

# 18 Days Himalayan Birding Tour April 2003

*By Niels Poul Dreyer*

## INTRODUCTION

This tour was tailor-made to the requirements of the birding group, and has been evolved after exchange of 56 e-mail messages over a period of more than a year. The design of the tour was focused on Himalayan upper altitude species with special attention to pheasants.

Thus the trip was mainly a birding tour with little sightseeing. Niels Poul Dreyer organised the trip from Denmark and Peter Lobo from GURUDONGMA TOURS & TREKS was the operator and leader on the tour. I can only say that the services and logistics provided by the operator and Peter Lobo was outstanding and consequently GURUDONGMA TOURS & TREKS is highly recommended. There were no delays or hick-ups on the tour and everything especially the food was a delight.

## GURUDONGMA TOURS & TREKS

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The birding guests of Gurudongma Tours & Treks have on an average recorded 200 species over 3-4 days. For detailed bird list go to [www.allindiabirding.com](http://www.allindiabirding.com). > Sikkim & North Bengal > Bird List

## TOUR DESIGN

The tour was organised in two parts:

Part 1: 05 Apr to 13 Apr: Looking for Himalayan Monal and other pheasants at the Great Himalayan National Park in the Western Himalayas.

Part 2: 14 Apr to 24 Apr: In North Bengal in the Eastern Himalayas visiting Mahananda Wild Life Sanctuary, Lava Forests, Singelila Range and Darjeeling.

Participants: Ole Michael Lemming, Jørgen & Bodil Nørgård went on the Western Himalayan tour only. Niels Poul Dreyer, Hans Meltofte, Ebbe Alfred Hansen and John Damgård Nielsen took both the Western and the Eastern Himalayan tour.

## TOUR PRICE

Four people paid each US\$ 1700 for the 18 days tour and 3 people paid each US\$ 870 for the 9 days tour, which included the following

- Reception at Delhi Airport.
- Accommodation on twin share with all meals.
- On birding treks, all camping arrangements, porters and birding guide with all meals. We (7 people) paid each Rs 500 in tip to 14 porters on Western Trip and Rs 700 in tip each (4 people) to 10 porters on Eastern trip. The porter fee is Rs 1500 for 5 days.

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- Transport for all transfers and birding trips as per itinerary: (a) Delhi & GHNP Sector – Two Cars AC shared by 07 plus guide. (b). Kalimpong & Darjeeling Sector – Hard top jeep 08 seated to be shared by 04 plus guide.
- Peter's services as birding guide.

Price did not include:

- We paid each US\$ 1100 in return airfare from Copenhagen to New Delhi.
- Air fare Delhi > Bagdogra > Delhi, US\$ 400 per person.
- Personal expenses such as tips, laundry, telephone, and medical expenses which was less than 150 dollars per person.
- Insurance which cost us US\$ 120 each.

Thus total price per person including airfare for 20 days was US\$ 3550 for West & East Himalayas, and US\$ 2680 for 9 days in the Western Himalayas.

## **INFORMATION ON WEATHER AND CLIMATE**

In brief the weather in the plains was warm (20-36°C) and only T-shirts were required with sun hats. For GHNP and Singelila trek the temperature range was 6-20°C. We brought sun hat, woollen cap, underclothing and tracksuits, thermos underwear, heavy socks (with spares), trekking boots, sleeping bags and outer waterproof jacket with lining. Only in the eastern part we had regular thundershowers – usually in the late evening, but apart from one thunderstorm in the morning of 19 April we did not have rainy weather while we were in the field.

## **Part I: 09 nights Western Himalayas**

### **DESCRIPTION OF LOCALITY**

The Great Himalayan National Park is located 530 km from Delhi. It is 60 km from Kulu in Himachal Pradesh. Covering an area of 765km<sup>2</sup>, it is enclosed on the northern, eastern and western boundaries by the Greater Himalayan range. The variation in altitude is great – 1300m to 6100m More than half the area is above 4,000m with most of the eastern part perennially under snow. Glacial advances have given the region its unique topography. It is characterised by dazzling high ridges, glaciers, and deep gorges. Alpine meadows and valleys with closed virgin forests. It is arguably one of the largest areas of relatively undisturbed Western Himalayan ecosystems. With its stunning natural beauty, and dedicated conservation, the Park is a virtual treasure for the researcher, the sensitive nature lover and the adventure seeker.

The park comprises of the upper catchment areas of the Tirthan, Sainj, Parvati and the Jiwa Rivers – all are tributaries of the great Beas River. On this trip we will be exploring a small part of the catchment areas of the Tirthan River.

The forests comprise sub-tropical alpine, and dry alpine shrub types. 'chir' pines, conifers, oaks, firs, rhododendrons and junipers can be seen. Alpine meadows hold a high diversity of herbaceous species.

The excellent habitat shelters a large number of mammals. It is possibly the only place in the Himalayas where the 'Bharal' (blue sheep) occurs virtually side-by-side with the Himalayan 'Thar'. The largest population of the Himalayan Thar – endemic to India is in this park. The endangered Musk Deer can also be found here. The elusive and highly endangered Snow Leopard has also been reported

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The park is a delight for Himalayan avifauna watchers with over three hundred species that can be sighted. One of the few known viable populations of Western Tragopan, a highly endangered species of pheasants, lives in this protected environment. Out of the seven pheasants found in the Western Himalayas, six of them, the western Tragopan, Monal, Cheer, Koklass, Khaleej and Himalayan Snow-Cock can be found in the park. It also has an unexplored treasure of butterflies and a variety of insects. The return road journey to the park from Delhi takes 02 full days. We did trekking in the park for birding for 05 days.

## DAYLOG

### 05Apr: Reception and overnight at Delhi

We arrived at Delhi Airport by Swiss Air **Flight LX 172 from Zurich at 2310 hrs** (local time). We were received by Peter Lobo and transferred by two cars/mini buses to Hotel Jukaso Inn, accommodated in 4 x dbl. AC rooms on B&B basis.

### 06 Apr: Delhi > Chandigarh

After breakfast we departed at 1030 hrs by 2 x 4WD Toyota, from Delhi to Chandigarh on a 250km long highway. The weather was unusually cool and pleasant in New Delhi. We did some shortstop birding en route and saw a Lesser Spotted Eagle just before Chandigarh. After a bit of confusion we found Hotel Quality Regency.

### 07 Apr: Chandigarh > Sai Roopa

We left 0600 hrs at sunrise through Indian traffic towards Sai Roopa in Thirthan Valley. On the way we stopped for breakfast and refreshments just before the foothills. A chained monkey posed a health hazard for us as it went out to chase us every time a person entered within its action radius. We spotted Plum-headed Parakeet, Crested Bunting and Large Grey Babblers along the hedges and fields. Spring was underway and birds active in the foothills. We continued for another 257km along the Sutlej River Valley to Mandi – an ancient city on the confluence of the Sutlej and Beas Rivers. The highway follows the Beas River Valley up to Aut along a new hydroelectric project. Thereafter we branched off up the Thirthan River Valley – a tributary of the Beas River to Ghusiani and Sai Roopa. We arrived at Ghusiani /Sai Ropa by 1400 hrs, in time for a late lunch. For drinking we got the local, tasty applejack.

During the trip several participants, especially Hans and John were worried about their safety, as the second jeep had to keep pace with the first one, where the driver liked hard core driving and the challenge of overtaking slow moving trucks on the winding mountain roads. Upon arrival we had to be transferred in a hanging wire chair across the river. During that process Ebbe's new Leica scope was demolished by one of the porters, who did not know how to dismantle it, before sending it across the river. In the afternoon we did some birding in the Lower Thirthan Valley. We had dinner and an overnight stay at the Sai Roopa Forest Bungalow, a very nice place with spring flower in the garden. A couple of German expatriates had found themselves a refuge here in order to escape the 40°C temperature in New Delhi. We were fortunate not to have been here the previous week in the middle of a rainstorm. We had splendid clear sunshine every day during our 5 days stay in the Great Himalayan National Park.

### 08 Apr: Birding trek Sai Roopa, 1540 m – Rolla, 2040 m – 15 km

In the morning we started out on a nice birding trek along Thirthan River bed in spring weather. We spotted Ultramarine Flycatchers, Pink-browed Rosefinches, several laughingthrushes, warblers, bush warblers etc. We had lunch at the ranger station. Here we spotted an Asian Barred Owlet and big flocks of Slaty-headed Parakeets. As they flew around several parakeets tried to mate. Strangely, despite of big blooms, we did not see much activity in the rhododendron.

