuals and decreasing. The key threats are direct exploitation, particularly at nesting colonies, habitat destruction, including some felling of nest-trees, and drainage, conversion, pollution and over-exploitation of wetlands. Additionally, the Indian population is threatened by reduced use of open rubbish dumps for the disposal of carcasses and foodstuffs. It has been suggested that recent nesting failures in Assam may be due to disease, which may have a negative impact upon the species in the future. Young birds may also become entangled in fishing nets and the species may suffer from the disturbance of arboreal animals and from competition for nesting sites from the Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*. Poisoning of small wetlands to catch fish in the dry forests of northern and eastern Cambodia potentially poses a significant threat. At the Landfill site at Guwahati, India, pesticide use at the open rubbish dump, where storks flock to feed, led to several mortalities in 2005.

IBIS AND SPOONBILLS *THRESKIORNITHIDAE*

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* This species is a nomadic and occasional summer visitor to northeastern India. Therefore we did well to find several individuals, while birding in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International and the total population is estimated to be between 10,000 – 20,000 individuals and unfortunately, decreasing.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* This species is mainly a year-round, non-breeding visitor to India. Therefore, we were fortunate to observe a large flock of 20 or so birds, during both of our visits to Maguri Beel.

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS *ANATIDAE*

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* This species is a scarce lowland resident, of Northeastern India. Therefore, we were very fortunate to stumble upon a small flock of half a dozen or so birds in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra River Bridge, south of Tezpur.

Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* A common resident throughout India, we saw large numbers in Kaziranga National Park, and this was followed by a second sighting, of a small number of birds, at Maguri Beel.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Small numbers of this species, winter annually, in northern India. We observed a few small flocks, amongst the much larger flocks of Bar-headed Geese, in Kaziranga National Park.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* This beautiful species, is a common winter visitor to northeastern India. Many hundreds were wintering along the edge of the many lakes in Kaziranga National Park, and smaller numbers were present at Maguri Beel.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* A common winter visitor throughout northeastern India, we saw many large flocks in Kaziranga National Park, and smaller flocks at other wetland areas.

Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* A locally distributed, but widespread resident of India, we saw a pair of birds, during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A common winter visitor to northeastern India, we found good numbers wintering in Kaziranga National Park and Maguri Beel.

Falcated Duck *Mareca falcata* This species is a rare, but regular winter visitor, in very small numbers, to northern India. We were indeed fortunate to observe an adult male, in full breeding plumage, during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International, the total population is unknown, but is unfortunately, decreasing.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* A locally common winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed small numbers in the Sangti Valley, Kaziranga National Park and Maguri Beel.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca* A widespread and common winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed large numbers wintering in Kaziranga National Park.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* An uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed a pair in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and small numbers in Kaziranga National Park.

Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* A fairly common resident in northeastern India, we saw good numbers in Kaziranga National Park and at Maguri Beel.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* A common winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed some small flocks, during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* A very common winter visitor to northeastern India, once again, we observed some large flocks in Kaziranga National Park and Maguri Beel.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* A scarce winter visitor, to northeastern India. We were very fortunate to observe small numbers in Kaziranga National Park, and during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* An uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed up to a dozen birds, during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International, the total population is unknown, but is unfortunately, decreasing.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* A fairly common winter visitor to northeastern India. We found a couple of birds wintering along the Jia Bhareli River, in Nameri National Park.

OSPREY *PANDIONIDAE*

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A fairly common winter visitor to northeastern India, we enjoyed a couple of scattered sightings in wetland areas, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and in Kaziranga National Park.

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES *ACCIPITRIDAE*

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* In northeastern India, this species is a rare resident, we were fortunate to observe a single bird extremely well, during our time in the Mishmi Hills.

Thomas Claverhill Jerdon (1811-1872) was a British physician with both zoological and botanical interests. He was born in Durham and educated at the University of Edinburgh. He studied medicine and became an assistant surgeon with the East India Company. He published 'Birds of India' between 1862-1864.

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* A fairly common resident, throughout northeastern India. We saw a single bird in flight, while we were birding in grassland, on the Brahmaputra Floodplain, close to Roing.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A common resident of northeastern India, a single bird was observed hovering along the roadside, on the drive up to Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A common resident throughout northeastern India, we only observed it in the larger towns and cities, as we were passing through them.

Pallas' Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucorhynchus* A rare resident of northeastern India, we enjoyed a few good sightings in Kaziranga National Park, the stronghold for this species in northeastern India. The Pallas' Fish-Eagle is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 2,500 – 10,000 individuals and decreasing. Key threats are habitat loss, degradation and disturbance. Across the Indian subcontinent and probably most of its range, wetlands have been drained or converted for agriculture and human settlements. The felling of large trees near wetlands has reduced the availability of nesting and roost sites. The spread of water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes*, is a problem in India, as is the siltation of lakes due to catchment deforestation. Pollution of wetlands with pesticides and industrial effluents reduces breeding success. Habitat loss and degradation are compounded by disturbance of wetlands. Reductions in the prey base, primarily through hunting and over-fishing, are further consequences of increasing human pressure. In Myanmar, the development of oil and gas fields is a threat and in China, hunting is a localised problem. In Mongolia, during surveys in the summer of 2009, it was noted that two recently completed hydroelectric dams were severely disrupting water levels in the affected drainage basins, and could potentially affect all sites where the species occurs in the Great Lake Basin. Over-fishing was also noted at several sites and low rainfall was leading to falling water levels in some areas. **Peter Simon Pallas** (1741-1811) was a German zoologist and one of the greatest of the 18th Century naturalists. He led numerous expeditions throughout much of Russia between 1768-1774. He described many new species of mammals, birds, fish and insects.

Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* A rare resident of northeastern India, we enjoyed several good sightings of this species, during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 10,000 – 100,000 individuals and unfortunately, decreasing.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* Another rare resident of northeastern India; we saw a pair of birds in Kaziranga National Park, and this was followed by a second sighting, of a pair of birds, along the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat. This species is classified as

'Critically Endangered' by Birdlife International. Formerly described as possibly the most abundant large bird of prey in the world, at one time numbering several million individuals. Declines throughout the Indian Subcontinent began in the 1990s and were very rapid, resulting in an overall population decline of greater than 99%, over a 10-15 year period, and its global population is now estimated to be between 2,500-10,000 mature individuals, which is fortunately, slowly increasing. The cause of this rapid decline, is the veterinary use of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug *diclofenac*. Vultures are exposed to *diclofenac* when they feed from carcasses of livestock that have died within a few days of treatment, and still contain residues of the drug. Now that use of this drug has been officially banned throughout India, it is hoped that the population will steadily increase.

- Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* A scarce resident of the Himalayas, we saw a large flock of approximately 20 or so birds, which flew over our heads, while we were birding at Sela Pass. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 66,000-334,000 individuals, and stable.
- Crested Serpent-Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* A common resident throughout northeastern India, we enjoyed very good, close looks, at a perched bird, in Kaziranga National Park.
- Western Marsh-harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* A common winter visitor to India, we saw a single male, in Kaziranga National Park.
- Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India. We saw adult males on two separate occasions, the first, in Kaziranga National Park, and the second, during our boat trip at Maguri Beel.
- Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* This is an uncommon resident, in India. We saw a single bird in flight, in Kaziranga National Park.
- Shikra** *Accipiter badius* A common resident of northeastern India, we saw it in flight, on three separate occasions, throughout the tour.
- Besra Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter virgatus* An uncommon resident of northeastern India, we observed a bird in flight, while birding in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.
- Himalayan Buzzard** *Buteo burmanicus* A recent split from Eurasian Buzzard; it is a locally common resident of the Himalayas of northeastern India. We observed a few birds in flight, during the course of the tour.
- Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* A common winter visitor, throughout northern India, we saw several birds in flight, during the tour.
- Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis* An uncommon resident of the Himalayas, of northeastern India. We enjoyed a few, very good, close looks, at this handsome raptor, as they glided just above the forest.
- Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* This very large species of eagle is an uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India. We observed a couple of birds extremely well; one was perched on the ground, and the other perched in a tree, during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 3,300– 8,800 individuals and decreasing. The main threats to this species include habitat destruction and disturbance, poaching and electrocution. Suitable habitat mosaics have been lost as a result of afforestation and wetland drainage. In eastern Europe, agricultural intensification and the abandonment of traditional floodplain management, has greatly reduced habitat quality. Birds are intolerant of permanent human presence in their territories. Forestry operations are a major cause of disturbance. Shooting is a threat in Russia, the Mediterranean, South-East Asia and Africa.
- Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* A very uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India, we were fortunate to observe a single pale morph bird, in flight, in Kaziranga National Park.
- Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii* A scarce resident of northeastern India, we were

very fortunate to enjoy very good looks at an adult bird, circling overhead, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* This attractive species is an uncommon resident, and only occurs in the northeastern part of India. We enjoyed a very good sighting of this species, during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* An uncommon resident of the Himalayas, we enjoyed good, close looks, at a soaring bird, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS *FALCONIDAE*

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A common winter visitor to northeastern India, we observed a single bird, flying above flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra Bridge, at Tezpur.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* The Peregrine Falcon is an uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India. We saw it twice in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and once in Kaziranga National Park.

