

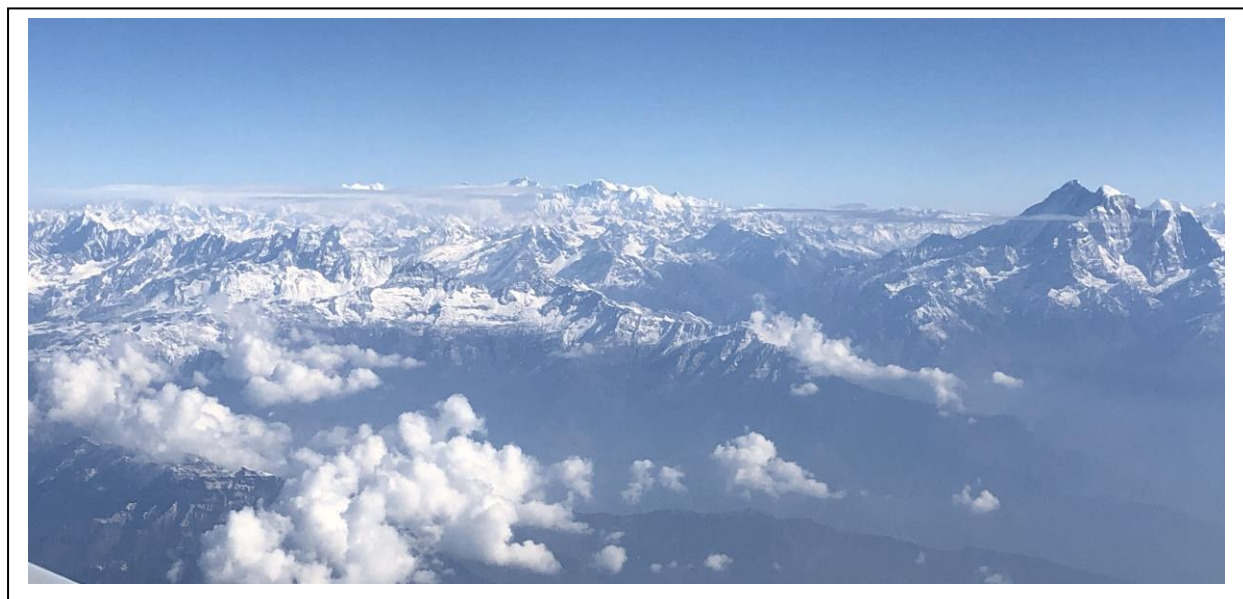


Birding in Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon

Trip Report Feb 23rd – March 7th 2020 by Richard Baines

In partnership with Red Panda Travel and Off to Bhutan. Yorkshire Coast Nature Director Richard Baines and Norbu Bumthap led a 14-day tour to Bhutan in February 2020. We had ten clients, all great fun to be with, it was a privilege to lead this trip. Our partnership company in Bhutan was the country's best birding and cultural team. Our driver was Tenzin who was also a good birder, and young guide Yeshay was a great asset to the trip. Our tours always have a high guide-client ratio on this trip we had four guides (including driver).

The trip this year was designed to complement the interests of our clients and contribute to conservation efforts in the country through a financial donation to the [Bhutan Royal Society for the Protection of Nature](#) (RSPN). Everyone was keen to not only do lots of birding but also learn a lot about the country and visit the amazing cultural sites in Bhutan. In the end we did more than we expected despite the snow!...



The Himalayas with Everest (on the right of the photo) taken from my seat on the Kathmandu – Paro flight 23rd Feb 2020. Not a bad bit of added trip value! © Richard Baines

Day one 23rd February

There aren't many birds and wildlife tours which start with photographing a shrike from the departure lounge just before boarding a plane. To our surprise a very smart **Long-tailed Shrike** posed within a few meters of the Drukair gate window from Kathmandu airport. This was a great omen and our luck was about to get even better. Clear skies greeted us as our flight flew parallel to the Himalayan range with Everest as one of many peaks rising above the snow-capped mountains. This must be one of the

most breath-taking journeys in the world. Within 50 minutes we landed at Paro. Visa and security were passed with great ease and we met our Bhutan guides.