It was a nice walk along the river occupied by Brown Dippers, Plumbeous Redstarts and White-capped Water-Redstarts. The trail has a gradual gradient all the way through coniferous and broad-leafed forests and it took about 5-6 hrs to reach our destination at Rolla. During the trek we spotted about 45 species. We had a nice overnight sleep in tented camp and the food was splendid. The porters brought 34 large 1 litre beer glass bottles all the way to 3000m. As most of us feared the prospect of getting up and out of the tents to pee during the night, we only managed to drink half of the load. In the end the rest ended as a tip to the drivers who brought us back to New Delhi.

#### **09 Apr: Birding trek Rolla, 2040 m – Shilt, 2900 m – 04 km**

Just after breakfast we commenced a short but very steep trek along a difficult and challenging route. First we had to cross a slippery wet rock using a rope, as the trail had been washed away the previous week. This crossing caused the group some trouble, but even worse, one of the porters slipped and fell 25m and broke his leg. Fortunately we managed to pass this crossing and thereafter we were rewarded with a sighting of Himalayan Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*) a nice goat with horns. Thereafter we climbed for about 4 hrs uphill to reach Shilt, through coniferous and broad-leafed forests with occasional meadows. Just before we reached a meadow we saw a Monal flying beautifully out of the trees and we could see all its splendour as it took a big swing across an opening among the trees.

We had a nice long rest in a meadow where Lammergeiers, Golden Eagles and Himalayan Griffons came close to us in full display. In the afternoon we went out along the ridge behind the camp to look for Monals. We were not disappointed as 12 Monals was spotted during that afternoon. Shilt is a grassy meadow surrounded by trees and rhododendron but few flowers appeared as the snow had just disappeared. We had a beautiful view in full moonlight across the valley towards the snow-covered mountains reaching an altitude of 4000m on the other side of the valley.

#### **10 Apr: Birding around Shilt, 2900 m**

At dawn we went downhill to look for pheasants including the Western Tragopan. Unfortunately an old man, who knew exactly the whereabouts of this endangered species was unable to help us, because he was too ill from advanced lung cancer. To make things worse Peter had lent the tape of the call of the bird to someone who had forgotten to return it. Consequently, we had to find it without any help. We never got close to the elusive species, as it prefers to rest in an inaccessible spot in thick dwarf bamboo in steep ravines. It is however a very sought after bird. For example, the Australian birder John Penhallurick went to the GHNP just as we left to search for the bird during a planned 12 days stay. Peter Lobo will try to locate the Tragopan with the help of a local priest in another valley next May (2004). If successful, maybe some of us will return to this marvellous place to see the bird.

Later in the season the snow disappears and the flowers will come out in full bloom, so it would be worthwhile to return to find the Tragopan and other species at a higher elevation. Very few tourist venture into this place as no overnight facilities exists.

After breakfast we walked along a ridge through bamboo and forests. More Monals were spotted sitting on a cliff face, but the highlights were a flock of Collared and Spot-winged Grosbeaks in a conifer tree spotted by Hans. Ebbe was happy with the sighting of a flock of Plain Mountain-Finches, which was something he had looked forward to. I was thrilled by a view of Red-eared Buntings and several rosefinches in a bamboo thicket. We continued birding along the same ridge east to Chowder for 4 hours through mixed forest and *en route* we had hot cooked lunch at a sacred site. In the afternoon we returned back to Shilt for an overnight camp.

#### **11 Apr: Birding trek Shilt, 2900 – Chowder, 2800 – Rolla, 2040 – 10 km**

Our local guide never gave up on the Tragopan, so consequently some of us ventured back again to the spot where I had heard it the previous morning. Hans was keen just to hear it, but the local guide believed it had moved further away, so we rushed further down the valley. Unfortunately, no Tragopan called and

if it did, it would have been impossible to locate it in the thick scrub below. Hans was very disappointed not to hear it, but I think many of us were a little frustrated as well. Additionally, I later got a report from the Australian (John Penhallurick from Canberra). He saw it a week a week after we had been there. Apparently, the bird calls more in overcast weather conditions. It is also more difficult to see it when travelling with 7 people who are keen to see the elusive Western Tragopan. As a bonus we spotted a few Koklas pheasants and I got a view of the Bar-tailed Treecreeper. Ole who likes to venture out independently photographed a pair of Himalayan Woodpeckers and a pair of Long-tailed Minivets. He also saw a White-cheeked Nuthatch. In the afternoon we returned downhill back to Rolla.

### **12 Apr: Birding trek Rolla – Sai Ropa (15 km). Drive to Kullu (36 km)**

We returned the same way back towards the road at Sai Ropa during a 4 hrs birding walk. The highlights were a flock of 3 species of laughingthrushes in a rhododendron tree. Among these we all saw a few Variegated Laughingthrushes. A young pair of Kalij Pheasants with blue tail confused us. We first thought it was Koklass pheasants. After a tea break we packed the jeeps and drove to Kullu. While we had been away, the drivers, who are used to the city life in Delhi, had made a lot of friends in the village and promised to return. We arrived at the luxury Hotel by the name Apple Valley Resort in Kullu around 5 PM. In the hotel garden there were several Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, and Ebbe spotted an owlet. During the dinner at night, one of the porters wanted to say goodbye to us. He had bought each of us a local hat as a souvenir from the Kullu Valley.

### **13 Apr: Kullu -Delhi 530 km**

We drove back to Delhi in 2 jeeps in 10 hrs, but in different paces. As a result only Jørgen, Ole and Bodil were lucky to spot a pair of Rock Bush Quail, which could be observed for several minutes.

Back at the Hotel Jukaso Inn we shook hands with major general Gupta. During the evening we had a farewell dinner in a restaurant nearby, but it did not turn out to be a happy event for Hans & John as they got *Delhi Belly* from the meal. The reason was probably an ice cream, a sure way to go belly up in India! After dinner, Ole, Jørgen and Bodil went to the airport to board departure flight, while the four people due to continue on Eastern Himalayan trip stayed overnight at Jukaso Inn.

## **Part 2: 11 days Eastern Himalayas**

This region comprising Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Lava and The Singelila range, nestles in the lush green midranges with a stunning backdrop of towering snow capped peaks, topped by the crowning glory of the 8534m high Mount Khangchendzonga. It has been blessed by nature. Fast flowing rivers, terraced fields, vast tracts of protected forests with exotic flora, Buddhist monasteries, miles of tea gardens, colonial buildings, exotic bazaars, are all there to explore.

Out of the 11 days in this region we spent 02 days for entry and exit, and spent a day birding in the foothills in the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, followed by 02 full days birding around Lava forests. Thereafter we undertook a 05 days birding trek in the Singelila Range, and finally a day at Darjeeling.

### **DESCRIPTION OF LOCALITIES**

**The Mahananda River Wild Life Sanctuary** Located just outside Siliguri, it is well known for its large population of Elephants. As a result birders have not yet explored this area. The deciduous forests and riverine belt provides habitat for a rich variety of birds in the sanctuary. A river runs through the park and is a good venue to do birding. Lesser Pratincoles nest in the riverbed and large yellow orchids growth on the trees. We have made short birding forays over one morning, and found that the forests were teeming with bird life. Some of the birds we saw: Black Stork, Black Baza, Besra, Greater Coucal, Large Cuckoo

Shrike, Black hooded Oriole, Indian roller, Green-billed Malkhoa, Red Jungle Fowl, Indian Grey Hornbill, Himalayan Griffon, Jungle, various bee-eaters, barbets, Common Hill Myna and more.

**Kalimpong** is an exotic town of beautiful people, mystical and enchanting? Ruled by Bhutan for 155 years, and annexed by the British in 1865, it was developed as a centre of the wool trade with Tibet. This trade flourished until the Chinese took control of Tibet, in the 1950's The Lepchas, who were the original inhabitants, were subjected to Bhutanese, Tibetan, British, and Nepalese influences. A gentle and docile people, they have almost lost their identity, and are now called 'The vanishing tribe'. However history has left behind a fascinating ethnic blend of Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepalese people. Here Buddhism rubs shoulders with Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. Gumpas, churches, temples, monasteries, monks and missionaries; all coexist in a jovial and tolerant society. Flower and orchid nurseries, colonial bungalows, churches of the 'Raj', and Buddhist monasteries are there to explore. A quaint bustling bazaar, is a Pandora's box of surprises? Kalimpong is a wanderer's delight. Buddhist tankhas, hand beaten silver, Bhutanese weaves, Chinese lamps, hand crafted paper, Lepcha daggers, Nepali Khukaris and Buddhist masks, are some of the shopping attractions. The town is located at an elevation of 1200-1400m. On this tour we were based at Kalimpong for birding in the Lava area.