PHEASANTS AND PARTRIDGES *PHASIANIDAE*

Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis* This is a rare resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. Fortunately for us, the stronghold for this species is Kaziranga National Park, where we enjoyed two good sightings, of separate coveys. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 10,000 – 20,000 individuals and decreasing. Most remaining habitat within its range is subject to intense pressures from drainage for agriculture, human encroachment, fire, grass harvesting, grazing by domestic stock, commercial forestry plantations and dam and irrigation schemes. Significant populations reported from outside the protected areas in Assam in the 1990s have all but vanished in recent years, due to conversion of habitat into farmland.

Agricultural pesticides may be affecting its numbers, either through direct mortality or the reduction in potential food sources (invertebrates) and poisoning of wetlands for fishing is a threat reported from Nepal. The drying out of swampy areas during the breeding season represents a threat that may become more severe owing to climate change. A negative correlation between numbers of this species and numbers of people present in part of Koshi Tappu, suggests that disturbance and habitat alteration may significantly impact this species.

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* A locally common resident in the lowlands of northeastern India, we enjoyed good sightings of both males and females in Kaziranga National Park, and in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Kaleej Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos* A common resident of northeastern India, a single bird was observed in Kaziranga National Park.

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS *RALLIDAE*

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* This species is a fairly common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it very well on several occasions in Kaziranga National Park, and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* This is a fairly common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw it on two occasions, firstly, at a small swamp close to Sivasigar, and secondly, during our boat trip on Maguri Beel.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A common resident of northeastern India. We saw it very well during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it well in Kaziranga National Park, and during our boat trip on Maguri Beel.

JACANAS *JACANIDAE*

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* This species is a common resident of the lowlands wetlands of northeastern India, we enjoyed many good sightings throughout the tour.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* This species is a fairly common resident of northeastern India, we enjoyed many good sightings in Kaziranga National Park and during the boat trip, at Maguri Beel.

AVOCETS AND STILTS *RECURVIROSTRIDAE*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* In northeastern India this species is an uncommon resident of lowland swamps. We saw a few birds very well in Kaziranga National Park and during the boat trip, on Maguri Beel.

THICK-KNEES *BURHINIDAE*

Indian Thick-knee *Burhinus indicus* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw a small flock of half a dozen or so birds, along the Jia Bhareli River, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris* A scarce, and highly local resident, of northern India, we saw a pair of birds very well, along the Jia Bhareli River, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. Its total population is estimated to be between 7,000 – 17,000 individuals and unfortunately, decreasing.

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS *CHARADRIIDAE*

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* This species is a fairly common winter visitor, to the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw small numbers at scattered wetlands throughout the tour.

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* This beautiful species, is a fairly common resident along the lowland rivers of northeastern India. We saw small numbers very well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve and at Maguri Beel.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* In India this species only occurs in the lowlands of the northeast, we saw up to half a dozen birds during our time in Kaziranga National Park, and a couple of birds at Maguri Beel.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* A common resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw well, at most of the wetlands we visited.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* A fairly common winter visitor, mainly to coastal areas of India. We saw a small flock along the edge of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we enjoyed good sightings in the Nameri Tiger Reserve and at Maguri Beel.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A widespread and locally common winter visitor to India, we saw a small flock along the edge of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES *SCOLOPACIDAE*

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* A fairly common resident of the Himalayas. While being driven through Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, Bill saw a bird flush from the track.

Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola* A scarce breeding resident of alpine meadows, in the high Himalayas. We were very fortunate to enjoy very close, prolonged looks, at a single individual, while birding at Sela Pass. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife

International. Its total population is estimated to be between 2,500– 10,000 individuals and is unfortunately decreasing. The main threat to this species, is loss of habitat.

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* A common winter visitor to eastern India. We saw a single bird very well, while birding on the edge of a wetland, in the Suburban Eco Park, at Kolkata.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* A common winter visitor to northern India. We saw good numbers of this species, in Kaziranga National Park, and in Maguri Beel.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A fairly common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw small numbers at all the wetlands we visited.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* A common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India, we observed it very well at several of the wetlands we visited.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* This species is also a common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India and once again, we observed small numbers at most of the wetlands we visited.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India. We observed small numbers during our time in Kaziranga National Park, and at Maguri Beel.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* A common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw several birds during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

Little Stint *Calidris minutus* This species is a common passage migrant, in northeastern India. We saw a small flock along the edge of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* A common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India. We observed a small number very well at Maguri Beel. **Coenraad Jacob Temminck** (1778-1858) was a Dutch ornithologist, illustrator and collector. He was appointed the first Director of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, in Leiden, in 1820 and held that post until his death. He was a wealthy man who had a very large collection of specimens and live birds. His first task as an ornithologist, was to catalogue his father's very extensive collection. His father was Jacob Temminck, for whom Le Vaillant collected specimens.

GULLS *LARIDAE*

Steppe Gull *Larus barabensis* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to India. We saw an immature bird, along the edge of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus* This species is a locally common winter visitor, mainly to the coast. We saw a single bird in flooded grassland, close to Tezpur, and a couple of birds along the edge of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat.

TERNs *STERNIDAE*

River Tern *Sterna aurantia* A fairly common resident of the lowland rivers in northeastern India. We observed small numbers during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

PIGEONS AND DOVES *COLUMBIDAE*

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* Large feral populations present in all the towns and villages throughout northeastern India.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota* This stunning species is a common resident of montane cliffs and snowfields of the high Himalayas. We saw many large flocks, while birding at Sela Pass.

Speckled Wood-Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii* A locally common resident of the forested Himalayas. We had splendid views of a large flock of this species, sat in the top of a tall tree, sunning themselves in the early morning sun, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

- Oriental Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* This species is a common resident throughout northeastern India, in both the lowlands and the highlands. We saw it on one occasion, while birding in Kaziranga National Park.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* A common resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw very well, on several occasions.
- Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis* A very common resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it on every day of the tour, during our time in the lowlands.
- Barred Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia unchall* In India this species only occurs in the far northeast, where it is an uncommon resident. We saw a handful of birds in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* A recent split from the Pacific Emerald Dove, that we know so well in Australia. This species is a common localised resident of northeastern India. We had a good sighting of this bird, during our time in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.
- Ashy-headed Green-Pigeon** *Treron phayrei* A recent split from Pompadour Green-Pigeon. This species is a fairly common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We enjoyed good scope views of a female bird, in Nameri Tiger Reserve.
- Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon** *Treron phoenicopterus* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, it proved very common in Kaziranga National Park.
- Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon** *Treron apicauda* In India this species only occurs in Assam, where it is an uncommon resident. Therefore, we were very fortunate to enjoy good scope views of several of these birds, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.
- Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon** *Treron sphenurus* In India this species only occurs in Assam and West Bengal, where it is a common resident and altitudinal migrant; spending the summer months in the high Himalayas and the winter months in the foothills and lowlands. We saw birds on their wintering grounds in Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Green Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula aenea* A common resident of northeastern India, we observed large numbers in both the Nameri Tiger Reserve and in Kaziranga National Park.

PARROTS *PSITTACIDAE*

- Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria* This large species of parakeet is a common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We observed good numbers during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species was named in honour of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) who was the King of Macedonia. During his famous military campaigns, he forbade the killing of peacocks for food, and instead, he had them shipped home, so that he could enjoy their beauty. He is often credited as being the founder of aviculture.
- Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* This species is a common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw good numbers in Kaziranga National Park and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.
- Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri* Once again, in India this species only occurs in the far northeast, where it is a common resident of the lowlands. We observed good numbers in Nameri Tiger Reserve.
- Vernal Hanging-Parrot** *Loriculus vernalis* This is an uncommon resident of northeastern India. While birding in Nameri Tiger Reserve, we watched a pair of birds feeding in a flowering tree, and we were able to enjoy a very good look at them.

