



Bhutan – Birding & Wildlife April 27th – May 18th 2024

Trip Report 18th May 2024

Day One and Two – Delhi and Thimpu. 27th and 28th April

On our way to Bhutan, part of our group stopped in Delhi overnight before flying on to Paro in Bhutan the following day. A half day sightseeing tour of the Delhi's amazing historical sites took us into **Black Kite** habitat. The kites love the parks at this time of year because of the pools of water on the lawns created by the watering schemes. In 39° heat they really needed a drink!

Also around the temples were **Indian Palm Squirrels**, **Lineated Barbets**, **Grey Hornbills**, **Purple Sunbirds** and **House Crows**.



Indian Palm Squirrel – April 27th 2024 © Richard Baines

Paro and Thimpu

Flying to Paro, Bhutan's main airport from either India or Nepal takes you past Everest. The view from the plane is spectacular. Shortly after flying past this incredible mountain range, we landed in Bhutan.



Everest and Royal Bhutan Airlines 28th April 2024 © Akexandra Prescott

The **Ibisbill** is a unique bird, one species in a family of its own. Restricted to mountain streams in the high Himalayas, there are few places in the world to see them with ease. Within 30 mins of landing at Paro in Bhutan we were watching a family of two adults and four beautiful chicks. I was hoping to show our guests one of my favourite world birds but I didn't expect we would find a family and spend time watching and learning about their behaviour. a truly magical experience. Seeing these small newly born **Ibisbill** chicks was a once in a lifetime opportunity and great work by our Bhutanese nature guide Pema!



Ibisbill female and chick. Paro – April 28th 2024 © Richard Baines

Along the Paro Chhu River we also had great views of **River Lapwing**, **Plumbeous Water Redstart**, **White-capped Water Redstart**, **Brown Dipper**, **Common Sandpiper** with **Russett Sparrows** and **Oriental Turtle Doves** in the trees by the river. Along the adjacent roadside we saw **Grey-backed Shrikes** and **Blue Whistling Thrushes**. An impressive flock of several hundred **Red-billed Choughs** spiralled high over the mountains above the river. We had only been in Bhutan for a few hours but already my group was captivated.

Day Three – Dochula Pass, Lamperi Botanical Gardens, Punakha Dzong – 29th April.

An early start usually makes a huge difference and this was one of those well-planned days. Leaving our hotel in Thimpu at 0530 meant we could be at the summit of the Dochula Pass early enough to see and hear some great birds and experience the early morning atmosphere at 3,100m. We were also fortunate to see a **Wild Boar** on the roadside on our way to the summit.

Behind the restaurant we found four species of Laughingthrush; **Black-faced**, **Chestnut-crowed**, **White-throated** but best of all a spectacular **Spotted Laughingthrush**. Close by, a confiding female **Crimson-browed Finch** put the icing on the cake.



Spotted Laughingthrush. Dochula Pass - April 29th 2024 © Richard Baines

After a great start we moved down the road to Lamperi Botanical Gardens. Situated within the impressive moist temperate forest, the garden paths have created a fabulous site for birders. Huge Hemlock trees tower above Magnolia, Quercus (oak) and an impressive 40 species of native Rhododendrons. Beautiful Epiphytic Orchids were growing on dead oak trees including ***Coelogyne corymbosa***.

By the edge of the forest not far from the entrance to the gardens a flock of around 30 **Black-throated parrotbills** were feeding low down in the shrub layer of the forest. A mating pair of **Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers** were a great sight and our first **Yellow-billed Magpie** impressed the group.



Black-throated Parrotbill - April 29th 2024 © Richard Baines

Along the trails there were two **Tickell's Warblers**, lots of singing **Blyth's Leaf Warblers**, **Mrs Gould's Sunbirds**, **Green-tailed Sunbird**, **Bay Woodpeckers**, **Red-tailed Minla**, **Ultramarine Flycatchers**, **Whiskered Yuhinas** and a **Brownish-flanked Bush-warbler** alongside other woodland birds.

A stop on the roadside as we travelled towards Punaka brought us a lucky sighting of two **Himalayan Cutia** and several **Fire-capped Tits**. We could hear a **Wards Trogon** calling in the forest below us which was a real delight.

After a delicious lunch provided by the great team at Wild Nature Quest, we set off for Punakha Dzong translated as the 'palace of great happiness or bliss'.



Punakha Dzong - 29th April 2024 © Richard Baines

Day Four – Jigme Dorji National Park – 30th April.

This large national park covers an area of 4,316 km². An incredible 1,434 species of vascular plants have been found here. This rich diversity of flora was evident all around us as we entered the park. The lush green understory, the dense shrub and young tree growth and the towering huge trees above us many hundreds of years old. But what was most impressive was the scale of the forest. The fast-flowing river below us cut through huge steep sided glacial hillsides cloaked in forest. Flowers encountered included this beautiful Epiphytic orchid *Dendrolium Nobile*.



Dendrolium Nobile - 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines

The first birds we encountered included a **Green Cochoa** singing high in the forest. This shy and seldom encountered forest bird was not going to show itself but the sound was fabulous to hear. On a high tree above the canopy, we found a raggy looking **Oriental Honey Buzzard** and a close **Crested Serpent Eagle** flew straight over our heads. Further down the road we had brief views of a **Little Forktail**.



Sixbar Swordtail - 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines

As the morning grew warmer a wide range of butterflies emerged to feed on a variety of food on the vehicle track which included a dead toad! Our guide Pema helped us identify as many butterfly species as we could which included; **Circe** *Hestinalis nama*, **Sixbar Swordtail** *Graphium eurous*, **Common Windmill** *Byasa polyeuctes*, **Popinjay** *Stibochiona nicea*, **Bhutan Azure Sapphire** *Heliophorus moorei moorei*, **Oriental Orchid Tit** *Chliaria othona* and a **Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui*.



Common Windmill - 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines



Bhutan Azure Sapphire - 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines

Not far from these amazing butterflies we enjoyed great views of a **Chestnut-crowned Warbler**. Shortly afterwards, Norbu heard a **Lesser Shortwing** singing. After a great deal of staring into the undergrowth we eventually saw this tiny bird in the darkness of the foliage. A similarly tricky bird to see further down the road was a **Slaty-bellied Tesia**, after a lot of patience a similar reward of close but brief views. Much more difficult was the **Spotted Elachura** singing in dense vegetation. These birds have been nicknamed 'ninja birds' by our guides for their incredible ability to stay hidden. By this time our late lunch was calling far more urgently than the ninja! During lunch we added **Brown Dipper**, **Hodgson's Redstart** and a **Eurasian Wryneck** to the day list.



Chestnut-crowned Warbler - 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines

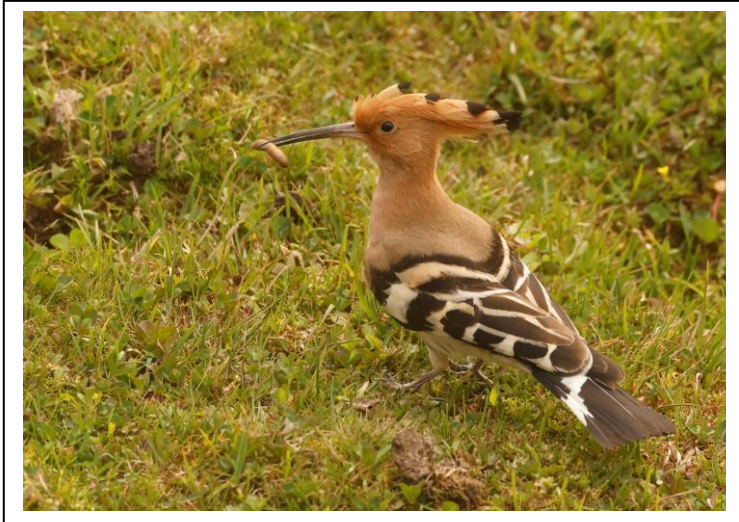
Our final stop on the forest road before turning back produced a very entertaining flock of **White-throated Laughingthrushes** taking a bath at the base of a mountain stream. The drive back through the forest was relatively quiet until at the entrance to the park I had a brief view of a male **Tickell's Thrush**. We eventually located both the male and female of this scarce species in Bhutan. A really good find to end the day. But as almost always happens just when you think you have seen the last birds another great species turns up. This time it was the turn of a **Crested Kingfisher**, such an impressive bird for everyone even those who had seen them before on YCN trips in India.



White-throated Laughingthrush
- 30th April 2024 © Richard Baines

Day Five – Punakha and Punatsangchu River, Roadside – Bajo to Nobding, Pelala Pass to Phobjikha – 1st May.

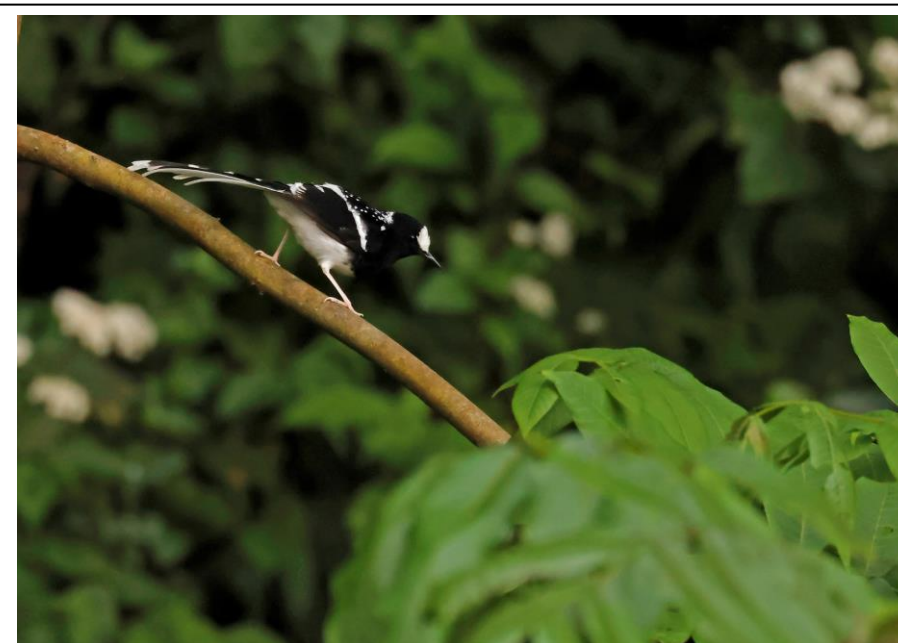
An action-packed day full of birding treats. A 5.30 am start meant we could reach the forest where most activity would be early in the morning. During a short stop by the river, we added **White-browed Wagtail**, **Green Sandpiper** and **Hoopoe** to our trip list. It's always great to see some birds we are familiar with in Europe alongside completely new families and species.