Lava is the prime birding destination in this region. It is a small bazaar once a halting place for caravans on the trade routes to Bhutan and Sikkim. It is now a forest village with a buddhist monastery amidst a sea of evergreen forests at an elevation of 2100m Surrounded by very large tracts of protected forests ranging in elevation between 1600 and 2400m, it includes the remote and uninhabited Neora National Park, and it is a bird watcher's delight. Some of the most sought after and least known birds of India can be spotted here. Satyr Tragopan, Ashy Wood Pigeon, Rufous throated and Spotted Wren Babblers, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Red-faced Liocichla, Cutia, Rust-bellied Shortwing, Blue-fronted Robin and Long-billed Thrush, are some of the rare birds.

The **Sandakphu Ridge** of the Singelila Range at an elevation of 3600m provides good birding in Bamboo, Oak, Silver fir, birch, and Rhododendron forests between 2000 and 3000m elevation. There is also the attraction of breathtaking views of Khangchen Dzonga, and glimpses on Mount Everest, apart from the delightful forests. The national park is situated along the deforested Nepal. We spotted 30 cattle, which had entered into the park illegally. Most of the accommodation and teahouses are found on the Nepalese side of the jeep track. It is necessary to register at the border/immigration office in Maneybhanjhan. The trek took us from 2000m to 3650m along a 30km long jeep track, but we climbed more than 2100m as we descended 500m in altitude from Magma to Garibas. The huts were primitive, but fortunately we could stay in the more comfortable Wildlife Guest House at Sandakapu. **The best species seen:** Cinereous and Himalayan Vulture, Satyr Tragopan, Crimson-breasted & Darjeeling Woodpecker, Spotted Nutcracker, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Streak-breasted & Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Scaly-breasted & Rufous-throated Wren Babbler, Black-throated Parrotbill, Red-capped Babbler, Black-faced, Striated, Spotted and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler Whiskered, Stripe-throated & Rufous-vented Yuhina, Golden & White-browed & Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Large-billed, Ashy-throated, Buff-barred, Blyth's & Lemon-rumped Warbler, Blue-fronted Redstart, Little Forktail, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Green-backed, Grey-crested, Rufous-vented, Rufous-fronted & Yellow-browed Tit, White-tailed Nuthatch, Hoary-throated Barwing, Plain Mountain Finch, Edward's, Dark-breasted & White-browed Rosefinch.

**DARJEELING:** The town derived its present name from the Tibetan Dorjee-Ling, meaning Place of the thunderbolt. It is located in the state of West Bengal. It has a population of 200 000, comprising an ethnic mix of Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha and some Bengalis. Common language is Nepali. Until the nineteenth century, it was a part of the kingdom of Sikkim, but was overrun by the Nepalese. The British intervened in 1835 to broker peace and in return pressurised the Sikkim raja, to gift Darjeeling, to the British for an annual sum of Rs 3000. Finally in 1861, after a short war, the British annexed Darjeeling and the adjoining territory up to the Rangit River. The British developed Darjeeling, due to its strategic location,

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as a base for future trade with Tibet. In early 1840's, tea plantations were developed, extensively, and Nepali labor was imported.

This resulted in a change in the demographic balance, with Nepalese gradually gaining ground over others. In 1989 after a violent agitation, for formation of a Gorkhaland state, the Darjeeling District, was granted autonomy, under Gorkha Hill Council, with limited powers. It remains a part of Bengal state Darjeeling retains its colonial flavour, and the region grows the best quality of tea. The fantastic views of the great snow capped ranges, is a major tourist attraction, along with Buddhist monasteries and exotic bazaar. The Zoological Park, the botanical gardens and Tiger hill were good birding sites in the past, but are now too crowded. We saw 200 vehicles on return from Tiger Hill. We went to the wildlife sanctuary instead to see Yellow-billed Blue Magpai, Large Hawk, Common & Oriental and Large Hawk-Cuckoos, Himalayan Swiftlet, close views various babblers and laughingthrushes and Buff-barred Leaf-warbler, and other colourful species seen. All sites were approachable by jeep with little walking.

## DAYLOG

### 14 Apr: Delhi – Bagdogra-Siliguri

We transferred to the airport after breakfast in order to fly to Bagdogra on Jet Airways Flt 9W 601. Departure at 1010 hrs. We arrived in Bagdogra at 1340 and went directly to the Hindu hotel Cinderella. Only vegetarian food was offered here. In the afternoon we went on a short trip at Mahananda WLS just up the road. We had good views of Red-breasted Parakeets and Alexandrine Parakeets among a few jungle Owlets. Up in the mountains we heard thunder rumble and Peter reported from lieutenant general 'Jimmy' Singh that they had had a massive hailstorm in Kalimpong.

### 15 Apr: Siliguri – Birding Mahananda WLS – Kalimpong, 1400 m

As the sun rose one hour earlier we got up at 4.30 am to check out before going by jeep to Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary. Peter had arranged through his connections at the Wildlife Department that we could enter the park 2 hours earlier than the scheduled 8 am opening. We had a nice morning looking for birds along the riverbed. Although we did not see the famous elephants in the 280km<sup>2</sup> large reserve, we had to be careful not to enter too far into the forest.

In the late afternoon we continued uphill towards Kalimpong at 1300m elevation along a winding route for 80 km which followed Tista River for most of the 0230 hrs drive. Unfortunately, the Government of India has decided to build 189 dams in the Himalayas and this beautifully free flowing river will be dammed at no less than 6 locations. We could see that this river was pristine and very suitable for rafting and sport fishing.

We had a nice overnight stay at Gurudongma House, Kalimpong, as guests of lieutenant general 'Jimmy' Singh. It was interesting to hear about the General's career and his views on the USA invasion of Iraq. Just after arrival we had a violent thunderstorm. The house was beautifully decorated with all the gifts and medals the General had received during his time at the Chinese border in Arunachal Pradesh.

### 16 Apr: Kalimpong – Birding Lava, 2200 m – Kalimpong

We departed early and drove along the highway to Lava. When we reached some degraded forest without middle story vegetation. We nevertheless were overwhelmed of the teeming bird life. Everything went so fast that some of us were frustrated not getting on the birds. However after some time we scored most what we wanted such as the rare Blue-fronted Robin. In the same area we saw a male White-tailed Robin next to the Blue Robin. Shortly after having sorted out the 35 species spotted during our stay, we continued uphill in order to have a well-earned breakfast at the top of a hill overlooking the whole area.

Peter Lobo had brought chairs and porcelain in order to create a colonel style setting. The sun appeared from a partly overcast sky while he and his driver prepared the toast, fruit salad and eggs for us. Although

we were at 2000m altitude, it was no longer possible to see the third largest mountain in the world Kangchinzonga 8580 m clearly. In April it was quite hazy despite of the rain we had the previous night. In order to clear the 3km thick haze over the plains, which also penetrate into the foothills, a widespread rain system is needed to drench the area. Peter told us that the infamous Indian haze has got worse during the last 10 years due to pollution, dust from deforestation and higher temperature.

After breakfast we descended through a plantation where we saw a flock of Little Buntings and thereafter we had opportunities to sort out several species of Laughing-thrushes and Scimitar-babblers in the Khampung Reserve Forest. We returned to Gurudongma House Kalimpong in the late afternoon for overnight stay.

### **17 Apr: Kalimpong – birding Lava – Kalimpong**

Once again we drove towards Lava for a 06 hrs birding trek along a isolated forest trail. It was very successful as we spotted 75 species during 8 hrs of birding. The highlight was a close up encounter of the rare and most wanted Yellow-rumped (Himalayan) Honeyguide, as it flew right towards us and landed 4m from the trail. The bird's yellow rump came in clear view as it started to get agitated. What a crippler and views!!

### **18 Apr: Kalimpong – Maneybhanjhan, 2134 m – birding trek to Meghma, 2900 m**

We arrived in **Maneybhanjhan** by jeep in 4 hrs from Kalinpong. It was a cold overcast day when we met the porters. The first part of the trek was steep, going through partly reforested pine plantation until we reached the first teahouse at the cloud base at 2400m. The adventurer and experienced outdoor Greenland expert Hans complained about the steep ascent and needed a rest quite often – too much desk work for too many years!

