



NORTHERN INDIA:
The Himalayas, Bharatpur, and the Chambal River



IBISBILL One of three birds that thrilled us on our final morning around Corbett NP:
The *ultimate* wader/shorebird prize?

A [TROPICAL BIRDING custom tour](#)

22 November - 6 December 2008

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Tour Leader: Sam Woods

All photos taken by Sam Woods/Tropical Birding

Hein and Tom came to India with one thing in mind, to cram in as many birds into two short weeks in the north. To this end we all worked hard to get as many as we could, and ended up with over 400 species. This list included such thrillers as a threesome of **Ibisbills** that stole the show near Corbett, **Indian Spotted Eagles** and **Marshall's Iora** in Bharatpur (along with masses of waterbirds following a productive monsoon season in the region), and a raft of **Indian Skimmers** along the Chambal River.

The trip was put together with birding the absolute priority, and mammals almost an afterthought. Amazingly though, for this bird-focused trip, we saw three species of cat by the end of the trip. This included a highly fortuitous, (if a little brief), sighting of the 'daddy of them all', 'Old Stripes' - **Bengal Tiger**, that crossed the road in front of our car during the first five minutes of our very first unofficial night drive on the edge of Corbett NP. However, the close-up encounter with a bold **Leopard** (also in Corbett), was the most dramatic of our cat encounters and made our only game drive in the rusty, noisy old canter in Corbett all very, very worthwhile. The most surprising of all the cat sightings though was the **Fishing-cat** in Bharatpur, that allowed us to watch us as it pulled out a dead fish from a murky pool beside a quiet Hindu temple in the park in broad daylight. On top of that, we also managed to get a number of views of the extremely rare **Gangetic River Dolphin** in the clean waters of the Chambal River on our final day.



CRESTED KINGFISHER

Day 1 (23 Nov) **New Delhi to Naini Tal** (Uttarakhand)

A bleary-eyed Hein appeared having just had a few hours sleep since his arrival in the deep of night, although still keen for the pre-dawn start to get us into the Himalayan foothills as soon as possible. We made our way north from the Gangetic Plain and eventually emerged in the town of **Ramnagar** on the edge of Corbett NP, the famous tiger park named after the tiger-hunter, turned conservationist, James Corbett. A large dam across the Kosi River was a great place to

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stretch our legs after the long drive, and more than anything begin our birding. The large concrete structure itself provided a perch for Asia's largest kingfisher - **Crested Kingfisher**. However, most of our time was spent scouring the large boulders in the riverbed for a very special Himalayan bird. Although Hein and Tom had both had previous experience of the species in Europe (and even in their Dutch homeland as an extreme vagrant), you can just never get enough *Wallcreepers*. Not long later we finally nailed a **Wallcreeper** as it gleaned insects from a large boulder in the riverbed, at this time of year sporting the pale throat of winter plumage, but still showing the irresistible bright crimson wing flashes that make this such an appealing bird. A large raptor circled low over the dam just before we had to make tracks, that proved to be a marvelous **Pallas's Fish-Eagle**, a bird we had not expected to run into just yet, and an unexpected early bonus.

With it now the afternoon we stopped in for a spicy Indian feed, where we took in some other birds right from our garden table, that included a kettle of vultures that contained several **Eurasian Griffons** and a **Cinereous Vulture**. We also found our first few **Himalayan Swiftlets**, and a couple of **Crested Treeswifts** scythed through the air above us too.

Stuffed with tasty spices, we then made our way to the picturesque **Bajun Valley**, just south of the town of Naini Tal. This hidden valley is just a short walk from the main highway into town, but feels like you've walked into another century, where traditional ox-drawn carts plough the fields and much of the tilling is still carried out by hand. Passing another birding group from Taiwan on the way down to the valley bottom we received good news - two species of forktailed were hanging out in the small river below as we'd hoped. When we reached the stream we soon found the largest, and arguably most striking, of our trio of forktails recorded on the trip - **Spotted Forktail**, although it took until much later in the afternoon for the **Slaty-backed Forktail** to reappear, at which point it was then seen feeding alongside its larger 'cousin'. Babblers of all shapes and sizes abound in India, and we managed to get some of the most striking species during our afternoon walk, with no less than four different species of boisterous laughingthrushes: **White-throated**, the striking **White-crested**, **Striated** and **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes** all seen in this picturesque valley. A little less conspicuous were a few **Black-chinned Babblers**, and another massive raptor passed overhead here too when a **Lammergeier**, the legendary bone breaking vulture, passed overhead in the late afternoon. A couple of trip exclusive **Gray Treepies** were also vocal and conspicuous that afternoon at Bajun.

At the end of the day we checked into our grand hotel that was a little less grand than usual courtesy of various improvements that were well under way, in the old English Hill Station of Naini Tal.

Day 2 (24 Nov) **Sat Tal** (Uttarakhand)

For our first full day in the Himalayan foothills we descended from our base at Naini Tal and birded around Sat Tal, a tranquil area of seven scenic lakes, part of which was the site of a large tea plantation in the days of the British Raj. This area is rich in birds and the mixed pine and oak forests here are home to many migratory species that at this time roam the forests in colorful mixed feeding flocks, or "bird waves". Many species were encountered on this one bird-packed day, and not again later on the tour.

However, before we hit the forests we checked some more open areas higher up the valley, well above the lakes, where we waited patiently for the sun to strike the fields, removing some of the chill in the air, and bringing with it a flurry of early morning activity.

Checking some scrubby areas as the sun warmed us brought the birds to life, and we soon found some of our targets lurking beneath the brambles, including three **Black-throated Accentors** (see photo below), that on this day strangely outnumbered the usually more common **Rufous-breasted Accentor**. This same scrubby area also brought us a top notch male **Siberian Rubythroat**, in full song despite being in the chills of winter. A chance encounter with another birding party led us to a narrow valley further up the road where we added a male **Himalayan (White-tailed) Rubythroat** too.



Much of the rest of our time at Sat Tal was spent birding trails and roads that passed through the forest that cloaks the lower part of the valley, sifting through many waves that contained too many birds to mention, although some highlights included **Long-tailed and Scarlet Minivets**, the dinky **Speckled Piculet**, both **Lesser and Greater Yellownapes** (two striking Asian woodpeckers), sprightly **Yellow-bellied Fantails**, **Green-backed, Black-lored and Yellow-browed Tits**, **Velvet-fronted and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches**, **Bar-tailed Treecreeper**, a couple of **Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers**, and many, many others. India has some very striking and colorful flycatchers that winter in these foothills and some of the most colorful of these were found lurking in the understorey, including **Snowy-browed and Rufous-gorgeted Flycatchers**, **Blue-capped Redstart**, and both **Rufous-bellied and Small Niltavas**. The underbrush of lantana that carpets much of the forest floor is also good for babblers and robins, and we chanced upon a

cracking **Golden Bush-Robin** and a mixed flock of laughingthrushes, that included the common **Streaked**, and the much scarcer, striking **Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush**, that on this occasion unusually emerged out from the understorey and foraged in an open Oak above, much to our delight. A little more trickery was required to lure out a **Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler** from the brush, a skulker of note, which finally succumbed to our overtures admirably. Up in the canopy the trees were often alive with bulbul, the commonest being the **Himalayan and Black Bulbuls**, although we also enjoyed good numbers of the less common species, **Mountain and Ashy Bulbuls** too. Noisy parties of **Slaty-headed Parakeets** drew us to them with their vociferous nature, and the multicolored **Blue-throated Barbet** found calling in a large Oak tree proved to be one of only two seen on the trip. The day brought us a mass of new species, and with some of the skulkers and more uncommon birds falling easier than expected we found ourselves with a little time on our hands in the afternoon. With this, we decided to check out the forest-cloaked Kilbury Road close to the town of Naini Tal, where all was pretty quiet in the chilly late afternoon, although we did manage to squeeze a **Hill Partridge**, and a superb **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** out of this unplanned late afternoon visit, the latter of which ended up being our lone look of the trip. Arguably, the very best of the woodpeckers available on this tour.

Day 3 (25 Nov) **Vinayak and Pangot** (Uttarakhand)

This day we set out from Naini Tal to explore areas much higher up than the town, where some excellent mountain roads pass through rich forest, and open grasslands, that provide not only excellent Himalayan birding but spectacular scenery to boot. We enjoyed some fantastic looks at giant Himalayan peaks as a bright clear day afforded us magical photo opportunities of them. By

venturing higher into the mountains we opened up new birding possibilities, and were after in particular some of the birds that winter at such higher elevations than we had experienced previously. We began at **Vinayak** (sometimes spelt Binayak), our highest point of the tour, characterized by our best Himalayan vistas yet (**see photo**). Our early start had been planned to try and get one or more of the pheasants that lurk at these high spots, although despite good activity the pheasants were largely quiet and invisible on this day. Our time was far from wasted though as the open grassy hills allowed us fantastic views of the monstrous **Himalayan Griffon** both perched and flying below us. A large flock of accentors was present in the area wheeling in the air and then banking down onto the hill beside us, where we could confirm them as **Himalayan (Altai) Accentors**. A grassy slope behind also brought us face to face with a scarce highland pipit, the aptly named **Upland Pipit** that slunk through the grass, while a couple of **Rock Buntings** were found in one of the few bushes that dot the hillsides. The open nature of the grassy slopes up there allows some great views of the landscape and is a great raptor watching spot, that also brought us **Eurasian Sparrowhawks**, **Eurasian Buzzard**, and a silvery male **Northern Harrier** passing by. On the wing overhead were a small group of **Eurasian Crag Martins**, and many more of the widespread **Nepal Martin**. Flurries of bird activity along the forested sections of road brought us new birds in the form of the adorable **Spot-winged (Black-crested) Tit**, that mixed in with the more common tit species, along with our third nuthatch of the trip, **White-tailed Nuthatch**. One of the flocks also held the unobtrusive, and inconspicuous **Green Shrike-Babbler**, and several sightings of the far more strikingly patterned **Himalayan (Pied) Woodpecker** ended up being our only sightings of the trip.



With Himalayan winter birding the focus is getting the winter migrants at lower elevations than they breed at during the summer. At this time they are therefore more readily available and accessible at their wintering haunts. Many of these are altitudinal migrants that descend to elevations around Naini Tal at this time of year. There is always however, a certain degree of unpredictability depending on what the weather conditions have been at that time: harsh weather driving birds lower down near town, and warmer temperatures sometimes leading some of these

altitudinal migrants to remain at higher elevations for longer. Thrushes are just such a group of birds that vary in species and number from year to year, and on this day we came upon a good number of **Dark-throated Thrushes** moving around the area, feeding in the high Rhododendron bushes, along with a couple of **Mistle Thrushes** too that were a little more unexpected.

After a morning at the high points we descended back towards Naini Tal, and spent some time around the tiny Indian village of **Pangot** on the way back, where good roadside forest and scrub provides excellent Himalayan birding. The scrub held a monotonously calling **Striated Prinia**, which was significantly overshadowed by the "vision in pink", better known as **Pink-browed Rosefinch**. Exploring the open grassy fields a little below the village brought us a number of **Russet Sparrows**, and several small groups of **White-capped (Chestnut-breasted) Buntings**. Scrub even further down the road brought us a **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler** finally that had eluded us so expertly at Sat Tal the day before. Some emergent dead snags a little further down still, just before the habitat deteriorated, held a fine male **Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush** standing sentry. We finished up another bird-packed day making our way back along the Kilbury Road, that is flanked with dense Pine/Oak forest and held a few feeding flocks or bird waves, one of which held at least ten smart **Black-faced Warblers**, and a lone **White-browed Shrike-Babbler** was also found on this return journey along with several parties of colorful orange-breasted babblers, better known as **Rufous Sibias**.

We arrived back in our hill station base, **Naini Tal**, with a little light still left for birding so opted to check out the gardens and hillsides on the edge of town, where we lucked into several **Asian Barred Owlets** (**see photo**), that gave us the impression of being all too common this year, and then we promptly never saw them again thereafter! We also chanced upon a couple of **Kalij Pheasants** foraging on a hillside before the light faded and we retreated to our hotel for hot cup of *chai*.

Day 4 (26 Nov) **Vinayak, Pangot & Bajun Valley** (Uttarakhand)

Our last day in the Naini Tal area involved mixing it up between a number of sites in the area, beginning again at **Vinayak**, as we were still smarting at having missed a couple of birds the day before, so we returned with renewed vigor the following morning, and pretty soon enjoyed crippling looks at a cracking male **Koklass Pheasant** pacing around a hillside cloaked in dense pine forest. Thrushes were still in evidence feeding in some dense rhododendron bushes and this time included a couple of **Gray-winged Blackbirds** in their midst. Good numbers of hulking **Great Barbets** were also found in the same area.

Dropping down again to **Pangot** we birded around a small lodge in the area and were graced with a **Mountain Hawk-Eagle** gliding low overhead, along with another **Black-throated Accentor** and a troop of raucous **Black-headed Jays**. We then made our way back down the Kilbury Road towards Naini Tal, where we had our only real looks at a **Red-flanked Bluetail** (also known as



rather cumbersomely **Himalayan Red-flanked Bush-Robin**) of the trip, as they seemed strangely scarce this year (perhaps due to the mild weather we had been experiencing). It was rather quiet along the road although we did run into a few **Blue-winged Minlas**, and another **Green Shrike-Babbler** there too. Scouting around Naini Tal town again brought us another addition with several **Whiskered Yuhinas**, before we dropped down the other side of town and finished the day in the scenic **Bajun Valley**, where we had begun our exploration of Naini Tal just a few days, and many, many birds before. As with anywhere in the Himalayas we came upon a number of bird waves, with the usual selection of confusing although no less interesting warblers in the mix, and we were able to study the trio of **Lemon-rumped, Buff-barred, and Ashy-throated Warblers** all at close quarters, the latter of which was our only encounter of the trip. Equally confusing are the bush-warblers, although thankfully some of them were in song and we picked out **Gray-sided and Aberrant Bush-Warblers** in the denser scrub at the base of the valley. Tom also managed to find a **Chestnut-eared Bunting** foraging along a dry stone wall. Once again we came upon a brace of forktails, with both **Spotted and Slaty-backed Forktails** feeding in the rivulet in the valley bottom once more, and an assortment of laughingthrushes were again foraging along the forested hill sides.

