

This was a tailor-made 3-week trip for just the two of us, arranged by Jo Thomas of **Wild About Travel** info@wildabouttravel.co.uk and everything went well, exceeding expectations. It was a slow-paced, laid-back trip with the aim of seeing a wide range of Sri Lanka's wildlife in varying habitats. Our driver-guide was Susantha Weerappuli (Susa); we travelled in his comfortable car (for Parks/Reserves we transferred to safari jeeps). Susa was brilliant. An excellent birder, sharp-eyed as they come and also good on butterflies, reptiles, trees, plants.... He's professional, adaptable and very patient, accepting that on this trip we didn't necessarily want to chase every bird but wanted to appreciate all wildlife. His cheerful personality meant there were many laughs along the way. He has good organisational skills, too, and was quick to make sure we got what was needed, that people were doing what they should, etc. We have no hesitation in recommending him to both serious birders and novices alike. Accommodation was good to very good and the food was always good, often excellent and always plenty of choice. As expected, it was hot in the lowlands with highs in mid 30s and often very humid so we usually spent a few hours relaxing during the middle of the day. In the highlands it was very different, of course, with early mornings around 4°C rising to the mid-teens. All the safari vehicles we used were from small operators, we would either drive in Susa's car to a private house and transfer to the jeep, or the driver would come to our hotel to meet us depending on the distance from our accommodation.

We flew with Sri Lanka Airlines direct from Heathrow. With corona virus taking hold in China and elsewhere as we departed, many people at Heathrow were wearing face masks, as were the airline crew. At Colombo airport we had our temperature checked before reaching Immigration.

Sri Lanka is a beautiful country, very green and lush with lots of large bodies of water everywhere, most are natural-looking made-made reservoirs. Wildlife is prolific everywhere not just in reserves. It's clean, calm and everyone we met was friendly and welcoming. All main, tarred, roads were in excellent condition, no potholes, so travelling was very comfortable.

ITINERARY

30 Jan	Arrived Colombo 12.45. Afternoon-evening hotel grounds.	Colombo	Tamarind Tree, Colombo
31 Jan	Drive to Sinharaja Reserve. Afternoon walk up rocky track below Reserve.	Sinharaja	Rock View Motel, Weddagala
1 Feb	Early morning to early afternoon Sinharaja Reserve. Then walking outside Reserve.	Sinharaja Forest Reserve	"
2 Feb	Early morning Sinharaja Education Centre then Reserve until mid-afternoon. Late afternoon-evening hotel grounds.	Sinharaja Forest Reserve	"
3 Feb	Early morning birding from Rock View motel. 09.15 drive to Udawalawe hotel. Afternoon hotel grounds. Night jeep drive local area.	Udawalawe	Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort
4 Feb	Morning drive in NP. Afternoon hotel grounds.	Udawalawe NP	"
5 Feb	Early morning roadside birding by Udawalawe reservoir. Drive to Debarawewa near Tissamaharama, stops on route. Hotel grounds then evening at Debarawewa Lake.	Udawalawe to Debarawewa (Yala)	River Face Inn, Debarawewa
6 Feb	Morning jeep drive Block 1 and afternoon Block 5, Yala National Park.	Yala NP	"
7 Feb	Morning jeep to marshes and saltpans Bundala National Park. Afternoon Block 5 Yala NP.	Bundala and Yala NPs	"
8 Feb	Morning jeep Block 5 Yala NP. Late afternoon Tissamaharama Lake.	Yala NP and Tissamaharama Lake	"
9 Feb	Early morning marsh Bundala. Drive to Nuwara Eliya via Surrey Bird Sanctuary, Welimada. Late afternoon birding Nuwara Eliya.	Bundala marshes, Surrey Bird Sanctuary and Nuwara Eliya	Hill Pride Hotel, Nuwara Eliya
10 Feb	Early morning to Horton Plains. Mid-afternoon driving/walking Nuwara Eliya.	Horton Plains and Nuwara Eliya	"
11 Feb	Morning Hakgala Botanic Gardens. Afternoon Victoria Gardens.	Hakgala and Victoria Gardens, Nuwara Eliya	"

12 Feb	Early morning roadside and golf course birding Nuwara Eliya. Drive to Sigiriya, with stop at tea plantation. Afternoon hotel grounds. Night walk Popham's Arboretum.	Nuwara Eliya to Sigiriya; Popham's Arboretum	Ehalagala Lake Resort, Sigiriya
13 Feb	Morning jeep Kaudulla NP. Afternoon-evening walk in rural areas around Ehalagala.	Kaudulla NP and around Ehalagala (Sigiriya)	"
14 Feb	Morning woodland by Sigiriya Rock. Late morning hotel grounds/lake. Afternoon-dusk woodland and rice fields near Sigiriya Rock.	Sigiriya	"
15 Feb	Early morning walk Ehalagala. Drive towards Wilpattu, stops on route incl. Anuradhapara (Tissa Wewa) reservoir. Afternoon hotel grounds. Night drive outside Wilpattu park.	Sigiriya to Sinharagama (Wilpattu)	Sinharagama Resort, Nochchiyagama
16 Feb	Whole day in Wilpattu NP.	Wilpattu NP	"
17 Feb	Whole day in Wilpattu NP.	Wilpattu NP	"
18 Feb	Drive towards Colombo with roadside stops at wetlands and at Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary, Puttalam. Afternoon hotel grounds.	Wilpattu, Anawilundawa Sanctuary and Colombo	Tamarind Tree Hotel
19 Feb	Early morning hotel grounds.		

DIARY

30th January Arrival

Arrived Colombo more or less on schedule at 12.45hrs Sri Lankan time. Susa was waiting for us outside the terminal and quickly whisked us off to the Tamarind Tree Hotel just 10 minutes away. After making sure we were settled in our room Susa left us to relax for the rest of the day. We had a spacious cottage in the lovely grounds, lots of trees and plenty of birds and butterflies. It was well over 30°C so we sat on the veranda with a couple of beers, watching and listening to the birds. We had our first lesson in Barbet identification - the steady *k-troo, k-troo, k-troo* of **Brown-headed Barbet** contrasting with the rapid 4-6 note *poo, poo, poo, poo, poo* of the endemic **Crimson-fronted Barbet**. A **Koel** was calling its name from a neighbouring garden, **3-striped Palm Squirrels** were chasing each other around the trees and a **Loten's Sunbird** was feeding on flowering shrubs. By 17.00hrs it was a little cooler with a light breeze and we walked around the grounds until dark at 18.30hrs. There was an extensive buffet in the large dining room; we ate well.

Other species today included: *Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, White-bellied Drongo (white-vented race), Asian Brown Flycatcher, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Magpie Robin, Red-vented Bulbul, Greater Coucal (HEARD only), Asian House Gecko.*

31st January Colombo to Sinharaja

Woke at 05.00hrs having slept well. After an early walk we enjoyed a buffet-style breakfast of eggs, tomatoes, baked beans, hash browns, breads, fruits, cake. A selection of curries was also on offer. When Susa arrived we watched some fruiting trees in a quiet area behind the car park - **8 Crimson-fronted Barbets, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Southern Hill and Common Mynas, Yellow-billed Babbler and Black-hooded Oriole**, with **Red-wattled Lapwings** below. We were checked out and away before 08.00hrs but minutes later pulled in to another hotel; Susa led us to the side of a building and let us find them ourselves: **3 Indian Scops Owls** (a pair with a juvenile). **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters** zipped around above our heads.

It was a good journey, little traffic, everywhere clean and calm and always lots of birds - in wet, marshy areas, rice fields, rubber plantations and lush gardens. **Stork-billed and White-throated Kingfishers** and **Eastern Cattle Egrets** were everywhere, **Black-headed Ibis** were common and we even saw **3 Spot-billed Pelicans** perched on central reservation lights! By 10.45hrs we reached forested, quite steep hills; there had been no rain in this area for over 3 weeks and Susa commented that rivers were rather low. Continuing to climb, the views became more impressive and raptors were soaring including **Crested Honey Buzzard** and **Crested Serpent Eagle**. As we drove through one small town we saw a huge pile of rubbish - a recycling depot. An **Indian Peafowl** was sauntering along the edge of a cultivated patch - we thought it must be a domestic or feral bird but Susa assured us it wasn't, no one keeps peacocks, the wild population is steadily spreading up from the dry zone into wetter areas and they are considered an agricultural pest; the government is being pressed to authorise a cull.

Other species this morning included: *Woolly-necked Stork, Oriental Darter, Indian Pond Heron, Great Egret, Purple Heron, Brahminy Kite, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Asian Palm Swift, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Sri Lanka Swallow, Plain Prinia, Red-vented Bulbul.*

We were staying at Rock View Motel just a short drive from the start of the track up to Sinharaja Forest Reserve. The best thing about the hotel was the *fabulous* panorama from our balcony, lush green gardens backed by the richly-wooded Sinharaja ridge. We had a light lunch brought to our balcony to make the most of the view and all the birds we could see. At about 15.30 we drove to the track up to the forest, parked at the bottom and slowly walked uphill. We didn't really get far because there was just so much to see! Particularly impressive were the **Layard's Parakeets**, a fly-over **Legge's Hawk-eagle**, a perched **Besra**, a small group of **low wet-zone** race of **Purple-faced Langur** and a gorgeous **Green Forest Lizard**. It was dark by the time we got back to our room.

Other species this afternoon included: *Rose-ringed Parakeets, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Common Emerald Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Crested Honey Buzzard, Red-backed Flameback, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Crimson-fronted and Brown-headed Barbets, Red-backed Flameback, Crested Tree Swift, Asian Palm Swift, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Orange Minivet, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, White-browed, Yellow-browed, Red-vented and Square-tailed Bulbuls, Zitting Cisticola, Yellow-billed Babbler, Southern Hill Myna, Asian Brown and Brown-breasted Flycatchers, Common Iora, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Jerdon's and Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Loten's Sunbird, White-rumped Munia. Bengal Monitor Lizard.*

1st and 2nd February Sinharaja Forest Reserve

We had two days walking in these forests with one of the rangers, Shantha, joining us - he was exceptionally good, quiet and reserved yet determined to find as many species for us as possible. We made an early start each day as you first go to the Visitor Centre for entry tickets, meet the forest ranger and pick up a jeep. Susa went to sort this out as we got the day's bird list going with **Sri Lank Blue Magpies**, **Indian Blue Robin** and **Spot-winged Thrush**. On the first day we stopped part-way along the track and walked to a private area to stand behind a screen overlooking a tiny clearing amongst the trees where a pair of **Sri Lankan Junglefowl** were pecking at some cooked rice. A small group of people were there, looking a little disappointed and bored; they soon moved away. We were luckier - 5 minutes later the star birds appeared - a pair of **Sri Lanka Spurfowl** which stayed for several minutes! Amazing. Our list of Sri Lankan endemics was quickly growing. On the second day we started at the Sinharaja Education Centre, hoping for **White-faced Starling** and getting a few brief glimpses (luckily much better views came later in the day). The track from Martin's Lodge up to the reserve entrance is renowned as "very bumpy and uncomfortable". However, Susa had made sure we got the best vehicle available with well-padded seats and, provided we relaxed and just let ourselves go with the motion, it really wasn't that bad. [We've certainly had very much worse in other countries and actually, our only bruises came later in the trip, from bumping along some of Wilpattu's sand-and-rock tracks].