We later continued into the mist and cloud and reached some good forest. Here John spotted a Spotted Laughingthrush, which for while refused to be chased away by a squirrel. It was a wonderful and handsome bird, which was a lifer for everyone. In the late afternoon we arrived to Maghma, which was a desolated, damp place with a rough tone to it. We slept on second floor in dormitory settings. As the bedding conditions were less than desirable John did not sleep well. Peter got in contact with a fellow guy who claimed to know the whereabouts of the Satyr Tragopans and consequently promised to show it 2 days later. If we had accepted this offer, we would not have reached the Sandakphu peak, so we politely asked him whether we could do this quest the following morning instead, which he reluctantly accepted. He was a bit cross that we did not stay at his teahouse.

### **19 Apr: Birding trek Meghma – Garibas, 2621 m**

We raised to bright sunlight to meet with the teahouse man who came 20 minutes late. Shortly after we heard a Hill Partridge, which he claimed to be the Tragopan. It took us ½ hour to figure out that the whole project was a flop, so we concentrated on finding other birds. We soon were rewarded with sightings of a pair of White-browed Shortwings attracted by tape playback. Later Ebbe found a Large-billed Leafwarbler to us and not long after a Darjeeling Woodpecker sat right out in the open in a small tree ready to be photographed. As I thought we were looking for Tragopans I did not bring the camera. After breakfast we started our climb up to Tonglu 3070 m and then trek down through Singelila National Park to Garibas in 4-5 hrs. A flock of school kids and 3 teachers followed us.

During our first rest stop, one teacher moved very close to us and started to stare down in Hans' bag, while he was packing. This was too much for Hans, so the teacher was politely asked to find another place to watch the scenery away from us. I presume this habit of getting close is not suitable for everyone, but it is a common feature among some people in India. I have experienced this quite often in other places like on trains and airports. During our trek down to Garibas we passed some nice forest areas with bamboo. Here we found two really rare birds: Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler chased out of the bushes by one of our porters and a fast moving Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler.

We arrived to Garibas around 3.30, just in time before a massive monsoon like downpour started. It rained for 6 hours on and off in massive waves. It was concerning, as we thought the monsoon has started early. This year the dry summer was quickly interrupted by early pre-monsoon weather which normally is due to arrive mid May. We later found out a massive cyclone hit the Bengal Bay flooding huge areas and killed 350 people. A cyclone of this magnitude made the weather pattern unusually unstable at Sandakphu despite we were 1000 km away from the scene of chaos.

A lot of school children stayed in a cramped room below and in some in the tents outside. Despite fear of excessive noise, we all managed to sleep early and well. Again thanks to Peter's extraordinary planning we had two rooms with 2 beds for ourselves, despite of the place being overbooked 10 times!!

At Garibas an American Red Panda researcher stayed in one of the rooms. It later appeared to us that he was not a real researcher and he had no visa to India, and no permit to carry out his tasks. Peter Lobo a keen conservationist reported him to the manager and his friend at the Wildlife Department upon our return.

### **20 Apr: Birding trek Garibas – Sandakphu, 3636 m**

We woke up to a misty but not too dark morning. We could even see the moon and blue sky through the light mist, without knowing how the weather would behave we started our 1000m altitudinal climb. As the morning progressed it got darker in the mist, it became so dark that I thought the sun would set and the earth had started to rotate faster. After a massive thunder rumble in the mist it suddenly cleared and a large thunderstorm was threateningly moving in. A little ray of sunlight behind the monsoon clouds made the scene dramatic especially when the lighting display started. We found refuge in a teahouse. After 2 hours of thunder weather it suddenly cleared. Unfortunately the wind picked up at the same time, so the birding was very poor that day. During our ascent to the top of Sandakphu we could see Kanchenjunga 8580m appear out of the clouds in the north. A massive mountain, which is unnaturally large in comparison to the mountain chain of peaks of 6000m. We had a comfortable but chilly overnight stay in Wildlife Guest House, a place reserved to VIP-people on courtesy of the wildlife manager. It was cold inside so we had to organise firewood. Alternatively we would have to stay in overcrowded and noisy huts nearby. We were all grateful to Peter.

### **21 Apr: Birding trek Sandakphu – Garibas**

In the morning we went out to see spectacular views of Everest and Kanchenjunga at sunrise and the view was fantastic. As the sun rose lenticular wave clouds (whale-back) were forming over the peaks, which indicated a very unstable air mass. Shortly afterwards we went down to a meadow to look for birds. The wind was quite strong, but we managed to find a pair of Fire-tailed Sunbirds, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Edward's Rosefinches and best of all a singing Spotted Laughingthrush. First we thought it was a beautiful female human singer. I have never heard such a sweet and complex song from a bird before. Even better I went down to get a close view of this crippler!

After breakfast we went down hill to return to Garibas. The birding was poor due to the strong wind. First when we got down to 2800m, we took another remote but very birdy route back to Garibas. As we descended, the sky became more or more cloudy and misty. Peter went ahead as it became late in order to ensure that we could keep our booked rooms in the crowded Garibas hut. Not long after Peter left with a porter, the latter returned to get us quickly. Peter had just down the bend found a family of Satyr Tragopans, but unfortunately the male had disappeared just before we managed to reach the spot. However 3 females reappeared and at least we got the species nailed down on our life lists!

Just after that sighting we managed to spot a flock of Black-throated Parrotbills in the bamboo. Peter told us that it would be unsafe to stay out in the forest after dark, because the area has a quite large Black Bear population. The evidence for this warning became clear to our minds when we found a few footprints on the path. Just before it got dark, we reached the trekkers hut at Garibas, just in time before the heavens opened up for another massive downpour and associated thunder.

## **22 Apr: Birding trek Garibas – Maneybhanjhan. Drive to Darjeeling**

The next morning we had bright sunshine and we had a pleasant walk for about 6 hours downhill along a small river towards Pos Basti. We did not see too many birds before reaching 1800m. Just near a village we found White-throated Laughingthrushes and got nice views of a Golden-throated Barbets. Higher up in a tree a brownish pink orchid was spotted. Unfortunately people collect orchids and they have become much rarer in recent years.

In the valley the whole village of 500 people were busy excavating a channel in order to pump water through a pipe to generate hydroelectrical power. Peter later found out the company had not obtained a proper Environmental Impact Statement, and consequently the project had to be relocated to another site because it would negatively impact the waterflow in a wildlife sanctuary nearby.. In India it is important to have the paperwork completed before a project is commenced. During our transfer in jeeps towards Darjeeling we passed through a hailstorm, which had ravaged the area with 5-10 cm thick layer of hail. Several trees, leaves, flowers and bamboo were damaged and washed down on the road or destroyed by lightning strikes and the 4cm large hail stones. We arrived in late afternoon to an old but refurbished colonial English hotel. We had suite rooms, but the electricity in Darjeeling was so unreliable, that we had problems with catching up with the news.

## **23 Apr: Dajeeling with birding options**

We had a day to relax and explore Darjeeling. In the early morning and late afternoon we had an option of birding around Darjeeling. Birding is quite good as the birds have become approachable from adoption to people and traffic. Not much virgin forest is found around town, but the scrubby thickets were quite good for many species such as laughingthrushes. We found an Indian Blue Robin, 2 Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, several Golden Fulvettas and a flock of the Black-throated Parrotbills.

During the day we went shopping for tea, but that proved to be more complicated than we thought was possible as we had to choose between 200 different sorts farmed in 20 different ways. The price range is 150-800 Rs for 250 gram of tea. It is possible to order tea via the internet from the local store we visited.

I was surprised of honesty of the people in Dajeeling. For example, I paid 300 Rs for a postcard by mistake and consequently, the salesperson went out on the street to find me in order to hand me the change of Rs 270. It was also very cheap to phone home, about 100 Rs to do 6 minutes call, but the lines were busy or out of order most of the time.

There were a few beggars around town, which is according to Peter a professional occupation. One time the police found 100000 Rs in the pocket of a dead beggar. Some beggars pay to a mafia ring for personal protection. However no beggars are found in the Kalinpong municipality, as the activity is banned by the local authorities.

In the late afternoon we went to the wildlife reserve outside the town, where we spotted 3 Barking Deer and a few cuckoos such as Large Hawk Cuckoo and Common Cuckoo.