CUCKOOS *CUCULIDAE*

- Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis* This very large species of cuckoo is a fairly common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw a couple of birds very

well, in Kaziranga National Park.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it briefly, while birding in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

OWLS *STRIGIDAE*

Collared Scops-Owl *Otus lettia* This species is a common resident of the Himalayas, of northeastern India. We enjoyed super close views of an adult bird at its daytime roost, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* In northeastern India, this species of owl is a fairly common resident of the Himalayas. Somewhat surprisingly, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, a bird came in very well to tape playback, in full daylight, while we were attempting to bring in small passerines, by playing the call of this species.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* This is a common resident in northeastern India. This species is also diurnal, (active in daytime), and we saw it very well on one occasion, in Kaziranga National Park.

Brown Wood-Owl *Strix leptogrammica* We heard a few of them calling loudly, around our tented camp in the Nameri Tiger Reserve. But try as we may, Joy was the only person who actually saw one.

NIGHTJARS *CAPRIMULGIDAE*

Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka* In India, this species only occurs in the extreme northeast, where it is a common resident. It flushed off tracks after dark, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.

SWIFTS *APODIDAE*

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* A common resident of northeastern India, which we saw well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.

Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Another common resident of northeastern India, which we saw very well, on many occasions.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw very well, on several occasions.

Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda* A little-known, very local, and very scarce summer breeding visitor, to the far eastern areas of the Himalayas, of India. The wintering grounds are unknown. We were extremely fortunate to observe a few small groups, during two of the days we were birding in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. Its population is estimated to be between 150-700 individuals and stable. There are no known threats to this species.

Blyth's Swift *Apus leuconyx* A recent split from Fork-tailed Swift; this species is a locally fairly common, summer breeding visitor, throughout the Himalayas, and winters in the Indian peninsula. We saw a small flock, while birding in the Mishmi Hills. **Edward Blyth** (1810-1873) was an English zoologist and author. He was Curator of the museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1842-1864. He wrote *The Natural History of Cranes* in 1881.

TROGONS AND QUETZALS *TROGONIDAE*

Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus* In India, this uncommon resident only occurs in the lowlands and mid-Himalayas of the far northeast. We saw it well, on one occasion, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

KINGFISHERS *ALCEDINIDAE*

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it very well, on several occasions.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, while in the lowlands, we saw it on a daily basis.

Himalayan Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris* This species is a scarce resident, of rocky, forested streams, of the Himalayas. We were fortunate, to see it well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve and on the floodplain of the Brahmaputra River, close to Roing.

Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw very well, on several occasions.

BEE-EATERS *MEROPIDAE*

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni* An uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of northeastern India. We were fortunate, to see it well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve and on the floodplain of the Brahmaputra River, close to Roing.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we observed small numbers in flooded grassland, close to the Brahmaputra River Bridge, at Tezpur, and in Kaziranga National Park

ROLLERS *CORACIIDAE*

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw well on many occasions.

HOOPOES *UPUPIDAE*

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we observed small numbers during our time in Kaziranga National Park, and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

HORNBILLS *BUCEROTIDAE*

White-throated Brown Hornbill *Anorrhinus austeni* In India, this uncommon and highly localised species, only occurs in the Himalayas of the northeast. We saw a small flock extremely well, on once occasion, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International, the population is unknown, but unfortunately, it is thought to be decreasing

Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis* Once again, in India, this very uncommon and highly localised species, only occurs in the Himalayas of the northeast. We enjoyed wonderful scope views of an adult female, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International, the population is thought to be between 1,500-7, 000 individuals, and unfortunately decreasing. The main threats to this species are deforestation, hunting and trapping, for the cage bird trade.

Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulatus* In India this species only occurs in the lowland forest of the northeast. While birding along the banks of the Jia Bhareli River, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, a single bird, flew across the river.

BARBETS *CAPITONIDAE*

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* In northeastern India this species is a fairly common resident of the forested Himalayas, which we saw well on a few occasions, while in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata* In India, this species only occurs in the northeast where it is a common resident of lowland forest, we saw it very well, on several occasions.

Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii* Once again in India, this species only occurs in the Himalayas of the northeast. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions in the Eaglenest

Wildlife Sanctuary, and again, in the Mishmi Hills.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica* Once again in India, this species only occurs in the lowland forest of the northeast. It was seen on one occasion, in Kaziranga National Park.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* In northeastern India this species is a common resident of the lowland forests. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions in Kaziranga National Park, and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

WOODPECKERS AND ALLIES *PICIDAE*

Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus* In India this common resident is confined to the lower foothills of the Himalayas, we saw it very well, in both the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and in Kaziranga National Park.

Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei* A common resident of northeastern India, we saw it well, on one occasion, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Hypopicus hyperythrus* In northeastern India this species is a fairly common resident, of Himalayan forests. We saw it well on one occasion, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus* This species is an uncommon resident of forested areas throughout northeastern India. We observed this species very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha* This species is also an uncommon resident of forested areas throughout northeastern India. We saw it very well, on a few occasions.

Grey-faced Woodpecker *Picus canus* This species of woodpecker is a fairly common resident throughout all forested areas of northeastern India. We observed this species briefly, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* In northeastern India this species is confined to lowland forests. We saw a family party very well, in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus* This very large species of woodpecker is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands of northeastern India. We observed an individual very well, during our time in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* In northeastern India this species is an uncommon resident of Himalayan forests. We observed it on two different occasions, firstly, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and secondly, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

BROADBILLS *EURYLAIMIDAE*

Long-tailed Broadbill *Psarisomus dalhousiae* A fairly common resident of Himalayan forests, we saw a single bird very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Silver-breasted Broadbill *Serilophus lunatus* A locally common resident of the Himalayan forests of northeastern India. We saw a very large flock, of 20 or so birds, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

LARKS *ALAUDIDAE*

Sand Lark *Calandrella raytal* This species is endemic to the Indian sub-continent where it is an uncommon resident along the edge of the major rivers in the north of India. We saw it well in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, along the Brahmaputra River at Saikhowa Ghat, and at Maguri Beel.

SWALLOWS *HIRUNDINIDAE*

Grey-throated Sand-Martin *Riparia paludicola* A recent split from Plain Martin, this species is a

common resident of the lowland rivers, of northeastern India. We found a large colony nesting in the banks of the Jia Bhareli River, in Nameri National Park, and then we found small numbers present at Maguri Beel.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* In northeastern India this species is an abundant winter visitor, which we observed on many days of the tour.

Nepal House-Martin *Delichon nipalense* In northeastern India this species is an uncommon resident of the Himalayas. We observed small flocks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* This common species breeds in the high Himalayas, of northeastern India, and winters at much lower altitude, from the plains of northern India, to southern India and Sri Lanka. We observed small numbers wintering, in Kaziranga National Park.

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS *MOTACILLIDAE*

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* This large species of pipit, is a common winter visitor to the whole of India. We saw a single bird along the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat, and a few in the Suburban Eco Park, at Kolkata. **Monsieur Richard of Luneville**, was a French naturalist and collector. The pipit was named after him, and was described by **Vieillot**.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* In northeastern India this species is a common and widespread resident of the lowlands. We saw it well on several occasions, including an unusually rufous race, in the Suburban Eco Park, at Kolkata.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* A fairly common passage migrant through the eastern Himalayas, we found a small migratory flock, feeding on the ground, at Sela Pass.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* In northeastern India this species is an altitudinal migrant; breeding in mountain pastures high in the Himalayas, and wintering in lowland plains. We observed several small flocks on their wintering grounds in Kaziranga National Park, and then we observed a small flock at Maguri Beel.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* The distribution of the Olive-backed Pipit, is very similar to the above species. It is an altitudinal migrant; breeding in mountain pastures, high in the Himalayas, and wintering in lowland plains. We observed many small flocks on their wintering grounds throughout the tour.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Some races of White Wagtail are altitudinal migrants in northeastern India. They breed on open plains above the snowline, high in the Himalayas, and winter on lowland plains. Other species only winter on the plains of northeastern India, breeding as far away as China and Russia. We observed several races wintering on the lowland plains throughout the tour.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* A common winter visitor to the plains of northeastern India. We observed several small flocks, throughout the tour.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to the plains of northeastern India. We saw it very well in Kaziranga National Park and at Maguri Beel.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* This species is an uncommon winter visitor throughout northeastern India. We observed a bird feeding on one of the tracks in the Mishmi Hills, and a second bird was seen in grassland, on the Brahmaputra Floodplain, close to Roing.