Day 5 (27 Nov) **Kumeria** (Uttarakhand)

We left our old British hill station base behind finally, departing early for **Kumeria**, that is situated right on the edge of **Corbett NP**, the famed tiger reserve named after the game hunter turned conservationist, the late James Corbett. With our drop in altitude came a veritable siege of new birding possibilities. We parked alongside a small river flanked by open Sal forest, where we once again focused largely on flocking species that are winter migrants to these forests, but also searched the brushy understorey for a number of skulkers too. Our arrival, shortly after dawn was greeted with much bird song and activity in the trees above. Flocks held **Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrikes**, **Whistler's Warblers**, constantly calling **Gray-headed Canary-Flycatchers**, our first **Great Tits**, **Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches**, a single **White-bellied Erpornis (Yuhina)**, and our first **Black-chinned Yuhinas**. A spectacular **Greater Flameback** (another stunning Asian woodpecker) also made an appearance. Best of all though was our first brilliant **Green Magpie** working its way through the treetops. On the skulker front, the forest floor held a vocal **Puff-throated Babbler**, and our first party of **Red-billed Leiothrix** came through, while tesias seemed to be calling everywhere! A number of choice encounters were made with the impish **Chestnut-headed Tisia**, and just yards away from one of them was also the only other conspecific tisia in range, the **Gray-bellied Tisia**. Hats off to Tom though for one of the standout moments of the morning when he glanced up to find he was being stared back at by a pair of glaring yellow eyes that belonged to a beastly **Brown Fish-Owl** day-roosting in the trees above.

After all this action we made a stop off at a recent site for the legendary Ibisbill, a scarce and spectacular shorebird that breeds in the high Himalayas and descended down to the foothills during the winter months. In recent years they have been hard to come by in the area, although we had a very recent tip-off and so headed to a particular section along the boulder-strewn banks of the **Kosi River**. Alas, no Ibisbills could be found out in our short search, although we were aware we had more time to search in the coming days, and contented ourselves with a couple of **Rosy Pipits**, **Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipits**, and **Citrine Wagtail** that we found feeding along the river banks. Another flash of pink brought us another smart **Wallcreeper** feeding on the low boulders, and overhead passed our first huge **Alexandrine Parakeet**, so our time was well spent there in spite of the lack of Ibisbills. Hunger led us towards our next hotel further along the banks of the Kosi River, with one last choice stop before we got there to add a rarer and second day-roosting owl for the morning, the well-named **Tawny Fish-Owl** that barely gave us a glance as we looked admiringly up at it.

After another hearty curry lunch in the extravagant wooded garden of our new inn, we headed down to another section of the **Kosi River**, just a short walk down from our hotel. The walk to the river is a pleasant one, flanked by Sal forest that held another diminutive **Speckled Piculet**, our first **Black-crested Bulbul**, and both **Yellow-bellied and White-throated Fantails** passing through in small mixed waves. Down at the river we scoured the banks for any pied forms feeding on the waters edge, and not for the first time on the tour enjoyed two species of forketails feeding close to one another, although this time the larger **Spotted Forktail** had the much smaller **Little Forktail** for company, one of our main targets along the river. The other, **Brown Dipper**, was found perched on a small boulder in the middle of a small set of rapids out in the center of the river. We finished off the day in another area of Sal forest where as dark descended a couple of **Gray (Indian Jungle) Nightjars** called and hawked overhead before we had the most unexpected sighting of all. Tom and Hein were keen to do an "unofficial" night drive seeing as we were right on the edge of Corbett, a famed park for mammals in its own right. So off we went and we had barely been driving for five minutes when the huge striped form of a **Bengal Tiger** trotted across the road in our car headlights in front of us! Quite a shock indeed.

Day 6 (28 Nov) **Corbett NP** (Uttarakhand)

Today we ventured into the heart of the park itself. This park is named after the great writer James or Jim Corbett, who regaled fantastic stories from his time as a hunter, and became famous especially for successfully tracking down some of the notorious man-eating leopards and tigers that prowled the area at the time. He was also an accomplished naturalist who later turned his attentions to conservation, being a pioneer in this field, who was involved in the original demarcation of what has become present-day Corbett NP. During the morning we used one of the park jeeps to go birding in one area of Sal forest within the park borders, and then jumped onto a canter in the afternoon to enjoy a game drive through the forests and grasslands in another area of this rich park. While we waited in a line of jeeps to get into the parks, a rowdy **Jungle Owlet** began calling right by the park gate and we feasted on that before we were all finally unleashed into the park. As with so many parts of this tour, the place seemed alive with birds in the park: a **Red Junglefowl** (the wild ancestor of the domestic chicken) scurried away from our vehicle as we came by, gorgeous **Plum-headed Parakeets** were seen perched in all their splendor in some open trees, our first **Yellow-footed Pigeons** fluttered in the treetops, and chunky **Lineated Barbets** replaced their larger cousins the Great Barbet down at these lower altitudes. Woodpeckers featured heavily during our morning drive in the park with **Gray-capped, Fulvous-breasted and Streak-throated Woodpeckers** all putting in an appearance or two, along with both **Himalayan and Black-rumped Flamebacks** too. Our seventh bulbul of the trip was added, arguably the flashiest of them, the **Red-whiskered Bulbul**, a lone **Common Iora** turned out to be a trip exclusive, as was a **Green-billed Malkoha**. Our first **Indian Robin**, that was to become a more prominent feature of the tour on the Gangetic Plain around Bharatpur, made its first showing, as did a smart **Yellow-eyed Babbler**, along with the more common **Jungle Babbler**, groups of which patrolled the understorey noisily. The flute song of the **White-rumped Shama**, Asia's version of the nightingale, aroused us to its presence and this again ended up being our sole encounter with this marvelous songster on the trip. A **White-bellied Drongo** was outshone by another trip exclusive: **Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo**, a spectacular and flamboyant drongo species, that sports a long racketed tail. A male **Slaty-blue Flycatcher** was found flitting around in the brushy understorey, and a **Black-hooded Oriole** was seen calling from high in the trees, while a **Booted Eagle** was seen gliding high above. A specific stop along a quiet forest-flanked stream paid off when we found the hoped-for **Stork-billed Kingfisher** lurking with intent in trees along the riverbank. All in all, another dizzying variety of birds was on offer to us and that was just during the morning session. Late in the morning a superb adult **Rufous-bellied Eagle** also passed low overhead.

**STORK-BILLED KINGFISHER**

Just before lunch in the middle of the day we went and checked an area that is a hotspot for vultures and racked up five species in just half hour on site: **White-rumped, Egyptian, Red-headed, and Cinereous Vultures** and **Eurasian Griffon** all being present.

After lunch we changed vehicles, moving from our open top park jeep to a dedicated "game" vehicle for our afternoon game drive into the grasslands of **Dhikala** within Corbett NP. As we made our way towards Dhikala we spotted a large tawny shape in the trees above the vehicle, so we stopped and glared up again at our second roosting **Tawny Fish-Owl** of the tour. A little further along we stretched our legs at a scenic lookout down on the river that brought us a bizarre animal in the form of the strange, long-snouted **Gharial**, a fish-eating crocodile-like reptile, as well as another raptor addition in the form of a **Lesser Fish-Eagle**. We then proceeded to Dhikala camp with little action along the way, except for the tantalizing news that a leopard had been sleeping in a tree by the road just a short time before we arrived, although had clearly loped off prior to our arrival. At the camp all was pretty quite although we did manage a **Blue-bearded Bee-eater**, before we alighted our canter once more and headed out into the Dhikala chaur, one of the largest remaining areas of grassland in the park. This grassland is a key spot within Corbett for a number of grassland species, and in just a short time there we managed to find most of them, including **Lesser Coucal**, and **Black Francolin**. However, the one we had really come for was **Hodgson's (White-throated) Bushchat**. This chunky stonechat is now classified as vulnerable as its wintering grounds, in the grasslands of India and Nepal, are under serious threat, and this remains one of the most reliable places to get them, with just a handful of

birds wintering near Dhikala in most years. In just a short drive through the grasslands we lucked into two different males perched prominently on a grass stem. Nearby some dead branches played host to three different **Collared Falconets**, a tiny falcon that is barely bigger than a sparrow.

The star sighting of the afternoon however, was non-avian, and was saved until late on. As we lumbered our way back towards the park gate, and bird noise began to quieten in the late afternoon, we working our way slowly through a quiet patch of forest when suddenly there on the dirt road ahead of us was a large spotted animal, that quickly slinked off the side of the road and down into the valley below. Smarting at such a tantalizing glimpse, we drove on and rounded the bend only to find the same **Leopard** standing on the side of the road casually glancing over its shoulder at us as we approached! Once we were a little close for comfort this sleek and beautiful cat wandered up the hillside where we maneuvered to find that it had decided to rest up for a few choice minutes, allowing us all a good, long look at its intricately patterned hide, and fearsome paws! A magical moment, then gently and slowly the animal rose again and faded back into the jungle once more. A scintillating end to our one, and only, game drive, on this bird-focused custom trip.

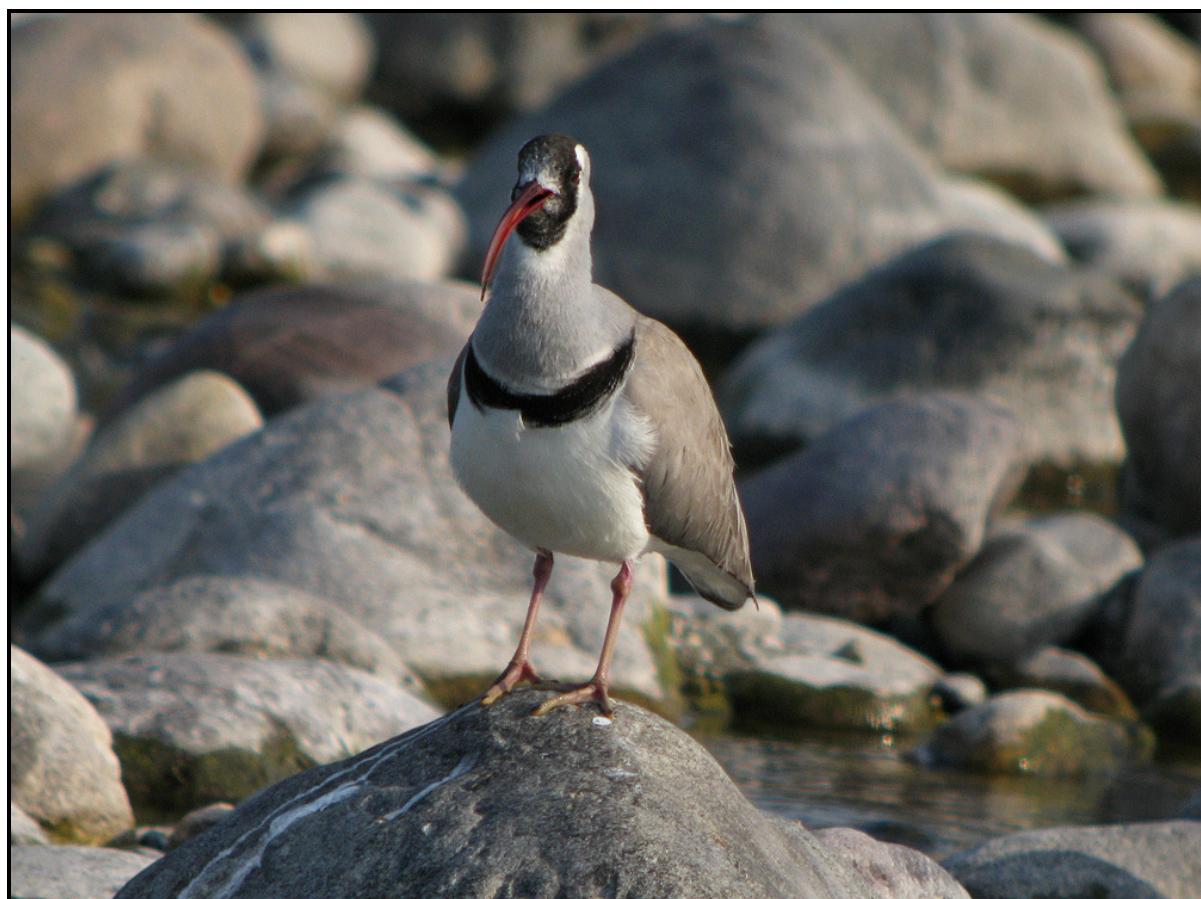
Day 7 (29 Nov) **Corbett NP** (Uttarakhand)

For our final day in Corbett we did much as we had done on our final day around Naini Tal, racing around between a number of different sites, trying to tie up any loose ends (i.e. missed birds) in the process. So we combined time within the park with some extra time within the excellent Sal forest that borders the park too. An early start had us checking a small wet area where a rather "well-endowed" thrush was seen uncharacteristically feeding brazenly in the open. The normally shy **Long-billed Thrush** venturing out into the open in the early morning a short time after dawn, before retreating back into the shadowy undergrowth to resume its more normal furtive behavior five minutes later. We then made our way into Corbett once more, this time entering via a different gate and birding a completely new area of forest, where we ran into wave after wave of birds flitting in the trees above us, that by now held some very familiar species, from **Scarlet Minivets** to **Lineated Barbets**, to a dizzying array of cryptic warblers that included **Brooks' Leaf, Blyth's Leaf, Gray-hooded, Whistler's, and Chestnut-crowned Warblers**. Sifting through the flocks though led us to another worthy addition, with three **Maroon Orioles** found within them, along with further **Black-hooded Orioles** and another **White-bellied Erpornis (Yuhina)**. **Plum-headed and Slaty-headed Parakeets** also joined noisy flocks of the very common **Rose-ringed Parakeet** there too. A couple of speedy **White-rumped Needlets**, a large and powerful swift, scythed overhead, and a brace of fish-eagles passed over giving us further views of the rare **Pallas's Fish-Eagle**, and its smaller cousin, the **Lesser Fish-Eagle**. Hornbills were heard several times around Corbett during our stay, and although Great Hornbills always remained frustratingly just out of reach, we did manage to get an **Oriental Pied Hornbill** during our morning drive in the park. Other bold birds included more **Green Magpies** and the equally impressive **Blue Magpie** that we had run across during our time around Naini Tal. Back at the garden of the inn we were staying at, Hein had lucked into a **Blue-bearded Bee-eater** as he had opted to rest up there for the morning.

Day 8 (30 Nov) **Corbett NP (Uttarakhand) to New Delhi**

This was essentially a travel day back to India's bustling capital, although just so happened to turn into a red-letter day for us all the same. With a few hours to spare before we headed back down onto the Gangetic Plain, we decided to try once more for a bird that had until then been thwarting us in our attempts to see it. We drove up to the edge of the Kosi River and began our hunt for one of the most enigmatic shorebirds on Earth, the unique and remarkable Ibisbill. As

before though after scouring the boulders on the riverbank we came up blank, so Tom and I widened the search and searched up and down the river while Hein remained around their alleged favored area. Still, while we hunted for this legendary Himalayan wader we had plenty of other birds, **Oriental Skylarks**, and **Rosy and Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipits** were found foraging along the banks, and as we strode along we disturbed a **Eurasian Hoopoe** that flew up with a flash of black and white before settling quickly down again when we could take in its substantial pink crest. Many **River Lapwings** were also in the area, and once again huge **Alexandrine Parakeets** passed overhead as they traveled from one area of Sal to another. Other interesting birds along the Kosi included our first **Oriental Magpie-Robin**, another beautiful Asian songster that we would see more often down in the lowlands of Bharatpur later on the trip, our last looks at India's largest kingfisher, the impressive **Crested Kingfisher**, another **Indian Chat**, and another very welcome **Wallcreeper** gleaning from the riverside boulders. Finally, after Tom and I had tramped around for a little while we glanced back at Hein and quickly realized he was frantically waving to us, and we immediately raced back towards him. Once we caught our breath we took in the scene: three immaculate **Ibisbills** were feeding inconspicuously on the opposite bank, while a Hindu family on our side noisily washed their pots and pans in the river. The Ibisbills were completely unperturbed, and just sat there in all their glory. Magic.