Just before dinner Peter had a meeting with the wildlife manager. He told us that the researcher at Garibas was caught by the personnel of the department, and he was currently under house arrest. All his possessions including computer data had been copied and an investigation was underway. He claimed that he had not worked in India, but only used the facilities at the station as a base for his research in Nepal. As everyone knows that there are no red pandas in Nepal because of deforestation, the purpose of the research became suspect. Consequently, the folks at Wildlife suspect that he had been involved in a poaching ring under pretext of research.

## **24 Apr: Darjeeling – Bagdogra – Delhi**

After breakfast, transfer to Bagdogra by jeeps to board flight to Delhi. We had to take a detour by the plane to the east before heading west to New Delhi. Fortunately, we spotted a Lesser Adjutant Stork through the plane window in the Gauhati airport.

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

Peter had organised a pickup in the late afternoon and we went to Orkla near the river east of the city. The highlights were Painted Stork and Demoiselle Crane. The water level was very low so the flats were almost dry. After 1 hours birding we went to a county club for a farewell dinner. The food was superb and plentiful, but we also experienced the high life of the 100 million middle class of India. Around 11 o'clock we went back to the airport to board the Swissair flight bound for Europe. TOUR ENDS

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTGS**

We are most grateful to Peter Lobo, who organised a great trip for us. Lieutenant genera 'Jimmy' Sing provided great hospitality during our stay in his residence, Gurudongma House, and major general Gubta helped us with all practical arrangements in Delhi. The great success of our trip was not the least the result of tireless efforts by our porters, and the friendliness of the Indian people in general.

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## BIRDLIST

### **Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax niger*

1 6/4, 4 7/4 on the plains before and after Chandighah, 1 Kullu – Delhi 13/4

### **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

1 6/4 Delhi – Chandigarh, 2 7/4 & 2 13/4 *en route* Chandiah – Sai Roopa, 3 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

2 7/4 Chandiah – Sai Roopa, 2 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

5 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Intermediate Egret** *Mesophoyx intermedia*

About 20 Kullu – New Delhi 13/4, 3 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Common on the plains

### **Indian Pond-Heron** *Ardeola grayii*

1 7/4 & 8/4 *en route* to GHNP, 13/4 2 Kullu – Delhi, +10 14/4 & 24/4 Bagdogra

### **Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve (Ebbe)

### **Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala*

20 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi (caught a 15cm fish)

### **Asian Open-bill** *Anastomus oscitans*

27 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

1 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

### **Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus*

1 Guwahati Airport 24/4

### **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

5 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*

1 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

### **Black Baza** *Aviceda leuphotes*

1 pair 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, close view in understory

### **Oriental Honey-Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

2 7/4 *en route* to GHNP, 1 pair 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

### **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*

1 6/4 & 7/4 *en route* to GHNP on the plains

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Common on the plains & towns

**Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

In total+15 seen during 5 days in GHNP

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*

1 6/4 & 7/4 on plains, 8/4 1 Sai Roopa – Rolla

**Long-billed Vulture** *Gyps indicus*

5 positively identified. Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*

6 6/4 +10 7/4 in foothills, +20 GHNP (5 days), +10 seen on return to Delhi on 13/4, 3 seen at 3000m around Sandakphu on both 20/4 & 21/4

**Crested Serpent-Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*

2 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, 2 16/4 Lava

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*

1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, 1 20/4 close up at 3000 m around Sandakphu.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius*

6 6/4 Plains, 1 9/4 & 1 12/4 GHNP, 1 13/4 Plains

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

1 9/4 female GHNP, 1 12/4 Lava, 1 21/4 Sandakphu, 1 23/4 Darjeeling

**White-eyed Buzzard** *Butastur teesa*

1 6/4 Plains (Ole, Hans, John & Ebbe)

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

1 21/4 Sandakphu

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis*

1 GHNP 7/4 & 1 8/4, 1 16/4 Lava

**Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina*

1 Chandigarh Hills 6/4

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

1 Roopa – Sai Roopa (throughout), 1 pair seen every day at 2900 m in GHNP

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*

1 *en route* to Roopa, 9 counted during our 5 stay in GHNP (2 light phase, 7 dark)

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis*

1 Mahananda wildlife Reserve 15/4, 1 Lava 16/4 & 17/4

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

+10 *en route* to Roopa, 8 seen from 1700-2100m GNHP, none seen at the high camp

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

1 8/4 & 11/4 GHNP

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*  
10 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*  
3 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*  
20 + 100 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*  
4 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*  
20 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*  
30 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
1 in a hydroelectric dam *en route* to Roopa 7/4

**Rock Bush-Quail** *Perdicula argoondah*  
2 13/4 foothills *en route* to Chandigarh (Jørgen, Bodil & Ole)

**Hill Partridge** *Arborophila torqueola*  
2 seen, 3 heard 10-12/4 GHNP, heard every day on Lava and Sandakphu trek

**Western Tragopan** *Tragopan melanocephalus*  
Heard a clear "mega-mega-mega" one morning by Ole, Niels and the local guide 11/4 GHNP

**Satyr Tragopan** *Tragopan satyra*  
3 females seen, 1 male by Peter 21/4 Garibas

**Himalayan Monal** *Lophophorus impejanus*  
+32 seen and heard in total above 2700m GHNP

**Kalij Pheasant** *Lophura leucomelanos*  
2 (ad.female+juv.) on slope, first thought to be Koklass P. but one had blue tail, Rolla to Sai Roopa 12/4,  
2 Lava, 17/4, 1 *en route* to Maneybhanjhan 22/4

**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus*  
1 pair crossed the road *en route* to Roopa 7/4, 1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Koklass Pheasant** *Pucrasia macrolopha*  
heard 9/4, 2 heard 10/4, 2 seen 11/4, GHNP mainly above 2400m

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*  
4 Chandigarh 6/4, 10 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo*  
2 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
2 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio*

20 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*Seen *en route* to GHNP 6-7/4 & 13/4, 2 Bagdogra 14/4, 5 Orkla, New Delhi 24/4**River Lapwing** *Vanellus duvaucellii*

10 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

2 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, 1 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*1 *en route* to Chandigarh 6/4**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatalis*1 *en route* to Chandiah 6/4**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

1 24/4 Orkla, New Delhi

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*1 5/4 & 3 13/4 *en route* to Chandiah**Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*

2 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

10 i kanal i udkanten af New Delhi 13/4 , +100 Orkla 24/4

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

7 24/4 Orkla

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

+30 24/4 Orkla

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*Found in a channel in New Delhi and a few *en route* to Changidah  
13/4 så vi i den forreste bil omkring 400 *en route* Kullu – Delhi**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

+35 24/4 Orkla

**Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea*

+ 200 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve (nesting), +40 24/4 Orkla

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*

2 24/4 Orkla

**Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon** *Treron phoenicoptera*

1 spotted by Ebbe in the Himalayan foothills from GHNP to Chandigarh 13/4

**Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*

+100 9/4 GHNP

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Oriental Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

2-4 seen every day in GHNP, Lava & Sandakphu trek

**Eurasian Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

several *en route* to Changidharh 6/4

**Red-collared Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

+4 near Changidharh 6/4

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

+50 GHNP, 1 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 12/4, 1 Lava 15/4 & 2 Lava 16/4, 1 Darjeeling

**Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*

+50 14/4 Silligun Forest, +25 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*

Nesting several places *en route* and near Chandigarh 6/4, +50 7/4 & 13/4 several *en route* to and from GHNP, +10 24/4 Orkla

**Red-breasted Parakeet** *Psittacula alexandri*

+25 Siliguri forest 14/4

**Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala*

2 7/4, before foothills near Chandigarh, 4 8/4 GHNP at 1800m, 1 12/4 GHNP

**Slaty-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula himalayana*

Big flocks in GHNP, perhaps +100 especially below 2200m, nesting & mating, we observed one pair on a 15 longterm mating. After copulation the male fed the female just after copulation!