Birding bus loaded up and ready to roll. © Richard Baines

Paro to Thimpu (the capital of Bhutan) is approximately 90 minutes leisurely drive through the beautiful Paro river valley flanked by forested and village landscapes. We checked on to our hotel for a break then out for an afternoons birding by the river. A flock of 187 **Ruddy Shelduck** were a spectacle of colour whilst nearby **Red-crested pochard**, **Northern Pintail**, **Goosanders** and **Common Sandpipers** were a familiar suite of species. After a short walk a boulder coloured unique species the iconic **Ibisbill** was spotted on the opposite side of the narrow river. A short time later we realised there were two, we all had great prolonged views and retired tired but very happy.



Ibisbill near Thimpu 23rd Feb 2020. © Richard Baines

On my first visit to Bhutan I was fortunate to meet Rebecca Pradhan. The **White-bellied Heron** Project Ecologist for the Royal Society of the Protection of Nature? I booked her to give a talk for our group. We all ended the day hoping the new captive breeding program can save this amazing bird. Yorkshire Coast Nature, Off to Bhutan and Red Panda Travel donated a combined \$700 to the project from the profits this trip. An inspirational end to an amazing first day.



Rebecca Pradhan at our hotel in Thimpu giving the group a talk on the White-bellied Heron 23rd Feb 2020. © Richard Baines

Day Two 24th February

Our first full day started with an early breakfast so we could hit the road at 0700. A slow climb up to the Dochula pass yielded good views of a flock of 10 **Spotted Nutcrackers** and a less than confiding Wallcreeper. The Dochula pass occupies a look out across a large vista of mountains and forests at an elevation of 3,100m. The site is dominated by 108 memorial stupas known as Druk Wangyal Chortens. They were built in memory of the soldiers who died in a battle to free the country from insurgents in 2003.



Mountain Hawk Eagle Bhutan Feb 2020. © Richard Baines

After the frosty and impressive landscape and cultural stop we continued down to the Royal Botanical Gardens taking in roadside birds such as **Rufous-fronted Tit** and **Yellow-browed Tit**. At the entrance to the gardens a small flock of **Olive-backed Pipits** showed well along with several **Rufous-breasted Accentor**. **Blue-fronted Redstart**, **Fire-tailed Sunbird**, **Green-tailed Sunbird** and **Mountain Hawk Eagle** were also seen. After a good start to the day we drove further down the valley and before lunch found an unusually confiding group of **Crimson-browed Finches** by the roadside. This was a new bird for everyone on the trip and great views. Next stop a displaying **Black Eagle** above our heads!



Crimson-browed Finch Bhutan Feb 2020. © Richard Baines

Lunch was a beautifully laid out picnic by the side of a stupa alongside prayer flags shimmering in the mountain breeze. After lunch we continued down the road stopping at a site for **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**. These unique birds feed on **Giant Rock Bees** and their honey comb. Straining our necks and scopes we all got good views of one Honeyguide perched near a huge bee's nest.

We arrived at the enormous Tzong Palace of Great Bliss at mid-afternoon just in time to catch the two-hour restricted opening. Our guides took us into the temple whilst regaling us with stories of deities, demons and lamas. Our luck was still with us as we were fortunate to witness a sacred reading along with traditional Buddhist chants and music.



Birders Picnic Bhutan style Feb 2020. © Richard Baines

Our final birding trip on the day was a drive further up the river in search of the critically threatened **White-bellied Heron**. After our fascinating talk the previous evening we were keen to see a real Heron but with less than 24 in Bhutan our hopes were not high. We drove to a place our guide knew north of Punakha on the [Mo Chhu](#) (female river) It didn't take long though for our guide to shout loudly "**White-bellied Heron** flying down the river" even better it then landed opposite us giving fantastic views from the road. It felt like the second tallest flying bird in the world (after Sarus Crane) had arrived to thank us for the donation to the project in its name, or maybe spinning that prayer wheel in the temple did the trick...