The Sinharaja forest was marvellous, unforgettable. Birds, butterflies, reptiles, plants..... so much to see and enjoy. Forest birding is never easy but Susa and Shantha didn't ease up, constantly on the hunt and we saw such a lot. Pride of place goes to the **Sri Lanka Frogmouth**, they've eluded us in southern India and so it was one of only a few species we'd really hoped to see on this trip and to watch it (a male) for five minutes or more, and leaving it undisturbed, was something special. There were several attempts to get good views of **Sri Lanka Thrush** with brief sightings of two separate birds deep in the undergrowth. However, Shantha and Susa weren't satisfied with that and kept trying, eventually getting us fabulous views of a pair moving around in a wet hollow. Other highlights were **Red-faced Malkoha**, **Green-billed Coucal**, **Jerdon's Baza**, **Malabar Trogon**, **Yellow-fronted Barbet**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Crimson-backed Flameback**, **Sri Lanka Drongo**, **Black-naped Monarch**, **Green Warbler**, **Sri Lanka Scimitarbabbling**, **Dark-fronted Babbler**, **Orange-billed Babbler**, **Ashy-headed Laughingthrush**, **Black-capped Bulbul**, **Sri Lanka Hill Myna**, better views of **White-faced Starling**, **Legge's Flowerpecker** and **Purple-rumped Sunbird**. Butterflies were abundant and impressive; some that we could identify were **Blue Mormon**, **Great Eggfly**, **Blue Tiger**, **Sri Lanka Rose**, **Red Helen**, **Red-spot Duke** and the huge, mesmerizing **Sri Lanka Tree Nymphs**. Hundreds of migrating **Albatross** were streaming across clearings then up and over the trees. There was a plethora of reptiles near the entrance gate - **Green Forest Lizard**, **Common Garden Lizard**, **Kangaroo Lizard**, **Sri Lanka Whistling Lizard** and **Common Vine Snake**! A visit to a nearby private garden was successful; the hoped-for **Chestnut-backed Owlet** flew in and stayed for 20 minutes or more. Susa and Shantha worked very hard to find us an "easy to get at" Serendip Owl. They certainly found them but always in difficult terrain and, very disappointingly, we couldn't manage to reach them. It was the only endemic we failed to see but **they were there for us** - if only we were a few years younger! We certainly want to thank Susa and Shantha for their efforts.

Other species in Sinharaja area included: *Indian Peafowl, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Crested Serpent Eagle, Besra, Changeable and Legge's Hawk-eagles, Common Emerald Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Layard's Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Little Swift, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Orange Minivet, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Red-vented, White-browed, Yellow-browed and Square-tailed Bulbuls, Sri Lanka Swallow, Large-billed Leaf Warbler (HEARD only), Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Brown-breasted Flycatcher. Purple-faced Langur, Toque Macaque, Flame-striped and Dusky-striped Palm Squirrels, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel.*

By mid-afternoon we returned to the hotel. Even at this time of day there was a lot of bird activity with **egrets**, **Asian Openbills** and a pair of **Woolly-necked Storks** flying past, **Sri Lanka Hanging Parrots** and **Golden-fronted Leafbirds** feeding in fruiting trees below us, and plenty more. A pair of **Malabar Pied Hornbill** flew to a nearby tree and stayed for

several minutes. When we told Susa he seemed a bit sceptical, saying they don't occur up here, being a lowland species. Later he met a friend who had also seen them and had photographs to prove it!

Other species around the hotel included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Eastern Cattle, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Brahminy Kite, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Orange-billed Babbler, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Little Swift, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Orange Minivet, Brown Shrike, Purple-rumped Sunbird. 3-striped Palm Squirrel.*

3rd February Sinharaja to Udawalawe

We started the day by birding around the hotel from first light, trying to photograph **Sri Lanka Hanging Parrots, Common Ioras, Yellow-fronted Barbets** and **Orange-billed Babblers**. After a late breakfast we set off for the journey to Udawalawe. It was a scenic route, especially the first 1½hrs when we were parallel to the main Sinharaja ridge (which reaches over 1,000m). Of note along the way were two **Black Eagles** and perched **Crested Tree Swifts**.

Other species on route included: *Asian Openbill, Layard's Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Banded Bay Cuckoo, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Brown-headed Barbet, Brown Shrike, White-bellied Drongo, Sri Lanka Swallow, Indian Jungle Crow, Common Tailorbird, Common Myna, Purple-rumped Sunbird,*

At 12.15hrs we arrived at the large and rather upmarket Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort set in extensive leafy grounds with ponds, a stream and to the rear a small area of woodland adjoining a vegetable plot. We had a walk round before lunch; it was very hot, about 33°C, and the only bird of note was a **Crested Serpent Eagle** in one of the big woodland trees - the **3-striped Palm Squirrels** were not happy with his presence! We had more luck with the butterflies - **Red Poirrots** and **White Four-rings** were common.

Other species around the hotel included: *Brahminy Kite, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Indian Jungle Crow, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Common Myna.*

After dinner (huge choice at the buffet and à la carte also available) we went for a night jeep drive. There have been a lot of elephants around recently and the authorities have banned all night driving in what would have been the best routes for us, so we had to make do with field, marsh and woodland edge and riversides, consequently the range of species we saw wasn't great. However, we did see a **Rusty-spotted Cat**. Or maybe not. Everything seemed right, the coat, the head markings, the tail, but it just didn't seem quite *small* enough. Do they hybridise with domestic cats?? Whatever it was, we were pleased to see it. Apart from this, we saw several **Black-naped Hares, Indian and Jerdon's Nightjars, Yellow-wattled Lapwings** and numerous **Indian Stone-curlews** and **Jerdon's Bush Larks**. Along the river were several **Grey Herons** and **Black-crowned Night Herons** and a **Malabar Pied Hornbill** was roosting on a low branch. In the middle of a dirt track we spotted a snake which photographs later confirmed was a **Hump-nosed Pit Viper**! It was 23.30hrs by the time we got back to the hotel. We had enjoyed it but are not sure it was worth the £25 each.

4th February Udawalawe

A jeep was waiting for us outside the hotel at 06.00hrs and in just 12 minutes we were at the ticket office of Udawalawe National Park. Oh dear. A very long queue of jeeps - maybe 30 in front of us and more coming up behind. The wait for tickets wasn't too long but it was a slow process getting past the barrier as they checked everyone had a valid ticket. Once "in" we took it very slowly and all the other vehicles whizzed past us, presumably on the hunt for elephants. We, however, stopped to look at *everything*. Light was still low when a **Golden Jackal** came trotting towards us, then another and another - it was 2 adults with 4 juveniles. One of the juveniles picked up a peacock's tail feather and was still carrying it as we lost sight of them all. A great start! Birds were in abundance and we especially enjoyed the **Indian Pitta** (at last, we've waited years for this), **Orange-breasted Green Pigeons, Sirkeer** and **Blue-faced Malkohas, Grey-bellied Cuckoo**, two **Lesser Adjutants, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle** and a **Changeable Hawk-eagle** devouring its prey. **Elephants** were easy to find, including a group with two tiny youngsters that came to drink, bathe and play at a small pool. We ate our packed breakfast overlooking the huge Udawalawe reservoir, alive with birds; 2 **Great Stone-curlews** were resting on the bank. There were lots of butterflies, the most common being **White Four-ring** and **Common Jezebel**. The drive ended with a **Jungle Cat** walking in front of us near the exit gate. A very successful visit.

Other species this morning included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Painted, Woolly-necked and Asian Openbill Storks, Eurasian Spoonbill, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Eastern Cattle, Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets, Spot-billed Pelican, Indian and Great Cormorants, Black-winged and Brahminy Kites, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Wood Sandpiper, Gull-billed, Caspian and Whiskered Terns, Feral Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Asian Koel, Crested Tree Swift, Indian Roller, White-throated Kingfisher, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Coppermith Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Large and Black-headed Cuckooshrikes, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, White-browed Fantail, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn and Sri Lanka Swallows, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Grey-breasted and Plain Prinias, Tawny-bellied, Yellow-billed and Yellow-eyed Babblers, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie Robin, Indian Robin, Jerdon's Leafbird, Purple and Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Baya Weaver, Indian Silverbill, White-rumped and Tricoloured Munias, Western Yellow Wagtail, Richard's and Paddyfield Pipits. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Spotted Deer. Mugger Crocodile.*

Back at the hotel, it was very hot so we made use of the swimming pool as a troop of Toque Macaques played on the buildings and in large trees around us. Many **Plains Cupid** butterflies were flying, too.

5th February Udawalawe to Debarawewa (Yala)

We had a productive hour on the roadside beside Udawalawe reservoir this morning - as well as a big **bull Elephant** standing in the water, a **Golden Jackal** and some foraging **Wild Boar**, the broad marshy edge was covered in birds.

Species around the reservoir included: *Woolly-necked and Painted Storks, Grey and Indian Pond Herons, Little Cormorant, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Wood and Marsh Sandpipers, Common Snipe, Pacific Golden, Lesser Sand and Little Ringed Plovers, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled and Red-wattled Lapwings, Gull-billed, and Whiskered Terns, Green Imperial Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Koel, Indian Swiftlet, Asian Palm Swift, Green Bee-eater, Yellow-naped Woodpecker, Black-headed Oriole, White-tailed Fantail, Brown Shrike, Indian Jungle Crow, Yellow-billed Babbler, Jerdon's Bushlark, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Indian Robin, Scaly-breasted Munia, Western Yellow Wagtail, Richard's Pipit.*

We were then heading towards Yala National Park; everywhere was very green along the route with marshes, rivers, rice fields and large gardens. Some of the rice fields were being harvested, the machinery disturbing hordes of frogs and grasshoppers, drawing in hundreds of egrets, ibises, storks and kites.

Species on route included: *Indian Peafowl, Black-headed Ibis, Woolly-necked Stork, Eastern Cattle, Little, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Indian Pond Heron, Red-wattled Lapwing, Brahminy Kite, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Asian Koel, White-fronted Kingfisher, Spotted Dove, Barn Swallow. Bengal Monitor Lizard.*

By midday we reached the small hotel, River Face Inn, our room shaded by palm trees and overlooking a small river. We spent the afternoon around the nearby Debarawewa Lake, one of several natural-looking reservoirs here. Birding was excellent with close views of both **Yellow** and **Cinnamon Bitterns**, two **Ashy Woodswallows**, a male **White-naped Woodpecker** finding big, fat beetle larvae on tree trunks and feeding them to a juvenile and, at dusk, as we watched an **Indian Flying Fox** dip down to the water then fly to a tree to lick water from its fur, an **Eastern Barn Owl** perched nearby. In fading light there was a tantalising glimpse of a **Watercock**.