Hoopoe – 1st May 2024 ©
Richard Baines

The road between Bajo and Nobding was really rewarding with many birds seen on our short walks. Three species of swift started the show with great views of around 50 **Himalayan Swiftlet**, one **White-throated Needletail** and several **Fork-tailed Swifts**. As we progressed up the side of the valley, a male **Blue-fronted Redstart** was spotted from the bus by two of our guests. We then stopped for a very loud **Spotted Elachura** which showed briefly to a few lucky guests.

Another roadside stop, this time prompted by our excellent driver Tensing gave us great views of two **Spotted Forktails** at the base of a small waterfall.



Spotted Forktail – 1st May
2024 © Richard Baines



Himalayan Cutia – 1st May 2024
© Richard Baines

Our first forest highlight was excellent prolonged views of male and female **Himalayan Cutia**. They fed above us searching out invertebrates amongst the mosses and ferns in the trees without any interest in our group, as we watched from below with great delight. Not bad for pre-breakfast!

During our field breakfast we were interrupted by two impressive **Crested Serpent Eagles** circling above our tea and toast, and our first **Drongo Cuckoo** of the trip. A **Mountain Hawk Eagle** circled over the forest shortly after our breakfast.

Then came our first bird rush of the day. A group of Alder trees attracted several **Tibetan Serin** and a pair of **Spot-winged Grosbeaks**. Nearby, a sparkingly bright male **Asian Emerald Cuckoo** sat on the top of a tree long enough for us all to enjoy great scope views. **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker**, **Chestnut-crowned Warbler**, **Whistlers Warbler**, **White-tailed Nuthatch**, **Himalayan Cuckoo**, **Common Cuckoo** and many more birds created a fabulous early morning show. The next highlights were not far away. A very smart **Pale-blue Flycatcher**, **Vermillion Flycatcher**, a male **Grey-chinned Minivet** and a female **Orange-bellied Leafbird**.



Pale-blue Flycatcher – 1st May
2024 © Richard Baines

After lunch we drove up to the summit of the Pele La. At 3423m this is one of the highest passes in Bhutan. Walking the old road was wonderful as it took us away from the road and into the wilder hillsides. We were immediately surrounded by Rhododendrons with both *Rhododendron arboreum* and *Rhododendron thomsonii* creating a very impressive veil of red across the hillsides. On route we stopped to appreciate a pair of **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush**.

After a quiet start to the walk the shrubs suddenly sprang into life. Three species of warblers; **Ashy-throated, Blyth's Leaf** and **Lemon-rumped, Green-tailed Sunbird, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Rufous-vented Tit, Yellow-browed Tit, Hoary-throated Barwing**, three species of **Yuhina; Whiskered, Streak-throated and Rufous-vented, White-browed Fulvetta, Rufous-winged Fulvetta** and **Bar-throated Siva**. Amongst all of these birds, a pair of **Golden-naped Finch** appeared out of no-where but kept down low amongst the Rhododendrons.



Hoary-throated Barwing – 1st
May 2024 © Richard Baines

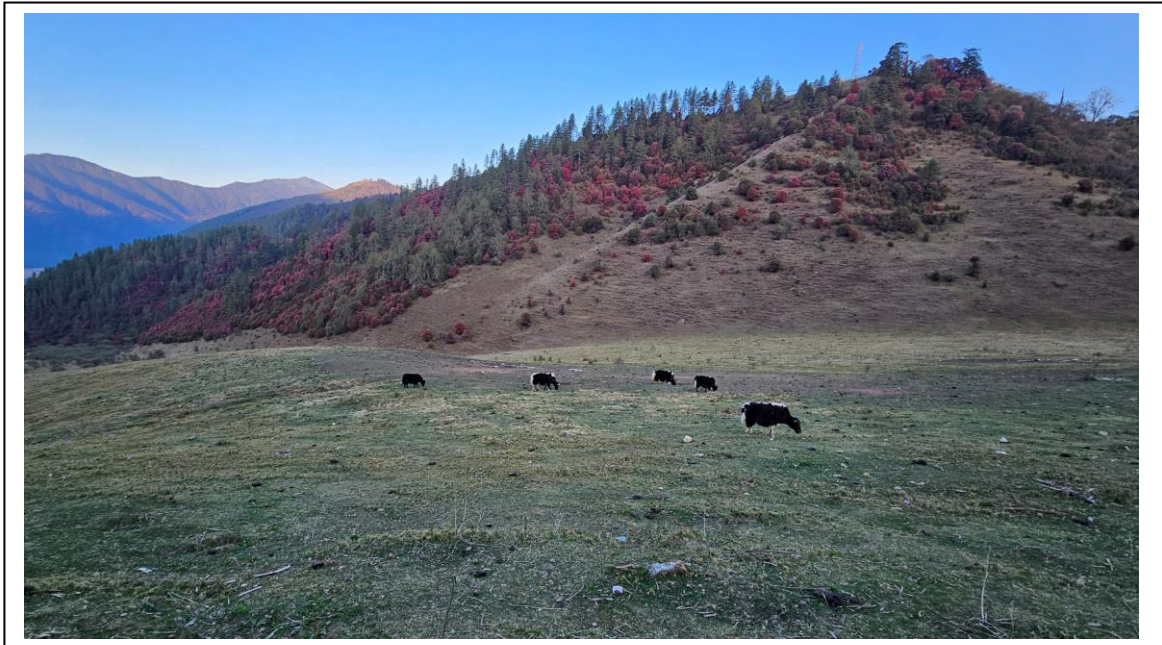


Rhododendron and Evergreen Forest. Pelala Pass to Phobjikha – 1st May

The last good birds of the day included a **Spotted Nutcracker** on the top of a **Blue Pine** and a **Hoopoe** nesting in the wall of our hotel in the Phobjikha valley.

Day Six – Pele La to Bumthang – 2nd May.

The drive from Phobjikha to the high pass at Pele allowed us a stop in the Yak grazed grassland just below the summit. Here we found a group of **Rosy Pipits** and several **Oriental Skylark**. At the summit a group of **Spotted Nutcrackers** flew over the prayer flags towards the distant high Himalaya Mountain range.



Grasslands, Yak and Sunrise at Pele La – 2nd May 2024 © Richard Baines



Rosy Pipit at Pele La – 2nd May 2024 © Richard Baines

Before long we were back on the old road at Pele La. The early start meant we were the first people on the rough track in the morning. It didn't take long before we found a female **Satyr Tragapon** feeding on the edge of the forest. This was a great sighting to start to the walk. At this elevation the air is cool so we all had to wear several layers to keep warm on the walk.

Before the sun broke across the mountain range there was less bird activity but we still managed to see some great species. **Ashy-throated**, **Blyth's Leaf** and a **Large-billed Warbler**. **Rufous Gorgeted Flycatchers** were very common with smaller numbers of **Slaty-blue Flycatchers**. On the hillside we found a small group of **White-browed Rosefinches** and five **Tibetan Serin**. Nearby were a pair of **Red-headed Bullfinch**, several **Spot-winged Grosbeaks** and two **Green Shrike Babblers**. Further down the track our expert guides Norbu and Pema picked out both **Grey-sided Bush Warbler** and **Aberrant Bush Warbler** with good views of both birds.



Long-tailed Minivet (female) at Pele La – 2nd May 2024 © Richard Baines

By the time we reached the breakfast crew the sun had risen above the hillside. This was a big lift to not only our spirits but also the bird activity. Opposite our breakfast was a forest alive with birds. **Common Rosefinches, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Grey Bushchats, Long-tailed Minivets, Olive-backed Pipits, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Yellow-bellied Fantail**, leaf warblers and to top off the show six **Himalayan Vultures** drifted over the breakfast table...



Moupin Pika at Pele La – 2nd May 2024 © Richard Baines

Amongst the shrubs and grassland by the edge of the forest we also noticed several **Moupin Pika**. These endearing small mammals are generalist herbivores and restricted to Himalaya favouring Rhododendron and Bamboo forests throughout their extensive range and very cute!



Our birding and wildlife group at Pele La old road – 2nd May 2024 © Richard Baines

Day Seven – Bumthang – Thrumshing La, Sengor and Phrumsengla National Park. 3rd May.

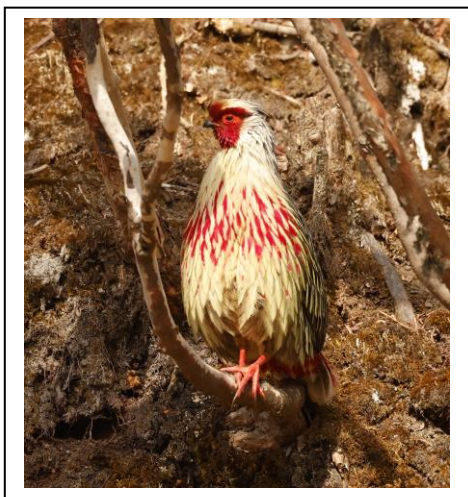
After several early starts we decided to have a well-deserved sleep in on the morning of the 3rd with an 8am breakfast at the wonderful family run hotel Phuntsho Guest House in Bumtang.

Our next destination was Sengor which involved weaving our way on the narrow road through forests of Blue Pine, slowly climbing higher and higher. After a relaxing journey with very few other vehicles on the road we stopped for a leg stretch at Tangsibi under Bumthang district. Above and around the Dzong were lots of **Red-billed Choughs** and not far away 12 **Himalayan Vultures** ‘kettled’ on the mid-day warm air above the forest. Two **Himalayan Buzzards** joined the group and a male **Amur Falcon** soared above the temple before disappearing into the valley. This was our first rush of raptors on the trip. As we continued eastwards at a higher altitude, our bird of prey sighting improved further as we caught sight of a displaying female **Northern Goshawk** above the coniferous forest a few miles beyond Tangsibi.