White-bellied Heron Bhutan Feb 24th 2020. © Jonathan Roddick

Day Three 25th February

An early start saw us on the road by 0700 the best time to see roadside birds. Within 15 minutes we were watching a magnificent **Pallas's Fish Eagle** perched high on a tree. Next stop Jigme Dorji National Park where dense temperate forest stretched away as far as the eye could see and rising above the forest the snow peaks of the high Himalaya. Before lunch we saw many great birds including **Small Niltava**, **Rufous-breasted Bush Robin**, **Himalayan Bluetail**, **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush**, **Mountain Hawk Eagle** and **Brown Dipper** on the crystal-clear river below us. One of the highlights of the day was a small foraging group of **Red-billed Leothrix**. They had found a reliable source of food by the door of a small house and were dropping down to drink and feed, a great opportunity to see this unique looking bird.



Large Niltava Bhutan Feb 25th 2020. © Richard Baines

Small mountain streams ran down from the hillside under the road, through lush ferns, mosses and evergreen forest. This was the best habitat to find Forktails. Our first lucky strike was two **Little Forktail** feeding under a waterfall, flying up to find insects on the vertical mossy stones by the stream of water. Our lunch stop was another tasty picnic served up by the team, a great location in a clearing in the forest beside a stream with two **Slay-backed Forktail**. Also keeping us entertained were a male **Large Niltava**, **White-capped Redstart** and **Hodgson's Redstart**.

After lunch we drove deeper into the forest stopping whenever we found a foraging flock of songbirds. **Grey-hooded Warbler**, **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker**, **Whiskered Yuhina**, **Black-chinned Yuhina** and **Rufous-vented Yuhina** were among the many birds seen and, in the undergrowth, a singing **Spotted Elachura**. Along the road on our return journey a large flock of chattering **White-throated Laughingthrushes** kept us entertained. We finished the day with another view of the **Pallas's Fish Eagle** and a **Crested Kingfisher** by the Mo Chhu River.



White-capped Redstart Bhutan Feb 25th 2020. © Richard Baines

Day Four 26th February

Out on the road again by 0700 and some river birding along the Punakha Tshang Chu River. A few new species of duck for the trip list included familiar species **Mallard** and **Northern Pintail**. The cloud was low with light rain forcing hundreds of **Himalayan Swiftlets** to feed low over the river. I set up the scope to look for ducks but to my surprise the first bird I looked at was a gull on the river. On our 2019 trip we didn't see any gulls and I knew any gull was a good find in Bhutan. There are two species in the Birds of Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas book and neither were remotely like this bird. At first from a long distance we thought it was larger than it really was but on a review of video footage (taken expertly by Jonathan Roddick) it was clearly a **Common (Mew) Gull** type. I needed to be sure I wasn't hallucinating having just seen hundreds of Common Gulls in the UK. So, I consulted a friend Yoav Pearlman (via the powers of messenger) who indicated it was likely a Russian **Common Gull** sub-species *heinei*. Shortly after videoing the gull we lost it as it flew down the river, the rain became heavier so we moved on.



Mega! Common Gull Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines

We continued up the main road towards the Phobjikha valley but as we climbed to above 2000m the weather closed in, the rain became heavier and mist rolled down the mountains. The birding became tough in the poor light but the opportunities for landscape photography were amazing. In high spirits we soldiered on. In the shrouded forest a **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** was a great find by two of our group along with cracking views of three **Yellow-rumped Honeyguides** and a **Crested Serpent Eagle** dropping down from the forest at close range. The next stop yielded great views of two **Streak-throated Scimitar Babblers**.