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* A common resident of the lower plains, of northeastern India. Somewhat surprisingly, we only found a single bird, while birding in the Sangti Valley.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES *CAMPEPHAGIDAE*

Large Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina macei* This very large species of cuckoo-shrike, is a common

resident of lowland forests, we saw it on only one occasion, in Kaziranga National Park.

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos* This species is a fairly common resident throughout all forested areas of northeastern India, we saw a single bird very well, while birding in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris* In India, this uncommon resident of forested areas, only occurs in the northeast. We saw small flocks very well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* This species is a common resident of all forested areas of northeastern India. We saw a family party very well, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* A fairly common resident of all forested areas of northeastern India. We observed a couple of family parties in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and a small family party, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

BULBULS *PYCNONOTIDAE*

Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus* This uncommon resident, is endemic to the forests of the Himalayas; we saw it well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* This species is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands and lower hills of the Himalayas. We observed it very well on several occasions, throughout the tour.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, we saw it very well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* A very common and widespread resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, and once again, we saw it very well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

White-throated Bulbul *Alophoixus flaveolus* In India, this species only occurs in the northeast, where it is an uncommon resident of the forested lowlands, and lower hills of the Himalayas. We observed it very well on one occasion in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and this was followed by a second sighting, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mcclelladii* A common resident of the forested Himalayas, which we saw very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* This attractive species, is a common resident of the forested lowlands and lower hills of the Himalayas. We saw a couple of birds very well, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Himalayan Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* This Himalayan endemic, is a fairly common resident of all forested areas of northeastern India, where we saw it well, on many occasions.

LEAFBIRDS *CHLOROPSEIDAE*

Gold-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* This attractive species, is a fairly common resident of lowland forests throughout northeastern India. We saw it very well in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and Kaziranga National Park.

Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii* A common resident of the forested Himalayas, which we saw very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis* This species is a fairly common resident of lowland forests, throughout northeastern India. We saw it well, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

IORAS *AEGITHINIDAE*

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* A common resident of lowland forests throughout northeastern

India, we saw it very well in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

DIPPERS *CINCLIDAE*

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* A common Himalayan endemic, of the mountain streams and rivers of northeastern India. We observed a pair of birds along the ice-blue Dirang River, in the township of Dirang, and several along the fast-flowing Sangti River, in the Sangti Valley.

WRENS *TROGLODYTIDAE*

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* A common resident of montane, rocky areas, in the high Himalayas. We saw it exceptionally well, at Sela Pass, and in the Mishmi Hills.

ACCENTORS *PRUNELLIDAE*

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* A fairly common resident of the barren rocky slopes of the high Himalayas. We observed a few birds at very close quarters, at Sela Pass, as well as a single bird, in the Mishmi Hills.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophciata* An uncommon endemic of the Himalayas, we had a brief sighting, of a single bird, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

THRUSHES AND ALLIES *TURDIDAE*

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* In northeastern India, this species is a common resident of Himalayan forests. We saw both males and females very well, on a few occasions in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to northeastern India. We first saw it on the roof of a building, close to Tezpur, and then we enjoyed a second sighting, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* In northeastern India this species is a common resident throughout all forested areas, usually close to rivers and streams. We observed it very well, both in the lowlands and particularly, in the Himalayas.

Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul* In northeastern India this species is a locally common altitudinal migrant. Breeding in the Himalayan forests, and wintering mainly in the Indian state of Meghalaya. We observed a pair of birds extremely well, in the Mishmi Hills.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis* In northeastern India, this species is an abundant winter visitor, from breeding grounds in central Russia. We observed several birds, at scattered localities, throughout the tour.

Rusty-bellied Shortwing *Brachypteryx hyperythra* A scarce endemic of the Himalayas, which we saw briefly, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. Its population is estimated to be between 6,000-15,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing.

Gould's Shortwing *Heteroxenicus stellatus* In northeastern India, this scarce, resident species, occurs only in the Himalayas. In the summer months, it breeds above the treeline, and during the winters months, it inhabits wooded valleys. We saw a single bird, very well, in the Mishmi Hills. This species was voted 'Bird of the Tour', by tour participants.

Purple Cochoa *Cochoa purpurea* This is a particularly scarce species, throughout its entire range. In northeastern India it is predominantly a breeding summer visitor, to the forests of the high Himalayas. It is also somewhat nomadic, and some birds are present throughout much of the year. We were very fortunate to observe an adult female, two days running, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES *CISTICOLIDAE*

Bright-capped Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* In northeastern India, this species is an uncommon

resident of tall lowland grassland. We saw a small number very well, during our time in Kaziranga National Park.

Swamp Prinia *Prinia cinerascens* This very scarce and endangered species, is a recent split from Rufous-vented Prinia. It occurs in riverine elephant grass, and is endemic to a tiny area in northeastern India. We were incredibly fortunate, to observe a single bird, perched out in the open, atop a tall stalk of elephant grass, in grassland of the Brahmaputra Floodplain, close to Roing. It has not yet been assessed, by Birdlife International.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* A common resident of riverine grassland. We saw it well, in the Brahmaputra Floodplain, close to Roing, and at Maguri Beel.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* In northeastern India, this species is a common resident of grassland areas, in the lowlands. Individuals were observed well, at Maguri Beel, and at the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Tesia castaneocoronata* In northern India this species is a fairly common resident of Himalayan forests. It is always difficult to see, as it lives in thick undergrowth on the forest floor. A single bird was seen well, on one occasion, in the Mishmi Hills.

Slaty-bellied Tesia *Tesia olivea* In India, this species only occurs in the northeast, where it is an uncommon summer breeding visitor, in the forest undergrowth, of the Himalayas. It winters on the forested plains, a little to the south. We saw a single individual, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Large Bush-Warbler *Oligura major* In northeastern India this very plainly coloured species of bush-warbler is a scarce and local resident, of Himalayan forests. We saw a single bird extremely well, at very close quarters, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Hume's Bush-Warbler *Horornis brunnescens* A recent split from Yellow-bellied Bush-Warbler. In northeastern India, this species is a scarce resident, of montane bamboo forests, of the Himalayas. We saw an individual very well indeed, while birding in the Mishmi Hills. **Allan Octavian Hume** CB (1829-1912) was a famous Theosophist and poet, and also a writer on Indian birds. He was born in London to a Radical Member of parliament Joseph Hume. Allan Hume joined the Bengal Civil Service at the age of 20. He wrote 'The Game Birds of India' and 'Indian Oology and Ornithology'. After his retirement he was co-founder of the Indian National Congress in 1885, and became its General Secretary until 1906.

Spotted Bush-Warbler *Locustella thoracica* In northeastern India, this species is a locally common altitudinal migrant. In the summer months, it breeds at high altitude in the Himalayan forests, and during the winter months it descends to the plains, below the Himalayan foothills, where it skulks around in dense scrub. We were very fortunate to observe this species very well, in tall grassland, at Maguri Beel.

Rusty-rumped Warbler *Locustella certhiola* This species breeds in Siberia, Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. It is a scarce winter visitor to northeastern India, where it skulks around in the thickest reedbeds and areas of wet grass. We enjoyed very close, and prolonged looks, at a single bird, creeping around in a reedbed, in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* This species is a locally common winter visitor to the Indian sub-continent, from breeding grounds in western Asia. We saw small numbers in the reedbeds of the Brahmaputra floodplain, and in the reedbeds, at the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Indian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus brunnescens* In northeastern India, this species is a locally common resident, and a common winter visitor. We saw small numbers in reedbeds in the

Brahmaputra floodplain, where it is resident, and then saw more in reedbeds at the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata, where it is a winter visitor.

Blyth's Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* A common winter visitor to northeastern India, we saw a single bird exceptionally well, in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cucullatus* An uncommon resident of Himalayan forests. We saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* A common resident of the lowland plains of northeastern India. We saw it very well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* A common winter visitor to northeastern India, Bill saw one in the grounds of our hotel, at Tinsukia.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* This rather plain *phylloscopus* warbler is a long-distance migrant. In northeastern India it is a fairly common winter visitor to the forested lowlands, from summer breeding grounds in Siberia, the Russian Far East, Mongolia and northeastern China. We saw it well on one occasion, in Kaziranga National Park.