Hein had another trick up his sleeve though and he soon led us to a striking **Great Thick-knee** (**see photo**) that had also wandered in while he had been waiting for the "Royal" arrival of the Ibisbills. Another great shorebird.

We then began our journey back to Delhi in earnest, passing the usual array of transport options along the route, with everything from buffalos, camels, motorcycles, cars, buses, bicycles, tractors occupying the road en-route that made for an entertaining journey. It is sometimes staggering what some Indian families will manage to pack onto the back of a very small vehicle! There was further birding to be had too, with a kettle of vultures holding more **Cinereous Vultures** among them, and our first **Long-legged Buzzard** of the trip also passed over, along with many more of the commoner raptor species, like **Steppe Eagles**. We made a birding/cultural stop along the Holy **Ganges River**, where many burials were under way, while we birded along the grassy banks, and checked the sand bars in the river for waterbirds. The full range of gulls was on offer: **Steppe**, **Great Black-headed (Pallas's)**, **Black-headed**, and **Brown-headed Gulls** all foraging in the Holy waters. The bars along the river held a number of shorebirds, including **Temminck's Stint** and **Snowy Plover**, and the riverbank held the odd wintering **Rosy Pipit**. We then returned to Delhi to get our heads down before we ventured into the lowlands of Rajasthan.



Day 9 (1 Dec) **New Delhi to Bharatpur (Rajasthan)**

The day was split into three birding areas: we began birding **Okhla Barrage** on the outskirts of Delhi, then birded our way to Bharatpur at various wetlands that dotted our journey, before birding in the World famous **Keoladeo Ghana National Park** in Bharatpur itself.

Okhla Barrage is a large area of wetlands and marshes bordered with scrubby edges and reedy fringes within the Delhi limits. Our focus here was not only waterbirds though, as the area is home to many special passerines too. Until then our time had been in the highlands of northern India, and our change in scene brought us into the lowlands of the Gangetic Plain, with its markedly different suite of birds. By the end of the day we racked up over 120 species, the majority of which were new for our trip list. The open water held over 70 striking **Bar-headed**

Geese, our only **Ferruginous Pochards** of the trip in addition to **Tufted Ducks**, and our first **Indian Spot-billed Ducks** and **Red-crested Pochards**. **Western Marsh Harriers** were noted quartering the reed beds, and a few **Pied Avocets** and **Black-winged Stilts** were busy feeding on the muddy edges. The reed beds at Okhla play host to a number of wintering migrants, like **Bluethroats** that were hopping around on the fringes of the reedbeds and also holds some notable residents, not least the localized **Striated Babbler**, a group of which were seen along with the more widespread **Common Babbler**. Also found hiding out within the reeds was a male **White-tailed Stonechat**, a rare and localized resident that along with the **Striated Babblers** were our main targets here as they were unlikely elsewhere on the tour. A look at a **Striated Grassbird** in the reedbeds was also our only one of the trip. Sadly we could not find any weavers that seasonally move into these reedbeds, although we did find a few finch flocks, with the inconspicuous **Indian Silverbill** in some of them and small parties of the decidedly more obvious **Red Avadavat** also feeding within the reed mace. The scrubby verges of the dam were alive with passerines and prinias in particular, with **Yellow-bellied, Ashy, and Plain Prinias** all present, as well as a trip exclusive **Asian Koel**, (the name koel being given to the bird as it is a representation of its loud call). Other finds included a party of three extremely cute **Spotted Owlets** huddled in a large sprawling tree, and a single **Spotted Dove**, that was one of only a few seen on the whole trip.

Overwhelmed with new birds we then began our journey to the great wetland park of Keoladeo Ghana, more commonly referred to as simply "Bharatpur". We made a few stops at wet spots along the way, picking up our first **Indian Cormorants**, glorious **Painted Storks**, **Eurasian Spoonbills**, bizarre **Comb Ducks** (the males of which have a ridiculous growth or "comb" protruding from the top of their bills), and an unexpected **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, along with several "leggy" **White-tailed Lapwings** feeding on a marshy pool right alongside the highway.

After another fine curry feast (when we met up with our understated, expert local guide), we headed out into the famed park itself. One of the joys of visiting this wetland reserve is that no cars are permitted, and you travel round by way of cycle rickshaws, making for a very peaceful journey around this wonderful park. This was in sharp contrast to the hubbub of the crowded streets of Delhi that we had experienced just that morning. The water levels of Bharatpur have been an international talking point over recent years, as they are dependent on the monsoon rains, and in recent times the rains have not hit this area like they traditionally did in the past. Thankfully though, this year the reserve was brimming with water, with huge ponds and lakes visible all through the park, in stark contrast to my experience in 2007. With restored areas of water, came much higher numbers of waterbirds in the park than I had encountered last year, a very welcome return to form. The pools were packed with ducks, **Lesser Whistling-Ducks**, **Indian Spot-billed Ducks**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Pintail**, and even a small group of **Cotton Pygmy-Geese** (that we promptly never saw again during our stay). However, some of the headline birds that afternoon were birds from dry land. Bharatpur has an excellent guide system with many superb local guides, who are famous for digging out roosting nightbirds, and so regularly know their local haunts. We limited which ones we went after this day as we knew we had plenty more time in the park, although enjoyed a **Gray (Indian Jungle) Nightjar** snoozing on an open branch by a quiet Hindu temple. As our rickshaw driver gently ambled us along we picked up our first **White-eared Bulbuls** (our eighth and final bulbul of the tour), saw one of only a few **Common Hawk-Cuckoos** seen on the trip (a bird that has such a distressingly monotonous call that it has been nicknamed the "Brainfever Bird"), a perched **Crested Serpent-Eagle**, and a **Long-billed Pipit** pacing around one of the drier areas within the reserve. Also around the park were a **Blyth's Reed-Warbler**, and a **Yellow-crowned (Yellow-fronted Pied) Woodpecker** was watched working one of the dead snags. We also saw one of Asia's largest land mammals, a powerful and striking antelope called the **Nilgai** or Blue Bull pacing around the park. Finally after this siege of new species we retired to our fancy hotel,

the Bagh, a throwback to the times of the British Raj, with glorious gardens and wonderful steamy food on offer.

Day 10 (2 Dec) Keoladeo Ghana National Park/Bharatpur (Rajasthan)

With 29 square kilometers of park to explore we had more than enough to fill a whole day inside the sanctuary, that is right on the edge of the bustling Rajasthan town of Bharatpur. We birded the bunds and dykes that divided many massive pools packed with a myriad of waterbirds: **Comb Ducks** abounded throughout the reserve, **Eurasian (Green-winged) Teal**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, and **Northern Pintail** were all there seemingly in their thousands. Among them were less common waterfowl like the astonishing **Bar-headed Goose**, mixed in with the distinctly more common **Greylag Goose**, and a number of rusty **Ruddy Shelduck** too. Despite this being supposedly winter some of the **Painted Storks** and **Asian Openbills** were in the throws of breeding, their huge sprawling stick platforms in the trees being a prominent feature of the Bharatpur skyline at this time. Although the days headline storks were

the graceful pair of **Black-necked Storks** wandering elegantly along the banks of one of the jheels, (an Indian word for a body of water). Checking the muddy edges of various dykes, which intersect the many large water bodies within the reserve brought dozens of shorebirds, including **Spotted Redshanks**, **Green Sandpipers**, **Wood Sandpipers**, and **Ruff**. A couple of stately **Sarus Cranes** were much appreciated too. Bharatpur is arguably one of Asia's top raptor venues, and we saw this firsthand, recording thirteen species during our day there, including three **Pallid Harriers**, dozens of **Black Kites**, at least four **Shikras**, **Black-shouldered Kites** commonly hovered over some of the drier sections of the sanctuary, a lone **Short-toed Eagle** cruised overhead, a number of **Steppe Eagles** glided over, three separate **Crested Serpent-Eagles** (see photo), a single **Imperial Eagle** was a good find in recent times when they have become much scarcer in this area, a single **Bonelli's Eagle** glided over, and several **Greater Spotted Eagles** too. In one of the more remote



areas of the park we also managed to catch up with the scarce **Indian Spotted Eagle**, not an easy task anywhere in northern India. Just before sundown we decided to check a dry, almost arid area on the very edge of the park, and came upon the hoped for **Yellow-wattled Lapwing**, three of which were roaming the fields.

Part of our time was spent with our local guide cleverly leading us to staked out roost sites for some of the park's many nocturnal bird species. By the end of the day we had observed three

different roosting **Indian Scops-Owls**, watched a pair of nesting **Dusky Eagle-Owls** (whose "ping-pong ball" call was heard emanating from the trees at dusk), bumped into several **Spotted Owlets** (actually a diurnal owl species), and also had the pleasure of being fixed in the stare of a day-roosting **Brown Hawk-Owl**. On top of that we re-visited yesterdays **Gray (Indian Jungle) Nightjar**, still "glued" to its same branch, and with a little help from our eagle-eyed local man Harish, found an inconspicuous **Large-tailed Nightjar** roosting in the brush, where its leaf-like cryptic plumage made it far from straightforward to find. There are not many places where you can walk away from a days birding and come back with two species of nightjar and four species of owl, and at no time have been out in the dark!



LARGE-TAILED NIGHTJAR

Of course no visit to India would be complete without seeing its most famous and treasured bird, the sensational **Indian Peafowl** or "peacock". This bird is not only the national bird of India, representing such qualities as grace, beauty, pride and mysticism, but it is also a sacred species protected in both law and also through the powerful influence of Hindu culture in Indian society, that view the peacock in the image of the God of thunder, rains and war, Indra. All of which makes them forbidden to hunt, and so within the lowlands they are often one of the commonest and most visible birds. We saw many of these birds throughout the lowlands, and this day was no different. One of the striking features of birding India is quite how abundant and confiding some of the birds can be, that has been brought about by this deep respect towards nature in their Hindu-led culture. Venturing out in the early morning we often encountered groups of peacocks dropping off the roofs of peoples houses where they had roosted at night, presumably happy in the knowledge that this was a place of safety, well elevated out of the reach from predators on the ground, and close to humans who will leave them unharmed and protect them by their powerful presence.

Checking underneath the low bushes amongst the leaf litter we found a couple of quietly feeding **Orange-headed Thrushes**, a gorgeous *zoothera* with a flame orange head and breast and powder grey upperparts. The few taller trees in the same area also held our first **Small Minivets**

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flitting nervously around the treetops, a pair of **Ashy Drongos** (looking far from Ashy in this part of their range), and a single **Indian Gray Hornbill**. We also found our only **White-browed Fantail** zipping around a garden by one of the research facilities within the park. Visiting a more remote part of the reserve, not only bought us the Pallid Harriers and Indian Spotted Eagle mentioned earlier, but also a lone **Bengal Weaver** along a reedy dyke, and saw us run into a superb **Marshall's (White-tailed) Iora**, an endemic to the region, and in the drier areas both a **Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike**, and a strange, pale tawny cuckoo, the **Sirkeer Malkoha**, another regional specialty.

We also sampled some of India's game while wandering around the park, from Asia's largest deer, the powerful **Sambar**, to a completely unexpected encounter with a **Fishing Cat** that we observed fishing out a rather dead-looking fish from a small pool beside a tranquil Hindu temple within the park. We also saw a number of **Chital or Spotted Deer** (often the favored prey of the tiger within the tiger reserves), **Wild Boar**, and a number of mischievous looking **Golden Jackals**. There was only one thing to do at the end of the day but to retire to the Bagh once more, and be pampered with truly exceptional service, and delicious local curries flavored with cumin, turmeric and accompanied with the obligatory bowl of *dhal* (lentils), and a plate of various steaming spicy *nan* breads and *chapatis*.

Day 11 (3 Dec) **Bayena, Bund Baretha and beyond** (Rajasthan)

One of the payoffs of having birded this area when the rains had failed the region, was that we ventured further outside the park, and in doing so visited some fascinating areas for birds that we vowed we would visit whatever the condition at Bharatpur as they had been so productive. On this day we birded our way to the famous **Bund Baretha**, a huge reservoir a coupe of hours from Bharatpur, but also ventured beyond to some of the intriguing arid sections beyond this large water body. The day was therefore once again a mix of waterbirds and some birds of dry country too making for a fascinating day list. However, before we had even reached Bund Baretha we had plenty to try and fit in our busy schedule for the day. By covering a number of varied sites along the way, and dropping into as many sites as we could physically manage we ended up hauling in the greatest one day list of the tour, with a staggering 153 species recorded on this day alone!

Our day began by a small local railway flanked by stands of huge elephant grass that was the reason we chose to stop there. When in seed these grasses can be a magnet for buntings, sparrows, and weavers. The weavers were nowhere to be seen, although we did find a good mixed flock of buntings, with over fifteen **Red-headed Buntings**, many of which had rich rufous hoods, and also hiding among them were at least two **Black-headed Buntings** too, an unexpected bonus bird. Other areas of grasses along the way bought us **Spanish Sparrows** among the vastly more common **House Sparrows**, and further **Indian Silverbills**. Buntings "in the bag", our next stop was an area of dramatic, towering sandstone cliffs rising starkly out from the surrounding plains. Among others our main target here was the subject of a very sad story, the **Indian Vulture**. Once considered a very common species throughout the Indian subcontinent, since the mid 1990s this species has undergone a dramatic and startling 97% decline. The Bharatpur area population declined from an estimated 816 birds in 1986 to a staggering 25 birds by 1998! This figure is now even lower. The cliffs here at **Bayena** provide vital nesting sites for the handful of remaining vultures in the area, that have been decimated through the widespread use of the livestock drug diclofenac. We found a few of these "griffons" loafing on the bright sandstone cliffs, while **Dusky Crag Martins** hawked insects in front of the cliff face. At the base of the cliff we searched for and found a nice cobalt-blue male **Blue Rock-Thrush**, before we carried on our journey towards Bund Baretha.

The journey to and beyond the reservoir is good lark country and by the time we reached Bund Baretha we had come across larks of five different species: striking **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Larks** were found foraging in the drier, less fertile looking areas along with **Rufous-tailed Lark** and **Indian Bushlark**, while a large flock of **Greater Short-toed Larks** were found on some of the wetter, more fertile lands along with **Crested Larks**. Fields along the way also brought us more **Yellow-wattled Lapwings** to add to yesterday's sightings.