Streak-throated Scimitar Babbler Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines

Lunch was another fine tented feast and shortly afterwards we arrived in the village of Nobding only to be faced with a police road block. Heavy snow fall and a road accident had closed the mountain pass to Phobjikha. A nearby café provided a warm stove and wonderful hospitality as we waited on news of the road. With no positive news we were forced to put plan B into operation. Back to Punakha to stay another night in the Zhingkhams Resort. As wildlife guides, we always hope the plan B will bear fruit. After a slow drive down the road our first treat was awaiting by a misty mountain stream. A secretive **Long-billed Thrush** and great views of a dandy **Spotted Forktail**. Shortly afterwards two **Yellow-throated Martins** ran across the road in front of our bus. Things were definitely improving.



Long-billed Thrush Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines



Spotted Forktail Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines

Next stop the **Silk Cotton Trees** which have never let us down as bird magnets. As we approached the Cotton trees, as if by magic the clouds parted, the rain stopped and sunshine warmed the forest. The trees were alive with birds. **Black Bulbuls** and **Rufous Sibias** fought over access to the flowers and in the same area were many other species including **Golden-fronted Leafbird**, **Blue-throated Barbet**, **Golden-throated Barbet**, **Black-throated Sunbird**, **Rufous-vented Yuhina**, **Lemon-rumped Warblers**, **Blue-winged Siva**, **Red-tailed Minla** and **Black-eared Shrike Babbler**.



Golden-throated Barbet Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines

This was quite a spectacle and superb for photography as most of the birds were very confiding. As the mist and sunshine rolled back and forth, we were caught between photographing the amazing views and fantastic birding.



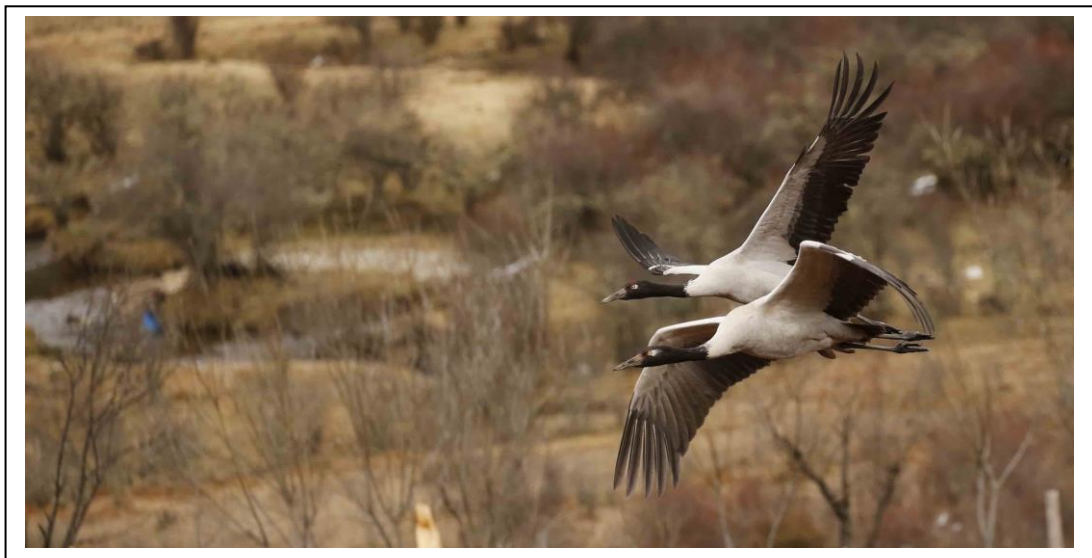
Majestic landscapes followed us everywhere in Bhutan Feb 26th 2020. © Richard Baines

Day Five 27th February

We awoke under bright blue sky and a glowing sun across the impressive view below our hotel. We left Pobjekha after an early breakfast to spend the morning birding the forest again on route to what we hoped would be our planned destination Phobjikha Valley...By lunch we had secured some new trip species such as **White-browed Fulvetta**, **Alpine Thrush**, **Blyth's Shrike Babbler** and **Darjeeling Woodpecker** but by far the most impressive sight was 42 **Himalayan Vultures** circling above our picnic lunch stop!