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparverioides*

Heard on the lower part of Sandakphu trek 22/4, 2 seen 23/4 in Darjeeling

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Heard in Lava 16 & 17/4 and several times on the lower Sandakphu trek, finally one observed in Darjeeling on 23/4

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*

1 seen and several heard GHNP, Heard every day on Western trip, +7 seen in Lava, 1 18/4 Maghma

**Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus*

2 Heard 16/4 at 1850m Lava

**Drongo Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris*

1 16/4 seen well by some at 2000m Lava

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea*

2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve Reserve 15/4

**Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus tristis*

3 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis*

+7 Delhi to GHNP and return, 25 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum*

5 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*

1 seen at check point to GHNP 8/4, heard same place 12/4

**Spotted Owlet** *Athene brama*

1 seen by some in Kulo 12/4

**Gray Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus*

Heard 1 seen by Ole in camp at Shilt, GHNP 9/4 & 11/4

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris*

several seen every day in GHNP, Lava area, +30 Sandakphu

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis*

between 10-25 seen every day at lower attitudes

**House Swift** *Apus nipalensis*

50 6/4 evening at Chandigarh, 2 seen by John at Sai Roopa, GHNP 10/4

**Crested Treeswift** *Hemiprocne coronata*

3 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve?

**White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*

About 5 seen every day at lower altitudes, 5 Kulo, 3 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater** *Merops leschenaulti*

3 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Little Green Bee-Eater** *Merops orientalis*

10 7/4 near the Himalayan foothills and Chingidarh

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*

6 Chandigarh – Sai Roopa 7/4

**Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis*

4 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

1 Orkla, New Delhi 24/4

**Indian Gray-Hornbill** *Ocyroceros birostris*

1 14/4 & 2 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Oriental Pied-Hornbill** *Anthracoceros albirostris*

4 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Great Hornbill** *Buceros bicornis*

5 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens*

+40 GHNP, 1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, several in Lava and heard often in the Sandakphu area

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Lineated Barbet** *Megalaima lineata*

2 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Golden-throated Barbet** *Megalaima franklinii*

1 seen in Lava, 1 seen at close range near Pos Basti at 1860m 22/4

**Blue-throated Barbet** *Megalaima asiatica*

2 seen well 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala*

Only heard the first day (during a shortstop *en route* Chandigarh – Sai Roopa), to our surprise we did not see this common bird on the whole trip.

**Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** *Indicator xanthonotus*

1 Lava 17/4

**White-browed Piculet** *Sasia ochracea*

1 seen after Sai Roopa on 8/4

**Rufous Woodpecker** *Celeus brachyurus*

1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Gray-headed (faced) Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

2 seen on tree limbs in the top of a large tree calling Lava at 1950m altitude at forest edge.

**Greater Yellownape** *Picus flavinucha*

2 males and 1 females looking for nesting hole together, but chased away from a hole by something, maybe a roosting Jungle Owlet in Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4, 1 seen on both days in Lava

**Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus*

3 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Himalayan Flameback** *Dinopium shorii*

1 15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Himalayan Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos himalayensis*

15/4 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Darjeeling Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos darjellensis*

1 male Magma 19/4

**Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos cathpharius*

1 pair Lava 17/4

**Brown-fronted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos auriceps*

2 Sai Roopa (GHNP) 12/4

**Gray-capped Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

1 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Greater Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserva 15/4

**Plain Martin** *Riparia paludicola*

20 Orkla, New Delhi 24/4

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.

Compiled by Niels Poul Dreyer, Brunemosevej 10, 4250 Fuglebjerg, Denmark

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

foothills *en route* 13/4, 2 Pos Basti 22/4, Darjeeling 23/4

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*

*En route* 13/4, 2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Gray Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

2 Sai Roopa on 7/4 & 12/4, 2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4, a few seen every day in Lava & Sandakphu trek

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

1 breakfast stop at the foothills *en route* to GHNP 7/4

**Black-backed Wagtail** *Motacilla lugens*

1 New Delhi 6/4, 2 *en route* to New Delhi 13/4

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

+6 seen at Shilt GHNP 10/4 & 11/4, +30 Lava, 10 Magma, a few seen every day on the rest of the Sandakphu trek and in the Dajeeling area. More common above 2000m.

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus*

2 at the summit of Sandakphu 3800m

**Large Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei*

+5 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 14/4 & 15/4

**Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus*

common in GHNP about 45 counted during our 5 days stay, +20 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve, 15 Lava (2 days), +25 during our 5 days Sandakphu trek

**Short-billed Minivet** *Pericrocotus brevirostris*

15 Lava 17/4, 1 male above Garibas 21/4

**Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus flammeus*

2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis gularis*

2 seen Mahananda Wildlife Reserve

**Striated Bulbul** *Pycnonotus striatus*

4 seen Lava 16/4 & 17/4

**Black-crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus melanicterus*

3 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*

+12 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Himalayan Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys*

common between 1000-2000m in GHNP, common in Lava

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*

common in foothills in the west, Lava area

**Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*  
+10 Sai Roopa 7-8/4 & 12/4, 6 Darjeeling

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*  
5 12 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach*  
3 Lava 16-17/4, 1 Darjeeling 22/4, 1 Orkla 24/4

**Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii*  
+15 seen along the river from Sai Roopa to Rolla 8/4 and 13 on the same route back again on 12/4

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
1 seen by Ebbe at 2000m Garibas – Pos Basti

**Rufous-breasted Accentor** *Prunella strophiatea*  
2 at camp Shilt 10/4, 2 summit of Sandakphu 21/4

**White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana*  
1 pair and another one Magma attracted by tape playback 19/4

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*  
1 seen by John at 2500m *en route* to Magma

**Indian Blue Robin** *Luscinia brunnea*  
1 male singing from a telephone line early in the morning outside Dajeeling 23/4

**Orange-flanked Bush-Robin** *Tarsiger cyanurus*  
+10 seen during our 5 days stay in GHNP, 1 Lava 18/4

**Golden Bush-Robin** *Tarsiger chrysaeus*  
1 first stop at 1850m altitude in thinned out forest Lava 16/4

**Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*  
Fairly common in the Himalayan foothills mainly to the east

**Indian Robin** *Saxicoloides fulicata*  
4 seen *en route* in the first Himalayan foothills *en route* from Chandigarh to GHNP

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*  
1 foothills 7/4, 1 female nest *en route* to Magma 18/4

**Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis*  
17 counted during our 5 days stay in GHNP, 1 pair Garibas 19/4 & 21/4

**Plumbeous Water-Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*  
1 pair occurs every 30m in the river along the Sai Roopa to Rolla route GHNP, 1 Lava 16/4, 5 Garibas to Pos Basti

**White-tailed Robin** *Cinclidium leucurum*  
1 male together with a much different Blue-fronted Robin at 1850 m Lava 16/4, 1 Garibas – Pos Basti 22/4

**Blue-fronted Robin** *Cinclidium frontale*  
2 at 1850 m Lava 16/4

Indian Himalaya Birding trip, April 2003.  
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**Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri*

2 Rolla, GHNP 8/4 & 12/4, 2

**Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus*

1 in a ravine between Pos Basti and Manebhanjang 22/4

**Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus*

3 near a village just before park entrance GHNP 8/4

**Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata*

5 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferra*

1 pair at Sai Roopa nest, +7 seen in the GHNP, 2 Lava 16-17/4 & 2 Dajeeling both days.

**White-capped Water-Redstart** *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

about 15-20 along the river Sai Roopa – Rolla GHNP, 1 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4, 1-2 Garibas 19/4 & 21/4, Pos Basti 22/4

**Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris*

Very common above 2000m

**Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

2 Mahananda Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Blue Whistling-Thrush** *Myiophonus caeruleus*

Very common, a flock of about 10-20 birds chased every other bird away near Rolla, GHNP.

**Scaly Thrush** *Zoothera dauma*

1 seen (crippling views for a very long time) Lava 17/4

**Tickell's Thrush** *Turdus unicolor*

2 (a pair) at 1850 m Lava 16/4

**White-collared Blackbird** *Turdus albocinctus*

+10 seen, some nice females above 2500m, they like to feed in Rhododendrons, +12 seen Sandakphu trek, females can be confused with Chestnut thrush, which we did not see!

**Gray-winged Blackbird** *Turdus boulboul*

heard and seen a single GHNP, 7 Lava, 7 Sandakphu summit 20/4 & 21/4

**Dark-throated Thrush** *Turdus ruficollis*

2 Shilt in GHNP (Ebbe) 10/4, Common and in flocks at Magma 3000m 19/4

**White-browed Scimitar-Babbler** *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*

2 Lava 16/4

**Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

2 Lava 16/4

**Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler** *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris*

1 good but brief look in bamboo about 2700 elevation above Garibas 19/4

**Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga albiventer*

Heard and seen by Bodil 8/4 GHNP, 1 top of Sandakphu, 1 seen well above Gambrias 21/4 (*albiventer* fulvous morph)

**Pygmy Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla*

Heard both in Lava and in forest of Sandakphu

**Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler** *Spelaeoris caudatus*

1 pair of this mouse like bird was chased out in the open by one of the porters at 2900m, between Magma and Garibas. Rufous throat was seen well by some of us.