Other species around the reservoir included: *Asian Openbill and Painted Storks, Black-headed Ibis, Grey and Purple Herons, Indian Pond Heron, Eastern Cattle, Little, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Eurasian Spoonbill, Indian Pond Heron, Spot-billed Pelican, Little, Indian and Great Cormorants, Oriental Darter, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Shikra, White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Common Sandpiper, Gull-billed, Whiskered and Little Terns, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Stork-billed and White-throated Kingfishers, Blue-tailed and Green Bee-eaters, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Brown Shrike, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Ashy Prinia, Common Myna, Tricoloured Munia, Western Yellow Wagtail. Many insectivorous bats, 3-striped Palm Squirrel.*

6th February Yala

Our base was quite a long way from Yala National Park and the first half of the journey was through town so we left at 05.30hrs; it took 35 minutes (but 45 minutes on our return). This morning we went to Block 1, the most popular area of the park as it tends to have the most leopard sightings. Just as at Udawalawe, everyone overtook us, just occasionally someone would stop to ask what we were looking at but quickly continued their leopard-hunt when we said "**Marshall's Iora, Sirkeer Malkoha, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer.....**" Despite the number of vehicles, we had a great morning. Park rules stipulate strictly no eating in the vehicle and no getting out. The only place you can stop for lunch is not particularly nice and we'd been advised to go back to our hotel late morning and return in the afternoon once it was a bit cooler. There's a lot of sense in this, of course, but it's a big chunk of lost viewing time.

We tried a quieter section of the park in the afternoon, Block 5, a little farther from our hotel, almost an hour's drive. A very depressing sight on the way was a big bull elephant "loafing" on the road, stretching his trunk out to vehicles passing within inches of him, including big lorries, and we soon saw why: a tuk tuk slowed down and people threw out a bunch of bananas. Another vehicle stopped and let the elephant put its trunk through the open window. Incredibly stupid. This can only end in disaster, either for the elephant or the people, likely both. Putting that miserable sight out of our minds, we entered Block 5 and everything was perfect. Mixed habitats, woodland, open grassy stretches, thickets, pools, a large reservoir, very few vehicles and wildlife everywhere. **Ruddy Mongooses** were very common and there was one **Stripe-necked Mongoose**. We saw plenty of spectacular butterflies such as **Banded Peacock, Plain, Common and Dark Blue Tigers**. We added many birds to the trip list - probably the best sightings were the two **Barred Buttonquail** hiding under a bush and a **Brown Fish Owl**. Then right at the end of the day, near the exit gate - a **Leopard**! Great views all to ourselves, no one else around.

Other species today included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Garganey, Little Grebe, Painted and Asian Openbill Storks, Lesser Adjutant, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Yellow Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron, Striated and Indian Pond Herons, Eastern Cattle, Little, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Grey and Purple Herons, Spot-billed Pelican, Little, Indian and Great Cormorants, Oriental Darter, Western Osprey, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Grey-headed Swamphen, Great Stone-curlew, Black-winged*

Stilt, Yellow-wattled and Red-wattled Lapwings, Pacific Golden, Grey, Little Ringed and Lesser Sand Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Marsh, Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Little Stint, Gull-billed, Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Spotted Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Blue-faced Malkoha, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Brown Fish Owl, Little, Crested Tree and Asian Palm Swifts, Indian Roller, White-throated, Pied and Common Kingfishers, Chestnut-headed, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Eurasian Hoopoe, Sri Lanka Grey and Malabar Pied Hornbills, Coppersmith Barbet, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Red-backed Flameback, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, White-browed Fantail, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, House Crow, Jerdon's Bushlark, Oriental Skylark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn and Sri Lanka Swallows, Grey-breasted, Jungle and Plain Prinias, Yellow-billed and Yellow-eyed Babblers, Common Myna, Brahminy Starling, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama, Indian Robin, Purple Sunbird, Baya Weaver, Scaly-breasted Munia, Paddyfield and Blyth's Pipits. Tufted Grey Langur, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Golden Jackal, Asian Elephant, Sambar deer, Wild Water Buffalo. Bengal Monitor, Mugger Crocodile.

7th February Bundala and Yala National Parks

This morning we visited a different park, Bundala near the coast. It was barely light as we reached the fresh and saltwater marshes and within minutes we saw what we'd hoped to find - **Watercock**. We watched a male and a female as they foraged amongst the water weeds. Light improved but they stayed in the open and we saw another two a little further on. So, not as crepuscular and shy as we'd expected. **Clamorous** and **Blyth's Reed Warblers** were common and we saw a small group of **Streaked Weavers** but failed to find the rarity, a Black-headed Warbler that had been seen and photographed here a few days earlier. We moved on to salty inlets with lots of waders, egrets and so on. There were several jeeps waiting at the Park HQ but all was quiet and calm. The toilets here were spotless (as were most others we used elsewhere). Not far into the park we came across a large flock of **Pratincoles**, mostly **Oriental** but with at least 2 **Collared** amongst them. Then came the *really* big numbers of birds - saltpans literally covered by thousands of waders and terns. They are working saltpans and there was some activity on one side but mostly it was free from disturbance and there were no other birders around. The pans are surrounded by lagoons and salt water inlets, sand dunes with some trees and thickets with the sea beyond and the number and variety of species was great, including **Lesser and Pacific Golden Plovers, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Caspian, Greater and Lesser Crested Terns, Pin-tailed Snipe**. One of the waders was puzzling and we couldn't identify it. Once he was home, Susa checked the photos and realised it was a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**! **Small Pratincoles** were nesting and we saw two newly-hatched chicks, their downy feathers not yet dry. As well as birds we saw **Tufted Grey Langurs** and what could have been a **Saltwater Crocodile** in one of the lagoons. Lots of **Elephant** footprints in the sand, too.

Other species at Bundala and saltpans included: *Lesser Whistling Duck, Little Grebe, Painted, Asian Openbill and Woolly-necked Storks, Eurasian Spoonbill, Yellow Bittern, Striated and Indian Ponds Herons, Grey and Purple Herons, Eastern Cattle, Little, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Spot-billed Pelican, Little, Indian and Great Cormorants, Oriental Darter, Brahminy Kite, White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Great Stone-curlew, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled and Red-wattled Lapwings, Common Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Marsh, Green, Wood, Common and Curlew Sandpipers, Ruff, Brown-headed Gull, Gull-billed, Little, Whiskered and White-winged Terns, Eurasian Collared and Spotted Doves, Greater Coucal, Asian Palm and Little Swifts, White-throated, Common and Pied Kingfishers, Brown Shrike, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Jerdon's Bushlark, Red-vented Bulbul, Sand Martin, Sri Lanka and Barn Swallows, Common Myna, House Sparrow, Scaly-breasted Munia, Western Yellow Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit. Water and Bengal Monitor Lizards.*

After a fantastic morning, we decided on a return visit to Yala Block 5 for the afternoon. Good decision: within a few minutes of entering the park a **Leopard** emerged from some bushes, stopped in the open to stare at us briefly then walked slowly across the track and into the forest. Wow! It was almost certainly the same female we saw yesterday. The afternoon continued to give us great sightings - a 2 metre long **Indian Rat Snake** on a fallen tree, a **Soft-shelled Turtle** basking on the track, **5 Forest Wagtails** (always wanted to see these), a big "tusker" **Elephant** and to finish the day, another **Leopard**! It leapt over a log and disappeared from sight as unseen Spotted Deer started alarm-calling.

There were 3 elephants on the main road this evening, waiting for food to be thrown from vehicles.

Other species Yala Block 5 included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Black-crowned Night Heron, Eastern Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Western Osprey, Crested Honey Buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Orange-breasted and Sri Lanka Green Pigeons, Green Imperial Pigeon, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Blue-faced Malkoha, Jacobin and Grey-bellied Cuckoos, Crested Tree Swift, Asian Palm Swift, Indian Roller, White-throated and Common Kingfishers, Green, Chestnut-headed and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Eurasian Hoopoe, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Coppersmith Barbet, Red-backed Flameback, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, Ashy Drongo, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Plain Prinia, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama, Indian Robin, Scaly-breasted Munia, Western Yellow Wagtails. Elephant, Wild Water Buffalo, Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, Indian Black-naped Hare, Ruddy Mongoose. Bengal Monitor, Soft-shelled Turtle.*

8th February Yala National Parks and Tissamahamara Lake

Another visit to Block 5. As we arrived at the ticket office uproar broke out, rangers and staff yelling and pointing across the road. They'd seen a leopard by the gate but we missed it. For some reason we were allocated a Ranger this morning.

He wasn't very communicative, directing our driver along little-used tracks, probably searching for the leopard which is not what we wanted to do, we aren't likely to improve on the sightings we've already had. There seemed less activity this morning although we saw plenty of species with some excellent views - both **Sirkeer** and **Blue-faced Malkohas**, **Indian Pitta**, **White-rumped Shama**, **Common Emerald Dove**, **Dark-fronted Babbler**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**.

Other species this morning included: *Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Painted, Asian Openbill and Woolly-necked Storks, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Eastern Cattle, Little, Intermediate and Great Egrets, Indian and Great Cormorants, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Common Kestrel, Red-wattled Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Dove, Orange-breasted, Sri Lanka Green and Green Imperial Pigeons, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Greater Coucal, Crested Tree Swift, Indian Roller, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Eurasian Hoopoe, Malabar and Sri Lankan Grey Hornbills, Coppersmith Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Small Minivet, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, Cinereous Tit, Jerdon's Bushlark, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Grey-breasted, Jungle and Plain Prinias, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Indian Robin, Purple Sunbird, Scaly-breasted Munia, Forest Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Golden Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose, Asian Elephant, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, Wild Water Buffalo. Mugger Crocodile.*

We returned to the hotel for lunch and after a few hours by the river went to Tissamaharama Lake where several big trees were filled with squabbling **Indian Flying Foxes** and an array of nesting birds - **egrets, herons, Eurasian Spoonbills**, all **three cormorant species** and **Oriental Darters**. It was fascinating to watch such busy, noisy colonies. Birds were also feeding amongst the mats of water hyacinth and all round the marshy edges, totally ignoring us. At 17.00hrs we went to a small private garden where, with permission, we waited for a **Jungle Owlet** which shows most evenings - success! It sat quite high above us, calling for several minutes as light faded.

Other species this afternoon included: *Black-crowned Night Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Spot-billed Pelican, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Green and Common Sandpiper, Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns, Little and Asian Palm Swifts, White-throated and Common Kingfishers, White-naped Woodpecker, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Barn Swallow, Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Paddyfield Pipit.*

9th February Bundala swamp, Surrey Bird Sanctuary and Nuwara Eliya

After an early breakfast we made another visit to Bundala freshwater marsh and although still no luck with the Black-browed Warbler we had fabulous views of a **Black Bittern**, **Jacobin Cuckoo** and more **Watercock**.