The plan was working as the day warmed up and the snow was melting quickly. By the time we reached the junction to Phobjikha the road had been re-opened. The forest looked amazing under bright blue sky and a light snow covering. As we passed two Yaks by the side of the Janchab Chorten at 3360m the road descends through beautiful forest and the valley opened up beneath us. It only took a few minutes for Norbu to spot our first **Black-necked Cranes**. Shortly afterwards we found a family group of two adults and a juvenile in an arable field by the roadside no more than 150m away! By nightfall we had enjoyed around 50 Cranes including the fantastic sight of a group of 13 flying past us to roost as they called against the beautiful valley and mountain scene.

The afternoon birding stroll through the valley produced more great birds including new trip species; **Yellow-breasted Greenfinch**, **White-collared Blackbird**, **Black-throated Thrush** and 30 **Oriental Skylark**. A male **Hen Harrier** hunted across the wet meadows before dusk and a small group of **Solitary Snipe** gave excellent scope views.



Black-necked Crane gallery Bhutan Feb 27th 2020. © Richard Baines

Day Six 28th February

The **Black-necked Cranes** leave their roost within the first hour of light so we needed to be on the button to see and hear them. It was a cold and very frosty morning with bright blue sky above Phobjikha Valley. The Cranes were calling when we arrived at 0640 along with many singing **Oriental Skylarks** and a **Red-throated Thrush** perched on low scrub. The intensity of Crane calls rose and fell as each group prepared to fly. The size of flights varied from two to 13 with most lifting off at around 0715. A fantastic sight and sound as the sun slowly lit up the valley.



Birding as the sun rises and the Cranes fly in Phobjikha Bhutan Feb 28th 2020. © Richard Baines

Our journey to Trongsa took up most of the day with comfort break stops often at impressive Stupa monuments which also happened to be good birding locations. **Little Bunting**, **White-browed Fulvetta** and...our biggest find of the day, a **Takin**! Perched on a bamboo hillside above the road peering down at us we could just about make out his face and horns in the foliage. This was a very lucky find a mythical beast and very rarely seen away from remote mountain plains.