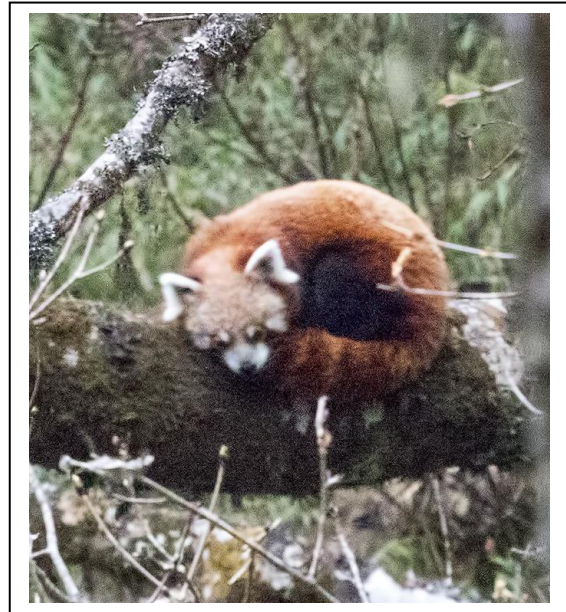
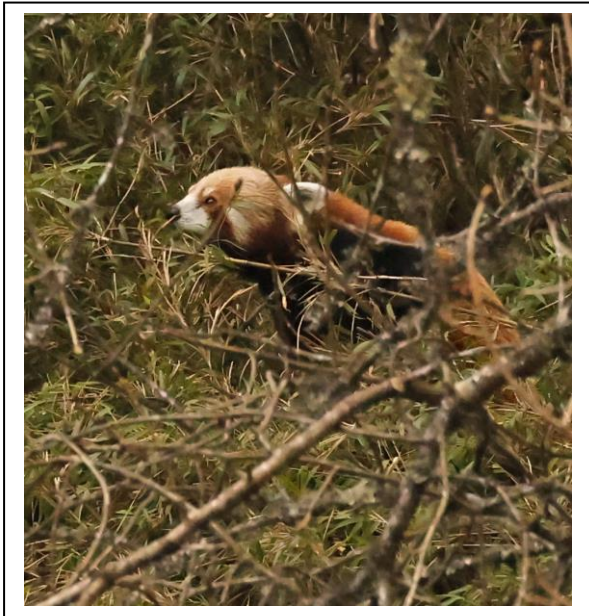
Tangsibi under Bumthang district – 3rd May 2024 © Richard Baines

Thrumshing La is the second highest pass in Bhutan at 3,780m. The Chorten, prayer flags and the breathtaking view were fabulous. Within a few minutes of leaving our birding bus we had found new trip species. A **Golden Bush Robin** was one of many new species around the summit. Our first **Blood Pheasants** of the trip and **Fire-tailed Sunbirds**. **Grey-crested Tit**, **Rufous-vented Tit**, **Buff-barred Warblers** and a small flock of **White-throated Needle-tail Swifts** were chasing each other high above us.



Blood Pheasant (male) and Fire-tailed Sunbird Thrumshing La – 3rd May 2024 © Richard Baines

We slowly weaved our way down the road flanked by Hemlock and Rhododendron Forest stopping occasionally for some birding and to take many landscape photos. As we dropped in altitude the forest slowly became more impressive. The trees became older, bigger and taller, and we started to see Bamboo in the understory. Early afternoon is normally a quiet time for wildlife watching but not on this day. Tenzin the team driver called Norbu to give us the news, he had found a **Red Panda**! After a very swift stomp we were all watching one of the world's top mammals. The distance between us and the panda allowed us to watch it feed without disturbance, and after over an hour of munching its way through bamboo leaves, it simply crawled onto a nearby branch and fell asleep. The whole experience was amazing and unforgettable.



Red Panda Phrumsengla National Park – 3rd May 2024 © Richard Baines and George Collett



Satyr Tragopan – Sengor – Phrumsengla National Park – 3rd May 2024 © Norbu. Bhutan Wild Nature Quest

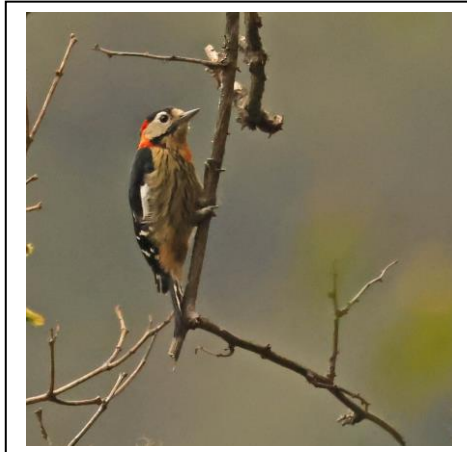
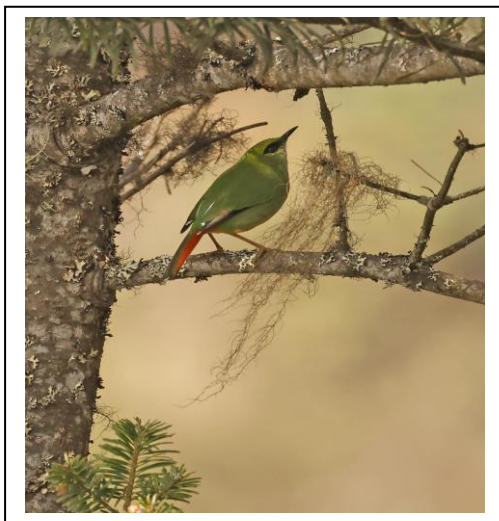
Not far from the panda site is the small village of Sengor and Tshewangmo where we stayed overnight, camping in the field behind the hotel. Surrounded by forest and small cattle grazed fields we were in the best place to experience the tranquillity and wildness of this National Park. A short drive before dinner produced great views of a displaying male **Satyr Tragapon**. Just before retiring to our tents, we watched a **Grey Nightjar** display above our heads and listened to several **Himalayan Owls** in the forest.

Day Eight – Sengor/ Tshewangmo, Thrumshing La and the Yongkola Road – Phrumsengla National Park. 4th May.

The night sky of the 3rd May was full of stars with an impressive and vivid display above our tents, but the following day started chilly with a light ground frost. After breakfast we headed back up the road, past the previous day's panda site to Thrumshing La. Just below the summit a male **Himalayan Monal** glided between the trees and a small group of **Blood Pheasants** arrived at the roadside.

By the side of the road below the pass we found more **Fire-tailed Sunbirds** but even more exciting were two **Fire-tailed Myzornis**, spotted by Norbu. Myzornis was one of our major trip targets, so we were all very pleased with this sighting. In the same area were several **Himalayan Bluetail** and lots of **Buff-barred Warblers**, a single **Greenish Warbler** and many **Lemon-rumped Warblers**. Further down the road a small flock of **Fulvous Parrotbills** and two **Great Parrotbills** gave great views in the forest.

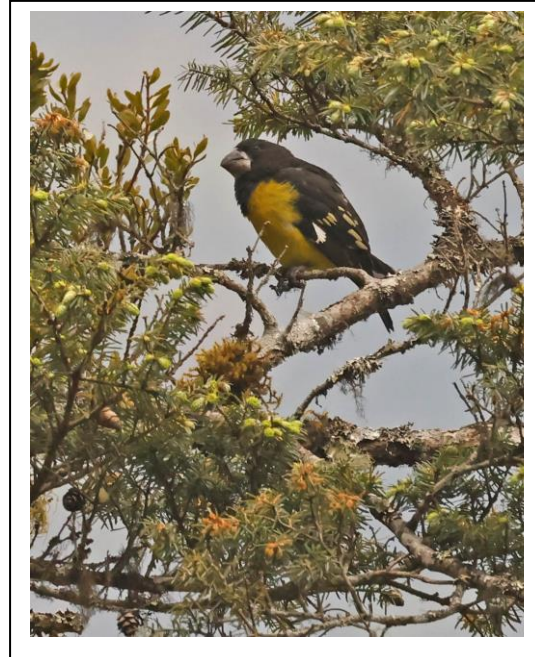
An early evening drive before rain created an opportunity to look for **Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers** which were tricky to see but very vocal. A female **Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** proved far easier to see as she fed on a tiny hanging branch.



Fire-tailed Myzornis, Great Parrotbill, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker and Golden Bush Robin
Phrumsengla National Park – 4th May 2024 © Richard Baines

**Day Nine – Sengor/ Tshewangmo, along the Yongkola Road within Phrumsengla National Park.
5th May.**

At dawn on this mild and damp morning, I was awoken by the sound of barking dogs and the sound of two singing **Satyr Tragapons** behind our camp site. Thanks to the dogs I was able to listen to the eery and strange sound of tragapons before I got out of bed! The dawn chorus was dominated by tragapons, **Grey Nightjar**, **Himalayan Owl**, **Himalayan Cuckoo**, **Lesser Cuckoo**, **Olive-backed Pipits**, **Spotted Nutcrackers**, **Blyth's Leaf Warblers** and sunbirds.



Scarlet Finch and Spot-winged Grosbeak Phrumsengla National Park – 5th May 2024 © Richard Baines

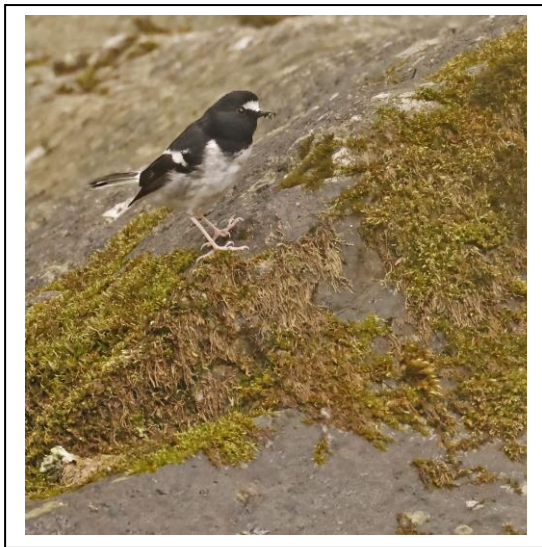
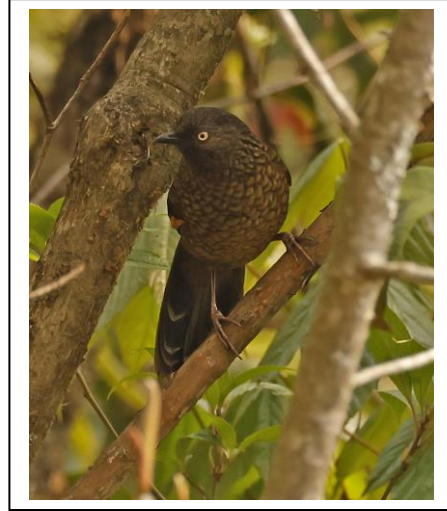
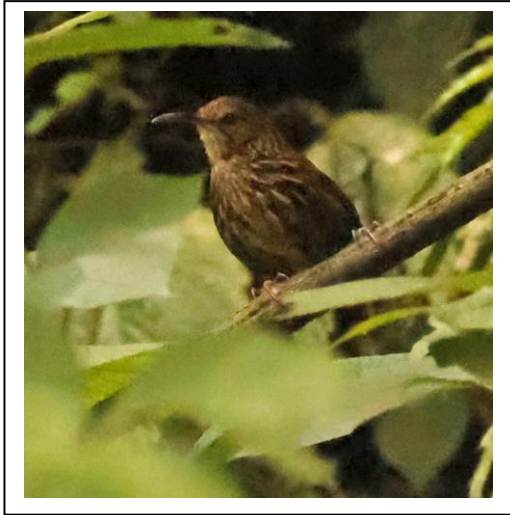
After breakfast we started birding the Yongkola Road which was a great experience on this mild and misty morning. Before finding lots of new species, we enjoyed the fantastic sight of a male **Satyr Tragapon** gliding low over our heads. This meant all of our group had now seen this iconic species. On the same walk we then enjoyed great views of **Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** and **Darjeeling Woodpecker** along with a group of four **Spot-winged Grosbeaks**.