We then birded the reservoir Baretha along with a number of other wet areas and lakes en-route that were brimming with waterbirds: flocks of shorebirds included **Eurasian Curlew**, **Ruff**, **Little Stint**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, and **Black-tailed Godwit**. The larger bodies of water held **Gull-billed**, **Whiskered**, and **River Terns**, and the odd **Sarus Crane** (see photo). These areas bought us too all five possible species of wagtail: **White**, **Gray**, **White-browed**, **Yellow**, and **Citrine Wagtails**. The usual huge rafts of waterfowl on the dam contained within them some scarcer species like **Tufted Duck**, **Garganey**, and **Red-crested Pochard**.

Although the area along the route is only sparsely wooded, the few areas with trees held **Black-rumped Flameback**, **Eurasian Wryneck** (a cryptically patterned woodpecker relative that actually spends a good deal of time on the ground and off trees altogether), and the only **Red Collared Doves** and **Rosy Starlings** of the trip. At the dam itself we watched a **Brown Crake** running in and out of the reeds, that also held **Indian (Clamorous) Reed Warbler**. As we arrived at Bund Baretha the countryside changed markedly from fertile agricultural land to dry, arid rocky country, interspersed with red sandstone outcrops. Walking among this parched country to an old long abandoned former maharaja's palace within his former hunting preserve we found a couple of **White-capped Buntings**, before we headed deeper into this semi-desert country searching for more birds of the dry country. As we drove through this barren and foreboding country we came upon a number of passerines flitting on and off the boulders beside the road, that on investigation involved a number of chats of three different species: the vivid pied forms of **Variable Wheatears** were outnumbered by the sandier, pallid **Isabelline Wheatears**, and the smaller **Desert Wheatears**. This dry country also held three species of shrike: **Bay-backed**, **Rufous-tailed** and **Southern Grey Shrikes**. This semi-arid zone also held **Rufous-fronted Prinia**, another regional endemic, in one of the few stunted bushes available for cover in the area, and a large flock of twenty five or more **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** were also seen diving into the cover of a well-vegetated field. Finally we had to turn back and head "home" towards Bharatpur once more, stopping en-route at a small reed-fringed pool where a **Black Bittern** sat motionless in the reeds.



Day 12 (4 Dec) **Keoladeo Ghana N P/Bharatpur and the Taj Mahal** (Rajasthan)

Well even such hardened birders as Hein and Tom could not resist a peak at the Taj Mahal, and so after a morning around the Bharatpur Sanctuary again, we set off for Agra, and India's greatest national treasure, the **Taj Mahal**. We enjoyed a great time of day to visit the Taj, when crowd numbers had dipped a little and the afternoon light hit the gleaming white marble mausoleum to good effect (**see photo**).



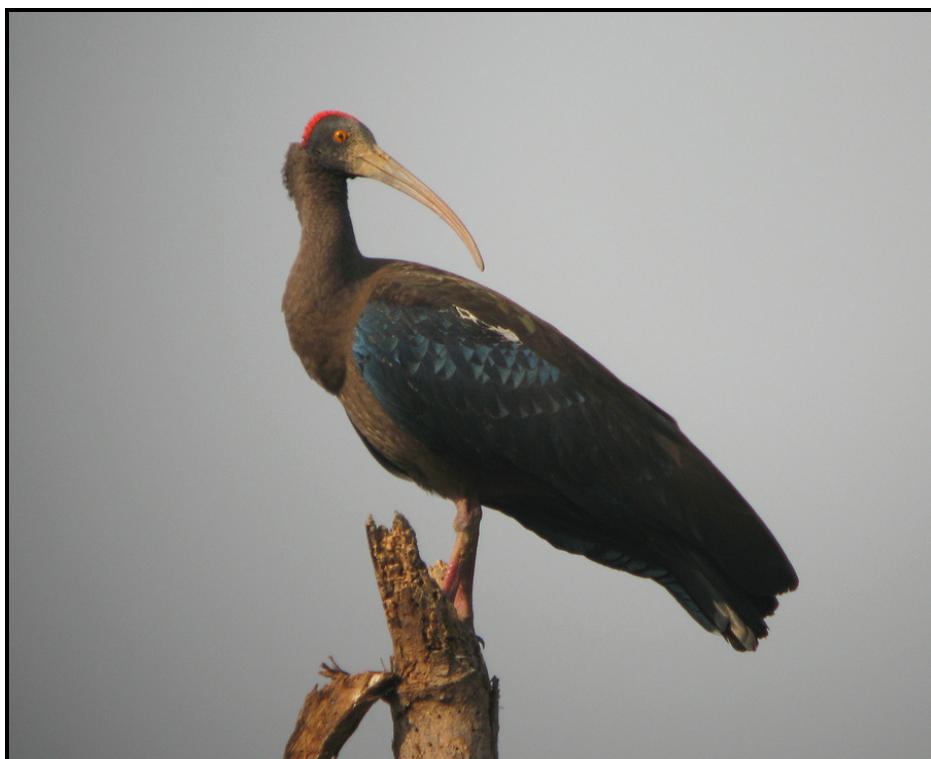
TAJ MAHAL resplendent in the late afternoon sunlight

During the morning around Bharatpur we came upon another **Black Bittern**, this one hiding to good effect in some dense scrub overhanging a small jheel. We also checked out the nursery, where **Small Minivets** played in the treetops, another **Common Woodshrike** was present, and possibly the same **Orange-headed Ground-Thrush** was seen lurking under the brushy understorey, while a few of the trickier *phylloscopus* warblers were flitting about in the trees that included some calling **Hume's and Greenish Warblers**. Quietly being cycled along by the various jheels, pools, lakes and dykes we watched as we passed by huge platform nests holding **Painted Storks**, **Asian Openbills**, and a few **Woolly-necked Storks** were also around the reserve. The brushy, scrubby areas within the sanctuary held the usual **Bluethroats**, **Black Redstarts**, and **Indian Robins** that flitted from under the bushes regularly as we passed by, as we were slowly peddled down to the temple which forms the centerpiece of the reserve. We stationed ourselves on the well-positioned observation tower and surveyed the huge water bodies spreading out to the horizon and scanned the skies above for raptors. The water held thousands of ducks, geese, herons, egrets and a few **Sarus Cranes** too. During our morning vigil on the tower we managed to pick out a ringtail **Pallid Harrier**, **Long-legged Buzzard**, **Greater and Indian Spotted Eagles**, **Booted and Imperial Eagles**, and several **European Honey-Buzzards**, along with a large squadron of twenty-three **Great White Pelicans** that dropped down out of a thermal and landed on the large pool in front of us, and then proceeded to feed

rapidly in formation. At the end of the morning we left the sanctuary and checked out a rather grotty and unpleasant dyke in the middle of the town. Once we got over the stink of the sewage emanating from this rather unpleasant ditch we focused on checking the vegetation where we soon found eight **Great Painted-Snipes**, our reason for coming to such an uninviting place! With that it was time for lunch and the Taj and so we finished off our day on the banks of the Yamuna River with the white marble form of the Taj looming large in the foreground.

Day 13 (5 Dec) **Bayena to Chambal** (Rajasthan)

For our final morning we checked out some areas outside the park again, around Bayena and on the road to Bund Baretha, before departing after lunch for the Chambal Safari Lodge. Around the looming red rock cliffs at **Bayena** itself a male **Blue Rock-Thrush** foraged around the base, as did a **House Bunting** and a **Crested Bunting** (both new additions), while high up on the ridges several **Indian Vultures** clung onto survival, and (yet) another **Wallcreeper** made an appearance flitting in between the dark rocky crags (a rarity in Rajasthan). Small but noisy parties of delightful **Plum-headed Parakeets** flew around the cliffs perching both high on the rocks, and also on the cables below the base. Chats moved on and off the rocks at the base, that included a single **Desert Wheatear**, and a number of dowdy **Indian Chats**. More color came from an **Indian Roller** glowing from atop a near bush. A warbler flitting around the low scrub at the base of the outcrop turned out to be our only **Sulphur-bellied Warbler** of the trip. Birding around the general area once again produced five species of lark: **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark**, **Greater Short-toed, Crested, and Rufous-tailed Larks** and **Indian Bushlark**. **Rufous-tailed and Southern Grey Shrikes** were also present, and boggy fields held a **White-tailed Lapwing** and a far less expected **Northern Lapwing**. The drier edges of the field held both **Blyth's and Tawny Pipits**. After our final tasty Bagh lunch we made for the Chambal Safari Lodge, getting justifiably distracted by a couple of **Red-naped Ibis** (see photo) along the way, in addition to **Coppersmith Barbet** and **Indian Grey Hornbill**.



Day 14 (6 Dec) Chambal River to New Delhi (departure)

Our final morning of the trip was spent birding the clean waters of the Chambal River. We began by birding the scrub and fields along the banks of the river waiting for the early morning mist to burn off, before alighting into our boat and gently cruising downstream. After scouring the scrubby verges of the Chambal we managed to find a **Sykes's Warbler** and also three **Brooks's Leaf-Warblers**, in addition to four **Long-billed Pipits** in the fields alongside. The headline bird at Chambal is the threatened **Indian Skimmer** (the rarest of the three skimmer species in the world), that still come to this area to winter each year, and we enjoyed stunning looks at a restless flock of 29 birds squatting on the riverbank, and every so often lifting off momentarily, only to alight nearby again a short time after. However, with or without these star birds the trip is an absolute delight, to be able to gently amble along this peaceful river watching birds and animals along the banks from the comfort of our mobile "hide", (despite the fact that we were very much in the open, birds and animals just did not seem to react that strongly to the approach of our boat). Some of the most visible birds were the flocks **Bar-headed Geese** lining the banks, along with many **Ruddy Shelduck**, and **Lesser Whistling-Ducks**, and a couple more **Red-naped Ibis** were also foraging along the banks. By checking the banks carefully we managed to find seven **Great Thick-Knees**. Whilst at Bharatpur we had witnessed a flock of twenty-three **Great White Pelican** cruising into land. Here on the Chambal we found another group of Great White Pelicans, numbering twenty-three again, and this time holding a single **Dalmatian Pelican** in its ranks. As we ambled along the river we came upon some huge **Mugger Crocodiles** standing statue on river islands, along with the bizarre long-snouted **Gharial** "crocodile" too. However, Chambal's star mammal broke the glassy surface a few times, the rare **Gangetic River Dolphin**, a very rare animal, in decline like the Indian Skimmer due to pollution of India's waterways. Similarly, we observed another declining waterbird, as a couple of handsome **Black-bellied Terns** dipped low over the shimmering waters of the Chambal, another species threatened by pollution of the waterways. We enjoyed seeing the striking **River Lapwings** for the final time, and also had a couple of **Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gulls** pass low over our boat. Most of our time was spent relaxing on the boat itself and taking in the wildlife that way, although we opted to kick around on some of the sandier parts of the shore that produced a **Desert Wheatear**, and also eventually led us to find the hoped-for, and well-named **Sand Lark**. Finally we had to leave this magical river behind, and head back to our lodge, finding a new addition in the form of a few **Baya Weavers** feeding in the tops of the elephant grass on the route back, causing the grasses to sway from side to side. Back at the lodge we feasted on our final curry of the tour, before we quickly took in the eerie glare of a roosting **Brown Hawk-Owl** in their garden and then jumped back in the vehicle and headed back to Delhi for our international flights out, after what had been a marvelous whistle-stop tour of north India's very best birding spots.

Highlights were many and varied, the **Ibisbills** in Corbett were pretty hard to beat bird wise, although the breathtaking encounter we had with a **Leopard** in Corbett gave that a run for its money. Multiple sightings of the enigmatic **Wallcreeper** were well worth mentioning, as were the brace of rubythroats (**Siberian and Himalayan Rubythroats**), both males watched singing in a magical half hour period at Sat Tal in the Himalayan foothills. The abundance and tameness of birds in India is the highlight in itself, as is India's rich culture, and exquisite cuisine. In the end we enjoyed all of this, and thanks to Hein and Tom's dedication to the cause, we managed a very respectable total of over 400 bird species seen in this short tour of the north.

BIRD LIST

The taxonomy of this list follows: **Clements, James F, Anthony W. White, and John W. Fitzpatrick. The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World. Cornell, 2007.** This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell on 15 Dec 2008.

Species marked with an **H** were only heard.

Species marked with **GO** were seen by the guide only.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
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Recorded regularly during the Bharatpur section of the tour.

Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
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4 birds were seen at Bund Baretha reservoir.

PELICANS: Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
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23 birds were seen circling down and landing on a large pool at Bharatpur, when they proceeded to feed "in formation". Another 23 birds were seen along the Chambal Rover on our final day.

Dalmatian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>
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One was seen with 23 Great White Pelicans on the banks of the Chambal.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
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First seen as we journeyed towards Bharatpur, where they were seen regularly around the park.

Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
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A number of these large cormorants were seen at Ramnagar Dam en-route to the Himalayas, and good numbers were recorded on the Bharatpur section of the tour.

Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>
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As with Great Cormorant, a number of these cormorants were seen at Ramnagar Dam en-route to the Himalayas, and good numbers were recorded on the Bharatpur section of the tour.

ANHINGAS: Anhingidae

Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
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A single bird was seen in the Dhikala area inside Corbett NP, with many more seen in and around Bharatpur on that leg.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS: Ardeidae

Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
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A single was seen inside Corbett NP, with regular sightings during the Bharatpur leg of the tour.

Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
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Small numbers were seen daily throughout the Bharatpur section of the tour, both inside and outside the park.

Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
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A few were seen in Corbett NP, and around Ramnagar Dam en-route to the Himalayas. They were then seen daily in the Bharatpur area.

Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
<i>Seen daily during the Bharatpur section of the tour.</i>	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
<i>A few birds were seen in Corbett NP and around Ramnagar Dam on the first "Himalayan leg" of the tour, with good numbers seen daily on the later section, in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Indian Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
<i>Small numbers of this pond-heron were seen en-route to the Himalayas, and on the Bharatpur leg of the tour.</i>	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
<i>Regularly recorded during the Bharatpur leg of the tour.</i>	
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
<i>Just a single sighting of two birds inside Keoladeo Ghana NP (Bharatpur).</i>	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Black Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>
<i>Two sightings, one was seen hiding in a dense overhang inside the park at Bharatpur, and another was seen for a prolonged period sitting beside a small reedy pool en-route back from Bund Baretha on one of our Bharatpur day trips.</i>	
STORKS: Ciconiidae	
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
<i>In contrast to last year, when it was extremely dry inside the park, good numbers of this striking stork were seen in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
<i>Good numbers were present in and around the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
<i>A single bird was seen in the Dhikala section of Corbett NP, and a few were seen on most days around the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>
<i>This stately and majestic stork was only recorded once, when a pair were seen along a dyke inside Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae	
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
<i>Seen almost daily on the Bharatpur section of the tour.</i>	
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>
<i>This strange "bald" ibis was seen en-route to Chambal Safari Lodge, and another two were seen foraging along the banks of the Chambal the following day.</i>	
<i>NB. Also known as INDIAN BLACK IBIS.</i>	
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
<i>Regularly recorded around Bharatpur, with over 20 birds seen on some occasions.</i>	
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
<i>Seen regularly in and around Bharatpur, and also on marshes en-route to and from the park from New Delhi.</i>	

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae

Lesser Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
<i>Good numbers were recorded in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
<i>Good numbers were present at Okhla Barrage on the outskirts of Delhi, and other groups were seen within the park at Bharatpur on two days.</i>	
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
<i>A striking and handsome Asian goose. Over 70 birds were noted at both Okhla Barrage (Delhi) and at the end of the trip along the banks of the Chambal River. Smaller numbers were also seen both within the park at Bharatpur, and on our day trips out from there.</i>	
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
<i>Recorded along the banks of the Kosi River at Ramnagar en-route to the Himalayas on our first day, then along the banks of the Holy Ganges River as we journeyed back to Delhi from there. Recorded on most days in and around Bharatpur too.</i>	
Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
<i>In stark contrast to last year (when the monsoon "failed"), these odd ducks were very common within the park at Bharatpur, thanks to a good, wet monsoon leading to many large flooded areas within the park. Also recorded in roadside marshes between Bharatpur and Delhi.</i>	
Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
<i>This, the world's smallest duck, is always pretty scarce on this tour, and this year was no exception, just a small group of at least 6 birds being seen within the park at Bharatpur on our first afternoon.</i>	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
<i>After seeing a few along the Kosi River at Ramnagar Dam en-route to the Himalayas on our first day, many more were seen in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
<i>Again, a few were seen on the river beside Ramnagar Dam, with bigger numbers seen daily during the Bharatpur leg of the tour.</i>	
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
<i>Big numbers were noted at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, and around Bharatpur.</i>	
<i>NB. This was formerly considered a separate species from the American form, and then listed as Eurasian Teal, although they were lumped once more as Green-winged Teal in the changes made to the Clements list in December 2008.</i>	
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
<i>This striking duck was first observed at Okhla Barrage in New Delhi, with further birds being seen daily around Bharatpur.</i>	
<i>NB. Spot-billed Duck was recently split (December 2008) into 2 species, the other being Eastern Spot-billed Duck, A. Zonorhyncha</i>	
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
<i>Common and conspicuous at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
<i>A single bird was seen within the park at Bharatpur on three days.</i>	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
<i>Commonly recorded around Bharatpur, and also at Okhla Barrage in Delhi too.</i>	
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>
<i>Two birds (including a dandy male), were seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, and another small raft of them was found on Bund Baretha, on one of our day trips out of Bharatpur.</i>	

Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
<i>Smaller numbers of this duck compared to some of the others, just recorded on three days of the tour: at Okhla Barrage, and on two of our days in the Bharatpur area.</i>	
Ferruginous Pochard	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>
<i>Three birds were seen in a large raft of ducks at Okhla Barrage in New Delhi.</i>	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
<i>2 birds were seen in a large raft of ducks at Okhla Barrage, that also included 3 Ferruginous Pochards. Another small group of Tufted Ducks was also seen on Bund Baretha.</i>	
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
<i>2 birds were seen alongside a remote river inside Corbett NP. NB. This is sometimes referred to as GOOSANDER.</i>	
OSPREY: Pandionidae	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
<i>One was seen at Dhikala in Corbett NP.</i>	
HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES: Accipitridae	
Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
<i>Two birds passed over the observation tower in Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
<i>Small numbers were recorded throughout the tour (in Corbett, the Himalayan foothills and around Bharatpur).</i>	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
<i>North India's most common raptor, recorded in good numbers throughout.</i>	
Pallas' Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>
<i>Classified as VULNERABLE, due to population decreases, caused by among other things, conversion and development of habitat for agricultural practices Corbett NP provides a vital sanctuary for this threatened raptor. Two sightings were made in this area on the tour, firstly gliding over Ramnagar Dam, and later inside Corbett NP itself.</i>	
Lesser Fish-Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga humilis</i>
<i>Our first sighting came near Dhikala within Corbett NP, with a later sighting also made from another area inside the park.</i>	
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
<i>Just recorded on our first day, when two of these unique vultures were seen gliding low over the Bajun Valley, just outside Naini Tal.</i>	
<i>NB. Also known as BEARDED VULTURE or even BONEBREAKER, due to the well-publicized habit of dropping bones from a great height in order to break them open, and get to the marrow inside.</i>	
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
<i>A few singles were seen around Corbett NP, and later small numbers were seen in and around Bharatpur.</i>	
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>

As recently as 1985, this species was described as "possibly the most abundant large bird of prey in the world". However, since then this vulture like many others on the Indian Subcontinent, has undergone a staggering and dramatic decline. It is now classified as CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, as a result of a 99% decline that has occurred since the mid-1990s. We recorded the species just four times on the tour: a single was seen flying over our restaurant near Ramnagar Dam, with others seen between Ramnagar and Kumeria on three other dates. The highest count we had were three on one day, which seems rather sad for bird considered one of the commonest raptors on Earth just twenty or so years ago.

Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>
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Another vulture species that has undergone a catastrophic decline since the mid-1990s, estimated at 97%, and so is also classified as CRITICALLY ENDANGERED. From a local Bharatpur population of over 800 birds in the 80s, the local population there has since been estimated as a paltry 25 birds in 1999, although has since been thought to have declined further. The reason for the decline is said to be the widespread use of the anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac on livestock, that leads to poisoning of vultures when they feed on the carcasses of these animals. We visited a local breeding site for them, Bayena, a short distance from Bharatpur, seeing a maximum of 3 birds in two visits to the site.

Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
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One of the few vultures that does not seem in grave danger in India. This pale highland griffon was seen during our scenic mornings around Vinayak, both perched and in flight as they glided below us while we looked down on them.

Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
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Seen on several days around Corbett NP, and also on our journey back from there to Delhi.

Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>
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We enjoyed a good run with this species, seeing them on 4 different days. Most sightings were in Corbett NP, although our maximum count of three birds was made as we journeyed from Corbett back to Delhi.

Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>
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Another of Asia's troubled vultures, also categorized as CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, due to an estimated 94% decline between the years of 2000 and 2003 alone, that is also presumed to relate to the widespread use of the drug diclofenac in India. Recorded on 4 days, with a maximum of three recorded within the park at Bharatpur. The other sightings were all around Corbett NP.

Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
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One bird was seen circling above the sanctuary at Bharatpur.

Crested Serpent-Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
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Seen on two of our days within the park at Bharatpur, with a maximum of three on one of these days.

Western Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
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Three were seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, with others seen during three of our days around Bharatpur.

Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
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A ghostly male of the species sailed past us while we were looking down at gliding Himalayan Griffons at Vinayak. NB. Also known as HEN HARRIER.

Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>
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Three birds were seen during one morning in a remote area of Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, with another ringtail seen near the temple there a few days later.

Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
<i>Recorded regularly around Bharatpur, with a maximum of 4 birds in the park on one day.</i>	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
<i>Several were seen during our two days in the highest areas of the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Eurasian Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
<i>Two singles were seen in the Himalayas.</i>	
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
<i>Singles were seen in the park at Bharatpur, at Bayena, and also along the Chambal River. Another was also seen en-route to Delhi from the Ganges.</i>	
Indian Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila hastata</i>
<i>Singles were seen on two days in Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>
<i>Recorded on two days within the park at Bharatpur, with at least five different birds seen on one of these.</i>	
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
<i>Recorded in the Himalayan foothills several times, and also around Corbett NP, and a few were also seen in Bharatpur.</i>	
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
<i>Two singles were seen on different days within the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
<i>Two were watched circling over Corbett NP on one day, and another was seen within Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
Booted Eagle	<i>Aquila pennata</i>
<i>Single birds were seen on two days within Bharatpur.</i>	
Rufous-bellied Eagle	<i>Aquila kienerii</i>
<i>One flew over Bajun Valley in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Mountain Hawk-Eagle	<i>Spizaetus nipalensis</i>
<i>One flew low over us on one of our visits to the Pangot area in the foothills of the Himalaya.</i>	

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae

Collared Falconet	<i>Microhierax caerulescens</i>
<i>Three of these tiny falcons were seen near Dhikala camp in Corbett NP.</i>	
Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
<i>Singles were seen in the Pangot area of the Himalayan foothills, with another seen on our journey out of the foothills to Delhi, and a final sighting was made at the vulture cliffs around Bayena near to Bharatpur.</i>	
Red-necked Falcon	<i>Falco chicquera</i>
<i>Tom's persistence paid off when he had one of the handsome falcons swoop low past him close to Bayena, near the end of our trip.</i>	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
<i>Two singles were seen in the Himalayan foothills, one over Bajun Valley and another over Sat Tal.</i>	

PHEASANTS AND PARTRIDGES: Phasianidae

Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>
<i>Singles were seen on two consecutive days inside the grasslands of Corbett NP, including one near Dhikala Camp.</i>	

Gray Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>
A common and conspicuous francolin around Bharatpur, with others being seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, and close to the Chambal River.	
Jungle Bush-Quail	<i>Perdicula asiatica</i>
Frustratingly only heard close to Bund Baretha.	
Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila torqueola</i>
One was seen late one afternoon along the Kilbury Road, near to Naini Tal.	
Koklass Pheasant	<i>Pucrasia macrolopha</i>
At the second attempt at Vinayak (in the Himalayan foothills) we were rewarded with super views of a male bird wandering around beneath the high pine forest.	
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
One bird was seen inside Corbett NP. This species is the wild ancestor of the domestic chicken.	
Kalij Pheasant	<i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>
Two birds were seen on the edge of the town at Naini Tal, with two more seen in the scenic Bajun Valley close to there, a further two near to Dhikala in Corbett NP, and finally one was seen close to our inn at Kumeria (on the edge of Corbett).	
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
This extravagant pheasant is India's National Bird, and is also considered sacred as it is said that the god Kartikeya (son of the Lord Shiva and Parvati and brother to the god Ganesh) rides on its back. These superb pheasants were seen daily in the Bharatpur area, where they live in close proximity to many people, that offer the bird protection by their presence. Our first sighting though was a single bird in the Dhikala area of Corbett NP.	
CRANES: Gruidae	
Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>
Seen during our two days within the park at Bharatpur, with a maximum of two seen. Another two birds were seen in the Bund Baretha area on one of our day trips from Bharatpur, and one was seen during our journey back to Delhi at the end of the tour.	
RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: Rallidae	
Brown Crake	<i>Amaurornis akool</i>
Two birds were seen around the dam at Bund Baretha, with another bird seen on our journey back from there to Bharatpur the same day. A final sighting was made from our boat as ambled along the Chambal River on our final day.	
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
With the exception of one seen en-route to the Himalayan foothills all sightings came in the Bharatpur area, where they were seen daily.	
Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Recorded daily on the Bharatpur leg, with other sightings made at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Seen daily around Bharatpur.	
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Also recorded daily in good numbers around Bharatpur, in addition to during our visit to Okhla Barrage.	

JACANAS: Jacanidae

Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
<i>One was seen during our journey to Bharatpur, with another two sightings in that area, with a maximum of two birds seen.</i>	
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>
<i>First seen en-route to the Himalayan foothills on day one, with further sightings on most days around Bharatpur, with a maximum of three birds recorded in one day.</i>	

PAINTED-SNIPES: Rostratulidae

Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>
<i>The things we do for birds! As with last year the best site for this handsome shorebird was a sewage ditch in the town of Bharatpur. Once we had adjusted to the interesting odor rising from the dyke we managed to find 8 of these striking "snipe" huddled in this rather unpleasant looking ditch.</i>	

IBISBILL: Ibidorhynchidae

Ibisbill	<i>Ibidorhyncha struthersii</i>
<i>A hard to top BIRD OF THE TRIP for the second year running. We tried a known stakeout several times, before finally (at the so called "last chance saloon"), finding three of these magical montane shorebirds preening and calling on the banks of the Kosi River between Kumeria and Ramnagar, close to Corbett NP.</i>	

AVOCETS AND STILTS: Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
<i>Commonly recorded around Bharatpur, and also on the journey between Delhi and Naini Tal.</i>	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
<i>Seen at three sites on the tour: 4 were seen along the banks of the holy Ganges River en-route to Naini Tal on our first day; 1 was seen beside Okhla Barrage in Delhi; and finally another 6 birds were seen on a large lake beyond Bund Baretha on one of our day trips out of Bharatpur.</i>	

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae

Great Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus recurvirostris</i>
<i>One was seen a stone's throw from a trio of Ibisbill, along the Kosi River on the edge if Corbett NP. Another seven birds were noted from our boat along the Chambal River.</i>	

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
<i>One was seen in a marshy field near to the Indian Vulture cliffs at Bayena.</i>	
River Lapwing	<i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>
<i>This striking lapwing was seen at various spots along the Kosi River on the edge of Corbett NP, with others being seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, and along the Chambal River.</i>	
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>
<i>A pair were found feeding in a dry field on the edge of Keoladeo Ghana NP, and another two were seen the following day in fields en-route to Bund Baretha.</i>	
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
<i>Commonly recorded around Corbett NP and Bharatpur.</i>	

White-tailed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>
<i>This leggy lapwing was seen on the way to Bharatpur, with another single seen within the park itself, another on a day trip outside the park, and a final sighting en-route back to Delhi from Chambal.</i>	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
<i>One was seen along the bank of the Ganges River, and another was seen en-route to Bharatpur from Delhi.</i>	
Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
<i>Four sightings: along the banks of the Ganges en-route to the Himalayas, on a large lake beyond Bund Baretha (during a day trip out of Bharatpur), on a marshy field near to the vulture cliffs at Bayena, and finally along the banks of the Chambal.</i>	
SANDPIPER: Scolopacidae	
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
<i>One was seen feeding beside a marshy pool en-route to Bharatpur from Delhi, with others seen near Bund Baretha, in fields near Bayena, and en-route back to Delhi from the Chambal River.</i>	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
<i>One sighting was made on a large wetland beyond Bund Baretha.</i>	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
<i>A few birds were found frequenting a marshy field near to Bayena on several days.</i>	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucus</i>
<i>First seen by the dam at Ramnagar, with later sightings along the banks of the Ganges, and daily sightings around Bharatpur.</i>	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
<i>Recorded along the Ganges River, and daily around Bharatpur.</i>	
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
<i>Daily sightings were made around Bharatpur, with others seen on the banks of the Ganges River.</i>	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
<i>Seen in good numbers on the tour at Ramnagar Dam, the Ganges River, Okhla Barrage and around Bharatpur.</i>	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen on most days at Bharatpur.</i>	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
<i>A few were seen at the Ganges River crossing, Okhla Barrage, and Bharatpur.</i>	
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
<i>Seen daily on the Bharatpur leg of the trip.</i>	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
<i>Seen on three days of the tour: a few were seen looking down on the Yamuna River from the Taj Mahal, another small group were found on a large lake beyond Bund Baretha, and a marshy field loaded with shorebirds close to Bayena also held a few more.</i>	
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
<i>Recorded regularly around Bharatpur, with others being seen on the Ganges River on our journey to Naini Tal.</i>	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
<i>Ten birds were found on a large wetland beyond Bund Baretha.</i>	

Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen daily around Bharatpur, with others being seen between there and Delhi.</i>	
GULLS: Laridae	
Caspian (Steppe) Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans barabensis</i>
<i>Two immature birds were seen at the Ganges River crossing. NB. Steppe Gull is now considered to be a subspecies of Caspian Gull.</i>	
Great Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>
<i>Three birds were seen along the Ganges, with another two being seen from our boat trip along the Chambal River.</i>	
Brown-headed Gull	<i>Larus brunnicephalus</i>
<i>One bird was found within a flock of Black-headed Gulls at the Ganges River crossing.</i>	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
<i>A flock of fifteen birds was seen along the Ganges.</i>	
TERNS: Sternidae	
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
<i>Three birds were seen on a large wetland beyond Bund Baretha, on one of our day trips out of Bharatpur.</i>	
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
<i>A number of Whiskered Terns were found on the same wetland that held the Gull-billed Terns.</i>	
Black-bellied Tern	<i>Sterna acuticauda</i>
<i>Two of these dapper terns were seen dipping low over the waters of the Chambal River.</i>	
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>
<i>Just recorded on two days, two birds were seen along the Ganges en-route to Naini Tal, and a good number of them were feeding over a large wetland beyond Bund Baretha on one of our Bharatpur day trips.</i>	
SKIMMERS: Rynchopidae	
Indian Skimmer	<i>Rynchops albicollis</i>
<i>This species is classified as VULNERABLE by the IUCN as a result of recent and rapid declines caused by disturbance and degradation of their lowland breeding sites. One of their Indian strongholds is the Chambal River, where we approached a jittery group of 29 birds loafing on the banks of the river while we watched them from our boat.</i>	
SANDGROUSE: Pteroclidae	
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>
<i>A flock of at least twenty five birds was seen flying around a field beyond Bund Baretha.</i>	
PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae	
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
<i>Recorded regularly during the Bharatpur leg of the tour.</i>	
Red Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
<i>Four birds were seen between Bharatpur and Bund Baretha.</i>	
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
<i>Two were seen inside Corbett NP, with another single seen at Okhla Barrage in New Delhi.</i>	

Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	
Seen daily during the Bharatpur leg of the trip.		
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	GO
One shot past us in Kumeria, but did not linger unfortunately.		
Yellow-footed Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>	
This handsome green pigeon was first seen in small numbers inside Corbett NP, with bigger numbers seen around Bharatpur later on the trip.		
PARROTS: Psittacidae		
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	
This hulking parakeet was seen in flight crossing the Kosi River near Ramnagar on the edge of Corbett NP on both our visits there in search of Ibisbill.		
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	
One of the most visible birds in Northern India, recorded daily in all lowland areas.		
Slaty-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula himalayana</i>	
A mountain parakeet, recorded in good numbers during our day at Sat Tal, and small numbers were also seen within Corbett NP.		
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	
Arguably the most striking of the Indian parakeets, single parties of which were seen on three days, around Bayena, and also twice within Corbett NP.		
CUCKOOS: Cuculidae		
Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	
Also dubbed the "brainfever bird", by virtue of its monotonous call. Singles were seen on two days within Keoladeo Ghana NP.		
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	
One of these large, noisy black cuckoos was seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.		
Green-billed Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>	
One was seen inside Corbett NP.		
Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>	
Two of these sandy cuckoos were seen during a morning walk in the park at Bharatpur.		
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	
Commonly recorded around Bharatpur, and also seen in Delhi at Okhla Barrage.		
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	
This grassland specialist was seen during our canter drive around Dhikala in Corbett NP.		
OWLS: Strigidae		
Indian Scops-Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	
Three day roosting birds were seen in the park at Bharatpur in our first afternoon on site.		
Dusky Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo coromandus</i>	
A staked out nest brought us great looks at a pair of these large owls in Keoladeo Ghana NP.		
Brown Fish-Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	
Tom found one of these massive owls glaring menacingly down at us in Kumeria on the edge of Corbett NP.		

Tawny Fish-Owl	<i>Ketupa flavipes</i>	
<i>Two of these hulking beasts were found in the Corbett area, our first one outside the core area of the park in Kumeria, and then Tom spotted another one from our carter on our Dhikala game drive.</i>		
Brown Wood-Owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	H
<i>Heard on several days in the Himalayan foothills.</i>		
Collared Owlet	<i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>	H
<i>Up to three birds were heard during our time in the Himalayan foothills, although they never showed any signs of coming in.</i>		
Asian Barred Owlet	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>	
<i>Three were seen in a single day around Naini Tal, including right within the town, and then we saw no more the whole trip.</i>		
Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	
<i>On two consecutive days in the Corbett area two different birds were seen, including one within the grounds of our inn in Kumeria.</i>		
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	
<i>Three seen at Okhla Barrage were our first, then birds were seen on four days around Bharatpur with a maximum of five birds seen along the route to Bund Baretha.</i>		
Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>	
<i>Two day roosting birds were seen, the first just outside the park at Bharatpur, and then another in the garden of Chambal Safari Lodge.</i>		
NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae		
Gray Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	
<i>Two were seen hawking insects at dusk near Kumeria, with one of the usual roosting birds seen several times within Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>		
Large-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>	
<i>A day roosting bird was seen hiding in the leaf litter at Bharatpur.</i>		
SWIFTS: Apodidae		
Himalayan Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus brevirostris</i>	
<i>A few small groups were seen at a few different spots in the Himalayan foothills, including at Sat Tal.</i>		
White-rumped Needletail	<i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>	
<i>Two were seen flying overhead at Kumeri on the edge of Corbett, with another small party seen within Corbett a few days later.</i>		
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	
<i>Commonly recorded in the lowlands around Bharatpur, with smaller numbers seen around Corbett and in the Himalayan foothills.</i>		
CRESTED TREESWIFTS: Hemiprocnidae		
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	
<i>A few small groups were seen near to Ramnagar on the edge of Corbett NP.</i>		
KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae		
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	
<i>Scattered sightings were made both in the foothills and in the lowlands.</i>		

Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>
<i>A single stork-billed was seen within the park at Corbett NP.</i>	
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
<i>Commonly recorded around Corbett and Bharatpur.</i>	
Crested Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>
<i>This large kingfisher was regularly seen in small numbers around Kumeria, and Ramnagar, on the edge of Corbett NP.</i>	
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
<i>Regularly recorded in the lowlands.</i>	

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae

Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctyornis athertoni</i>
<i>One showed up briefly at Dhikala camp in Corbett, and Hein saw another while in the garden of our inn in Kumeria.</i>	
Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
<i>Surprisingly few seen on this tour, with just two seen during our journey between Bharatpur and Bund Baretha being our sole sighting.</i>	

ROLLERS: Coraciidae

Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
<i>This technicolored bird was seen in small numbers daily in and around Bharatpur.</i>	

HOOPSES: Upupidae

Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
<i>A few were seen daily in the lowlands.</i>	

HORNBILLS: Bucerotidae

Indian Gray Hornbill	<i>Ocyceros birostris</i>
<i>One or two were seen around Bharatpur on most days, with another seen in the Chambal Safari Lodge garden at the end of the tour.</i>	
Oriental Pied-Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
<i>One was seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Great Hornbill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>
<i>Despite hearing them calling on several occasions both within Corbett and just outside the park we just could not track down the calling birds.</i>	

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BARBETS: Capitonidae

Great Barbet	<i>Megalaima virens</i>
<i>Fairly common during one day up in the higher areas of the Himalayan foothills visited, with just a few seen elsewhere in the foothills.</i>	
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
<i>Two were seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi, with another two also being seen inside Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>
<i>Seen on three days in the Corbett area, with a maximum of three seen on one day in Kumeria.</i>	

Blue-throated Barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>
<i>One was seen at Sat Tal, and another in Pangot (both in the Himalayan foothills).</i>	
Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>
<i>One was seen in the sanctuary at Bharatpur, with another two seen on the journey between there and Chambal Safari Lodge.</i>	
WOODPECKERS: Picidae	
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
<i>This cryptically colored woodpecker was seen within the park at Bharatpur, and several were also seen between there and Bund Baretha.</i>	
Speckled Piculet	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>
<i>A single bird was seen in a bird wave at Sat Tal, with two further sightings at Kumeria on the outskirts of Corbett NP.</i>	
Gray-capped Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>
<i>One or two were seen daily around Corbett NP.</i>	
Brown-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos auriceps</i>
<i>Singles were recorded at two sites in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>
<i>Two birds were seen during our day at Sat Tal, with singles seen during our three days around Corbett NP.</i>	
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
<i>Just the one bird was seen within the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos hyperythrus</i>
<i>This is arguably India's most impressive woodpecker, with rich rufous underparts and a boldly barred back. Just the one was seen along the Kilbury Road, a short distance from Naini Tal in the Himalayas.</i>	
Himalayan Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos himalayensis</i>
<i>Just recorded on the one day in the Himalayan foothills, when three different birds were seen.</i>	
Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
<i>Two sightings were made, one at Sat Tal, and another near Kumeria.</i>	
Greater Yellownape	<i>Picus flavinucha</i>
<i>Two were seen in the Bajun Valley on our first day in the Himalayan foothills, with two more seen the following day in Sat Tal. Finally, another bird was seen on our second visit to Bajun a few days later.</i>	
Streak-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>
<i>Two birds were seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Gray-faced Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
<i>The most commonly encountered woodpecker in the Himalayan foothills, recorded in the Bajun Valley, Sat Tal, Pangot, and also around Kumeria, and inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Himalayan Flameback	<i>Dinopium shorii</i>
<i>Singles were seen on two different days within Corbett NP.</i>	
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
<i>One was seen in Corbett NP, and several sightings were later made around Bharatpur.</i>	
Greater Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>
<i>One was seen in Sat Tal, and a pair were seen near Kumeria on the edge of Corbett NP.</i>	
Great Slaty Woodpecker	<i>Mulleripicus pulverulentus</i>
<i>Heard distantly twice in the Kumeria area.</i>	

LARKS: Alaudidae

Indian Bushlark	<i>Mirafra erythroptera</i>
<i>Singles were seen near Bayena on both of our visits to the area.</i>	
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
<i>Four birds were seen near Bayena during our first visit there, with six found on our other visit there.</i>	
Rufous-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes phoenicura</i>
<i>Two were seen at Bund Baretha, and another two were seen at Bayena on our second visit there.</i>	
Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
<i>A flock of fifty or so birds was seen on our journey between Bayena and Bund Baretha, with another smaller flock seen near Bayena a few days later.</i>	
Sand Lark	<i>Calandrella raytal</i>
<i>After getting out of our boat along the Chambal River and kicking about a sand bar for a while we eventually found one of these pallid larks.</i>	
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
<i>Three were seen en-route to Bund Baretha, with others seen near Bayena a few days later, and finally a few were seen on the banks of the Chambal River towards the end of the trip.</i>	
Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
<i>A couple of birds were seen on the banks of the Kosi River while we searched for the Ibisbills, with another single seen along the Chambal on our final day.</i>	

SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae

Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
<i>Commonly recorded, especially in the lowlands around Bharatpur.</i>	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
<i>Scattered sightings were made throughout the trip.</i>	
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
<i>Just a few were seen around Bharatpur.</i>	
Eurasian Crag-Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
<i>A small group was seen around the cliffs at Vinayak in the Himalayan foothills, during both of our visits there.</i>	
Dusky Crag-Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>
<i>One was seen en-route to the Himalayan foothills on our first day, with the only other sightings being around the Indian Vulture cliffs at Bayena, just outside Bharatpur.</i>	
Nepal Martin	<i>Delichon nipalense</i>
<i>Small groups of this highland martin were seen en-route to Naini Tal on our first day, at Sat Tal, and later at Vinayak.</i>	
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
<i>Scattered sightings were made in both the lowland and highland areas of the tour.</i>	

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae

Oriental Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
<i>A few were found feeding along the banks of the Kosi River just outside Corbett NP, and a few more were seen by the Chambal River.</i>	
<i>NB. Also known as PADDYFIELD PIPIT.</i>	

Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>
<i>One was seen within Keoladeo Ghana NP on our first day, and four birds were seen in fields near the Chambal River on our final day.</i>	
Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>
<i>One was seen near Bayena in company with a Tawny Pipit.</i>	
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
<i>Several birds were seen in the Bharatpur area, another was seen foraging along the banks of the Ganges River, and one was seen in fields close to the Chambal River.</i>	
Upland Pipit	<i>Anthus sylvanus</i>
<i>One was seen high in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Rosy Pipit	<i>Anthus roseatus</i>
<i>A few birds were found wintering along the banks of the Ganges, and also along the Kosi River.</i>	
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
<i>Small numbers were recorded in Bajun Valley in the Himalayan foothills, around Corbett NP, and also in Bharatpur.</i>	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
<i>Two were seen inside the park at Bharatpur on our first visit there.</i>	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
<i>Recorded daily in the lowlands around Bharatpur, and also during our time in Corbett.</i>	
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla madaraspatensis</i>
<i>A few were seen in the Corbett area, although recorded more regularly around Bharatpur where a few were seen each day.</i>	
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
<i>Scattered sightings were made at Okhla Barrage (Delhi), Bayena, and other areas around Bharatpur.</i>	
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
<i>One was seen on the banks of the Kosi River on the edge of Corbett, with daily sightings in small numbers around Bharatpur.</i>	
Gray Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
<i>The least common of the five wagtails, recorded en-route to Naini Tal at Ramnagar Dam, at Sat Tal in the Himalayan foothills, in Corbett NP, and a number of times around Bharatpur.</i>	
CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae	
Large Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>
<i>Heard once inside the park at Corbett.</i>	H
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
<i>Small groups were seen on both of our visits to the nursery at Bharatpur, with a maximum of three on one of those days. Another four birds were seen on the journey between Bharatpur and Bund Barea.</i>	
Long-tailed Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>
<i>Recorded three times, twice in the Himalayan foothills (including at Sat Tal), and also once in the Kumeria area.</i>	
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>
<i>First recorded at Sat Tal in the foothills, and three further sightings were made around Corbett.</i>	
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
<i>Regularly recorded within bird waves around Corbett, with a few more seen during our day in Sat Tal in the foothills.</i>	