Other species at Bundala included: *Asian Openbill, Black-headed Ibis, Yellow Bittern, Grey, Purple and Indian Pond Herons, Little and Great Egrets, Brahminy Kite, White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Pacific Golden Plover, Pin-tailed Snipe, Common Redshank, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Gull-billed Tern, Eurasian Collared Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Little Swift, White-throated Kingfisher, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Brown Shrike, House Crow, Barn Swallow, Clamorous Reed Warbler. Ruddy Mongoose.*

Dragging ourselves away from all these birds we returned to the main road and started our journey to Nuwara Eliya; it's going to be quite a change going from sea-level up to 2,300m. As always, we enjoyed the journey as we progressed steadily higher. Above steep, heavily-wooded hills a group of raptors was circling - **2 Rufous-bellied Hawk Eagles**, **2 Oriental Honey Buzzards** and a **Crested Serpent Eagle**. Later we stopped for a leg-stretch at the tourist-magnet Ravanella Falls near Ella. Lots of vendors were tempting us with food and trinkets but there was no hassle and everyone was polite and smiling. We did buy some freshly-boiled sweetcorn, choosing not to have ours dipped in the bowl of salty water. It took quite a while to eat it as we were constantly distracted by movement in the roadside trees - **Pale-billed Flowerpecker**, **Yellow-fronted Barbet**, **Yellow-browed Bulbul** and several gorgeous **Common Jay** butterflies. Farther on we went through four or five towns all specialising in car bodywork and replacement parts - workshop after workshop and huge storage units all along the main roads - quite astonishing. As we continued to climb the scenery became even better, the towns much smaller with mainly fruit and vegetables for sale, many "rooms for rent" and occasional small tea plantations. We made a slight detour to "Surrey Bird Sanctuary", a small reserve (also a guest house and wedding venue) and enjoyed an hour or so there, succeeding in finding the target **Brown Wood Owl** and a few other nice species: **Black Eagle**, **Crimson-backed Flameback**, **Oriental White-eye**, **Southern Hill Myna** and a **Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher**.

It was 14.00hrs when we reached Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka's highest town. An attractive place set below Mount Pedro and with Lake Gregory at its centre. At over 1,800m it was much cooler than we'd become accustomed to! We checked in at the modern, comfortable Hill Pride Hotel (actually named Hill Pride **City** Hotel but it is most definitely not in a city, being surrounded by small dwellings and vegetable gardens). We found our fleeces and gloves and went to a roadside spot beyond town to try for Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. Within a few minutes a **Dusky-striped Squirrel** and an **Indian Blackbird** (*Turdus simillimus kinnisii* - perhaps soon to be a full species?) showed up followed by **Sri Lanka Scimitarbabbar** and **Yellow-eared Babbler** then soon a **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush** arrived. At first it was deep in the undergrowth but it moved forward into a chink of light and we got the full effect of the blue sheen and bright shoulder patch. Fabulous. We moved on to a small marshy area where Susa could hear a **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**. We could barely hear it ourselves but with patience the day ended with good views of two birds.

Other species this afternoon included: *Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-capped and Square-tailed Bulbuls, Common Tailorbird, Pied Bushchat, Grey Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit.*

As soon as we returned to the hotel we were asked if we would like medium or hot curry for dinner! It was traditional Sri Lankan "curry and rice", enormous portions and really delicious. Six different curries, a mound of rice served on a banana leaf and as many papadums as we could eat, followed by banana fritters. The hotel, like many others, did not have an alcohol licence but we'd found a liquor shop in town.

10th February Horton Plains and Nuwara Eliya

This morning headed for Horton Plains, leaving at 05.30hrs when it was 6°C. After just a short distance we heard a Common Hawk-Cuckoo and jumped out to try and locate it. It continued calling but more distantly and we had to admit defeat. We passed several small towns, tea plantations, cultivated areas and woodland; for the next 30 minutes or so we were climbing steeply and much of the habitat was subtropical montane evergreen forests although there were some stands of eucalyptus. By now there was an interesting-looking bank of cloud hanging above the mountains but otherwise the sky was clear and there was no mist; the temperature had dropped to 4°C so we were well wrapped-up! Before reaching the grasslands we had a couple of short walks at the forest edge and some small pools, finding **Yellow-eared Bulbuls, Green Warblers, Sri Lanka Bush Warblers, Sri Lanka White-eyes, Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, Dull-blue Flycatchers, Pale-billed Flowerpeckers and Dusky Striped Squirrels**. There were some lovely specimens of **Tree Rhododendron** *Rhododendron arboretum* and the **Tree Fern** *Cyathea crinita*.

As the sun got higher the temperature rose markedly and we were now pleasantly warm (about 14°C). We moved on to the gently rolling montane grasslands at around 2,100m. Two **Hill Swallows** were on the wing and we also saw **Zitting Cisticolas, Paddyfield Pipits and Sambar** deer stags. There were some interesting-looking plants up here but we didn't spend time trying to identify them, apart from the **Downy Rose-myrtle**, *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa* and one of the **Dwarf Bamboos** *Chimonobambusa densifolia*. Back in the forest we started to walk one of the side trails but, unbelievably, it was now too hot for walking. However, we did see yet another endemic bird, **Sri Lanka Woodpigeon** right above our heads. We decided it was time to return to Nuwara Eliya. Thick mist now hung below the mountains below a perfectly blue sky.

It was much warmer lower down, around 18-20°C, but chilly on our balcony and washing was not drying. It became cloudy and quite misty. At 16.30 we drove a short distance and walked along a quiet, wooded road on the edge of town. In a deep gully beneath the trees Susa spotted a large raptor below us - a stunning **Legge's Hawk Eagle** which was still-hunting from a thick branch. We stopped by the marshy field and again saw **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** as well as **Blyth's Reed Warbler**.

Other species around Nuwara and Horton included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Eastern Cattle Egret, Little Cormorant, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Red-wattled Lapwing, Spotted Dove, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Orange Minivet, Brown Shrike, Indian Jungle Crow, Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Cinereous Tit, Red-vented Bulbul, Hill and Barn Swallows, Ashy Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Sri Lanka Scimitar-babbler (HEARD only), Common Myna, Indian Blackbird, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, House Sparrow, Grey Wagtail.*

11th February Hakgala Botanical Gardens and Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya

A lie-in this morning, not up until 06.00hrs. We had a long, lazy breakfast - fresh fruit platter, followed by toast and jam, then 2 fried eggs, orange juice and tea/coffee. We were just saying how nicely full we were when the waiter brought out bowls of noodles and dhal curry - we had to say no to this!

We spent the morning at the well-tended Hakgala Botanical Gardens, a wonderful mix of formal and informal plantings, lots of trees, many native and endemic (all neatly labelled, very useful) with a wealth of wildlife. It was cloudy and dull this morning and, at just over 1,600m, fairly cool - just right for walking as it's quite hilly and steep in places. We had a brilliant time, spending an age trying to photograph the aptly-named "Bear Monkeys", the **montane race of Purple-faced Langurs**. Their coat is thick and long with a dense underfur to keep them warm in these highlands. We knew there was a chance of seeing **Kashmir Flycatcher** here and, again, we were not disappointed. **Dull-blue Flycatchers** were quite common along with **Yellow-eared Bulbuls** and **Sri Lanka White-eyes**. In the "Japanese Gardens" we watched an **Indian Rat Snake** beside a small stream for at least 20 minutes. Surprisingly, we saw another farther along the path.

In the afternoon we went to Victoria Park, not as wild nor as big as Hakgala but along the polluted, rubbish-lined stream beneath dense vegetation and massive trees we saw four **Pied Thrushes**, two **Blyth's Reed Warblers, Brown-breasted Flycatchers** and incredibly good views of a **Sri Lanka Thrush**. Frustratingly, we couldn't identify a **crake** which shot through the undergrowth. As we returned to the gates we noticed a **Brown Shrike** of the *lucionensis* race with a very pale grey head and nape.

Other species today included: *Indian Pond and Grey Herons, Eastern Cattle and Little Egrets, Crested Honey Buzzard, White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Common Snipe, Spotted Dove, Common Hawk-Cuckoo (two HEARD only), Yellow-fronted*

Barbet, Crimson-backed Flameback, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Cinereous Tit, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Ashy Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Oriental White-eye, Common Myna, Indian Blue Robin, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Pied Bush Chat, House Sparrow, Scaly-breasted Munia, Grey Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit. 3-striped Palm Squirrel.

12th February Nuwara Eliya to Sigiriya and Popham's Arboretum

Checked out of Hill Pride Hotel by 07.45hrs and drove to the "Whistling Thrush" spot in the hope of seeing Slaty-legged Crake but we were out of luck. Another stop was Nuwara Golf Course which can be good for Kashmir Flycatcher but again, no luck. It was very cloudy and looked like rain as we returned to the car. Driving through the highlands we had a few showers. We were now in real tea-country and decided to call in to the Damro Labookellie Tea Factory, one of the oldest tea estates in Sri Lanka. Fascinating place and it filled an hour or so while the rain poured down! As we walked back to the car a **Shikra** zoomed across the car park.

By 13.00hrs we were leaving the wet zone and entering an intermediate zone where spices grow best, so instead of tea plantations it was now spice garden after spice garden. Towns were busy, with all sorts of shops, car breakers, glass-makers, roofing, everything. It suddenly occurred to us that we have seen hardly any dogs, anywhere.

Species this morning included: *Woolly-necked Stork, Eastern Cattle Egret, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, Whiskered Tern, Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Asian Palm Swift, White-throated Kingfishers, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Cinereous Tit, Square-tailed and Red-vented Bulbuls, Barn Swallow, Common Myna, Indian Blackbird, Indian Blue Robin, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Dull-blue Flycatcher, House Sparrow. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Dusky-striped Squirrel.*

Our base for the next three nights was Ehalagala Lake Resort, in a rural setting. The large, modern rooms overlook a small lake, thickets and the extensive gardens. We could see Sigiriya rock from our balcony. Meals here was exceptional and staff were very efficient; it was the best of all the hotels we stayed at. It remained cloudy and rather dull as we relaxed on the balcony, watching **Greater Coucal, Great Egret, Black-headed Ibis** by Ehalagala lake.