Further down the road we stopped for another birding walk. Two **Scaly Laughingthrush** were our seventh species of Laughingthrush for the trip. Further down the road, three species of **Yuhina** (**Stripe-throated**, **Rufous-vented** and **Whiskered**) bounced around in the bushes alongside **Mr's Gould's Sunbirds**, **Green-tailed Sunbirds**, **Yellow-throated Tits**, **Ashy-throated Warblers**, **Rufous-breasted Niltava**, **Sikkim Treecreeper**, **Red-tailed Minla**, **Rufous Sibilas** but best of all a male **Scarlet Finch**. More short walks produced good views of both **Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler** and **Hume's Bush Warbler**.

Our lunch which we took by the side of the road, beneath the sub-tropical forest looked like a well-earned break especially for our team of hard-working expert Bhutanese guides. But there was to be no rest from great birds on this famous road. Withing minutes of arriving we were being entertained by a family of **Rufous-necked Hornbills** in the canopy above our tea and coffee!

Before reaching our new hotel and birding area for four nights we added **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker**, **Black Eagle**, **Grey-bellied Tesia**, **Little Forktail**, and more **Dark-rumped Flycatchers**. A late afternoon birding trip

was fruitful as we added, **Little-pied Flycatcher** and **Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo**, **Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Sultan Tit**, **Pygmy Cupwing**, **Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon** and many familiar species such as **Maroon Oriole**. In a final flourish, **Long-billed Wren-Babbler** and **Grey-cheeked Warbler** also showed well.

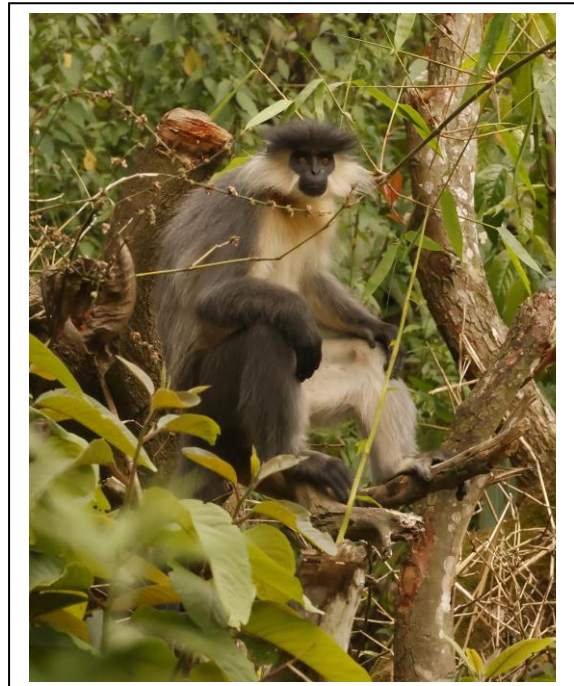
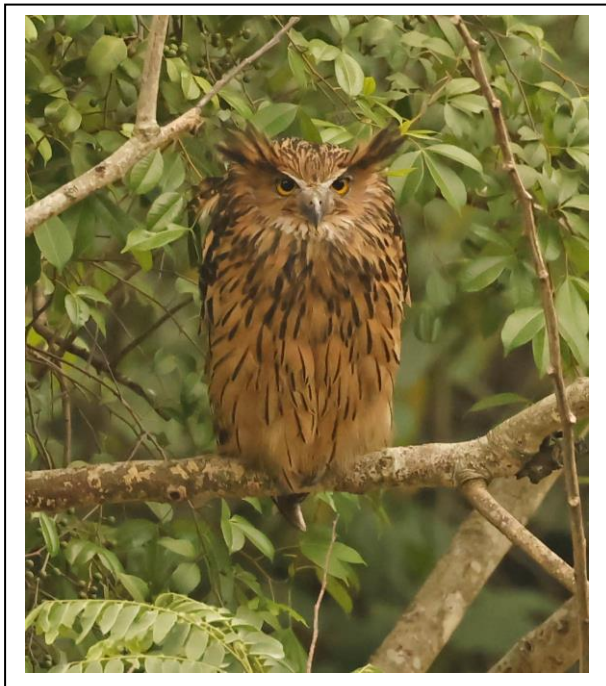


Long-billed Scimitar Babbler, Scaly Laughingthrush, Little Forktail and Mrs Gould's Sunbird

Phrumsengla National Park – 5th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Day Ten – Trogon Villa to Lingmethang and Lower Lingmethang. p.m. along the Namling Road in Phrumsengla National Park. 6th May.

Early morning rain and low cloud at Trogon Villa encouraged us to head south to a lower altitude where we were the weather was drier and less mist. At our first stop by a river in Lingmethang we saw both **Crested Kingfisher** and **White-throated Kingfisher**. A short walk on the edge of village fields and forest following the river produced new species for our trip in the form of **Crimson Sunbird**, **Crested Laughingthrush**, **Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush**, **Bronzed Drongo** and best of all a roosting **Tawny Fish Owl** which was perched in a fantastic place below us giving great views but not too close to be disturbed. At 700m this area was at the lowest altitude of birding for us on our trip so far.



Tawny Fish Owl and Capped Langur – Lower Lingmethang – 6th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Along the river and road, a range of lush sub-tropical trees and forest created a diverse mosaic of rich habitats alongside fruit and arable fields. The small population living in this area were growing a wide variety of food including maize and oranges. This was a bird rich area with lots of great sounds. Four species of **Bulbul**; **Red-vented**, **Black**, **Mountain** and **Ashy** made lots of noise, **Scarlet Minivets** chased each other through the trees alongside **Grey-headed** and **Bay Woodpeckers**, **Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches** and **Great** and **Blue-throated Barbets**. On the edge of an arable field where wild seed-bearing plants were growing, we found a flock of 20 **Yellow-breasted Greenfinches**.

Retracing our journey back up towards Trogon Villa brought us back into the forest areas on the edge of towering hillsides covered in sub-tropical forest. Several stops on the journey brought new trip birds in the form of **Black-chinned Yuhina**, **Striated Yuhina**, **Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike**, **Streaked Spiderhunter**, **Rufous-necked Laughingthrush**, **Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush** and **Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler**. Above the forest a magnificent **Black Eagle** soared over the road providing excellent views, **Black-throated Tits** whilst foraged in bamboo below us.

One of our last stops before lunch was again thanks to the keen mammal spotting of our excellent driver Tensing. A family group of **Capped langurs** fed on bamboo by the roadside whilst nearby a **Malayan Giant Squirrel** was spotted in a tree by a few of our guests.



The epiphytic orchid Foxtail Orchid *Rhynchostylis retusa* – 6th May 2024 © Richard Baines

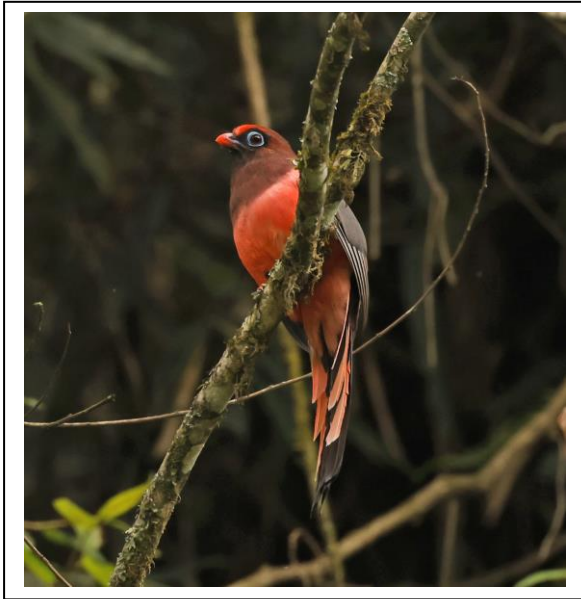
Day Eleven – Trogon Villa along the Namling Road in Phrumsengla National Park. 7th May

Staying at Trogon Villa is a huge thrill. Great rooms, great food, great staff and we are right in the thick of some great birding habitat. From the hotel gardens and the nearby roadside there were **Rufous-necked Laughingthrushes**, a **Long-tailed Shrike**, a male **Blue-capped Rock Thrush**, **Pale Blue** and **Verditer Flycatchers**, a **Streaked Spiderhunter** and in the sky above the villa two **Black Eagles** and flocks of **Himalayan Swiftlets**. And I mustn't forget the many **Eurasian Tree Sparrows** in the hotel garden. But arguably best of all was a monster hawk-moth found outside one of our guests' rooms. A very impressive **Mango Hawk-moth**. We carefully moved it to a safer roost site so it didn't get harmed.



Mango Hawk-moth – Trogon Villas – 7th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Our early start with coffee and tea at 0530 was certainly not auspicious as low cloud and rain dominated the scene outside the hotel. We pushed on regardless which proved the right thing to do. Our guests toughed out the rain at our first stop high up on the Namling Road. There were few birds singing in the rain but not long after we left the Wild Nature Quest birding bus, Norbu heard a **Wards Trogon**. After lots of wet waiting and scanning of the forest, Norbu picked out a male Trogon. For the next hour we enjoyed fantastic views of a male and a female. This was a great bird for us to see as many birders visiting this area had recently failed to see them. Not far from the Trogons was a **Himalayan Cutia**.



Wards Trogon (male and female) – Namling Road – 7th and 8th May 2024 © Richard Baines

After the thrill of the trogons, we spent a very leisurely day birding the sub-tropical forest of Namling Road. New birds included **Yellow-breasted Fulvetta**, **Small Niltava** and another 'Ninja' bird the enigmatic **Sikkim Wedge-billed Scimitar Babbler**. Only just re-discovered in this area of Bhutan in 2000.