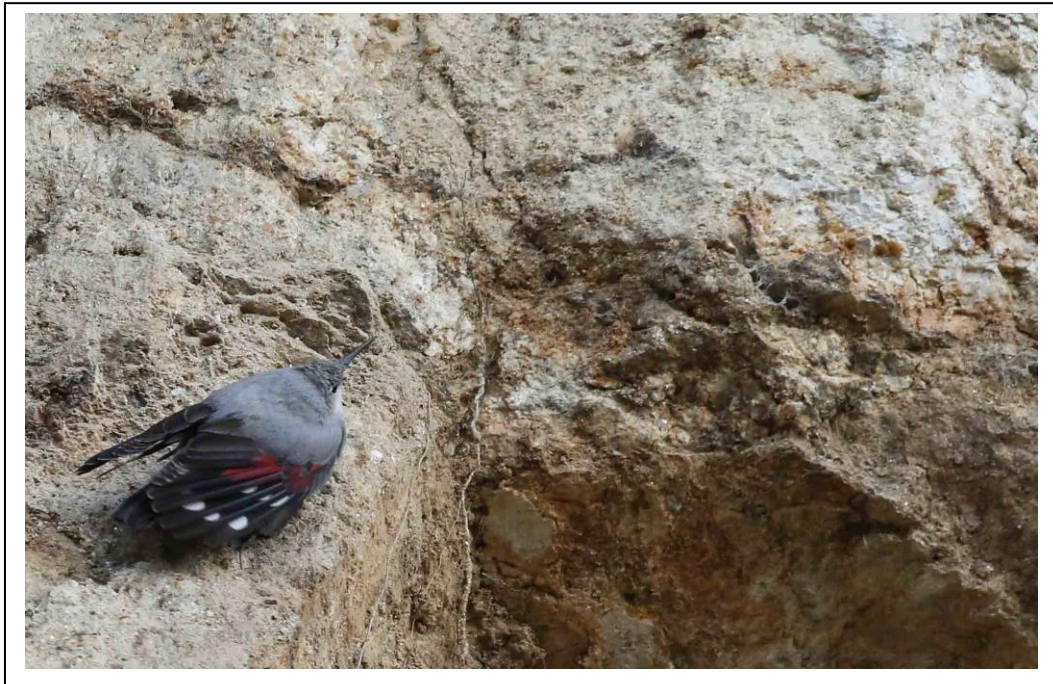


Takin hiding in Bamboo, the best view we got of this mythical mammal Feb 28th 2020. © Richard Baines

We arrived in Trongsa in time to visit the impressive Dzong and once again the group were lucky to experience a traditional monastic ceremony, the 'black hat dance'.

Day Seven 29th February

We left our hotel in Trongsa at 0700. It was yet another hotel set in amazing scenery with the huge forested valley stretching away as far as the eye can see from the bedroom balconies. We had only just rounded the corner we found a **Wallcreeper** by the roadside close enough for photos from the bus.



Wallcreeper near Trongsa Bhutan Feb 29th 2020. © Richard Baines

Our destination was the famous Tharpaling Monastery on route to Bumthang. We stopped a short distance away for our daily forest picnic lunch in the Chumney Valley. A large area of cattle and arable fields looking like a ranch straight out of the wild west! In the nearby scrub I located two **Beautiful Rosefinch**, a flock of **Russett Sparrows**, **Hodgson's Redstart**, several **Rufous-breasted Accentors** and a rare **Godlewski's Bunting**. The bunting was the second Bhutan mega rarity I had found in one week, get the beers in! Luckily most of the group managed to see the bunting and take evidence photos.



Godlewski's Bunting Bhutan Feb 29th 2020. © Richard Baines

Next stop Tharpaling Monastery, a known stake out for **Himalayan Monal**. The road up to the monastery was narrow and winding through pine forest with increasingly fantastic views to the valley below. At the top we were almost above the tree line with the long views beneath us. The whole place was incredibly peaceful and tranquil, no other tourists only the monks and the sound of Buddhist ceremonies and birds to keep us company. Heaven on earth!



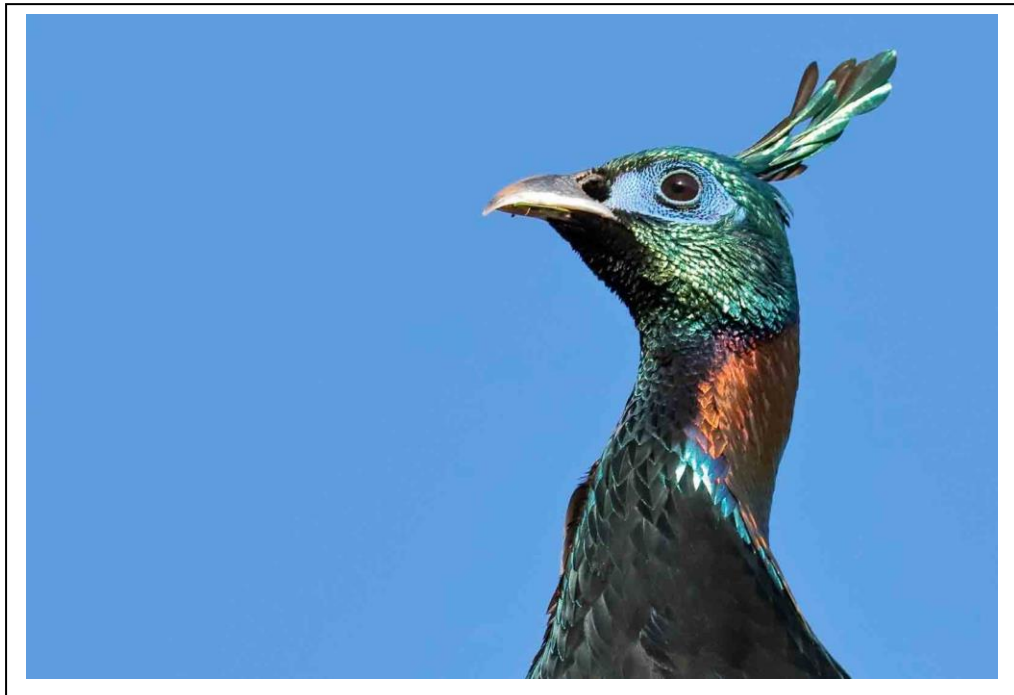
Snow Pigeons Bhutan Feb 29th 2020. © Ian Slingsby