Other species around Ehalagala included: *Lesser Whistling Duck, Yellow Bittern, Indian Pond Heron, Eastern Cattle Egret, Little Cormorant, Brahminy Kite, White-breasted Waterhen, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Asian Koel, White-throated Kingfisher, Green Bee-eater, Brown-headed and Coppersmith Barbets, Black-hooded Oriole, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, House and Indian Jungle Crows, White-browed and Red-vented Bulbuls, Barn Swallow, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin.*

At 18.00hrs we headed to Popham's Arboretum for a night walk. Two young men joined us on this walk and they didn't seem to realise what they were letting themselves in for as they were wearing rubber flipflops and cropped trousers - not ideal for walking through woodland in the dark. They had to stop frequently to pull large ants from their feet and they must have got sore toes as they constantly stubbed them on exposed roots and stumps. The walk was a success although it was a 1½hr, hot, sweaty slog. The guide started by shining his orange-filtered torch on roosting birds - **Common Tailorbird** and **White-browed Fantail** - then we were off into the trees. The bright eyeshine of **Spotted deer** and a brief glimpse of a **White-spotted Chevrotain** diving for cover gave us momentary excitement but eventually the orange light picked up the eyeshine of a **Grey Slender Lorix** - we eventually had very good views of 3 different animals moving through the trees. Soaked in perspiration, we returned to the car and as we pulled away two **Chevrotains** ran onto the road in front of us - one dived back into the tress but the other stood and watched us for several seconds. Our day was rounded off nicely when a **Brown Fish Owl** perched close to the dining area.

13th February Kaudulla NP and Ehalagala (Sigiriya)

Our original plan was to visit Minneriya National Park this morning but Susa's contacts advised against it, saying there would be more to see at Kaudulla, so that's where we went. It was an hour's drive; about half way we transferred from Susa's car to a safari jeep. Booking in at the Park was very slow, taking almost 30 minutes to obtain a ticket and open the park gates and when that was done tickets had to be re-checked and details written laboriously into the big book. Patience, patience. The packed breakfast from Ehalagala was really good, the best yet: the usual boiled eggs plus two tasty chicken salad club sandwiches, 2 slices of pineapple, a banana and a large piece of moist Madeira cake plus a bottle of water. It took us the whole morning to drive one long track and back the same way but it was very productive. Driving slowly, parallel to a small river with forest on each side we picked up some great species: **Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Indian Pitta, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Jerdon's and Golden-fronted Leafbirds.** Raptors were amazing: a beautiful, very white immature **Changeable Hawk Eagle** perched on a low branch continued calling loudly as we stopped beside it and about 50m farther on, what may have been its sibling was eating a female Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill. Both **Brown Fish Owl** and **Grey-headed Fish Eagle** gave close views as they perched on branches overhanging the river. At the end of the track we reached the edge of Kaudulla lake with many waders and egrets; it was now raining so we decided to turn round and return slowly to the gate. A **Grey Mongoose** trotted across the track, then a **Golden Jackal**. Susa suddenly yelled "stop": a **Common Vine Snake** had dropped from a tree with a **Bronze Grass Skink** in its mouth! We watched for some time but, as Susa said, although they have a venomous bite it will take a long time to completely subdue the skink and we moved on.

Other species at Kaudulla included: *Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Green, Wood and Common Sandpiper, Whiskered Tern, Spotted Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Asian Koel(HEARD only), Indian Cuckoo(HEARD only), Asian Palm and Little Swifts, Stork-billed, Common and White-throated Kingfishers, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Crimson-fronted Barbet(HEARD only), Coppersmith Barbet, Common Iora, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied Drongo, White-browed Fantail, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Red-vented Bulbul, Barn Swallow, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Indian Robin, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Purple-rumped Sunbird. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Spotted Deer. Bengal Monitor Lizard.*

It was pouring with rain as we arrived back at our hotel and staff rushed over with umbrellas! It didn't last long and, although there were a few short showers, most of the afternoon was bright, humid but quite breezy so it wasn't uncomfortable. At 16.00hrs we walked from the hotel along village tracks and around the lake. Birds galore! Two **Sri Lanka Swallows** were hawking over the lake, **Loten's Sunbirds** put on a good show and plenty of babblers were about - **Yellow-billed** and **Yellow-eyed Babblers** plus a group of 6 **Tawny-bellied Babblers**, two, presumably the breeding pair, were carrying nesting material and four others were accompanying them making a lot of noise! **White-rumped, Scaly-breasted** and **Tricoloured Munias** and **all the Prinias** were in good numbers, too.

A **Jerdon's Nightjar** was calling as we went for dinner but there was no sign of the Brown Fish Owl. Meals at Ehalagala are rather special, four courses are the norm. Tonight there was an appetizer of lime-pickled fresh Tuna with salad followed by vegetable broth with home-made rolls, then a main course of chicken and vegetable wraps with potato wedges and cucumber and a big fresh fruit platter for dessert.

Other species around Ehalagala included: *Woolly-necked Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Eastern Cattle, Great and Little Egrets, Little Cormorant, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Asian Palm and Little Swifts, Stork-billed and White-throated Kingfishers, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Coppersmith Barbet, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Small Minivet, Black-hooded Oriole, White-browed Fantail, Red-vented and White-browed Bulbuls, Barn Swallow, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Common Tailorbird, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Purple-rumped and Purple Sunbirds, Paddyfield Pipit. Tufted Grey Langur, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel, Golden Jackal.*

14th February Sigiriya woodlands and Ehalagala

We left at 06.00hrs so we reached the wooded area below Sigiriya Rock just as it was light. There was quite a lot of fresh elephant dung on the track and the forest guard suggested we parked farther along. The forest is quite dense here and it would be easy to "stumble" across an elephant - we didn't. Mammals we did see were the **northern dry-zone race of Purple-faced Langurs, Toque Macaques, Spotted Deer** and **Indian Muntjac**. Again, we couldn't see the Indian Cuckoos which were calling. Four **Common Kingfishers** were squabbling noisily on boulders by the moat surrounding the Sigiriya Rock and a female **Crimson-fronted Barbet** was watching her mate excavating a nesting hole. We made a detour on our return journey, checking out good habitat near some large hotels. An **Orange-headed Thrush** was foraging beneath a hedge but behind a wire fence - difficult to focus on. The guard asked what we were doing and then invited us in for a better look! This also gave us good views of a **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**. More than pleased with our morning, we returned to the hotel for lunch and a couple of hours walking in the grounds (**Thick-billed Flowerpecker**) and sitting on our balcony watching over the lake (**Lesser Whistling Duck**).

At 15.30hrs we returned to the same woodland as this morning. Susa chatted to the forest guard and we got permission to go through the barrier to park and walk in better forest, ending up beside rice fields and scrub. This afternoon's highlights were a **Rufous Woodpecker**, a **Red-backed Flameback**, a pair of **Brown-capped Babblers** unconcerned by us as they foraged by the track and, late in the day, a **Crested Goshawk**. We found lots of butterflies and dragonflies by the rice fields and further signs of recent elephant activity. Later, as we started to drive back to the hotel we saw a tuk tuk taxi stop ahead of us; a big **bull Elephant** was standing behind the electric roadside fence, swinging a front leg, seeming frustrated and a little angry. We moved past them very quickly.

It's 14th February and all the hotels, small guest houses and restaurants were advertising "Special Valentine's Day Dinner" so we shouldn't have been surprised (while we were listening to calling **Jerdon's Nightjars** and howling **Jackals**) when our waiter handed us a special menu this evening. 5 courses: prawns and papaya in a lightly spiced marinade. Spinach soup and home-made heart-shaped rolls. Then a sharp, tangy mango sorbet. The main course was an unusual but very tasty mix of fresh tuna and sliced chicken with plain mixed vegetables, spiced rice and creamed potatoes. Dessert was chocolate brownies (heart-shaped, of course) with white chocolate mousse decorated with fruits. All were beautifully presented. A surprising end to another great day!

Other species today included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Asian Openbill, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Intermediate and Little Egrets, Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, Red-wattled Lapwing, Spotted Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, Indian Cuckoo(HEARD only), Asian Palm and Crested Tree Swifts, White-throated and Common Kingfishers, Green Bee-eater, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Brown-headed, Crimson-fronted and Coppersmith Barbets, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker(HEARD only), Indian Pitta, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Sri*

Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Small Minivet, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Black-capped, White-browed and Red-vented Bulbuls, Sri Lanka and Barn Swallows, Green Warbler (HEARD only), Blyth's Reed Warbler, Grey-breasted, Jungle and Plain Prinias, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama, Indian Robin, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Purple and Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munias. Tufted Grey Langur, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel,

15th February Ehalagala to Sinharagama (Wilpattu)

We were out before light for a walk in the local area - primary target was the calling **Indian Cuckoo** as they have taunted us so many times. Calling constantly, they were very mobile but we eventually saw two males. Breakfast at 07.30hrs started with a fruit smoothie and a mixed fruit platter. Then came the pot of tea, a "full English", toast, jam and marmalade! They certainly kept us well-fed here. We were on the road by 08.45hrs heading for Wilpattu. We stopped many times, first by a huge swamp (actually an overgrown, choked lake) which, as always, was full of birds - and three people wading waist-high digging up Lotus roots for "Nelum Ala", Lotus-root curry. Other stops were at more water bodies, mostly marshes and lakes but also a large flooded area where a river overflowed during the monsoon and has been slow to recede. The numbers of birds everywhere was stunning. At Anuradhapara, a World Heritage Site and Sri Lanka's oldest-known town, we skipped the culture and went to the first big reservoir built in the country, Anuradhapara (or Tissawewa) Lake. Here we found another new species for the trip, **Cotton Pygmy Goose**.

Species this morning included: *Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Little Grebe, Asian Openbill and Woolly-necked Storks, Black-headed Ibis, Black-crowned Night Heron, Indian Pond, Purple and Grey Herons, Eastern Cattle, Great and Little Egrets, Spot-billed Pelican, Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra, White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Whiskered Tern, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial and Sri Lanka Green Pigeons, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Indian Cuckoo, Asian Palm Swift, White-breasted and Common Kingfishers, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Brown-headed and Coppersmith Barbets, Black-rumped Flameback, Common Iora, Small Minivet, Brown Shrike, White-bellied Drongo, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow, White-browed and Red-vented Bulbul, Sri Lanka and Barn Swallows, Plain Prinia, Brown-capped Babbler, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Scaly-breasted Munia. Toque Macaque, Black-naped Hare.*

We arrived at Sinharagama Hotel at 12.45hrs. The rooms were spacious, with views across rice fields and woodland, but they do need some TLC. We knew the food wouldn't be up to Ehalagala standards but it was fine with plenty of choice. After lunch we walked the grounds; there weren't many birds around but quite a lot of dragonflies and butterflies. We found the distinctive nest-holes of **White-naped Woodpeckers** in a palm tree and saw one bird in flight. Several **Zitting Cisticolas** were in display flight and two male **Black-hooded Orioles** were chasing back and forth over the rice fields.