Sikkim Wedge-billed Scimitar Babbler – Namling Road – 7th May 2024 © George Collett



Small Niltava and Yellow-bellied Fulvetta – Namling Road – 7th May 2024 © Richard Baines

The day ended with yet more good views of **Rufous-necked Hornbills**. A male fed on hanging black berries on a tree below the road which meant we could look down on the birds rather than stretching upwards into the canopy above the road.

Day Twelve – Trogon Villa along the Namling Road in Phrumsengla National Park. 8th May

Large scale, natural forest ecosystems are amazing places for wildlife because on almost every day the chances of finding new wildlife is really high. Returning to the same area really worked today because we became familiar with some of the birds we had seen earlier in the week and we also found new species. The weather had improved dramatically as we set out to sunshine and a clear sky. This was the first day since we arrived that we could see the whole landscape.

The first great bird was a striking male **Blue-capped Rock Thrush** which sat on a fence post by the roadside only 5 minutes from Trogon Villa. These summer visitors arrive every year in Bhutan and increase throughout early May.

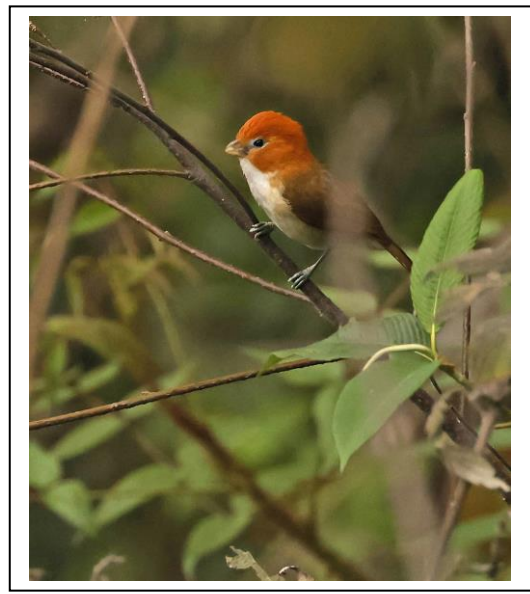
After driving towards Namling Road our guide Norbu decided to try an old track for some early morning birding. This was a great move as we found three **Red-headed Trogon** which was our second species of trogon in two days. Two males showed fairly well and a female before we moved back to the main road again. Before lunch we had seen another **Wards Trogon**. This was turning out to be an excellent week for trogons. After hearing **Sikkim Treecreeper** several times during the week, we finally achieved good views in the afternoon.

My previous trips to Bhutan had both been in winter. This spring trip was a great opportunity to enjoy the wide variety of cuckoos returning to Himalaya at this time of year. Over the course of this trip so far, we have seen and heard eight 'cuckoo' species; **Large Hawk Cuckoo, Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, Indian Cuckoo, Eurasian Cuckoo, Himalayan Cuckoo, Lesser Cuckoo, Asian Emerald Cuckoo** and **Drongo Cuckoo**. The group favourite was Asian emerald. The flashing iridescent emerald colour on its head and back was fabulous to see. Add to that their habit of perching on exposed branches giving us time to watch them and you have a guaranteed star bird.



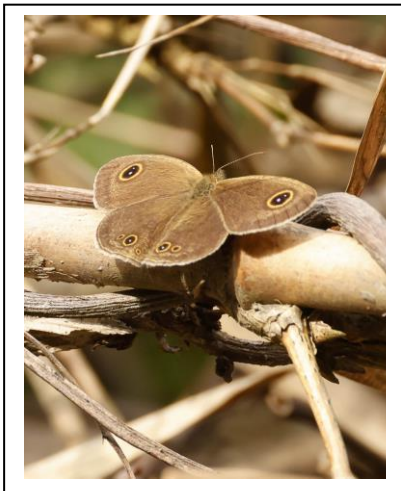
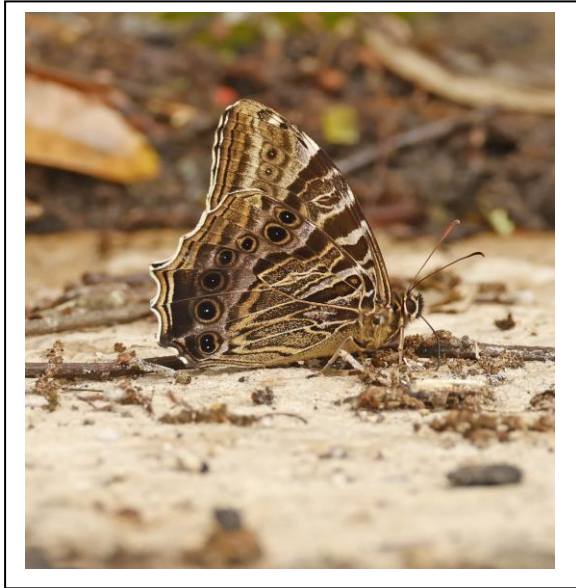
Blue-capped Rock Thrush and Sikkim Treecreeper – Namling Road – 8th May 2024 © Richard Baines

At the end of the afternoon as the light faded, we found a new trip species. After hearing the calls of several **White-breasted Parrotbills** we eventually found them and had brief but good views feeding in bamboo.



Asian Emerald Cuckoo and Greater White-breasted Parrotbill – Namling Road – 8th May 2024 ©

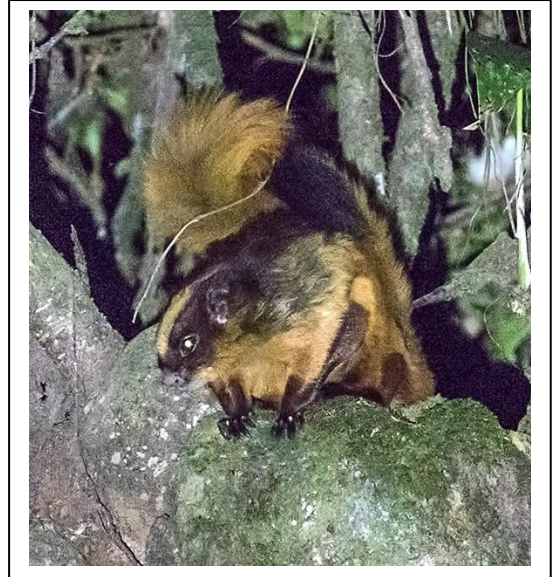
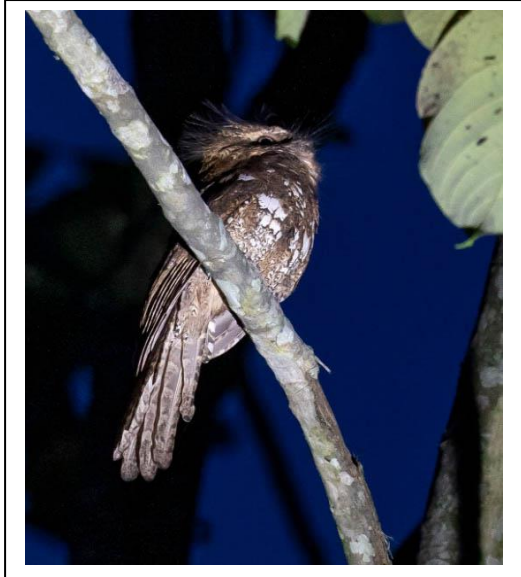
The warm and still weather proved perfect for butterflies and we added several new trip species including **Lilacfork**, **Dusky Labyrinth**, **Rusty Forester** and **Himalayan Forewing** and another **Bhutan Azure Sapphire** which we originally saw on day four in Jigme Dorji National Park.



Dusky Labyrinth, Rusty Forester, Himalayan Forewing, Lilacfork – Namling Road – 8th May © Richard Baines

Before heading back for dinner, we had planned an evening drive for two speciality species. On this beautifully warm and still night we were in luck as we successfully achieved great views of both **Hodgson's Frogmouth** and a **Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel**. The squirrel was found by driving very slowly up the road scanning a powerful torch into the trees and looking for a reflection from their 'laser' eyes shining bright. After a lengthy search we eventually found one and we saw the green eyes light up in the canopy. Another quick exit from the bus resulted in great scope views of this highly charismatic mammal and the largest flying squirrel in the world!

This memorable day ended in spectacular fashion as a huge thunder storm moved across the valley cutting off all the power. The hotel staff remained unphased and we enjoyed great food again under flashlights and good company. A traditional Bhutanese 'Thunder Dragon' end to an amazing stay at Trogon Villa.



Hodgson's Frogmouth © Norbu and Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel © George Collett – Namling Road – 8th May

Day Thirteen – Trogon Villa through Phrumsengla National Park to Chumey/Bumtang. 9th May

After a long and eventful day on the 8th May we opted for a slightly later start on the 9th. A 0730 sleep in! After breakfast we drove along the Namling Road and soon met the regular troupe of **Capped Langurs** which were busy licking a roadside cliff face which had been drenched during the previous night's thunderstorm. The minerals leaching from the rock outcrop proved to be an irresistible breakfast for the Langurs.

A few miles up the road and we stopped again for a stroll, this time to try to find the elusive **Beautiful Nuthatch**. We had only heard but so far not seen this famous bird during our stay. Sadly, this was a repeat of our previous searches with no sign on this occasion. However, we were treated to a fantastic display of hornbill activity. Two pairs moved into close proximity of each other and kicked off a frenzy of barks, screeches and grunts. After all the activity settled down, we enjoyed great close-up views of a male delicately picking berries from a tree with its huge bill.