Smoky Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus fulgiventis* In northeastern India, this species is a scarce altitudinal migrant. In the summer months, it breeds at high altitude in the Himalayan forests, and during the winter months, it descends to the plains, below the Himalayan foothills, where it skulks around in dense scrub. We were very fortunate to observe this species very well, in tall grassland, at Maguri Beel.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* In northeastern India, this species is a common altitudinal migrant; breeding in alpine scrub of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the forests of the lowlands, during the winter months. We saw a small flock in Kaziranga National Park, and one or two, at Maguri Beel. Colonel **Samuel Richard Tickell** (1811-1875) was a British army officer, artist and ornithologist, who worked in India and Burma. He made important early contributions to Indian ornithology while observing and collecting both bird and mammal specimens, in the states of Bihar, Orissa, Darjeeling and Tenasserim.

Orange-barred Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* In northeastern India, this species is a common altitudinal migrant; breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months. We saw it well on a couple of occasions, on its wintering grounds, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Grey-faced Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A fairly common altitudinal migrant in northeastern India. Breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, where we saw it very well, on several occasions.

Lemon-rumped Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* In northeastern India this species is a common altitudinal migrant, breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, where we saw it well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months.

Hume's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* In northeastern India this species is also a common altitudinal migrant, breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months. We saw a few birds very well, while birding in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* The Greenish Warbler is a long-distance migrant. In northeastern India it is a common winter visitor of the forested lowlands, from summer breeding grounds in Eastern Europe, Russia, Southern Central China and as close as the high Himalayas of Northeastern India. We saw it on only one occasion, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* This species is a common altitudinal migrant in northeastern India. It winters in the foothills of northeastern India, and breeds in the

Himalayan forests during the summer months. We saw it very well, on a few occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis* In northeastern India this species is an uncommon altitudinal migrant, breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months. We saw it very well on one occasion, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Grey-checked Warbler *Seicercus poliogenys* In northeastern India this species is a locally common altitudinal migrant, breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions, firstly, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and secondly, in the Mishmi Hills.

Yellow-bellied Warbler *Abroscopus superciliaris* In northeastern India this species is a fairly common altitudinal migrant, breeding in the mountain forests of the high Himalayas, and wintering in the foothill forests, during the winter months. We saw it well, on a couple of occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps* This species is a fairly common resident of the high Himalayan forests of northeastern India, where we saw it very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Broad-billed Warbler *Tickellia hodgsoni* The Broad-billed Warbler is a scarce resident of the high Himalayan forests, in northeastern India. We saw it amongst a mixed species feeding flock in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris* A locally common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw it well at Maguri Beel, and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS *MUSCICAPIDAE*

Orange-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiiata* This beautiful species of flycatcher is a common resident of montane forests in the Himalayas, we saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* Another beautiful species of flycatcher, which is a common winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India, from breeding grounds in Siberia. We saw it very well on a few occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in Kaziranga National Park.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is an altitudinal migrant in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands and breeds during the summer months in the high Himalayan forests. We saw a pair of birds, on one occasion, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* In northeastern India, this species is a common altitudinal migrant. In the summer months, it breeds at high altitude in the forests of the Himalayas, and during the winter months it descends to the plains, below the Himalayan foothills, where it winters in open wooded country. We enjoyed good, close looks, at a couple of birds, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is an altitudinal migrant, in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands and breeds during the summer months in the high Himalayan forests. We saw it very well in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is a common altitudinal migrant in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands and breeds

during the summer months in the high Himalayan forests. We saw a male very well, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis concretus* A scarce breeding resident, in dense forests of the Assam Hills. We were extremely fortunate to observe a pair of these large, slow-moving flycatchers, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Pale Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor* This uncommon and local species, breeds in the foothills of the Himalayas, and winters on the adjacent plains to the south. We were very fortunate to observe a fine male, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is a common altitudinal migrant in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands and breeds during the summer months, in the high Himalayan forests. We saw it very well both in the lowlands, and in the highlands.

Himalayan Rubythroat *Calliope pectoralis* In northeastern India, this species is a common altitudinal migrant. In the summer months, it breeds at high altitude in the forests of the Himalayas, and during the winter months it descends to the plains, below the Himalayan foothills, where it winters in dense bushes, thickets, and rank grass near streams. We enjoyed good, close looks, at an adult male, in the Maguri Beel.

Himalayan Red-flanked Bush-Robin *Tarsiger rufilatus* Another beautiful bird, which is predominantly a common resident of the high Himalayan forests, with a small number of birds wintering in the Assam Hills. We saw a single bird very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Golden Bush-Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus* A common bird of dwarf scrub in the high Himalayas, during the summer months, and a bird of the foothill forests, during the winter months. We had a quick glimpse, at one of these birds, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

White-browed Bush-Robin *Tarsiger indicus* This species is a fairly common resident of the forested areas of the Himalayas. We saw a female bird, two days running, probably the same bird, while birding in the Mishmi Hills.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* A common and widespread resident, throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw very well, on many occasions.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* This very beautiful species is an uncommon resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw this species fairly well, during our time in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni* In northeastern India, this species is a locally common winter visitor, from breeding grounds in China. We had prolonged, close looks, at a female bird, in the Sangti Valley.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps* This stunning looking bird, is a scarce resident, of the high Himalayas. It spends the winter months in meadows, fallow fields and bush-covered slopes. This is exactly the habitat, where we saw a few males, while birding at Sela Pass.

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus* The Daurian Redstart is a scarce winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India, which is at the extreme western edge, of its wintering range. It breeds in southern China. Therefore, we were very fortunate to observe both males and females, along the Dirang River, at Dirang, and along the Sangti River, in the Sangti Valley.

White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* A very scarce resident of the high Himalayas, right at the eastern edge of its range, at the Sela Pass, where we saw an adult female.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is a common altitudinal migrant, in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands and breeds

during the summer months in the high Himalayan forests. We saw it very well, on a few occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and at the Sela Pass.

White-capped River Chat *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* This very attractive species is a common resident of fast flowing mountain streams and rivers, both in the Himalayan foothills and also in the high Himalayas. We saw it very well on several occasions throughout the tour.

Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa* Another attractive species, which is also a common resident of fast flowing mountain streams and rivers, both in the Himalayan foothills and also in the high Himalayas. We saw it very well on a few occasions during the tour.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri* A locally fairly common resident of montane torrents, in the Himalayas. We saw the same bird two days running, at a montane torrent, in the Mishmi Hills.

Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus immaculatus* This species is a fairly common resident of the Himalayan foothills. A bird was observed flying off the track, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus* A fairly common resident of rock studded streams, of the Himalayas. A single bird was observed in the Mishmi Hills.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* This beautiful species is an abundant winter visitor to the lowlands of northeastern India, from breeding grounds in Russia. We enjoyed a great many sightings, throughout the tour.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS *MONARCHIDAE*

Black-naped Blue Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* A common resident along the base of the Himalayas. We observed a single bird, while birding in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

FANTAILS *RHIPIDURIDAE*

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha* Yet another beautiful bird, this species is a common altitudinal migrant, in northeastern India. It winters in the forested lowlands, and breeds during the summer months, in the high Himalayan forests. We saw it very well on a few occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* The White-throated Fantail is a common resident, throughout northeastern India. We saw it very well on several occasions, in the forests of the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

BABBLERS *TIMALIIDAE*

White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis* A common resident of Himalayan forests, we saw a fairly large flock, on one occasion, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

White-crested Laughingthrush *Leucodioptron leucolophus* A common resident of Himalayan forests, we observed a small flock, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush *Leucodioptron monileger* A common resident of the foothill forests of the Himalayas, which we saw in a mixed-species feeding flock, with the following species, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis* An uncommon resident of the foothill forests of the Himalayas. Seen in a mixed flock with the above species, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus* A common resident of the high Himalayas, which we saw very well on many occasions, in both the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Mishmi

Hills.