At 19.30hrs we left the hotel, drove through town and transferred to a safari-jeep for a night drive on the outskirts of Wilpattu National Park. Within a very short distance a **Small Indian Civet** crossed the road. We turned off the road onto dirt tracks, seeing numerous **Indian Nightjars**, a few **Black-naped Hares** and an **Indian Gerbil** bouncing across the road; **Fireflies** were twinkling everywhere - sometimes fooling us into thinking it was an animal's eye-shine! We were sometimes on the edge of open land and a few times were disappointed to realise the large mammal in our torchlight was a cow! We picked up greenish eye-shine in a grassy clearing - a **Jungle Cat**. At first we couldn't make out what was going on, there was so much movement. It was a female Jungle Cat with 2 half-grown kittens! Much of the time they were just murky shapes but we had some good, clear views as the kittens played around the female. We turned back onto a tarred road intending to go to the next dirt track; we checked out three or four domestic cats then another cat, bigger and much more elegant trotted along a side path - another **Jungle Cat**. We followed it along the road and into a field where it sat down and glanced at us with the disdain that only a cat can show. It had no intention of moving and we eventually left it still there! 10 minutes later we saw three shapes, and occasional eye-shine, jumping around. We stopped to watch and patience was rewarded - a **Golden Jackal** and two cubs! Not very clear views, admittedly, but exciting nonetheless. We got back to the hotel at midnight, tired but happy.

Other species this afternoon and evening included: *Grey Heron, Little Egret, Little Cormorant, Indian Palm Swift, Brown-headed Barbet, Scaly-breasted Munia.*

16th February Wilpattu National Park

Not much sleep last night as we were up at 05.00hrs to leave by 06.00hrs, reaching Wilpattu gates 40mins later. It was Sunday so we expected a lot of visitors but it wasn't too bad; our first stop was to watch an **Indian Muntjac** and four other vehicles joined us. Soon, though, we were on our own with just an occasional vehicle passing us; everyone seemed to be on a mission to see the "big" stuff but in fact they missed the **Sloth Bear** that Susa picked up - excavating a big hole, head down, snuffling and blowing, oblivious of us. Today was the day for **Blue-faced Malkohas**, we saw lots of them, very close. **Changeable Hawk Eagles**, too, were most obliging, one in particular sitting tight on a low stump as we crept slowly closer and closer until we stopped almost beside him; incredible views. **Crested Serpent Eagles**, too, were very tolerant. The park's habitats are varied, with dense woodland and scrub (**Loten's Sunbirds**) with small grassy clearings, ten natural lakes plus several made-made, stretches of deep white sand and lagoons (**Great Stone-curlews** and **Greater Sand**

Plovers). The length and spread of the horns on some of the big **Wild Water Buffalo** here were very impressive. We stayed in the park the whole day; it is so large it takes a long time to reach some of the better areas and would take far too long to get back to the Gate. There's a rest/lunch stop area under a shady roof, the only place you are allowed to eat and get out of the vehicle. Of course, the **Toque Macaques** know all about lunch boxes, bags, unwary tourists and anything left in jeeps..... be warned, shut everything in the jeep's cab, close the windows and be vigilant. Lunch today was provided by the jeep company - a selection of delicious home-made lightly-spiced curries, rice, pappadums and fresh fruit served on Melamine plates with proper cutlery and paper napkins. Couldn't ask for better.

Species today included: *Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Garganey, Painted, Woolly-necked and Lesser Adjutant Storks, Black-headed Ibis, Yellow Bittern, Indian Pond, Grey and Purple Herons, Eastern Cattle, Great and Little Egrets, Spot-billed Pelican, Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Common Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled and Red-wattled Lapwings, Pacific Golden, Lesser and Little Ringed Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Marsh, Wood, Curlew and Common Sandpipers, Whiskered Tern, Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo(HEARD only), Asian Palm Swift, White-throated, Pied and Common Kingfishers, Chestnut-headed, Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Crimson-fronted Barbet (HEARD only), Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (HEARD only), Red-backed Flameback, White-naped Woodpecker, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Common Iora, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, Jerdon's Bush Lark, White-browed and Red-vented Bulbuls, Barn Swallow, Plain Prinia, Yellow-billed and Brown-capped Babbler(HEARD only), Common Myna, Oriental Magpie-Robin, White-rumped Shama(HEARD only), Indian Robin, Jerdon's Leafbird, Purple Sunbird, Scaly-breasted and Tricoloured Munias, Western Yellow Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, Indian Black-naped Hare, 3-striped Palm Squirrel, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel, Golden Jackal, Asian Elephant, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Common Grey and Ruddy Mongooses. Mugger Crocodile, Bengal Monitor Lizard.*

It was 18.45hrs when we got back to the hotel. A big group of Australian birders had arrived (their local guide was Susa's best birding pal) and so dinner was buffet-style in the garden - and very nice it was, too.

17th February Wilpattu National Park

Out at 05.45hrs reaching our jeep pickup point by 06.00hrs and the park by 06.15hrs, earlier than yesterday but still there were lots of jeeps. Whilst waiting we all tried, unsuccessfully, to find the calling Indian Cuckoo (we've spent a lot of time doing that!) It was probably behind the thick clump of leaves right at the top of a big tree. First stop was at a small pool, still in low light, where there were good views of **Brown Fish Owl** as it flew down to the water perhaps in an attempt to catch one of the large frogs we could see. It failed, but flew nearer to us and settled on a low branch. Things were a little quiet this morning but then at about 11.00hrs, our driver spotted a **Leopard** walking through the bushes towards us - carrying a dead **Chevrotain**! We lost sight of her after about one minute - but what a minute that was, a fantastic sighting. The afternoon was more productive bird-wise (**Black-naped Monarch**, a white morph **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** and an excellent view of **White-rumped Shama**) and certainly better for **Monitor Lizards** and **Mongooses**. There were hundreds of white butterflies streaming along the tracks, all heading in the same direction, perhaps **Sri Lanka Albatross**. Late afternoon as we turned back towards the gate we heard Spotted Deer alarm-calling; we waited, then followed the sound. Further along the track a jeep had stopped and a **Leopard** walked slowly out of the forest and crossed the track. It was a young female, not the one we saw this morning; we've been very lucky with this species.

Species not on yesterday's list included: *Intermediate Egret, Pin-tailed Snipe, Common Greenshank, Common Emerald Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Roller, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Black Drongo, Black-naped Monarch. Leopard and the unfortunate dead Chevrotain.*

18th February Wilpattu to Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary and Colombo

A **Black-crowned Night Heron** flew past our veranda just as it was getting light. We were packed and away by 07.45hrs for the journey back to Colombo. It was, however, a bird-filled day! There was an amazing number of roadside lakes to stop at and a large flooded area with trees, scrub and farmland under water - and masses of birds. In some places there were literally hundreds of **egrets, cormorants** and **Oriental Darters**. **Whiskered Terns** were common, many coming into breeding plumage. By 10.00hrs we reached the 1,397 hectare RAMSAR wetland site, Anawilundawa, at Puttalam. Even though we'd seen many wet habitats in Sri Lanka's dry zones, this site still impressed us. We visited only the freshwater lakes (covered in, perhaps, too much vegetation?) surrounded by woodland, but the Sanctuary also includes freshwater and mangrove swamps, coastal systems and forested wetlands, with the lakes forming a complex irrigation system. The trees were festooned with breeding **egrets, herons, cormorants, darters, ibises, spoonbills, storks, pelicans.....** We've never seen so many **Purple Herons** in one place before - at least 80 easily visible with binoculars - and a minimum 100 **Grey-headed Swamphens**, many with begging chicks in tow, and we found the only **Eurasian Coot** of the trip! So many birds, it was difficult to know just where to look. There were groups of black-and-yellow "butterflies" fluttering above the paths - closer inspection revealed they were actually **Common Picture Wing** dragonflies. By midday it was getting very hot and we reluctantly returned to the car to continue on towards Colombo. By the time we reached Tamarind Tree Hotel it was very hot - the car showing 37°C outside temperature - but it was very breezy and we were quite comfortable around the grounds in the shade. We could have gone birding somewhere with Susa this afternoon but we had chosen to relax, watch the now-familiar common birds and reflect on our experiences over the last three weeks.

Other species today included: *Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling Duck, Little Grebe, Asian Openbill and Woolly-necked Storks, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-headed Ibis, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Eastern Cattle Egret, Great, Little and Intermediate Egrets, Spot-billed Pelican, Indian Cormorant, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Common Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, Spotted Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Asian Koel, Asian Palm and Little Swifts, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Common Iora, Brown Shrike, Black-hooded Oriole, White-bellied and Black Drongos, House and Indian Jungle Crows, Red-vented Bulbul, Sri Lanka and Barn Swallows, Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Indian Robin, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Jerdon's Leafbird, Purple and Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Paddyfield Pipit. Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel, Common Grey Mongoose.*

19th February Flight home

A final walk around the grounds and our last opportunity to watch **Crimson-fronted Barbets** by our room and the pair of **White-bellied Drongos** feeding tiny chicks on a nest by Reception. Susa arrived at 08.30hrs and all too soon we were saying our goodbyes. It had been a fantastic trip, 252 bird species, 30 mammals, 17 reptiles/amphibians, 32 butterflies. Our thanks go to Jo Thomas and Jith for all the arrangements and especially to Susantha for his expertise and cheerful personality, he really made the trip special.

FULL SPECIES LIST

BIRDS 252 sp + 2 Heard Only (and 1 missed)

Sri Lanka Spurfowl *E Gallopardix bicalcarata*

Pair at Sigiriya

Sri Lanka Junglefowl *E Gallus lafayettii*

Common.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Common.

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

Small numbers Yala, Ehalagala lake, Wilapattu and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

5 on Anuradhapara (Tissawewa) reservoir.

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

Small numbers at Yala and Wilpattu.

Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*

1 male at Sinharaja.

Jerdon's Nightjar *Caprimulgus atripennis*

1 seen, several heard on night drive near Udawalawe and heard around Sigiriya.

Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus*

6+ seen on night drive near Udawalawe, frequent sightings on night drive Wilpattu.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*

Fairly common at Sinharaja, Udawalawe, Yala, Sigiriya. Occasionally seen on route.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasensis*

Common, seen most areas.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Common, seen most areas.

Green-billed Coucal *E Centropus chlororhynchus*

1 seen Sinharaja, another heard.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Fairly common in all suitable habitat.

Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultii*

Quite frequent at Udawalawe and Yala.

Red-faced Malkoha *E Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*

Several sightings both days at Sinharaja.

Blue-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

Several sightings at Udawalawe, Yala and Wilpattu.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*

Two sightings at Bundala.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus*

Occasional sightings most areas, much more often heard.

Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*

Two singles at Sinharaja.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*

Fairly common at Udawalawe, Yala, Wilpattu. (Two hepatic females seen).

Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus dicruroides*

1 seen Kaudulla, another heard in Wilpattu.

[**Common Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococyx varius* Heard Nuwera Eliya but not seen]

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

2 seen by Ehalagala hotel, others heard Sigiriya and Wilpattu.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Common, seen every day, all areas.

Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon E *Columba torringtoniae*

1 seen well at Horton Plains, plus two briefly seen in flight.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

2 in Block 5, Yala and 2 Bundala.

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*

Very common throughout.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*

Singles/2s at Sinharaja and Yala.

Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicinctus*

Occasional sightings of singles/pairs Udawalawe and Yala, heard Wilpattu.