**Black-chinned Babbler** *Stachyris pyrrhops*

2 seen by Hans & Ebbe at 1700m near Sai Roopa, GHNP 8/4

**Golden Babbler** *Stachyris chrysaea*

10 Lava 17/4, 5 Magma 19/4, 2 Sandakphu – Garibas 21/4

**Large Grey Babbler** *Turdoides malcolmi*

A flock at the breakfast stop before the foothills from Chadigarh

**Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striatus*

5 seen same place as Large Grey Babbler

**White-throated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax albogularis*

a flock of 3-4 at 1800m Garibras – Pos Basti 22/4

**Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax pectoralis*

1 seen briefly and several heard Lava 16/4

**Striated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax striatus*

+5 seen in Lava, very responsive to tape playback and like to climb trees, onley laughningthrush which as a crest, 5 near Garibas 21-22/4

**Variegated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax variegatus*

a flock og 5-6 together with Chestnut-crowned L. in a rhodedendron tree near the river Rolla – Sai Roopa GHNP12/4

**Spotted Laughingthrush** *Garrulax ocellatus*

ne nice bird spotted by John before Magma, we had a 3 minute observation of this bird, 19/4, one heard singing and seen very well by NPD from a juniper tree below Sandakphu summit 21/4 (the bird's voice is like a human child).

**Black-faced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax affinis*

Fairly common above 3000m about 14 counted Sandakphu

**Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Garrulax erythrocephalus*

1 Sai Roopa 8/4, 2 together with Varigated LT Rolla – Sai Roopa 12/4, 6 Lava 16 & 17/4, 4 along road Darjeeling 23/4

**Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argentauris*

8 Lava 17/4

**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea*

6 +4 Lava 16/4 & 17/4, 4 Darjeeling 23/4

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**Cutia** *Cutia nipalensis*

2 great flocks of 10 each Lava 17/4

**White-browed Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius flaviscapis*

+18 Lava 16/4 & 17/4, 1 Garibas – Pos Basti 21/4

**Black-eared Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius melanotis*

4 Lava 17/4

**Rusty-fronted Barwing** *Actinodura egertoni*

+15 Lava 17/4, 1 Darjeeling 23/4

**Hoary-throated Barwing** *Actinodura nipalensis*

5 Magma 2900 meter 18/4

**Blue-winged Minla** *Minla cyanouroptera*

About 30 Lava 16/4 & 17/4

**Chestnut-tailed Minla** *Minla strigula*

5 Sai Roopa 8/4, 1 Sai Roopa 12/4, +15 Lava 16/4 & 17/4, +35 Sandakphu trek below 3200m, 10 Darjeeling 23/4

**Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta*

+5 Lava 16/4 & 17/4, 3 Magma 18/4, 5 Garibas 19/4 & 21/4

**Golden-breasted Fulvetta** *Alcippe chrysotis*

2 at 2850 meter Garibas to Sandakphu, 2 Darjeeling 23/4

**Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneiceps*

7 Lava 16 & 17/4, 2 Magma 18/4, +20 Sandakphu summit, 10 Garibas, 2 Darjeeling

**White-browed Fulvetta** *Alcippe vinipectus*

+30 seen on Sandakphu trek (5 days)

**Nepal Fulvetta** *Alcippe nipalensis*

2 at the breakfast site Lava 16/4

**Rufous Sibia** *Heterophasia capistrata*

7 seen GHNP, 30 seen (A common species heard all the time like the Oriental Cuckoo in Lava, more common lower down about 30 seen on the Sandakphu trek, 2 Darjeeling 23/4)

**White-naped Yuhina** *Yuhina bakeri*

1 Lava 17/4

**Whiskered Yuhina** *Yuhina flavicollis*

2 Rolla – Shilt, 3 Sai Roopa, 35 Lava, 5 Magma 18/4, 10 Magma – Garibas 19/4, 5 Garibas – Pos Baasti 21/4, 2 Darjeeling

**Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis*

2 Magma, +50 before and at the summit Sandakphu, 16 Darjeeling

**Rufous-vented Yuhina** *Yuhina occipitalis*

2 Lava 17/4, 4 *en route* up to Sandakphu 20-21/4

**White-bellied Yuhina** *Yuhina zantholeuca*

2 Lava 16/4

**Black-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis nipalensis*

+10 in bamboo above Gambias at 2650m 20/4 (Old route back), +25 Darjeeling close up in bamboo 23/4

**Chestnut-headed Tesia** *Tesia castaneocoronata*

Several heard but one seen at 3100m Magma – Garibas

**Slaty-bellied Tesia** *Tesia olivea*

6 seen or heard Lava 16/4 &amp; 17/4, one attracted close up with tape playback, heard below Garibas

**Pale-footed Bush-Warbler** *Cettia pallidipes*

One heard and briefly seen at Darjeeling waterworks above town, voice recorded 23/4

**Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler** *Cettia fortipes*

3 at park gate Sai Roopa – Rolla, taped, 4 same place 12/4, 2 Lava 16/4 (first stop at 1800m)

**Gray-sided Bush-Warbler** *Cettia brunnifrons*

1 at Magma seen well and recorded 19/4

**Striated Prinia** *Prinia criniger*

1 seen by Hans Sai Roopa – Rolla 8/4

**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata*

2 seen 6/4

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*

2 plains 6/4

**Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

1 at 2000m in juniper trees Lava 17/4

**Tickell's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis*

+6 Shilt GHNP 9-11/4

**Buff-barred Warbler** *Phylloscopus pulcher*

1 Rolla – Sai Roopa 12/4, +5 seen Sandakphu trek (3 days observation), 2 Darjeeling (very close views) 23/4

**Ashy-throated Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis*

7 Lava 16/4 &amp; 17/4, +20 Sandakphu trek (4 days observation),

**Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

3 Sai Roopa – Rolla 8/4, 1 below Shilt, 4 return to Sai Roopa 12/4, 1 Lava 16/4

**Hume's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*

3 Sai Roopa 8/4, 2 same place 12/4, 1 Lava 16/4

**Large-billed Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

1 Lava (Ebbe), 1 at close view Magma 19/4

**Western Crowned-Warbler** *Phylloscopus occipitalis*

2 pairs nesting in a ravine Shilt 11/4, 5 before Sai Roopa 12/4

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**Blyth's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*

2 Sai Roopa 7/4, 2 Rolla, 2 Shilt, 2 Rolla – Sai Roopa 12/4, 6 Lava 16-17/4, 2 Garibas 20/4

**Golden-spectacled Warbler** *Seicercus burkii*

3 Shilt 11/4, 11 Lava 16-17/4, +15 seen on Sandakphu trek (5 days observation)

**Gray-hooded Warbler** *Seicercus xanthoschistos*

very common in GHNP, mainly below 2300m, 10 Lava 17/4

**White-spectacled Warbler** *Seicercus affinis*

+10 Lava 17/4

**Gray-cheeked Warbler** *Seicercus poliogenys*

2 together with White-spectacled Warbler Lava 17/4

**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps*

5 together with White-spectacled warbler Lav 17/4

**Black-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus schisticeps*

6 Lava in another warbler flock 17/4

**Rusty-tailed Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ruficauda*

+15 Sai Roopa – Rolla and return 8/4 & 12/4, 1 Darjeeling 23/4

**Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea*

4 Lava 16 & 17/4, 1 Garibas both on 20/4 & 22/4

**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassina*

+25 counted during the 5 day trek in GHNP, 20 Lava, +15 Sandakphu trek (5 days observation), 5 Darjeeling 23/4

**Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophiiata*

7 GHNP (3 days), seen every 100-200m along the Sandakphu trek which is equal to  $60 \text{ km} / 0,2 = 300\text{-}500$  birds!!