- Grey-sided Laughingthrush** *Garrulax caerulatus* An uncommon resident of the high Himalayan forests. We were very fortunate to observe small flocks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Scaly Laughingthrush** *Garrulax subunicolor* This laughingthrush is a scarce resident of the high Himalayan forests. Fortunately, we observed small flocks while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Blue-winged Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron squamatum* This species is an uncommon resident of the high Himalayan forests. We observed this attractive species on a couple of occasions, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Red-headed Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum* This species of laughingthrush, is less shy than most of its relatives, and as a result, we saw it well on a few occasions, in the forests of the high Himalayas, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Mishmi Hills, where it is a fairly common resident.
- Red-faced Liocichla** *Liocichla phoenicea* This species is an uncommon resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. Once again, the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary turned up trumps, and we enjoyed watching a couple of small flocks, of this very attractive species.
- Marsh Babbler** *Pellorneum palustre* A scarce and local resident of tall grassland, at the base of the Himalayas. We were fortunate to enjoy such great looks at this very uncommon species, in tall grassland, on the Brahmaputra floodplain, close to Roing. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International'. Its population is estimated to be between 10,000-20,000 individuals, and unfortunately decreasing. The main threat to this species is the rapid loss and modification, of tall grasslands and reedbeds.
- Buff-breasted Babbler** *Pellorneum tickelli* A locally fairly common resident, of forested areas of northeastern India. We saw a single individual, very well, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Puff-throated Babbler** *Pellorneum ruficeps* A common resident of the forested lowlands of northeastern India. A bird was observed briefly, by some members of the group, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.
- White-browed Scimitar-Babbler** *Pomatorhinus schisticeps* A fairly common resident of the Himalayan foothill forests. We were fortunate to enjoy good looks at this species, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.
- Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* The Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler is a fairly common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We observed a small flock fairly well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and then observed a second flock much better, during our time in the Mishmi Hills.
- Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler** *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris* An uncommon and local resident of Himalayan forests. We were fortunate to observe this species well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Long-billed Wren-Babbler** *Rimator malacoptilus* A scarce resident of broadleaved evergreen forests of the Himalayas. This very shy bird was observed surprisingly well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler** *Napothera epilepidota* A locally fairly common resident, of hill forest undergrowth, in the lower Himalayas. We saw a bird extremely well, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer* All of the wren-babblers have very skulking habits, making them very difficult to see well. However, on one occasion, in the Eaglenest

Wildlife Sanctuary, we saw one of these individuals remarkably well. It is a fairly common resident of the high Himalayan forests.

Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis caudatus* This species is an uncommon resident of the high Himalayan forests. It is probably not as shy as other species of wren-babblers, and we saw one particularly well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. The estimated population is unknown, but thought to be declining.

Mishmi Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis badeigularis* This species is endemic to the Mishmi Hills of northeastern Arunachal Pradesh, where it is a locally common bird, of the forest undergrowth, in broadleaved evergreen forests. We saw this species particularly well, on a couple of occasions, in the Mishmi Hills. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. It is estimated that the population is between 1,500-7,000 individuals, and unfortunately decreasing. There are no known threats to this species.

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler *Spelaeornis troglodytoides* Perhaps the most attractive of all the wren-babblers. It is a scarce resident of the understorey of broadleaved forests, in the high Himalayas. We saw an individual incredibly well, on one occasion, in the Mishmi Hills.

Spotted Wren-Babbler *Elachura formosa* Another scarce resident of the understorey of broadleaved evergreen forests in the Himalayas. Another attractive bird, which we saw well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler *Sphenocichla roberti* A scarce resident of hill forest regrowth, of the eastern Himalayas. We saw a single bird very well, while birding in the Mishmi Hills. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' by Birdlife International. The population is estimated to be between 2,500-10,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps* This species is a fairly common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas, we saw it well on several occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea* This delightful species of babbler, is locally fairly common in the forests of the high Himalayas. We saw it fairly well on a couple of occasions, in the Mishmi Hills.

Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris nigriceps* A common resident of Himalayan forests, which we also saw well, in the Mishmi Hills.

Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis* A common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We observed it in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and also in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata* A locally common resident of grassland and scrub, at the base of the Himalayas. We saw it well, on one occasion, while birding at Maguri Beel.

Jerdon's Babbler *Chrysomma altirostre* In northeastern India, this scarce species only occurs in large expanses of tall grassland, in the Brahmaputra floodplain. We saw it in just such habitat, close to Roing, and at Maguri Beel. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. It is estimated that the total population is between 2,500-10,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing. The main threats to this species are destruction of habitat for conversion to cultivation, and grazing by livestock.

Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei* This species is a common endemic of marshland, which borders the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra river systems. We saw it very well, on the Brahmaputra floodplain, close to Roing, and at Maguri Beel.

Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris* This very attractive species, is a fairly common resident of broadleaved evergreen and pine forests, in the foothills of the Himalayas. We saw it very well, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Himalayan Cutia *Cutia nipalensis* This stunningly attractive species is local and uncommon in the forests of the high Himalayas, of northeastern India. This species was known as Nepal

Cutia, until it was recently discovered to be present in India. We enjoyed very good looks at a small flock, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

- Black-headed Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius rufiventer* A scarce resident of mixed oak and rhododendron forests, of the Himalayas. We were very fortunate, to enjoy very good looks at a pair of these birds, while birding in the Mishmi Hills.
- Blythe's Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius aerauiatus* A recent split from White-browed Shrike-Babbler, this species is an uncommon resident in the forests of the high Himalayas, we saw a pair very well, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Green Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius xanthochlorus* This small species of shrike-babbler, is a fairly common resident in montane forests, of the Himalayas. We enjoyed some good looks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Black-eared Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius melanotis* A fairly common resident of Himalayan broadleaved evergreen forests. We saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Indian White-hooded Babbler** *Gampsorhynchus rufulus* This delightful species, is a scarce resident of foothill bamboo thickets, of the lower Himalayas. We observed a small flock very well, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.
- Rusty-fronted Barwing** *Ixops egertoni* This bird is a locally fairly common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We enjoyed very good looks at small flocks in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Hoary-throated Barwing** *Ixops nipalensis* This species is a fairly common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We observed a small flock very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Streak-throated Barwing** *Ixops waldeni* This species is an uncommon resident of montane evergreen forests, in the Himalayas. We saw a few birds well, while birding in the Mishmi Hills.
- Blue-winged Minla** *Siva cyanouroptera* A common bird throughout the forested lowlands and highlands of the Himalayas, of northeastern India. We saw several of these birds in mixed-species feeding flocks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Bar-throated Minla** *Minla strigula* This species is one of the commonest residents of the forests of the high Himalayas, we saw it very well, on numerous occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta* This attractive species is a fairly common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We saw it well on a couple of occasions, in mixed-species feeding flocks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Golden-breasted Fulvetta** *Alcippe chrysotis* This stunningly attractive, and diminutive species of babbler, is a locally fairly common resident, of the forests of the high Himalayas. We observed a few small flocks, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Yellow-throated Fulvetta** *Alcippe cinerea* This attractive species is a scarce resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We were very fortunate to observe a few small flocks of this species, keeping very low in the undergrowth, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneiceps* This beautiful bird is a common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas, we saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Brown-throated Fulvetta** *Fulvetta ludlowi* This species is a scarce resident of montane forests of the Himalayas. We saw a few birds in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Manipur Fulvetta** *Fulvetta manipurensis* This range-restricted species is a scarce resident of montane forest regrowth. We saw it well on a couple of occasions, while birding in the

Mishmi Hills.

- Rufous-throated Fulvetta** *Schoeniparus rufogularis* A locally common resident of the Himalayan foothill forests and adjacent plains. We saw a single bird, very well, while birding in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.
- Rufous-backed Sibia** *Leioptila annectens* This species is a scarce resident, of the broadleaved evergreen forests of the Himalayas. We observed a couple of birds, during our time in the Eaglenest wildlife Sanctuary.
- Beautiful Sibia** *Malacias pulchellus* This species is a locally fairly common resident, of the broadleaved forests of the Himalayas. We saw it very well on numerous occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Long-tailed Sibia** *Heterophasia picaoides* A locally fairly common resident, of broadleaved and coniferous forests, of the Himalayas. We enjoyed some great looks, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- White-naped Yuhina** *Yuhina bakeri* This species is a locally fairly common resident, of the forests of the high Himalayas. We saw it well on a couple of occasions, while birding in the Mishmi Hills.
- Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis* A very common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We observed it frequently, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* This species is also a very common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. Once again, we saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Rufous-vented Yuhina** *Yuhina occipitalis* Another common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. Once again, we saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and in the Mishmi Hills.
- Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta* A rather scarce resident of broadleaved evergreen forests, of the Himalayas. We saw it once in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and a couple of times, in the Mishmi Hills.
- White-bellied Erpornis** *Erpornis zantholeuca* A common resident of the Himalayan foothills, we saw a few individuals very well, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Fire-tailed Myzornis** *Myzornis pyrrhoura* This beautiful species, is a locally common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas, of northeastern India. We saw it very well on one occasion, in the Mishmi Hills.