Sri Lanka Green Pigeon E *Treron pompadora*

Frequent at Sinharaja, Yala, Kaudulla and Sigiriya woodlands.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*

Common, seen all areas except Nuwara/Horton Plains.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Commonly seen in most wet areas.

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*

One in flight at Debarawewa Lake, 3 Bundala on 7th and 1 there on 9th.

Grey-headed Swampphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus*

Common in most suitable wetlands.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Uncommon: 1 Wilpattu, 2 Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

5 at Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Small numbers at Yala, Ehalagala lake and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*

2 at Yala.

Indian Stone-curlew *Burhinus indicus*

6 on night drive near Udawalawe.

Great Stone-curlew *Esacus recurvirostris*

Small numbers at Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Wilpattu.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Common, often numerous, all wetlands.

Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*

Uncommon. 1 on night drive near Udawalawe, pairs in Udawalawe NP and Yala, 1 at Wilpattu.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Common and widespread.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Fairly common in small numbers at Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Wilpattu.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Small numbers at Yala and Bundala.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Only seen at Bundala.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Common at many wetlands.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Small numbers at Yala and Bundala.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

Fairly common at Udawalawe, Yala and Bundala.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Single at Wilpattu.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Several near Bundala and fairly common at Wilpattu.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Fairly common at Yala, Bundala and Wilpattu.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Small numbers around Bundala

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

14+ at Bundala.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus*

1 at Bundala.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

1 photographed at Bundala salt pans on 7th November.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Large numbers at Bundala salt pans.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Common Yala and Bundala, small numbers Wilpattu.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura*

Several sightings at Bundala and Wilpattu.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Singles at Udawalawe reservoir, Bundala and Nuwara Eliya.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very common, Yala, Bundala and Kaudulla and roadside wetlands.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common Yala, Bundala and Wilpattu.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Common throughout and often in large numbers, notably at Yala, Bundala and Wilpattu.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common, often large numbers at Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Kaudulla, Wilpattu and roadside wetlands.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Small numbers at Bundala and Wilpattu.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

At least 10 in mixed flock of 80 Pratincoles at Bundala.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*

Mixed flock of 80 Pratincoles at Bundala were mostly this species.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*

At least 6 pairs at Bundala. Two newly-hatched chicks.

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*

6 at Bundala.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Fairly common most areas.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

2-3 at Udawalawe, 10+ at Bundala. Occasional at roadside wetlands and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

Very common at Bundala.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

10-12 at Bundala.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

4 at Debarawewa Lake. Common at Bundala. Occasional at roadside wetlands.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Common and numerous at all suitable wetlands.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Small number around reservoir Block 5 Yala.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

Frequent in small numbers most areas including roadside wetlands.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*

Common in all suitable areas.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

Fairly common and widespread, usually singles/pairs but up to 4 together at Wilpattu.

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*

1 at Udawalawe, 3 at Yala, 1 Wilpattu.

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*

Very common and widespread, including wetlands around Nuwara Eliya.

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

Common and numerous at Udawalawe, Debarawewa and Tissamaharama Lakes, Yala. 1,000s at Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary (nesting colony).

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Uncommon, 3-4 at Udawalawe, 2 Bundala, several at Tissamaharama Lake.

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Fairly common and widespread, including roadside wetlands.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Common and widespread.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Uncommon. Up to 4 together at Udawalawe and Yala. More at Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary (?breeding)

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

1 at Debarawewa Lake, 2 singles near Bundala, 1 at Ehalagala Lake, 1 Wilpattu.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

1 Debarawewa Lake.

Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*

1 at Bundala.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 on route to Udawalawe, 2 singles at Yala, 1 Tissamaharama Lake, 2 singles at Ehalagala lake, 1 Sinharagama hotel.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

1 at Bundala.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Very common and widespread.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Very common and widespread.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Widespread in rather small numbers.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Common and widespread in high numbers e.g. 80+ at Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Very common and widespread, often in high numbers (e.g. 25+ at roadside wetland on route to Colombo)

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia*

Widespread but less numerous than other egrets.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common and widespread but less numerous than Great *A.ardea*

Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*

Fairly common and widespread.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

2 singles at Yala Block 5 reservoir.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

2 singles at Udawalawe.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Fairly common, seen on 8 days (3 together on thermals on two days).

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni*

1 at Sinharaja.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*

Common, seen most areas except highlands.

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*

Common at Udawalawe, Yala, Kaudulla and Wilpattu and by the hotel at Sinharaja. Usually very confiding.

Legge's Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus kelaarti*

2 singles Sinharaja reserve, 1 Nuwara Eliya.

Rufous-bellied Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii*

2 soaring together near Ella on route to Nuwara Eliya.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis*

2 together near Sinharaja.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*

1 over forest near Sigiriya rock.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus*

1 on walk below Sinharaja.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Fairly common. Seen at Udawalawe, Yala, Kaudulla, Ehalagala (Sigiriya) and roadside stops.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Common and widespread but small numbers.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Common and widespread at most wetlands.

Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus ichthyaeus*

Common and widespread at most wetlands.

Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica*

1 at Debarawewa Lake.

[Serendib Owl *Otus thilohoffmanni* found by guides but not seen by us]

Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*

Pair with juvenile in private grounds Colombo.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*

1 Yala, 1 Ehalagala hotel grounds, 1 Kaudulla, 1 Wilpattu.

Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*

1 at Surrey Bird Sanctuary.

Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*

1 in private garden, Debarawewa town.

Chestnut-backed Owlet *E Glaucidium castanotum*

1 in private garden, Sinharaja.

Malabar Trogon *Harpactes fasciatus*

Several sightings on both days at Sinharaja.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Several sightings over 3 days at Yala.

Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthraceroceros coronatus*

2 seen from Rock View Motel, Sinharaja, on 31st (probably first record for this area, also seen and photographed by a local guide). Frequent sightings of pairs and small groups (up to 6) Udawalawe, Yala, Kaudulla, Sigiriya, Wilpattu and occasionally on route.

Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill *Ocyrceros gingalensis*

Singles/pairs at Yala, Kaudulla and Wilpattu.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Wilpattu, Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary and occasionally on route.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*

Singles at Sinharaja, Debarawewa Lake and Kaudulla. Occasionally heard elsewhere.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Very common and widespread.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common, seen at Yala, Bundala, Kaudulla, 4 together in moat by Sigiriya rock, Wilpattu and often on route.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Uncommon. Singles/2s at Yala, Bundala and Wilpattu.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Common in lowlands.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*

The most widespread Bee-eater, seen everywhere except Horton Plains.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti*

Small numbers around Yala, Bundala and Wilpattu.

Brown-headed Barbet *Psilopogon zeylanicus*

Very common, seen most areas except Horton Plains.

Yellow-fronted Barbet *Psilopogon flavifrons*

Frequent in Sinharaja, Nuwara Eliya, Hakgala Gardens,

Crimson-fronted Barbet E *Psilopogon rubricapillus*
Common in hotel grounds, Colombo. 1 near Sigiriya Rock. Heard at Yala and Wilpattu.

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*
Seen at Udawalawe, Yala, Sigiriya, Kaudulla, Ehalagala lakeside and occasionally on route.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus nanus*
1 Sinharaja, 1 Yala. Heard at Sigiriya, Wilpattu and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Leiopicus mahrattensis*
Singles at Udawalawe and Tissamaharama Lake

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*
Several sightings around Sinharaja.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*
1 at Yala, pair at Anuradhapara (Tissa Wewa) Lake, 1 at Wilpattu.

Red-backed Flameback E *Dinopium psarodes*
Singles/pairs at Sinharaja, Yala, Sigiriya and Wilpattu.

Crimson-backed Flameback E *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*
Singles/pairs at Sinharaja, Surrey Bird Sanctuary, Hakgala Botanic Gardens.

White-naped Woodpecker *Chrysocolaptes festivus*
Pairs at Debarawewa and Tissamaharama Lakes. Pair in grounds of Sinharagama hotel (Wilpattu area).

Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*
1 seen (another calling nearby) near Sigiriya Rock.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
1 in Yala Block 5.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*
Pair seen at Yala (others heard).

Layard's Parakeet E *Psittacula calthrapae*
Frequent sightings around Sinharaja.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
Flight views at Yala and around Sigiriya/Ehalagala lake.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
Common most areas, not Sinharaja and Horton Plains.

Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot E *Loriculus beryllinus*
Common around Sinharaja.

Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*
1 at Udawalawe, 2 Yala Block 5, 1 Kaudulla, 1 near Sigiriya Rock. Heard at Wilpattu.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus*
Occasional sightings at Yala and Sigiriya.

Sri Lanka Woodshrike E *Tephrodornis affinis*
Fairly common and widespread, seen at Udawalawe, Yala, Kaudulla, Sigiriya, Wilpattu.

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*
2 near Debarawewa Lake.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*
Fairly common and widespread, seen Colombo, Udawalawe, Yala, Kaudulla, Sigiriya, Wilpattu and occasionally on route.

Marshall's Iora *Aegithina nigrolutea*
Pair plus single female in Yala Block 5.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*
Male at Tissamaharama Lake, occasional pairs Ehalagala hotel grounds and Sigiriya.

Orange Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*
Fairly common around Sinharaja. Pair Nuwara Eliya.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei*
1 seen at Yala, occasionally heard elsewhere.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Lalage melanoptera*
1 on route to Sinharaja, 2 Udawalawe, 1 Kaudulla, 2 Sigiriya.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
Common throughout.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*
Common all areas except Horton Plains.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocerus*
3 on roadside cables near Wilpattu, 2 on route to Colombo.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

1 in Yala Block 5.

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caeruleus*

Common around Sinharaja. Singles at Yala and Kaudulla. Occasional sightings on route.

Sri Lanka Drongo *E Dicrurus lophorinus*

Several sightings around Sinharaja.

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*

Frequent around Udawalawe, Yala, Ehalagala, Kaudulla and Sigiriya.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

Occasional sightings around Sinharaja. Single Wilpattu.

Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*

Fairly common in most areas except highlands. White morph males frequent.

Sri Lanka Blue Magpie *E Urocissa ornata*

At least 4 around Sinharaja Visitor Centre.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Common, although less frequent than Indian Jungle *C.culminatus*.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus culminatus*

Very common and widespread.

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*

1 at Surrey Bird Sanctuary, singles at Horton Plains and Nuwara Eliya.

Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus*

Singles at Yala, Hakgala Gardens, Nuwara Eliya. 6 before Horton Plains.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix griseus*

Small flock in Yala.

Jerdon's Bush Lark *Mirafra affinis*

Fairly common around Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Kaudulla, Sigiriya and Wilpattu.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Small numbers around Yala.

Black-capped Bulbul *E Pycnonotus melanicterus*

Occasional sightings around Sinharaja, Nuwara Eliya and Sigiriya.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Common throughout.

Yellow-eared Bulbul *E Pycnonotus penicillatus*

Occasional sightings around Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains, and Hakgala Gardens.