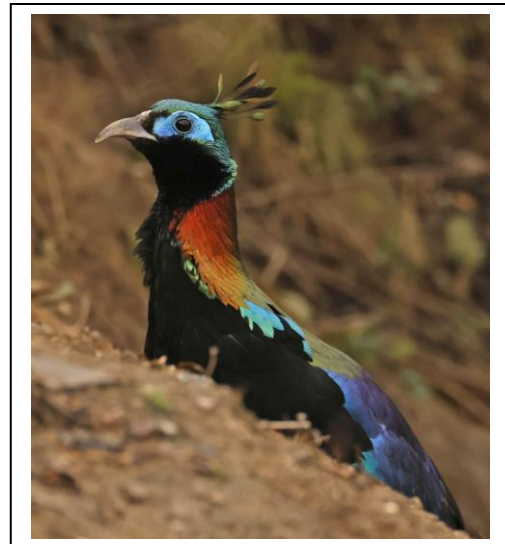
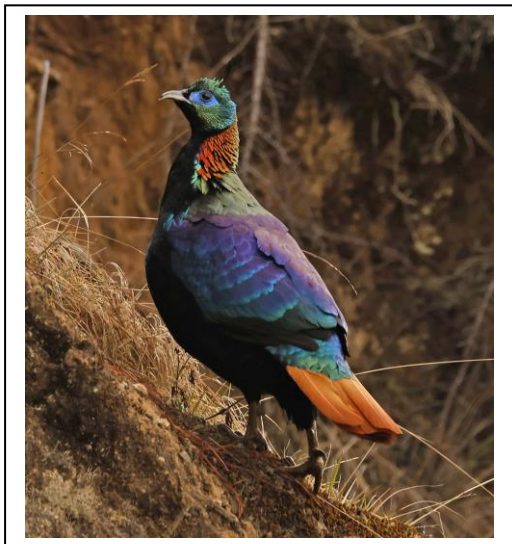


Rufous-necked Hornbill (male) – Namling Road – 9th May 2024 © Richard Baines

We eventually left the sub-tropical forest of Namling Road and Yongkola and started the long drive to the Chumney Valley and Bumtang. On the way we stopped at the exact same spot above Sengor where we had seen a **Red Panda** on the 3rd May. Remarkably after only 20 minutes searching Pema found another two **Red Panda** this time above us in dense bamboo and rhododendron. Whilst our views were closer the pandas were harder to see and moved on into the dense foliage after a short while. Three **Red Panda** on our two visits to this magical place in Phrumsengla National Park was a great result and testament to the skills of our guides from Wild Nature Quest.

Day Fourteen – Chumey/Bumtang to Trongsa. 10th May

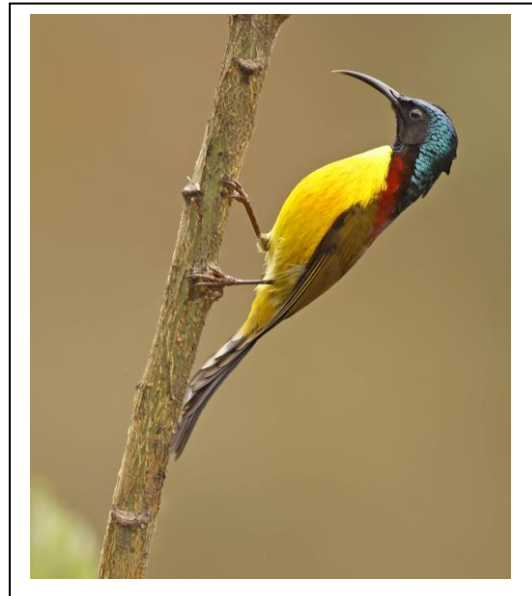
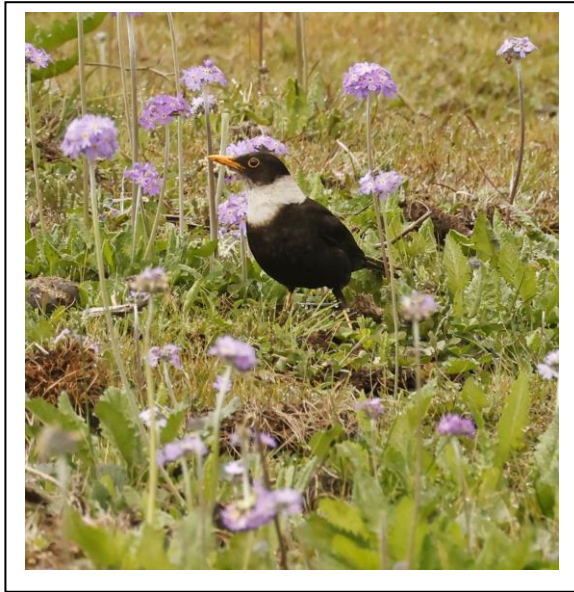
Overnight at the Nature Retreat in Chumney (2983m). Yet another hotel with wonderful staff, great food, lovely warm rooms and another great view. We rose early again to set out up the long track towards the iconic setting of Tharpaling Monastery (3630m). On the way to the lower monastery, we stopped for no less than three **Himalayan Monal**. This was the bird we really wanted to see and we were in luck even before we reached our final stop. The colour on the males we saw was truly amazing. A riot of shades with so many iridescent colours on such a large bird was remarkable to see. Monals are also noted for their very strong bill which is curved and used to dig for tubers/vegetable matter and invertebrates at depths of up to 25cm.



Male and female Himalayan Monal – 10th May 2024 © Richard Baines

At the monastery we saw another two birds a male and female. I was last here in February 2020 and it was great birding around the monastery. This time was no different with our first **Rufous-breasted Accentor** of the trip, a pair of **Red Crossbill** and a female **Common Rosefinch**.

On the way down we added another male bring the total to seven; five male and two female. We also found two **Blood Pheasant** on the way down we found a **Tickell's Warbler** and a very smart **White-collared Blackbird** feeding amongst **Drumstick Primroses**. Nearby a large flock of over 50 **Red-billed Choughs** entertained us with bill rubbing and mutual preening.



White-collared Blackbird and Green-tailed Sunbird – 10th May 2024 © Richard Baines

After coffee and tea under the Junipers at the base of the mountain we started the drive to Trongsa. Stopping along the way at several stops gave us an opportunity to see many now familiar species again such as **Black-throated Laughingthrushes**, yuhinas, fulvetas, barwings and a range of leaf warblers such as **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**, **Blyth's**, **Lemon-rumped** and **Ashy-throated**. At Yotongla summit we had brief views of a **Rufous-breasted Wren Babbler** and good views of a **Grey-breasted Bush Warbler**. Further down the road we enjoyed the best views of the trip so far of **Spotted Nutcrackers** and **Green-tailed Sunbirds**.

The next stop brought us close views of a pair of **White-winged Grosbeaks** feeding on Juniper. We could even hear the sound of their massive bills crushing the seeds. Shortly afterwards we stopped the bus again for two **Rufous-bellied Eagles**.



White-winged Grosbeak (male) – 10th May 2024 © Richard Baines

After such a great day full of birds we were ready for lunch break. But that didn't mean we had to stop birding! Overlooking a spectacular view of Trongsa, we watched a displaying female **Crested Goshawk** and a very smart **Yellow-billed Magpie**. We made it to our hotel the beautiful Yangkil Resort for an early afternoon check in followed by a group visit to Trongsa Dzong.

Day Fifteen – Trongsa to Tingtibi. 11th May

Ecosystems: Cool Temperate Forest to Sub-tropical Forest

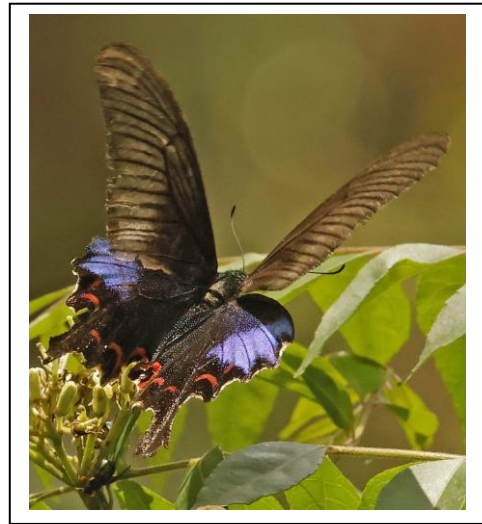
The long drive from Trongsa to Tingtibi was full of great birding stops. Our first was amongst terrace farmland on the steep slopes between beautiful forest and towering mountain sides near Samcholing. Here we saw a pair of **Grey-winged Blackbirds** and two **Crested Buntings** and a very smart male **Common Rosefinch**. Not long afterwards a **Mountain Hawk-eagle** flew over the bus and one of many **Common Cuckoos** on the trip sang close by and two **Bhutan Laughingthrush** showed really well by the side of the road. During lunch we watched a small group of **Ashy Woodswallows** hawk insects above the road and we saw our first **Mountain Bulbul** of the trip.



Crested Bunting – 11th May 2024 © Richard Baines

After lunch we slowly worked our way across the towering hillsides of forest from cool temperate dominated by evergreen broadleaf trees such as oak to sub-tropical forest where we started to see huge tree ferns amongst the lush undergrowth as well as epiphytic orchids. The change in ecosystem was gradual as we dropped in altitude and the temperature increased. Across large swathes of the landscape covering hundreds of kilometres there was no visible break in connectivity. Bhutan must be one of the most impressive countries in the world where this scale of primeval forest can still be seen.

Our first stop after lunch was mostly all about butterflies. Many species flew alongside the road and gathered to drink from a roadside culvert, there must have been over a hundred individual butterflies in a small area of roadside water the most impressive being the **Common Map** and a Swallowtail species possibly **Krishna Swallowtail**. The best birds in this area were two **White-browed Scimitar Babblers** and a very smart male **Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher** both new for our trip.



Common Map and Paris Peacock – 11th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Our first stop of the day in the sub-tropical ecosystem was a great one for three spectacular forest birds; **Silver-eared Mesia**, **Long-tailed Broadbill** and **Red-faced Liocichla**. Seeing these three birds in quick succession felt like a big change in bird/habitat communities. Just above the road our eagle-eyed driver found an active **Bronzed Drongo** nest.

Shortly afterwards we stopped to watch our first troupe of **Golden Langur**. By now we were deep within the sub-tropical habitat and on a short walk we found a foraging group of songbirds which included several new species for our trip; **Humes Warbler**, **Nepal Fulvetta** and **Golden Babbler** alongside other species we had seen previously such as **Blue-bearded Bee-eater**, **Grey-headed woodpecker** and **Black-chinned Yuhina**. Sharp eyed Norbu had brief views of a **Red-headed Trogon** before tried to move on again.

Norbu then stopped us as we tried to climb aboard the bus as he had just heard a **Blue-naped Pitta** calling nearby. Sure, enough when we got off the bus the pitta was calling very close to the road. This was a real red-letter sighting. The pitta showed really well to everyone, deep in the trees but clearly visible in the undergrowth below the road.