PARROTBILLS *PARADOXORNITHIDAE*

- Black-breasted Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis flavirostris* This remarkable species, is endemic to the Brahmaputra floodplain of northeastern India; and occurs nowhere else on earth! It is a locally common bird, of reedbeds and elephant grass. Therefore, we were indeed fortunate, to enjoy prolonged, good looks, at this extremely range-restricted species, while birding in the Brahmaputra floodplain, close to Roing. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International. It is estimated that the total population is between 1,500-7,000 individuals, and unfortunately, decreasing. The main threat to this species is the rapid loss and modification of tall grasslands and reedbeds, throughout its limited range.
- Black-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis nipalensis* This beautiful little bird is a common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas, wherever there are large tracks of bamboo. Bill observed this species, on one occasion, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.
- White-breasted Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis ruficeps* This species is a recent split from Lesser Red-headed Parrotbill. This range-restricted species, is an uncommon resident of areas of dense

bamboo, in the forests of the Himalayas, of northwest Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan. We observed a large feeding flock, on one occasion, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. This species has not yet been assessed by Birdlife International.

LONG-TAILED TITS *AEGITHALIDAE*

Red-headed Tit *Aegithalos iredalei* A very beautiful and common resident of the forests of the high Himalayas. We observed this species on one occasion, in a mixed-species feeding flock, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

CHICKADEES AND TITS *PARIDAE*

Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris* A common resident of Himalayan alpine forests and scrub. We observed this species, very well indeed, while birding at Sela Pass.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus* A recent split from Great Tit. This species is a common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. It was observed by some members of the group, in Kaziranga National Park.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* This more attractive species, replaces the above species in the forests of the high Himalayas, where it is a very common resident. We saw it very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* This very small species, is a fairly common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. We saw it very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea* This absolutely gorgeous species, is a fairly common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw a large flock, very well indeed, in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

NUTHATCHES *SITTIDAE*

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* This species of nuthatch is a common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas, we saw it very well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

WALLCREEPER *TICHODROMIDAE*

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* A fairly common altitudinal migrant. It breeds high in the Himalayas, mainly between 3,000 and 5,000 metres. Wintering down to 250 metres, where it inhabits rocky cliffs, boulder-strewn stream-beds, quarries, bridges and walls. Observed twice in flight, from our vehicles. The first sighting occurred close to Tenga, and the second, took place, at Dirang.

CREEPERS *CERTHIIDAE*

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *Certhia nipalensis* A fairly common inhabitant of montane, broadleaved forests of the Himalayas. We saw it well on one occasion, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS *NECTARINIIDAE*

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis* The Ruby-cheeked Sunbird is a locally common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We observed a single male, very well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* A common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw an adult female, very well, while birding in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Mrs Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae* This very attractive species is an uncommon resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. We observed a few birds very well, while

birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. This species is named after **Elizabeth Gould** (1804-1841) who was the artist wife of the famous ornithologist, **John Gould** (1804-1881).

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* A common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas; which we saw very well, at the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Black-breasted Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata* This species is a fairly common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas, we saw it well, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna* A locally common altitudinal migrant. Which breeds in the Himalayan forests during the summer months, and winters in the foothills and adjacent plains. We saw it very well, on a number of occasions.

FLOWERPECKERS *DICAEIDAE*

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectum* This species of flowerpecker, is a common resident of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. We observed it well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

WHITE-EYES *ZOSTEROPIDAE*

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* This species of white-eye is a common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw it very well, on several occasions throughout the tour.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES *ORIOLIDAE*

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* This splendid bird, is a common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw it very well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve and in Kaziranga National Park.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii* This species is a fairly common resident of the broadleaved evergreen forests, of the Himalayas. We saw it very well on a number of occasions.

SHRIKES *LANIIDAE*

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* This species is a fairly common winter visitor, to the lowlands of northeastern India. From breeding grounds in China and the Russian Far East. We enjoyed several scattered sightings, throughout the tour.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* This attractive species, is a common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India. We saw it very well, on many occasions throughout the tour.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* Throughout its range the Grey-backed Shrike is a fairly common altitudinal migrant. We observed this species on several occasions, on its wintering grounds, in the lowlands.

DRONGOS *DICRURIDAE*

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* A common and widespread resident, throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, where we saw it very well, on numerous occasions.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* The Ashy Drongo is a common altitudinal migrant; breeding in the summer months, high in the Himalayas, and wintering in the foothills of the Himalayas. We saw it very well, on its wintering grounds in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* The Bronzed Drongo is a fairly common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India, where we saw it very well on several occasions.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* The Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo is a locally common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw it very well, on

several occasions throughout the tour.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* This species is a locally common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw it well, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve, and in Kaziranga National Park.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* This species is a common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India, where once again, we saw it well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

WOODSWALLOWS *ARTAMIDAE*

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* This species is a fairly common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We enjoyed good sightings in Kaziranga National Park, and on the edge of the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES *CORVIDAE*

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris* This beautiful bird, is a locally common resident, of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. We saw it very well on one occasion, in the Mishmi Hills.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Another beautiful species, the Rufous Treepie is a common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We saw it very well in Kaziranga National Park, and in the Suburban Eco Park, in Kolkata.

Collared Treepie *Dendrocitta frontalis* This attractive species, is a rare resident of lowland forests of the Himalayas. We saw it well in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Jeypore Forest Reserve.

Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* A common but somewhat erratic resident, in predominantly coniferous forests, of the Himalayas. We saw a small flock in flight, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax* A common resident of open grazed, alpine pastureland. We saw a small flock very well, while birding at Sela Pass.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* A common and widespread resident of the villages and towns, in the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw well on many occasions.

Eastern Jungle Crow *Corvus leuillanti* This species is a common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, where we saw it very well, on many occasions.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* In northeastern India, this common resident, replaces the Eastern Jungle Crow, in the montane forests of the Himalayas. We saw it very well, at Tenga, and at the Sela Pass.

STARLINGS *STURNIDAE*

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* This species is a common resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, where we saw it very well, on a few occasions.

White-vented Myna *Acridotheres grandis* This species is at the northwestern edge of its range in northeastern India, where it is a locally common resident, of the lowlands. We saw a small flock, in farmland, close to the Brahmaputra Bridge, at Tezpur, and a second small flock, in Kaziranga National Park.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* This species is an abundant resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, where we saw it well, on many occasions.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* A small flock of this uncommon resident, of the lowlands, was observed briefly, along the roadside, close to Guwahati.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* An abundant resident of the lowlands of northeastern India, where we saw it well, on many occasions.

Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra* In northeastern India this species is a very common resident of the lowlands, where we saw it very well, on numerous occasions.

Grey-headed Starling *Sturnia malabarica* The Grey-headed Starling is a fairly common resident of the lowland forests of northeastern India. We enjoyed many good sightings, during our time in the lowland forests.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* Throughout the three week tour, we only saw one vagrant species, this was it! The Common Starling is a rare vagrant to northeastern India. Therefore, we were indeed fortunate to observe four birds amongst a very large migratory flock of Western Yellow Wagtails, along the banks of the Brahmaputra River, at Saikhowa Ghat. We saw a second small flock of three birds, in flight, during our boat trip, at Maguri Beel.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS *PASSERIDAE*

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* A common and widespread resident throughout the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw well, on a few occasions.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* This species is a common resident of towns and villages, both in the lowlands and the highlands. We enjoyed many sightings of this attractive species.

WEAVERS AND ALLIES *PELOCEIDAE*

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* A locally abundant species of the lowlands, we saw it well on a few occasions, in Kaziranga National Park.

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES *ESTRILDIDAE*

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* A common resident of cultivated areas of the lowlands. We saw a few small flocks, throughout the tour.

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS AND ALLIES *FRINGILLIDAE*

Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura* This attractive species, is a locally common resident of the montane forests of the Himalayas. We saw a small flock very well, while birding at Sela Pass.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus edwardsii* This species is a highly localised and uncommon resident, of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. It spends the winter months, as low as 1,000 metres, in the foothill forests of the Himalayas. We saw a small flock very well, on the lower slopes of the Mishmi Hills.

Scarlet Finch *Haematospiza sipahi* Another attractive species, the Scarlet Finch is a fairly common resident, of the montane forests of the high Himalayas. Wintering in the foothills of the Himalayas, during the winter months. We saw both males and females fairly well, on a couple of occasions, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS AND ALLIES *EMBERIZIDAE*

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* A common winter visitor, from breeding grounds in Siberia. In northeastern India, it winters in woodland openings, grassy areas and cultivation. We saw small flocks, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, and in the Mishmi Hills.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* This species is a common winter visitor, to the lowlands of northeastern India, from breeding grounds in central China. On its wintering grounds, it is particularly attracted to open areas around water. We saw an adult male very well, while birding at Maguri Beel.