BULBULS: Pycnonotidae

Black-crested Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
<i>A few were seen on all three of our days around Corbett NP.</i>	
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
<i>One was seen on our first day, in a brief stop at Ramnagar Dam just outside Corbett. Later a few more were seen around Corbett on two of our three days there, with a final sighting of a single bird at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.</i>	
White-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>
<i>Small numbers were recorded daily in the Bharatpur area.</i>	
White-cheeked (Himalayan) Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>
<i>This striking bulbul was a daily feature in both the Himalayan foothills and around Corbett.</i>	
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
<i>A common bulbul in north India, with sightings on almost all days of the tour.</i>	
Mountain Bulbul	<i>Ixos mcclellandii</i>
<i>Regularly seen during our day at Sat Tal in the Himalayan foothills, the only site where it was recorded.</i>	
Ashy Bulbul	<i>Hemixos flavala</i>
<i>First picked up at Sat Tal, with further sightings each day we were in the Corbett area.</i>	
Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
<i>Particularly common at Sat Tal, with a few more recorded at other sites within the Himalayan foothills, and a few seen during one session inside Corbett NP.</i>	

IORAS: Aegithinidae

Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
<i>Just the one seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	
White-tailed (Marshall's) Iora	<i>Aegithina nigrolutea</i>
<i>One was found in a remote area of Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary.</i>	

DIPPERS: Cinclidae

Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>
<i>A short walk from our inn at Kumeria down to the Kosi River produced one of these Asian dippers perched on a mid-river boulder, along with both Spotted and Little Forktails.</i>	

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae

Himalayan Accentor	<i>Prunella himalayana</i>
<i>Seen on both of our visits to the higher areas of the foothills, when a large roaming flock of at least thirty five birds wheeled in the wind, and then regularly alighted on the rocks below us.</i>	
<i>NB. Also known as ALTAI ACCENTOR.</i>	
Rufous-breasted Accentor	<i>Prunella strophiata</i>
<i>Strangely outnumbered by the usually scarcer Black-throated this year, just one seen at Sat Tal, and another single at Pangot (both in the Himalayan foothills).</i>	
Black-throated Accentor	<i>Prunella atrogularis</i>
<i>Three birds were seen at Sat Tal (with a Rufous-breasted Accentor in the same area), and another single was seen at Pangot in the foothills.</i>	

THRUSHES: Turdidae	
Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola rufiventris</i>
<i>Two males were seen in the Himalayan foothills at Pangot.</i>	
Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
<i>A male was seen foraging on the "vulture" cliffs at Bayena on our first visit, and another two birds were seen on a return visit to the same outcrop a few days later.</i>	
Blue Whistling-Thrush	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
<i>This bold thrush was seen daily in both the Naini Tal area, and around Corbett.</i>	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>
<i>This superb thrush was seen twice within Keoladeo Ghana NP, with two seen during one morning there.</i>	
Long-billed Thrush	<i>Zoothera monticola</i>
<i>This striking and normally furtive thrush, with the ridiculously long bill, was seen boldly feeding in the open along a quiet road just outside Corbett NP. After five minutes of uncharacteristically feeding right out in the open in the early morning before the bird retreated back into the undergrowth, where they are more usually expected to be.</i>	
Gray-winged Blackbird	<i>Turdus boulboul</i>
<i>Two birds were seen feeding in rhododendron forest in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Dark-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>
<i>Roaming flocks of these thrushes were seen on both of our visits to the higher areas of the Himalayan foothills, with over twenty five birds on our first visit.</i>	
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
<i>Two were seen near Vinayak in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
<i>Two were seen within the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Striated Prinia	<i>Prinia crinigera</i>
<i>Singing birds were seen on both of our visits to Pangot within the foothills.</i>	
Rufous-fronted Prinia	<i>Prinia buchanani</i>
<i>Two birds were seen on one of our day trips out of Bharatpur, beyond Bund Baretha.</i>	
Gray-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
<i>Three were seen at Sat Tal in the foothills, with further sightings around Corbett, and around the vulture cliffs at Bayena.</i>	
Graceful Prinia	<i>Prinia gracilis</i>
<i>Just the one was seen, by a marshy area en-route to Delhi from the Chambal River on our final day.</i>	
Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>
<i>One was seen beyond Bund Baretha on one of our Bharatpur day trips, with another seen on the journey between Chambal and Delhi.</i>	
Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>
<i>One was seen beside the Ganges River, with the only other sighting being at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.</i>	
Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
<i>Commonly recorded at Bharatpur, with others being seen at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.</i>	

Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>
<i>Recorded daily around Bharatpur, with others being seen at Okhla Barrage, Bayena, and by a small marsh between Delhi and Bharatpur.</i>	
OLD WORLD WARBLERS: Sylviidae	
Chestnut-headed Tisia	<i>Tesia castaneocoronata</i>
<i>Brief views were had in the scenic valley at Bajun, just outside Naini Tal, although three or more birds were seen really well just outside Corbett NP in the Kumeria area.</i>	
Gray-bellied Tisia	<i>Tesia cyaniventer</i>
<i>During a great morning for tesisas we had at least three Chestnut-headeds and a single Gray-bellied just outside Corbett NP.</i>	
Aberrant Bush-Warbler	<i>Cettia flavigula</i>
<i>A single singing bird was seen in the Bajun Valley, within the foothills of the Himalayas.</i>	
Gray-sided Bush-Warbler	<i>Cettia brunnifrons</i>
<i>Many were heard singing in the base of the Bajun Valley, with one bird seen well.</i>	
Blyth's Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
<i>Singles were seen on two days within the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Clamorous (Indian) Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>
<i>A single bird was seen at Bund Baretha, and another single bird was seen near the temple at Keoladeo Ghana NP.</i>	
Sykes' Warbler	<i>Hippolais rama</i>
<i>A forced walk along the banks of the Chambal, bought about by a delay in our boat cruise due to heavy mist hanging over the river in the early morning, paid off handsomely when we found one of these inconspicuous birds.</i>	
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen around Corbett and Bharatpur.</i>	
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
<i>A few were seen near Pangot in the Himalayan foothills, with more regular sightings in the Bharatpur area later on the tour.</i>	
Sulphur-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>
<i>A single sighting of a bird feeding around the base of the cliffs at Bayena, a short drive from Bharatpur.</i>	
Buff-barred Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>
<i>One of the more regular phylloscs encountered in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Ashy-throated Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus maculipennis</i>
<i>Just the one seen in a mixed flock with Buff-barred and Lemon-rumped Warblers, in the Bajun Valley.</i>	
Lemon-rumped Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>
<i>Like Buff-barred Warbler, encountered regularly in the foothills.</i>	
Brooks' Leaf-Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus subviridis</i>
<i>Three calling birds were found in a short walk into some scrub near the Chambal River.</i>	
Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>
<i>A single calling bird was seen in the Bajun Valley, and later seen a number of times around Bharatpur, and also seen at Okhla Barrage (Delhi), and near the Chambal River.</i>	
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
<i>Heard regularly in the park at Bharatpur, where a few were seen, with others seen in the garden of the Chambal Safari Lodge.</i>	

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>
<i>One was seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Whistler's Warbler	<i>Seicercus whistleri</i>
<i>Two were seen during our day in Sat Tal, with a couple of other sightings in Corbett NP.</i>	
Gray-hooded Warbler	<i>Seicercus xanthoschistos</i>
<i>This handsome and striking warbler was seen daily in the Himalayan foothills and in the Corbett area.</i>	
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	<i>Seicercus castaniceps</i>
<i>One of these sprightly birds was seen in a mixed bird "wave" inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Black-faced Warbler	<i>Abroscopus schisticeps</i>
<i>Ten birds were seen in a mixed flock near Pangot, with a single seen the following day along the Kilbury Road.</i>	
Striated Grassbird	<i>Megalurus palustris</i>
<i>Two birds were seen in the reeds at Okhla Barrage, in Delhi.</i>	
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen daily around Bharatpur, with a few others recorded in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: Muscicapidae

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula strophiata</i>
<i>Two were seen in the Himalayas at Sat Tal, and another two birds were seen in the Corbett area.</i>	
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>
<i>Fairly common around the park at Bharatpur, with another single seen just outside Corbett NP.</i>	
Snowy-browed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hyperythra</i>
<i>A single bird was seen at sat Tal, with another two seen just outside Corbett NP near Kumeria.</i>	
Little Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula westermanni</i>
<i>One single sighting was less than expected, a single male just outside Corbett NP.</i>	
Slaty-blue Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula tricolor</i>
<i>A single was seen at Sat Tal, with another two singles on separate days inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Small Niltava	<i>Niltava macgrigoriae</i>
<i>A single male at Sat Tal was the only sighting.</i>	
Rufous-bellied Niltava	<i>Niltava sundara</i>
<i>Three birds were seen at Sat Tal (two males), and another two were seen just outside Corbett NP.</i>	
Gray-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
<i>Regularly recorded within bird "waves" in the Corbett area, with a few others recorded around Bharatpur.</i>	
Siberian Rubythroat	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>
<i>A stunning male bird was seen singing a short time after dawn at Sat Tal, just a short time before a male Himalayan Rubythroat was also seen singing there too. A great early morning brace.</i>	
White-tailed (Himalayan) Rubythroat	<i>Luscinia pectoralis</i>
<i>Just minutes after we had watched a stunning male Siberian singing at Sat Tal we checked another valley close by and had the arguably even more stunning Himalayan Rubythroat singing from the top of a low shrub. A magical start to our morning at Sat Tal, what with a brace of accentors too in the same area (Black-throated and Rufous-breasted Accentors).</i>	
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
<i>A regular bird during our time in the lowlands, seen at Okhla Barrage, and at many sites in and around Bharatpur.</i>	

Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
<i>Surprisingly few seen in the Himalayas, perhaps as a result of the mild weather experienced in our time there meaning that some of the birds may have remained at higher elevations during this time. A few more were heard, although just the one was seen along the Kilbury Road a short distance out of Naini Tal.</i>	
Golden Bush-Robin	<i>Tarsiger chrysaeus</i>
<i>This smashing little robin was seen at Sat Tal, where a male was seen foraging beneath the thick jantana brush.</i>	
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
<i>First seen at Sat Tal in the Himalayas, and then again along the banks of Kosi River. However, many more seen around Bharatpur, where they were seen on most days.</i>	
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>
<i>This is one of the most melodic songsters in Asia, a single bird of which was seen inside the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicatus</i>
<i>A single bird seen in Corbett NP was the only one seen during that leg of the trip, although they were seen daily around Bharatpur.</i>	
Blue-capped Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus caeruleocephala</i>
<i>Seen on three days in the Himalayan foothills, with sightings around Pangot and Sat Tal.</i>	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
<i>Regularly seen around the Bharatpur, where they were a daily feature. A few were also seen around Corbett and Naini Tal.</i>	
Blue-fronted Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
<i>Three males seen in our day at Sat Tal were the only sightings of the trip.</i>	
White-capped Redstart	<i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>
<i>Regularly seen along rivers and waterways within the Himalayas, being recorded at Sat Tal, the Bajun Valley, and in Corbett NP.</i>	
Plumbeous Redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa</i>
<i>Regularly seen in the area around Corbett NP, and also seen in Sat Tal.</i>	
Little Forktail	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>
<i>One of these diminutive forktails was seen along the Kosi River, just a short walk down from our inn at Kumeria.</i>	
Slaty-backed Forktail	<i>Enicurus schistaceus</i>
<i>One was seen on both of our visits to the Bajun Valley, on both occasions feeding close to a Spotted Forktail.</i>	
Spotted Forktail	<i>Enicurus maculatus</i>
<i>One was seen on both trips down into the Bajun Valley, and another was seen feeding near a Little Forktail along the Kosi River close to our hotel in Kumeria.</i>	
White-throated (Hodsgon's) Bushchat	<i>Saxicola insignis</i>
<i>Classified as VULNERABLE, due to loss of grassland habitat in their wintering range. Two males were picked up during our game drive into the grasslands of Dhikala (Corbett).</i>	
(Siberian) Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus (maurus)</i>
<i>Scattered sightings both up in the highlands, and also on the Gangetic Plain. NB. Stonechat was formerly split into three species, African, Siberian, and European Stonechat, although they have all recently (Dec 08) been lumped into one species.</i>	

White-tailed Stonechat	<i>Saxicola leucurus</i>
<i>A male was found within the reeds around Okhla Barrage, Delhi.</i>	
Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>
<i>First recorded at Okhla in Delhi, with a number of further sightings around Bharatpur.</i>	
Gray Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferreus</i>
<i>Recorded daily around Corbett and higher in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
Variable Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe picata</i>
<i>Two birds were seen in dry, parched country beyond Bund Baretha, during one of our day trips from Bharatpur.</i>	
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>
<i>At least four birds seen within the same dry, wheatear country beyond Bund Baretha, that also held both Variable and Isabelline Wheatears.</i>	
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
<i>Three birds seen in the same general area as the aforementioned Desert and Variable Wheatears.</i>	
Indian Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>
<i>Two were found near the Ganges River crossing, with another found on the banks of the Kosi River just outside Corbett, and regular sightings during both of our visits to the rocky cliffs at Bayena.</i>	

FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae

Yellow-bellied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i>
<i>Two of these sprightly birds were found at Sat Tal, two further birds were found close to our hotel in Kumeria, and another was seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	
White-throated Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>
<i>Two were found within various bird waves at Sat Tal, with further sightings at Kumeria, and inside Corbett NP.</i>	
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
<i>A single bird was seen inside the sanctuary at Bharatpur.</i>	

BABBLERS: Timaliidae

White-throated Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax albogularis</i>
<i>Recorded each day within the Himalayan foothills, and a further sighting was made within Corbett NP.</i>	
White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>
<i>This striking "babbler" was seen on two days in the foothills (including on one afternoon within the Bajun Valley where five species of laughingthrush were seen in just a few hours there), and a further two sightings were made around Corbett NP.</i>	
Striated Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax striatus</i>
<i>Seen during both of our visits to the Bajun Valley, and another group was seen in Pangot.</i>	
Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax rufogularis</i>
<i>The scarcest of the laughers on the tour, three were seen in Sat Tal, where instead of skulking down in the brush as they often do, a few emerged high into an open Oak tree affording us prolonged views of this babbler in the open.</i>	
Streaked Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax lineatus</i>
<i>Seen at both Pangot and Sat Tal in the Himalayas.</i>	
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax erythroccephalus</i>
<i>A few were seen on both of our visits to the Bajun Valley in the Himalayas.</i>	

Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
A singing bird was seen just outside Corbett NP.	
Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrogenys</i>
Heard around Sat Tal, with one seen near Pangot the following day.	
White-browed Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus schisticeps</i>
One was seen sneaking through the lantana brush at Sat Tal.	
Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler	<i>Phoenopyga albiventer</i>
One of these elusive babbler was seen extremely well along a quiet valley in Sat Tal, that also held a magic male Golden Bush Robin, Blue-throated Barbet, and a party of Rufous-chinned Laughingthrushes.	
Immaculate Wren-Babbler	<i>Phoenopyga immaculata</i>
Heard in Corbett NP, and just outside the park. NB. Also known as NEPAL WREN-BABBLER. After its recent discovery it was originally believed to be a Nepalese endemic before its later discovery in India.	H
Black-chinned Babbler	<i>Stachyris pyrrhops</i>
Three were seen in the Bajun Valley, another was found in Sat Tal, two more birds were seen on the outskirts of Naini Tal town, and a last sighting was made within Corbett NP.	
Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>
Three were found inside the park at Corbett, another two were seen in Delhi at Okhla, and further sightings were made around Bharatpur.	
Common Babbler	<i>Turdoides caudata</i>
Recorded on just two days: two were found in the same reed bed that hosted a rowdy group of Striated Babblers at Okhla on the outskirts of Delhi, and five or so birds were found en-route to Bund Baretha from Bharatpur.	
Striated Babbler	<i>Turdoides earlei</i>
This localized babbler was found at a good spot for them, in the reed beds of Okhla Barrage on the outskirts of Delhi, where at least five birds were found.	
Large Gray Babbler	<i>Turdoides malcolmii</i>
A fairly common babbler in the lowlands, seen daily around Bharatpur, and also recorded at Okhla in Delhi.	
Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striata</i>
Recorded daily around Bharatpur and in the Corbett area, and another sighting at Okhla Barrage.	
Red-billed Leiothrix	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>
Abundant during our morning at Sat Tal, with over twenty birds found within the underbrush. Also seen on two days around Corbett NP.	
White-browed Shrike-Babbler	<i>Pteruthius flaviscapis</i>
A striking male bird was seen in the pine oak forests along the Kilbury Road in the Himalayas.	
Green Shrike-Babbler	<i>Pteruthius xanthochlorus</i>
Two singles were found within the foothills of the Himalayas.	
Blue-winged Minla	<i>Minla cyanouroptera</i>
Three birds were seen within mixed feeding flocks at Sat Tal, with others recorded along the Kilbury Road, and around Corbett.	
Rufous Sibia	<i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>
Less abundant than in previous years, small numbers were seen along the Kilbury Road a couple of times, and near to Pangot.	