Blue-naped Pitta and Golden Babbler – 11th May 2024 © Richard Baines

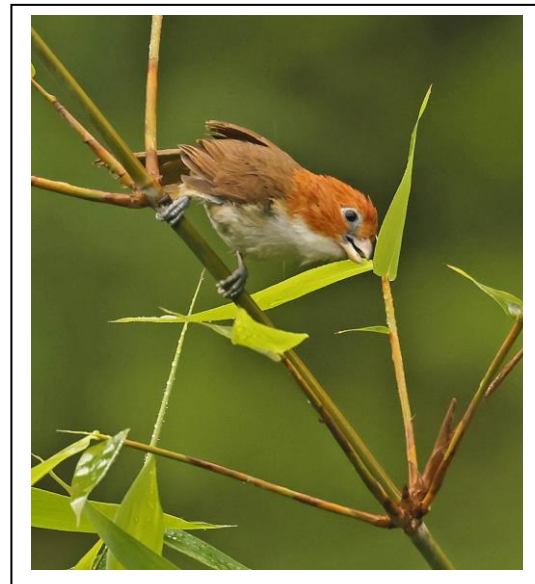
This was a great ending to the day. After an hour or so we reached our Forestry Department campsite at Tingtibi ready for great food, beer, wine and the daily list discussion led expertly by Pema Dawa of Wild Nature Quest.

Day Sixteen – Gomphu Road, Tingtibi. 12th May

Ecosystems: Sub-tropical Forest

Rising early sometimes doesn't beat the local guides. Norbu heard a **Hooded Pitta** calling on the **White-bellied Heron** nature trail right next to our tents at 5am. Maybe we will catch up and see it tomorrow... But the great thing was this meant we had both Bhutanese pittas on our trip team list, one seen and one heard.

After early coffee we hit the road concentrating our birding all day at low altitude (500m) within sub-tropical forest on the Gomphu Road. Our first new great bird of the day was a very smart **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** which showed well for everyone. With **Bay-banded Cuckoo** and **Grey-bellied Cuckoo** also new today we ended on a species tally of 13 cuckoos and allies. One or two have been heard only so we still have some searching to do.



Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and Pale-billed Parrotbill – 12th May 2024 © Richard Baines

In the same area as the cuckoo Norbu found us our first **Yellow-vented Warbler** and a **Yellow-bellied Warbler** which took us to an impressive 13 species of Phylloscopus warblers for the trip. Nearby our first views of **Pale-billed Parrotbills** feeding in bamboo. The morning birding ended with good views of a very striking male **Asian Fairy-bluebird**. Our next significant sighting was a noisy and spectacular **Common Green Magpie**.

After a great morning's birding, we returned to camp to have a lunchtime siesta. After food most of us took a wander to explore the fantastic habitat within and around the campsite. Two **Chestnut-tailed Starlings** and a lot of **Black Bulbuls** fed above us and a **Rufous-necked Hornbill** flew over. Camping on a site with hornbills has to be a real wow moment. On the White-bellied Heron trail were a pair of **Blue-throated Blue Flycatchers**, two **White-throated Bulbul** and a **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**.

Our afternoon birding/wildlife watching started with views of a **Grey-throated Babbler** and brief high tree view of a **Pale-billed Flowerpecker** both new trip species for us. This was followed by several encounters with troupes of **Golden Langurs**. These beautiful primates were a joy to watch. Close by the two groups were small numbers of **Assamese Macaques** which were feeding on scraps of fruit dropped by the **Golden Langurs**.

We ended the day with a nice rush of new trip species. Two **Lesser Yellownape**, a male and female **Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker** danced together in courtship on a branch, a **Black-crested Bulbul**, two **Pin-tailed Green Pigeons** flew over us several times, two brief views of the enigmatic and strikingly colourful **Asian Emerald Dove** and great views of a small feeding flock of **White-rumped Munia**. And I mustn't forget the very smart male **Red Junglefowl** which entertained everyone strutting its stuff and cockadoodle-ing as the true ancestor of our domestic cockerels should. The last and possibly the most interesting new bird of the day was a **Peregrine Falcon** which Norbu picked up flying straight past us by the side of the river. It perched on a nearby tree before flying away again later. A very dark plumaged adult bird worthy of further investigation to establish the sub-species involved. Whatever its origin it was a great bird to end to the day.



Peregrine Falcon – 12th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Day Seventeen – Dakphai Road and Wangdigang Road. Tingtibi. 13th May

Ecosystems: Sub-tropical Forest and Cool Temperate Forest

An early rise in the campsite failed to provide us with any sight or sound of the **Hooded Pitta** which Norbu and Pema heard the day before so we set out on another exciting drive. We started with birding along Dakphai road climbing out of the sub-tropical forest zone into the cool temperate ecosystem. Not long after we left camp, we found a smart **Slaty-backed Forktail** on the road feeding in the early morning light. Our target bird was **Beautiful Nuthatch**. A species which had eluded us in every area we had been where they had been seen previously. However, we had seen so many great birds, mammals and insects on this trip we were relaxed about finally catching up with the nuthatch.

The first new trip bird of the day was two **White-bellied Erpornis** in a mixed flock with fulvettas, yuhinas, drongos and a confiding pair of **Silver-eared Mesia**, the best views yet of this very colourful bird. By the end

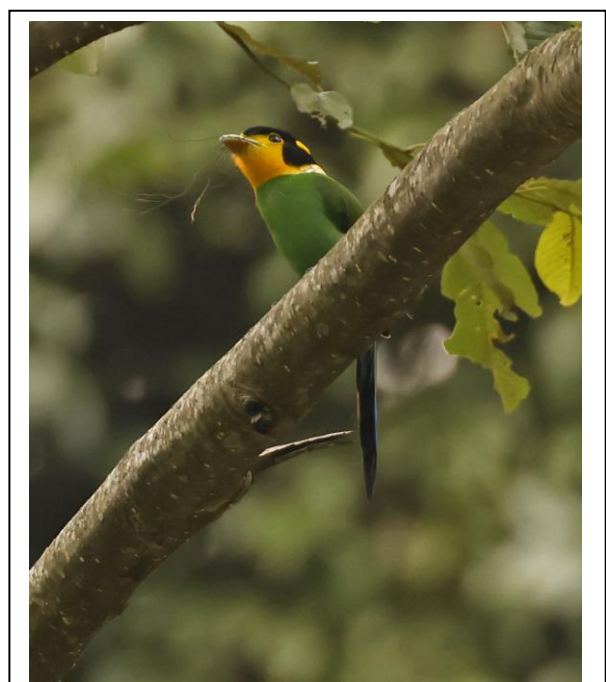
of the day, we had seen four species of drongo our best day for these great birds; **Ashy Drongo**, **Bronzed Drongo**, **Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** and **Hair-crested Drongo**. On the way back to lunch we found a roadside **Great Myna** a new bird on the trip.



Silver-eared Mesia and Yellow-bellied Erpornis – 13th May 2024 © Richard Baines

An outside lunch in a sub-tropical forest is never boring and today was no different. We had just started our cups of tea when Norbu shouted '**Great Hornbill**'. We all rushed over to watch as this huge bird landed in a tree across the river. A new bird for our trip and one which everyone got a chance to see through the scope.

After lunch we changed destination, back into the cool temperate zone but on a new road the Wangdigang. Before long we had our first big highlight. Tensing found an active nest of a pair of **Long-tailed Broadbills**. This was a fabulous find. To see such an enigmatic bird is great but to find a nest is really special.



Long-tailed Broadbills – 13th May 2024 © Richard Baines

Hanging over the road on a dangling branch the structure looked very precarious. A great strategy to stop nest raiders but vulnerable to high winds and unseasonal storms. There were many nest visits by at least one of the parents whilst we were watching. Entering through one side and exiting from the other side. We figured that final nest building or repairs may have been taking place due to the number of visits.

After the broadbills we were back checking every tree for anything which looked like a nuthatch. However, another usually much harder bird suddenly appeared thanks to Norbu's excellent ear. A **Spotted Elachura** which this time showed to everyone in the group. I even managed a few record photos. This was a big result for one of the most secretive of all 'ninja' birds!

Our slow drive back to camp for our evening meal was eventful with more **Blue-caped Rock Thrushes**, **Long-tailed Shrike** and a **Crested Kingfisher** along the river. Several troupes of **Golden Langurs** were all great to see and we stopped at most of them to watch and take a few photos. Another day birding and wildlife watching in paradise, we almost forgot about the mystical nuthatch!

Day Eighteen – Dakphai Road and Wangdigang Road. Tingtibi to Trongsa. 14th May

Ecosystems: Sub-tropical Forest and Cool Temperate Forest

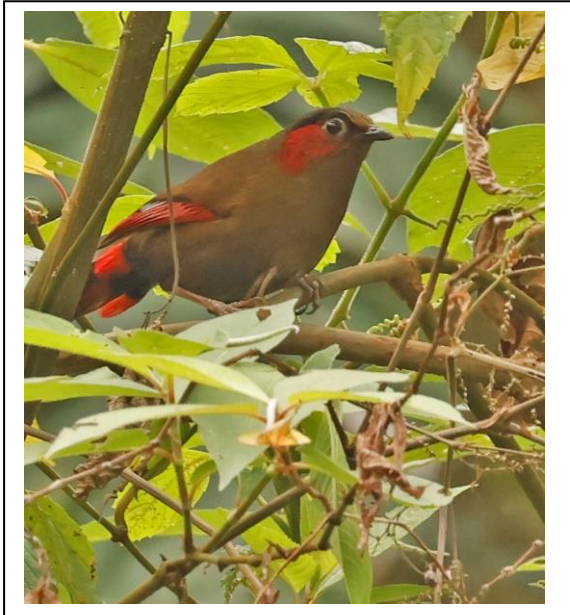
This day was mostly about travelling back to Trongsa after our Tingtibi visit. Breakfast at the campsite meant we had a bit more time to see some of the campsite birds before we left. A male **Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker** chose a vine very close to the breakfast table to climb down and then a smart **Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** fed on crickets lined up on the end of thin branches which had been attracted to the camp site lights during the night.

On the journey we stopped a few times to stretch our legs and do some wildlife watching. Our first stop was impromptu as Tensing noticed a **Red-headed Trogon** sat by the roadside. Cue quick exit from the bus and after a while re-finding the birds we had good scope views of a male and female which was our second encounter with these fabulous birds. After the trogons we encountered several troupes of **Golden Langurs** were great to see and the early morning ones were taking the mineral licks from roadside cliffs again. This appeared to be a routine early morning activity for the langurs at a time when the rocky outcrops are still damp and the minerals more accessible.

We found another **Long-tailed broadbill** nest this time only half built but with both adults nearby not very far away busy collecting material. Further down the road we could hear a **Rufous-necked Hornbill** calling in the distance then a male flew in and landed above us in a bare tree. This was the ninth day we had seen these fantastic birds and with many great views we had been truly spoilt with hornbill activity on this trip.

Our next birding encounter involved a couple of feeding flocks of songbirds. Great close views of **Golden Babblers** and **Nepal Fulvettas** was very rewarding but nearby a **Blue-winged Laughingthrush** proved very difficult to see. Just down the road we had better views of two **Red-faced Liocichla**. Nearby a very impressive **Red Lacewing** butterfly landed briefly before taking off again and flying over the liocichla.