White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*

Fairly common around Sinharaja, occasional at Yala, frequent around Ehalagala, Kaudulla, Sigiriya and Wilpattu.

Yellow-browed Bulbul *Acritillas indica*

Frequent sightings around Sinharaja.

Square-tailed Bulbul *Hypsipetes ganeesa*

Fairly common around Sinharaja. 3 singles Nuwara Eliya.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

1 at Bundala with Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common and widespread, although none at Sinharaja.

Hill Swallow *Hirundo domicola*

2 at Hakgala Gardens. Other possible around Nuwara Eliya.

Sri Lanka Swallow *E Cecropis hyperythra*

Fairly common in small numbers, seen at Sinharaja, Udawalawe, Yala, Ehalagala, Sigiriya and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary. Occasionally seen on route.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*

Singles at Sinharaja and Horton Plain. Heard at Sigiriya.

[**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Heard but not seen at Sinharaja two days]

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Common around Bundala. Occasionally heard by other wetlands.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Fairly common Yala, Bundala, Nuwara Eliya, Ehalagala, Sigiriya.

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola*

2 in marsh at Nuwara Eliya.

Sri Lanka Bush Warbler E *Elaphrornis palliseri*

2 Horton Plains.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Fairly common in suitable areas.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

Occasional at Udawalawe, Yala, Ehalagala, Sigiriya.

Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica*

Occasional Yala + Ehalagala. Heard near Sigiriya Rock.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*

Frequent at Udawalawe, Nuwara Eliya, Ehalagala hotel.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Seen more often than other Prinias. Udawalawe, Yala, Ehalagala, Sigiriya, Wilpattu and often on route.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Seen at Udawalawe, Nuwara Eliya, Popham's Arboretum, Ehalagala hotel. More often heard.

Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler E *Pomatorhinus melanurus*

Seen at Sinharaja and roadside stop Nuwara Eliya. More often heard.

Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hypertyra*

Seen at Udawalawe, Ehalagala/Sigiriya and on route to Wilpattu.

Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps*

Seen at Sinharaja and Yala.

Brown-capped Babbler E *Pellorneum fuscicapillus*

Seen in woodland by Sigiriya Rock. Heard at Sinharaja and Wilpattu.

Ashy-headed Laughingthrush E *Argya cinereifrons*

Frequent at Sinharaja, often heard.

Yellow-billed Babbler *Argya affinis*

Common most areas, except Nuwara Eliya/Horton Plain

Orange-billed Babbler E *Argya rufescens*

Frequent sightings around Sinharaja.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense*

Seen at Udawalawe, Yala, Ehalagala.

Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*

Surrey Bird Sanctuary, Hakgala Gardens.

Sri Lanka White-eye E *Zosterops ceylonensis*

Frequent sightings Nuwara Eliya/Horton Plains.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*

2 Horton Plains.

Sri Lanka Hill Myna E *Gracula ptilogenys*

Several sightings Sinharaja, often heard.

Southern Hill Myna *Gracula indica*

Several sightings Sinharaja. 2 at Surrey Bird Sanctuary.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Common and numerous throughout.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum*

2 Yala Block 5.

White-faced Starling E *Sturnornis albofrontatus*

Frequent sightings, usually pairs, at Sinharaja.

Pied Thrush *Geokichla wardii*

3 males, 1 female in Victoria Gardens, Nuwara Eliya.

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina*

2 in grounds of Hotel Sigiriya.

Spot-winged Thrush E *Geokichla spiloptera*

3 Sinharaja (1 at Visitor Centre, 2 in forest).

Sri Lanka Thrush E *Zoothera imbricata*

3 in Sinharaja, 1 Victoria Gardens Nuwara Eliya.

Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus*

3 around Nuwara Eliya.

Indian Robin *Copsychus fulicatus*

Common except none Sinharaja nor Nuwara/Horton.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Common throughout.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*

Common in Yala, Sigiriya woodland, Wilpattu.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

Seen Udawalawe, Kaudulla and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary. Also on route Colombo-Sinharaja.

Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*

Common Sinharaja, Nuwara Eliya and Sigiriya.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

1 in Yala Block 5, several sightings around Sigiriya.

Dull-blue Flycatcher *Eumyias sordidus*

2 Horton Plain, 1 Hakgala, 1 Nuwara Eliya golf course.

Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea*

1 male at Sinharaja Visitor Centre, 1 female Victoria Gardens Nuwara Eliya, 1 Nuwara Eliya roadside.

Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush *E Myophonus blighi*

Male at roadside stop Nuwara Eliya.

Kashmir Flycatcher *Ficedula subrubra*

1 Hakgala Gardens Nuwara Eliya.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

1 Nuwara Eliya town, 1 Hakgala Gardens.

Jerdon's Leafbird *Chloropsis jerdoni*

1 on route to Sinharaja, occasional at Udawalawe, Kaudulla, Wilpattu and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*

Occasional sightings at Sinharaja and Kaudulla.

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*

1 in Ehalagala hotel grounds, 1 at Anuradhapara Wetland Sanctuary.

Legge's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens*

Several sightings at Sinharaja

Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*

1 Nuwara Eliya town, 2 Horton Plains.

Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica*

Fairly common Sinharaja, Udawalawe, Kaudulla, Sigiriya, Ehalagala, Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

Fairly common, frequent sightings Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Ehalagala, Sigiriya, Wilpattu and Anawilundawa Wetland Sanctuary.

Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenius*

Pairs at Sinharaja and Ehalagala. Several at Wilpattu.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Uncommon. 1 male in Yala Block 5 and small numbers around Nuwara Eliya.

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*

Small numbers around Bundala on two days.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

Small flocks around Udawalawe and Yala.

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Small flock at Udawalawe.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Small flocks on route to Sinharaja, at Udawalawe, Ehalagala and Sigiriya.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

The most common Munia. Flocks frequent at Udawalawe, Yala, Hakgala Gardens, Ehalagala, Sigiriya and Wilpattu.

Tricolored Munia *Lonchura malacca*

Small numbers (2s/4s) at Udawalawe, Debarawewa Lake, Bundala, Ehalagala and Wilpattu.

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*

5 in Yala on 7th, 1 there on 8th. 2 Kaudulla.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Small numbers around Udawalawe, 1 Bundala, Several at Wilpattu.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

3 singles around Nuwara Eliya.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Occasional sightings at Udawalawe.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Common at Udawalawe, Yala, Bundala, Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains, Kaudulla, Wilpattu and Anawilundawa Sanctuary.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Single at Yala.

MAMMALS 30 sp. seen

Grey Slender Loris *Loris lydekkerianus*

Toque Macaque 3 races

Dry zone *Macaca sinica sinica*, *Low Wet zone* *M.s.aurifrons*, *Montane* *M.s.opsthormelas*

Purple-faced Langur 3 races

Low Wet Zone *Semnopithecus vetulus vetulus* (Sinharaja), *Northern Dry Zone* *S.v.philbricki* (Sigiriya),

Montane Zone *S.v.montanus* (Newara Eliya)

Tufted Grey Langur *Semnopithecus priam thersites*

Giant Grey Squirrel *Petaurista philippensis*

Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura*

Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum*

Flame-striped Squirrel *Funambulus layardi*

Dusky-striped Squirrel *Funambulus obscurus*

Indian Gerbil *Tatera indica*

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*

Black-naped Hare *Lepus nigricollis*

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*

Least Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus tenuis* PROBABLY this sp.

Rusty-spotted Cat *Prionailurus rubiginosus* ? pure or hybrid ?

Jungle Cat *Felis chaus*

Leopard *Panthera pardus*

Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica*

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*

Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes viticollis*

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*

Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*

White-spotted Chevrotain *Moschiola meminna*

Red Muntjak *Muntiacus muntjak*

Spotted Deer *Axis axis*

Sambur *Rusa unicolor*

Wild Water Buffalo *Bubalus arnee*

Asian Elephant *Elaphas maximus*

[Lesser Bandicoot-rat *Bandicota bengalensis* Signs frequent but animal not seen]

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS 17 sp

Hump-nosed Pit Viper *Hypnale hypnale*

Common Vine Snake *Ahaetulla nasuta*

Checkered Keelback *Fowlea piscator*

Indian Rat Snake *Pythas mucosa*

Sri Lankan (Whistling) Agama *Calotes liolepis*

Green Forest Lizard *Calotes calotes*

Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor*

Sri Lankan Kangaroo Lizard *Otocryptis wiegmanni*

Asian House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*

Bark Gecko *Hemidactylus leschenaultia*

Bronze Grass Skink/Mabuya *Eutropis macularia*

Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*

Water Monitor *Varanus salvator*

Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus paluster*

Saltwater Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*

Parker's Black Turtle *Melanochelys trijuga parkeri*

Sri Lankan Soft-shelled Turtle *Lissemys ceylonensis*

FISH 5 (thanks to Susanthe for his invaluable help in identification)

Walking Catfish *Clarias batrachus*

Ceylonese Combtail *Belontia signata*

Ceylon Stone-sucker *Garra ceylonensis*

Mozambique Tilapia *Tilapia mozambica*

Black-line Barb *Barbodes dorsimaculatus*

BUTTERFLIES 32 (thanks to Susanthe for his invaluable help in identification)

Banded Peacock *Papilio crino*

Lemon Emigrant *Catopsilia pomona*

Common Sailor *Neptis hylas*

Sri Lankan Tree Nymph *Idea iasonia*

Clipper *Parthenos Sylvia*

Blue Mormon *Papilio polymnestor*

Great Eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina*

Commander *Moduza procris*

Blue Tiger *Tirumala limniace*

Dark Blue Tiger *Tirumala septentrionis*

Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*

Common Tiger *Danaus genutia*

Pea (Long-tailed) Blue *Lampides boeticus*

Brown Awl *Badamia exclamationis*

Sri Lanka Rose *Pachliopta jophon*

Crimson Rose *Pachliopta hector*

Red-spot Duke *Dophia evelina*

Common Albatross *Appias albina*

Sri Lanka Lesser Albatross *Appias galene*

Cingalese Bush Brown *Mycalesis rama*

Common Lascar *Pantoporia hordonia*

Tamil Tree Brown *Lethe drypetis*

Oriental Cupid *Everes Lacturnus*

Plains Cupid *Chilades pendava*

Common Jezebel *Delias eucharis*

White Four-ring *Ypthima ceylonica*

Common Crow *Euploea core*

Psyche *Leptosia nina*

Great Orange-tip *Hebomoia glaucippe*

Red Helen *Papilio helenus*

Red Poirrot *Talicada nyseus*

Common Jay *Graphium doson*

DRAGONFLIES 4

Common Picture Wing *Rhyothemis variegata*

Scarlet Marsh Hawk *Aethriamanta brevipennis*

Rufous Marsh Glider *Rhodothemis rufa*

Shining Gossamer-wing *Euphaea splendens*

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Black and Yellow Flat Millipede *Anoplodesmus saussurii*

Firefly sp.

Giant Pill Millipede