MAMMALS

Assam Macaque *Macaca assamensis* We saw this large species of macaque, very well, on one occasion, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List. Although it has a wide distribution, the species is considered to be threatened in most parts of its range. Habitat destruction is the primary cause of the decline, there has been extensive habitat loss over the last 20 years in several states of northeastern India, of somewhere between 30-60% and this poses the greatest risk to this species. In the Himalayan regions of North Bengal, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, it frequently invades crops, which leads to reprisal killings. Lesser threats include hunting and trapping for sport, 'medicine', food, and the pet trade.

Northern Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca leonina* We had a quick look at a family party, of this species, in the Mishmi Hills. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List. Habitat loss and poaching are the major threats to this species. The reduction of forested areas in much of its range continues at a steady rate. Habitat disturbances that affect this species' survival include: selective logging; timber and firewood collection for making charcoal; road building, dams, power lines; and deliberately setting fires. All of these threats lead to forest fragmentation and soil erosion. This species is also hunted and traded for food, sport and traditional 'medicine', and accidental mortality due to trapping occurs.

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* A common and widespread species of the lowlands of northeastern India, which we saw along the roadside, on many occasions throughout the tour.

Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula* We enjoyed two sightings of single animals, during our time in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. This very handsome species of *mustilid*, occurs in forested areas of the Himalayas, from the plains, to the treeline.

Smooth-coated Otter *Lutogale perspicillata* We observed small family parties on a few occasions, during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List. In most Asian countries increased human population during the last century, combined with inadequate and ineffective rural development programmes, have failed to address the problems of poverty, forcing people to be more and more dependent on natural resources. Resulting in most of the wetlands and waterways not having an adequate prey base for sustaining otter populations. Throughout southern and southeast Asia there is severe conflict between otters and humans, because of poverty and recent increase in aquaculture activities, which leads inevitably to indiscriminate killing of otters. The major threats to Asian otter populations are loss of wetland habitats due to construction of large-scale hydroelectric projects, reclamation of wetlands for settlements and agriculture, reduction in prey biomass, poaching and contamination of waterways by pesticides.

Indian Flying-Fox *Pteropus giganteus* We observed several of these animals during the tour. It is the largest of all the many species of bats, which occur in India. It has a huge wingspan, in excess of 120 centimetres. It occurs throughout the Indian sub-continent, with the exception of the most arid areas, and the higher reaches of the Himalayas. They roost together in trees, in large, noisy groups, and at dusk they fly off to raid far away orchards, where they feed mainly, on over ripened fruit.

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* We saw many Asian Elephants during our time in Kaziranga

National Park. This species is classified as 'Endangered' on the ICUN Red List. The pre-eminent threats to the Asian elephant today are habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, which are driven by an expanding human population. Asian elephants live in the region of the world with the densest human population, growing at a rate of between 1–3% per year. Because elephants require much larger areas of natural habitat than most other terrestrial mammals in Asia, they are one of the first species to suffer the consequences of habitat fragmentation and destruction. Due to its great size and large food requirements, the elephant cannot co-exist with people in areas where agriculture is the dominant form of land-use. This leads in turn to increasing conflicts between humans and elephants, when elephants eat or trample crops. Hundreds of people and elephants are killed annually, as a result of such conflicts. The long-term future of elephants outside protected areas, as well as in some protected areas, is therefore inextricably linked to mitigating such human–elephant conflicts, and this is one of the largest conservation challenges in Asia today.

Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* We saw large numbers, during our time in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' on the ICUN Red List. This species declined to near extinction in the early 1900s, primarily due to widespread conversion of alluvial plains grasslands to agricultural development, which led to human-rhino conflicts and easier accessibility for hunters. Sport hunting became common in the late 1800s and early 1900s. A reversal of government policies shortly thereafter protected many of the remaining populations. However, poaching, mainly for the use of the horn in Traditional Chinese Medicine has remained a constant and the success is precarious without continued and increased support for conservation efforts in India and Nepal. Poaching has led to decreases in several important populations, especially those in Chitwan, Manas, Laokhowa, and the Babai Valley area of Bardia. The West Bengal populations in Jaldapara and Gorumara are affected by high levels of grazing from fringe villages, and there have been weed and climber infestations by *Mikania cordata*, *M. scandens*, *Lantana camara* and *Leea* spp. The species is inherently at risk because over 70% of its population occurs at a single site, Kaziranga National Park. This area, is subject to poaching and tensions with the surrounding high human population due to human-wildlife conflicts, including conflicts with rhinos.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* We observed small numbers, during our time in Kaziranga 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 good look at a single animal, while in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Swamp Deer *Cervus duvaucelli* We saw large numbers of Swamp Deer, in Kaziranga National Park. This species is classified as 'Vulnerable' on the ICUN Red List. High levels of malaria discouraged human settlement, of the Terai, until recently. The conquering of malaria has made the Terai one of the most densely populated regions of India and the human population is growing at a much higher rate than the rest of India. Most of the fertile Terai plains have been taken over by agriculture. The Marsh Deer's habitat is now reduced to isolated fragments as a result of agricultural encroachment and the destruction, through habitat conversion, of wetlands and wet grasslands. The mammals of the grasslands and wetlands of the Terai are besieged by a multitude of threats, which bodes badly for the future.

Hog Deer *Axis porcinus* We saw large numbers of Hog Deer, in Kaziranga National Park. This

species is classified as 'Endangered' in the ICUN Red List. Hog Deer is threatened by hunting and by habitat loss and degradation; much prime Hog Deer habitat had been converted into agricultural land, well before the twentieth century. In the Mekong countries of Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and also probably China and Bangladesh, hunting has been, and remains, the primary direct threat to the species. This huge extent of habitat loss probably occurred largely after Hog Deer had been hunted down to negligible numbers. While high levels of malaria had previously discouraged settlement and agriculture, the conquering of malaria has made the Indian Terai one of the most densely populated regions of India, with a population growing at a much higher rate than the rest of India. Most populations in India are under severe threat from hunting, although the largest population of the species, in Kaziranga, has been secured from this threat for many years. Poaching occurs in protected areas throughout its Indian range, especially in north Bengal, and can be associated with other human uses of protected areas perceived to be more legitimate, such as grazing camps. In a 2002 survey conducted in the state of Biwas, many old skulls of Hog Deer were found across Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. On average 2–3 skulls were recorded from most houses in villages randomly visited during the survey in Arunachal Pradesh. Outside protected areas in India, enforcement of anti-hunting regulations is patchy at best, and unless there is effective specific intervention, all Hog Deer populations in such areas will become extirpated in the near future.

Wild Water Buffalo *Bubalus arnee* Almost all Water Buffaloes have been domesticated and it is now very hard to find them in the wild. Fortunately, they can still be found in a couple of large national parks and Kaziranga is one of them, and here we enjoyed many good sightings of Wild Water Buffaloes. This species is classified as 'Endangered' in the ICUN Red List. The most important threats to Wild Water Buffalo are interbreeding with feral and domestic buffalo, hunting, and habitat loss and degradation. Diseases and parasites, transmitted by domestic livestock, and inter-specific competition for food and water between wild buffalo and domestic stock, are also serious threats.

Himalayan Brown Goral *Nemorhaedus goral* This mammal is a member of the *bovid* family, it occurs throughout the south facing slope of the Himalayas, from 400-4,000 metres. We enjoyed good scope views of a single animal, stood on a rocky precipice, at Sela Pass. It is classified as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List. Its population is unknown, but is thought to be declining. The main threats to this species are habitat loss and hunting for meat.

Black Giant Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor* We enjoyed a good, long look, at one of these aptly named squirrels, in the Nameri Tiger Reserve. This species is classified as 'Near Threatened' in the ICUN Red List. Human induced habitat degradation due to shifting agriculture practices, small-scale logging, clear-cutting, forest fires, expansion of human settlement and harvesting for local consumption, have been observed to be the major threats to this species.

Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Dremomys lokriah* We enjoyed a few close encounters, with this species, while birding in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Irrawaddy Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythus* This widespread species of squirrel, proved to be common throughout the tour, and we enjoyed many good sightings.

Northern Palm-Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* A common and widespread species, which we saw on a daily basis, in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.