The rarest bird of the day was a great surprise as by the side of the road close to a roadside café a **Slaty-breasted Rail** appeared and clambered around on a bank right next to our tour bus. This is a scarce and difficult to see species in Bhutan normally associated with ponds and small wetlands. We presumed this was a tired or hungry migrant stopping off in unusual habitat on the side of a dry forested mountain.



Red-faced Liocichla and Slaty-breasted Rail – 14th May 2024 © Richard Baines



Red Lacewing – 14th May 2024 © Richard Baines

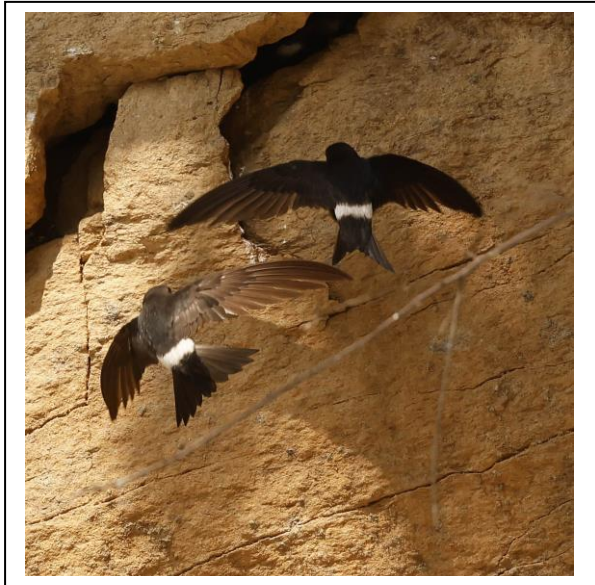
Day Nineteen – Trongsa to Paro. 15th May

Ecosystems: Cool Temperate Forest to Chir Pine Forest

This was the big drive day all the way back to Paro from Trongsa. We couldn't afford too many long stops but we did stop for one important bird, the very special **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**. At the first site we didn't find any sign of honeyguides despite a large **Giant Rock Bee** nest. We did however find a small colony of **Fork-tailed Swifts** nesting on the cliff by the road. This was a great sight watching them fly up to the nest sites in the rocky cliffs.

The next site we tried proved successful with Pema setting the scope up and very soon finding a single **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** sitting on vines very close to six huge bee nests. These highly specialised birds feed on insects including bees and the wax from **Giant Rock Bee** nests. Honeyguides have a fascinating natural history which includes likely nest parasitism but the lack of detailed studies on their breeding behaviour leaves many mysteries surrounding honeyguides.

We arrived early evening at our hotel in Paro, the very nice Olathang which is set in open forest at the base of the road to Chelela, our destination on the 16th.



Fork-tailed Swifts, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide and Giant Rock Bee nests – 15th May
2024 © Richard Baines

Day Twenty – Paro and Chelela Pass. 16th May

Ecosystems: Blue Pine Forest to Subalpine Conifer Forest

An early start is essential when visiting the summit at Chelela. Its useful to be on the road climbing through the forest for early morning pheasants and its also much better birding around the summit before more tourists arrive later in the day. The summit area is around 3,800m and feels very alpine in its habitat composition.

On our way up to the summit we saw four **Kalij Pheasant** and two **Blood Pheasant** by the side of the road. A pair of **Red-headed Bullfinch** proved elusive along with a calling **Darjeeling Woodpecker**. At the summit we added a pair of **Himalayan Monal** to our pheasant day list. It took a little while to start hearing and seeing birds at the top of the road but soon we were up and running with small groups of **White-browed Rosefinch**. Pema heard a **Collared Grosbeak** and I caught a quick view of it flying towards the forest.



Forests, Rhododendrons and mountains, the fabulous views looking west from Chelela – 16th May 2024 © Richard Baines

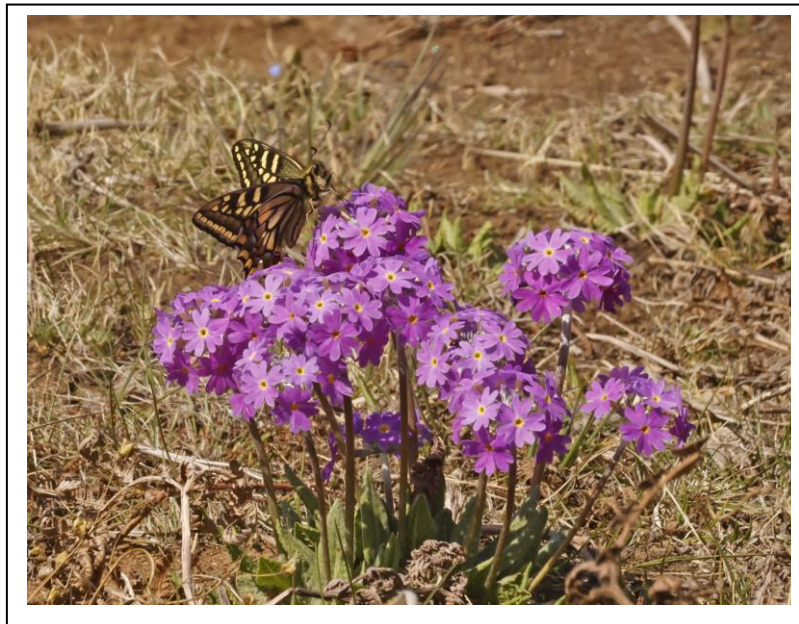
A smart **Rosy Pipit** called amongst the prayer flags and several **Moupin Pika** scuttled around under rocks. The rugged landscape and views from the summit area were truly fantastic. The towering fir forest, flowering rhododendrons and prayer flags created a breathtaking and unique canvas and beyond in all directions more forest and more mountains!

Pema created a list of the rhododendrons alpine and forest plants we had seen which included; *Rhododendron wallichii*, *Rhododendron campylocarpum*, *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* (bellshape flower), *Rhododendron triflorum*, *Primula glabra* (the little pink one), *Primula griffithii* (purple colour), *Primula smithiana* (yellow colour), *Primula denticulata* (pink colour), *Bryocarpum himalaicum* (little yellow bell-shaped flower).

The commonest warbler at the summit was **Greenish Warbler**, with smaller numbers of **Ashy-throated Warblers**. A little lower down in the fir forest **Lemon-rumped Warblers** and smaller numbers of **Large-billed**

Leaf Warblers became dominant. At the lower altitudes **Blyth's Leaf Warbler** became the most regularly encountered warbler in song. Amongst the Greenish at and just below the summit area were **Rufous-vented Yuhina**, **Slaty Blue Flycatchers**, **Himalayan Bluetails**, **Blue-fronted Redstarts**, **White-winged Grosbeaks**, **White-collared Blackbirds**, **Black-faced Laughingthrushes**, **Nutcrackers**, and a single **Rufous-breasted Accentor**.

Butterflies were fairly scarce with the commonest being **Indian Tortoiseshell**. Other species seen included **Painted Lady** and **Dark Clouded Yellow** but the big insect highlight was a very smart **Common Yellow Swallowtail**.



Yellow Swallowtail and Himalayan Bluetail (male) Chelela – 16th May 2024 © Richard Baines

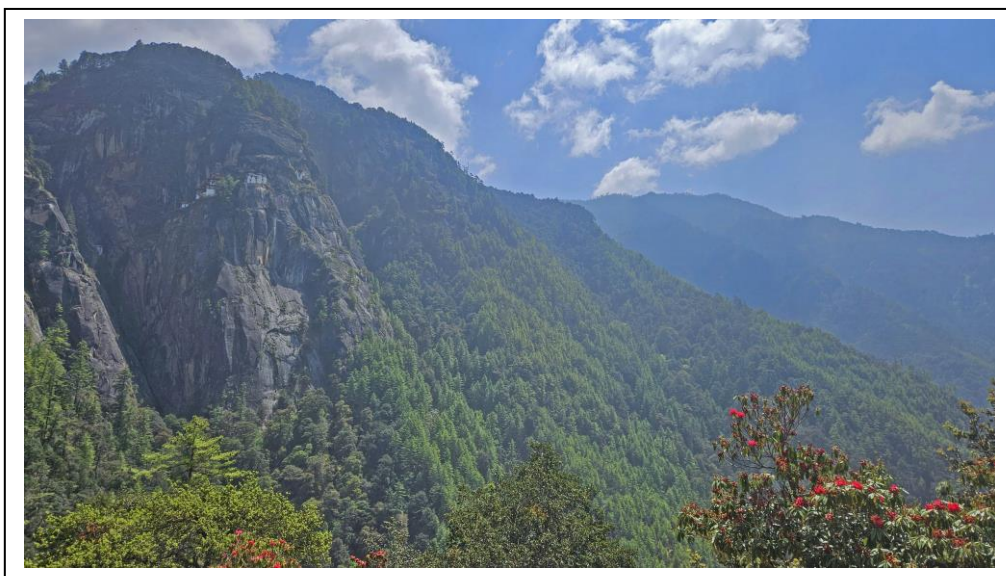
Day Twenty-One – Paro and Tigers Nest. 17th May

Ecosystems: Blue Pine to Subalpine Conifer Forest

Our final day on our Bhutan tour, is traditionally a day we climb the track to Taktsang Monastery or Tigers Nest. On the drive to the start of our journey we stopped at a site for **Black-tailed Crake**. Luckily two birds appeared shortly after we arrived to give good views and a new bird for our bird trip list.

The iconic and sacred Taktsang Monastery is an energetic climb. Situated at 2950m approximately 600m from the car park at the base of the mountain it is well worth the walk even if the café half way to the monastery is where you end your climb. The area at the base of the mountain proved to be the best birding on our day. A pair of **White-browed Bush Robin** were expertly located by our guide Pema Dawa. Other birds present included **Darjeeling Woodpecker**, **White-throated Laughingthrush**, **Blyth's Leaf Warbler**, **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**, **Ultramarine Flycatcher**, **Yellow-billed Blue Magpie**.

After a late lunch we ended our three-week tour with lessons in archery, a plunge into hot stone baths and very tasty food at a local homestay in Paro. This was a great way to end our fabulous tour with warm and friendly company and traditional hospitality.



Ultramarine Flycatcher (male) and Tigers Nest – 17th May 2024 © Richard Baines



Our Bhutan guests and Wild Nature Quest, leaders and crew.

Writing this trip report in my Yorkshire Coast Nature jungle office!

Tashi Delek!

Trip Report Written by Richard Baines

Yorkshire Coast Nature Director 18th May 2024