Whiskered Yuhina	<i>Yuhina flavicollis</i>
<i>Two were seen at Sat Tal, and another two were seen on the edge of town at Naini Tal.</i>	
Black-chinned Yuhina	<i>Yuhina nigrimenta</i>
<i>Three were seen in a mixed flock near Kumeria, with another two in the same area a couple of days later.</i>	
White-bellied Yuhina	<i>Yuhina zantholeuca</i>
<i>Singles were seen in passing bird waves in Corbett NP on two occasions. NB. This species has long confused taxonomists, recent DNA studies indicating it is unrelated to babblers. However, its true family status still remains a mystery. Some authors remove it from the babblers and rename it as WHITE-BELLIED ERPORNIS Erpornis zantholeuca. For now it remains within the babblers in Clements, although is likely to change in the future.</i>	

LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae

Black-throated Tit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
<i>Seen on most days within the Himalayas, and another group were found close to Corbett NP. NB. Also known as RED-HEADED TIT.</i>	

CHICKADEES AND TITS: Paridae

Black-crested (Spot-winged) Tit	<i>Periparus melanolophus</i>
<i>Only recorded in small numbers in the higher forests visited within the Himalayas, although a few were seen on both of our trips up there.</i>	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
<i>A few were seen on all three days we were in the Corbett area.</i>	
Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
<i>Commonly recorded in bird waves in the Himalayas.</i>	
Black-lored Tit	<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>
<i>This striking tit was seen daily in the Himalayan foothills (including at Pangot and Sat Tal), and also seen once within Corbett.</i>	
Yellow-browed Tit	<i>Sylviparus modestus</i>
<i>Up to five birds found within mixed flocks on our two visits to the higher forests above Pangot.</i>	

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>
<i>Four of these striking nuthatches were seen in mixed bird waves at Sat Tal, and further birds were found during two days around Corbett.</i>	
White-tailed Nuthatch	<i>Sitta himalayensis</i>
<i>Despite being heard at lower elevations, only seen during our two mornings within mixed bird parties, in the high pine oak forest above Pangot.</i>	
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
<i>Eight birds were found inside various flocks at Sat Tal, with a few others noted in the Corbett area.</i>	

WALLCREEPER: Tichodromidae

Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
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Five different sightings was a very good haul for this trip. Our first bird came in a short, leg-stretching stop at Ramnagar Dam, en-route to Naini Tal in the Himalayas. Three other birds were found foraging among the boulders of the Kosi River, just outside Corbett NP. Finally, for the second year running, we found one foraging within the large dark crags on the vulture cliffs at Bayena, an unusual site for the species.

CREEPERS: Certhiidae

Bar-tailed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia himalayana</i>
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Up to three birds were recorded during three days in the Himalayas, all birds found within mixed feeding flocks containing tits, nuthatches, and warblers.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: Nectariniidae

Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
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Just a few seen: in Okhla, and Bund Baretha.

Green-tailed Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i>
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Just the one sighting, at Sat Tal in the Himalayas.

FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum ignipectum</i>
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Two were seen in Sat Tal.

WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae

Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
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Seen most days in the foothills (at Pangot and Sat Tal for example), and around Corbett.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae

Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
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Two seen inside Corbett NP, with another bird found near Kumeria, just outside the park.

Maroon Oriole	<i>Oriolus traillii</i>
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Three birds were seen one morning in Corbett NP.

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>
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Two birds were found in a dry remote area of Bharatpur, with another two found just beyond Bund Baretha on a day trip out from there, and a final bird was seen near the vulture cliffs at Bayena.

Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>
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Two singles were found within the park at Bharatpur, and two others were found en-route to Bund Baretha.

Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>
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Seen daily around Bharatpur, and scattered sightings also made in the Himalayas, and at Dhikala in Corbett.

Southern Gray Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>
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At least five birds were found during our day trip to the Bund Baretha area, with another single seen a few days later at Bayena, and a final sighting along the Chambal River.

HELMETSHRIKES AND ALLIES: Prionopidae

Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>
<i>Seen on two of our visits to Keoladeo Ghana NP, with a maximum of three birds seen during one visit.</i>	

DRONGOS: Dicruridae

Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
<i>Recorded daily around Bharatpur, and also around Sat Tal in the Himalayas.</i>	
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
<i>One was seen in the nursery at Bharatpur.</i>	
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
<i>Two singles were seen inside the park at Corbett NP.</i>	
Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
<i>Six birds were seen in the Bajun Valley, another three were seen in Sat Tal, and others seen near Kumeria.</i>	
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>
<i>One was seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	

CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
<i>A few were seen in the higher forests of the Himalayas visited on the tour.</i>	
Black-headed Jay	<i>Garrulus lanceolatus</i>
<i>A small party were seen in Sat Tal, and another small group of these smart jays were seen in Pangot.</i>	
Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
<i>This spectacular magpie was very visible in our two visits to the Bajun Valley, with others seen at Sat Tal, and inside Corbett NP.</i>	
Green Magpie	<i>Cissa chinensis</i>
<i>Singles of this emerald green magpie were seen on all three of our days around Corbett NP.</i>	
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
<i>Seen daily in the lowlands, around Okhla and Bharatpur.</i>	
Gray Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>
<i>Two were seen on our first afternoon at Bajun Valley.</i>	
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
<i>Regularly seen throughout our time in the lowlands.</i>	
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
<i>Recorded on all except one day of the tour, both in the lowlands and highlands.</i>	

STARLINGS: Sturnidae

Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>
<i>One was seen during our journey between Delhi and the Himalayas on our first day.</i>	
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
<i>A very commonly encountered starling in the lowlands.</i>	
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
<i>Commonly encountered in the lowlands, with a few more seen in the Naini Tal area.</i>	
Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>
<i>Recorded daily in the lowlands.</i>	

Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>
<i>This handsome starling was seen every day in small numbers around Bharatpur.</i>	
Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>
<i>Just recorded on the one day, where five birds were seen just beyond Bund Baretha.</i>	
OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
<i>Scattered sightings were made throughout the trip.</i>	
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
<i>Ten birds were found within large sparrow flocks en-route to Bund Baretha, and another fifty birds were seen near to Bayena on another trip out from Bharatpur.</i>	
Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer rutilans</i>
<i>Four were seen at Sat Tal, and another five were seen at Pangot.</i>	
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>
<i>A few were seen on three days of the trip: a couple were seen beyond Bund Baretha, another was seen at Bayena, and a final bird was seen by the Chambal River.</i>	
WEAVERS AND ALLIES: Ploceidae	
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
<i>At least five birds were found between Chambal Safari Lodge and the Chambal River.</i>	
Bengal Weaver	<i>Ploceus benghalensis</i>
<i>A single bird was seen inside the sanctuary at Bharatpur.</i>	
WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae	
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
<i>At least twenty birds were seen feeding in the reed beds flanking Okhla Barrage, Delhi.</i>	
White-throated Munia (Indian Silverbill)	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>
<i>Two birds were seen feeding in the reeds at Okhla with a group of Red Avadavats, another six were seen inside the park at Bharatpur, and finally three birds were seen at Bayena.</i>	
Nutmeg Mannikin	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
<i>Recorded in the Bajun Valley, Dhikala (Corbett), Okhla Barrage (Delhi), and along the Chambal River.</i>	
Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>
<i>One was seen inside the park at Bharatpur.</i>	
SISKINS, CROSSBILLS AND ALLIES: Fringillidae	
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
<i>Seen on three days in the Himalayas: two at Sat Tal, one near Vinayak, and another in the Bajun Valley.</i>	
Pink-browed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rodochroa</i>
<i>A single was seen on both our visits to Pangot.</i>	
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis spinoides</i>
<i>Recorded at Sat Tal, Pangot and Vinayak in the Himalayan foothills.</i>	
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
<i>One was seen in Pangot.</i>	

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS AND ALLIES: Emberizidae	
Crested Bunting	<i>Melophus lathami</i>
<i>One male was found at the base of the vulture cliffs at Bayena.</i>	
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>
<i>Two were seen at Vinayak, and another bird was seen in Pangot.</i>	
Chestnut-breasted (White-capped) Bunting	<i>Emberiza stewarti</i>
<i>Five birds were seen in fields below Pangot, and a single bird was seen at Bund Baretha.</i>	
House Bunting	<i>Emberiza striolata</i>
<i>Two birds were seen foraging along the base of the cliffs at Bayena.</i>	
Chestnut-eared Bunting	<i>Emberiza fucata</i>
<i>One was seen in the Bajun Valley.</i>	
Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>
<i>Two birds were found within a flock of over fifteen Red-headed Buntings near to Bayena a short distance from Bharatpur.</i>	
Red-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza bruniceps</i>
<i>Fifteen birds were seen feeding in a large patch of elephant grass close to Bayena (that also held a couple of Black-headed Buntings in their midst), and another single was seen in the same area a couple of days later.</i>	

MAMMAL LIST

The taxonomy of this list follows **Nameer, P.O. (2000) Checklist of Indian Mammals**. Kerala Forest Department and Kerala Agricultural University.

FRUIT BATS: Pteropodidae

Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>
<i>A noisy restless, flock of these huge bats were seen a short time before we arrived at Bund Baretha.</i>	

OLD WORLD MONKEYS: Cercopithecidae

Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>
<i>One of the most common animals in north India, that we saw on every single day.</i>	
Northern Plains Grey (Hanuman) Langur	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>
<i>This sharp-dressed primate was recorded daily in the Himalayan foothills and Corbett. During the Bharatpur leg of the tour a small troop was also seen at Bund Baretha.</i>	

CANINES/DOGS: Canidae

Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
<i>One was seen at Kumeria, on the edge of Corbett NP, and then they were recorded daily in and around Bharatpur, with a maximum of six seen inside the sanctuary on one day.</i>	

MUSTELIDS (Weasels, Martens etc.): Mustelidae

Himalayan Yellow-throated Marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>
<i>One was seen in the Bajun Valley, and another two were seen inside Corbett NP.</i>	

MONGOOSES: Herpestidae

Common (Indian Grey) Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
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Two sightings were made around Bharatpur.

FELINES/CATS: Felidae

Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
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For me at least, the sighting of the trip. While we were driving back from Dhikala (Corbett NP) on our only game drive of the trip, and just as the sun began to sink lower, this boldly marked and powerful cat appeared suddenly and dramatically on the track in front of our canter. Bizarrely, our canter driver seemed not to notice the large strikingly marked cat standing there, and had to be alerted to stop for it from all of us behind! This sleek cat then dropped off the side of the road and down into a gully off the side of the road, only for us to catch up with it again on the side of the track a little further on, when it froze and glanced nonchalantly over its shoulder at us as we approached. Then after a few minutes this fetching feline slowly walked up the bank to the side of the road and sat down in full view of us, before finally sauntering away into the shadows a few minutes later. A magical sighting.

Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>
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When planning the trip Hein and Tom opted to miss the important tiger reserves of Central India and focus on the birds of the north. However, that did not stop them wanting to check for any animals along the roadsides just outside the park at Corbett on our own "unofficial" game drive. Unbelievably, just five minutes into our impromptu drive a Tiger walked out across the road in front of our vehicle. It may have been fleeting but the huge stripey orange form of a Bengal Tiger was pretty unmistakable and very fortunate indeed.

Fishing Cat	<i>Felis viverrina</i>
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Another surprise feline find of the trip, was this small cat found fishing a dead fish out of a small pool beside a Hindu temple within the park at Bharatpur, during mid-morning.

RIVER DOLPHINS: Platanistidae

Gangetic Dolphin	<i>Platanista gangetica</i>
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*This rare dolphin broke the surface a couple of times as we gently cruised along the Chambal River.
NB. Also known as GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN.*

PIGS: Suidae

Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>
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Three were seen in Corbett NP, and another sighting in Bharatpur too.

DEER: Cervidae

Spotted Deer/Cheetal	<i>Axis axis</i>
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This, one of the most regular species on a Tiger's menu, was seen regularly both within Corbett NP and Keoladeo Ghana NP.

Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
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This is India, and indeed Asia's, largest deer species. Recorded daily within Corbett NP, and also several times within the sanctuary at Bharatpur.

Barking Deer/Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
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One was seen near Vinayak in the Himalayan foothills, and several were seen during two separate drives into Corbett NP.

BOVIDS: Bovidae

Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>
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This massive animal was seen on three of our days around Bharatpur.

Himalayan (Grey) Goral	<i>Naemorhedus goral</i>
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One was seen at the highest point of the tour, above the town of Vinayak, where flocks of Himalayan Accentors wheeled in the air below us, and huge Himalayan Griffons cruised past us.

SQUIRRELS: Sciuridae

Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Fanambulus palmarum</i>
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Regularly seen around Bharatpur, and also at Okhla Barrage in Delhi.

HARES AND RABBITS: Leporidae

Indian/Black-naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
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One was seen at Bayena just outside Bharatpur.

OTHERS**CROCODILES: Crocodylidae**

Mugger Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
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Several of these huge and menacing looking crocodiles were seen along the banks of the Chambal River during our very enjoyable cruise along there on our final day.

Gavialidae

Gharial	<i>Gavialis gangeticus</i>
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*This strange, long-snouted, crocodile like reptile was seen first within Corbett NP, on our drive into Dhikala, and later again on the bank of the Chambal. This species is a **CRITICALLY ENDANGERED** species.*