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

1 female Mahanada WR 15/4

**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni*

1 Lava 16/4

**Ultramarine Flycatcher** *Ficedula superciliaris*

+23-25 GHNP (5 days)

**Rufous-bellied Niltava** *Niltava sundara*

12 Sai Roopa – Rolla and return on 8/4 & 12/4, 2 Lava 16/4 & 17/4, 1 Magma 19/4, 2 Garibas – Pos Basti 22/4

**Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

5 GHNP (3 days), +20 Lava 16 & 17/4, 4 Magma – Garibas 19/4

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea*

2 Mahanada WR 15/4

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**Asian Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi*

1-2 Sai Roopa 7/4

**Yellow-bellied Fantail** *Rhipidura hypoxantha*

3 Shilt in GHNP, 8 Lava 16 &amp; 17/4, 10 below Garibas 22/4

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis*

7 Lava 16 &amp; 17/4, 4 Garibas area 22/4, 3 Darjeeling 23/4

**Black-throated Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus*

+20 or more GHNP (5 days) +15 Lava (2 days), 2 Magma 18/4, 3 Darjeeling 23/4

**Black-browed Tit** *Aegithalos iouschistos*

17 sandakphu trek (3 days)

**Fire-capped Tit** *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*

2 Shilt in GHNP 11/4 (NPD)

**Rufous-naped Tit** *Periparus rufonuchalis*

9 GHNP Shilt area 9-11/4

**Rufous-vented Tit** *Periparus rubidiventris*4 GHNP Shilt & Rolla, form *rubidiventris*, 10 Sandakphu summit form *beavani* with grey belly.**Spot-winged Tit** *Periparus melanolophus*

+18 Shilt in GHNP 9-11/4

**Gray-crested Tit** *Lophophanes dichrous*

2 Shilt in GHNP, 11/4, 2 Magma – Garibas 19/4, 2 Sandakphu – Garibas 21/4

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

1 Kullu (ebbe) 12/4

**Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus*

Common in GHNP, 5 Lava 17/4, 4 Magma 18/4, 4 Garibas 22/4, 1 Darjeeling 23/4

**Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Parus spilonotus*

7 Lava 16 &amp; 17/4

**Yellow-browed Tit** *Sylviparus modestus*

4 Magma – Garibas 19/4, 5 sandakphu – Garibas, 2 Garibas – Pos Basti 22/4

**Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** *Sitta castanea*

4 Mahanda WR 15/4, 4 lava 16 &amp; 17/4

**White-tailed Nuthatch** *Sitta himalayensis*

6 Magma 18/4, 2 Garibas 20/4, 3 Darjeeling 23/4

**White-cheeked Nuthatch** *Sitta leucopsis*

1 Shilt in GHNP 11/4 (Ole)

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

3 Shilt GHNP (3 days), 2 Lava (2 days)

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**Bar-tailed Tree-Creeper** *Certhia himalayana*

1 close up view Shilt in GHNP 11/4 (NPD)

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus*

2 Sai Roopa – Rolla GHNP 8/4, 2 Lava 17/4, 2 garibas – Pos Basti 22/4

**Purple Sunbird** *Nectarinia asiatica*

1 female foothills after Chandigah, 4 Mahanda WR 15/4, 2 Orkla, New Delhi 24/4

**Gould's Sunbird** *Aethopyga gouldiae*

Only 3 seen above Gambias 22/4

**Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis*

7 Lava (2 days), about 25 counted Sandakphu trek (5 days), 5 Darjeeling 23/4

**Fire-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga ignicauda*

3-4 pairs Sandakphu summit 21/4

**Oriental White-Eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*

8 Sai Roopa (2 days), 5 Lava 17/4

**Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia*

30-40 seen during our 5 days trek in GHNP

**Chestnut-eared Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*

2 together with a female Dark-breasted Rosefinch in bamboo Shilt in GHNP 10/4

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

a flock of 10 birds in Juniper trees Lava 16/4

**Plain Mountain-Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola*

a large flock of 50 in a dead tree Shilt, GHNP 10/4, 10 near camp Shilt 11/4

**Dark-breasted Rosefinch** *Carpodacus nipalensis*

1 female with Chestnut-eared Bunting Shilt 10/4, 5 (one male) Lava (2 days)

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

1 Sai Roopa 8/4 (Ole), heard by Ebbe, 1 Sai Roopa 12/4

**Pink-browed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rodochrous*

2 Sai Roopa – Rolla in a meadow near fields and bushes 8/4

**Dark-rumped Rosefinch** *Carpodacus edwardsii*

1 Pair at the summit of Sandakphu 21/4

**Rosefinch sp.** *Carpodacus sp.*

1 female close up views for 30-50 seconds observation, all olivish green & brown, underparts streaked mainly on sides, no eyebrow, very weak pale marking in the wing and a dark bill. Darjeeling Wildlife Reserve Sanctuary 23/4 (NPD)

**White-browed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus thura*

1 female Sandakphu summit 21/4

**Red-headed Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*

15 seen Sai Roopa – Rolla 8/4, about 10 on return 12/4, 1 male Shilt 10/4, 3 Lava 17/4

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**Black-and-yellow Grosbeak** *Mycerobas icteroides*  
1 male fly over and seen well later Shilt in GHNP 10/4

**Collared Grosbeak** *Mycerobas affinis*  
4 in a tree together with a group of Spotte winged GB near Shilt 10/4, 1 seen by Ole 11/4

**Spot-winged Grosbeak** *Mycerobas melanozanthos*  
4 Shilt 10/4

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
Common in open country

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*  
10 Sai Roopa 7-8/4, 2 Sai Roopa 12/4

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
Common in villages

**Chestnut-shouldered Petronia** *Petronia xanthocollis*  
2 breakfast stop at foothills 1½ hrs from Changidarh

**Brahminy Starling** *Sturnus pagodarum*  
Only 3 seen on the first day on the plains, back in 1980 it was a very common bird!!

**Asian Pied Starling** *Sturnus contra*  
common but less so than before on the plains

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*  
Common, but numbers are down probably because of pesticide use!!

**Bank Myna** *Acridotheres ginginianus*  
Only seen the first day on the plains, but so common

**Hill Myna** *Gracula religiosa*  
15 Manebhanjan Wildlife Reserve 15/4

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*  
2 seen in a park just before Changidarh

**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus*  
4 Manebhanjan Wildlife Reserve 14-15/4

**Maroon Oriole** *Oriolus traillii*  
2 pairs Lava 17/4, 1 Dajeeling 22/4

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*  
Common

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*  
+8 or more, below 2300m GHNP, 4 days observation, +10 Lave area (2 days), common Garibas – Pos Basti 24/4

**Crow-billed Drongo** *Dicrurus annectans*  
5 Lava 17/4

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus*

1 Lava 17/4

**Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*

2 Manebhanjan Wildlife Reserve (Riverbed) 15/4

**Gold-billed Magpie** *Urocissa flavirostris*

+12-20 Sai Roopa – Rolla and back 8/4 &amp; 12/4, 2 Kullu, +10 Sandakphu trek (5 days observation)

**Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis*

2 Lava 16/4

**Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

1 Breakfast stop, 4 Manebhanjan Wildlife Reserve 14-15/4

**Gray Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae*

2 Lava 17/4, 1 Garibas 22/4

**Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

+20 GHNP (3 days above 2300 m), +10 Sandaphu Trek (3 days)

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

+10 Shilt GHNP 10/4

**House Crow** *Corvus splendens*

Common in plains

**Jungle Crow** *Corvus levaillantii*

Common everywhere

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

2 Dajeeling 23/4

## Mammals

### **Indian Mongoose** *Herpestes edwardsii*

1 en route to Sai Roopa 7/4

### **Yellow-throated Marten** *Martes flavigula*

1 Shilt 10/4

### **Himalayan Giant Squirrel** *Ratufa bicolor*

3 Rolla 8/4

### **Striped Squirrel** *Tamiops maccllellandi*

3 Lava (2 days) 16/4 & 17/4

### **Hoary-bellied Squirrel (Himalayan)** *Callosciurus pygerythrus*

1 Lava 17/4

### **Goral** *Naemorhedus goral*

2 Rolla 8/4

### **Barking Deer** *Muntiacus muntjak*

3 Dajeeling Wildlife Reserve Reserve 23/4

### **Common Langur** *Semnopithecus entellus*

10 Rolla 8/4, 3 Rolla 11/4, 20 Rolla – Sai Roopa 12/4

### **Assamese Macaque** *Macaca assamensis*

Common Manebhanjan Wildlife Reserve 14-15/4

### **Rhesus Macaque** *Macaca mulatta*

Common in villages

### **Siberian Weasel** *Mustela sibirica*

1 Rolla – Sai Roopa 12/4 (John)

### **Bat spp.** *Pipistrella spp.*

Several seen Dajeeling & Sandakphu