Our group split into two with one party deciding to walk to the higher smaller monastery. In this area were **White-fronted Redstarts**, a flock of **White-winged Grosbeaks** and **Snow Pigeons**. Meanwhile my group stuck around the lower and larger area closer to the tour bus. Behind the monk's quarters were a small selection of quality birds including a group of 12 **Black-faced Laughingthrushes** showing extremely well. Hidden under the scrub and showing very well for one group member was a smart male Himalayan **White-browed Rosefinch**. Above the scrub were two **Red Crossbill**, the male of which was in song.



Black-faced Laughingthrush Bhutan Feb 29th 2020. © Richard Baines

We were reliably informed that a **Himalayan Monal** occasionally comes to eat rice scattered by the monks from the monastery at between 4.30 and 5.00pm. The summit group also had a Monal stake out. At just after 5pm our driver Tensing ushered us over “the monal is coming” and there he was, this magnificent male **Himalayan Monal** walking towards us down the hillside following a well-worn monk path. Meanwhile the summit crew were doing even better as their Monal strode past them within a few meters and fed around their feet! When we all gathered back at the bus two Monals stood watching us from low in the forest allowing scope views for those who had missed the earlier birds. An unforgettable experience for everyone.



Himalayan Monal at Tharpaling Monastery Feb 29th 2020. © Ian Slingsby

Day Eight 1st March 2020

An early start from our beautiful family run guest house, breakfast served at a birders time of 0630 allowed us to be on the road heading for Thrumseugla National Park in search of **Blood Pheasants**. We drove for a couple of hours, climbing higher towards the Thrumseugla pass through **Pine, Hemlock** and **Rhododendron** forest with roadside sightings including male **Hen Harrier, Himalayan Griffon, Himalayan Buzzard, White-collared Blackbird, Black-throated Thrush** and **Grey-backed Shrike**. After a no show for so long I was beginning to wonder if we would ever see any Pheasants, then suddenly there they were 17 **Blood Pheasants** scampering across the road! Photos and drawings really don't do these birds justice, in the field their amazing colours are so striking against the natural forest colours. We stood on the road in admiration with camera shutters wiring as the group of 13 male and four females slowly ambled up the hillside giving us plenty of time to drink in the experience.

Our lunch station was once again located perfectly in the middle of the forest. Close to our picnic on this day were a showy pair of **White-throated Redstarts** along with a male **Hodgson's Redstart**. This was a good opportunity for a few of us to gain better photos of what must be the most striking of all Himalayan Redstarts.

The mornings success then faded into disappointment as we eventually realised the recent heavy snow had made conditions too dangerous to cross the pass safely in our vehicle. With many vehicles struggling with the conditions we decided to head back to Bumthang and spend an extra two nights on the edge of the town and explore the valley area. On the road back there was time for more irresistible landscape photos as the low cloud gathered in the evening sky, casting shadows across the

valley and sun lit prayer flags. At our final stop a **Spotted Nutcracker** called loudly from a Pine by the roadside to complete the show.



Blood Pheasant (sub species *tibetanus*) Bhutan March 1st 2020. © Richard Baines

Day Nine 2nd March 2020

We usually plan a day of down time when our group have a choice to take a break, visit some cultural sights and do some gift shopping. Bumthang is a great little town. Despite changing dramatically in the past 30 years from bamboo houses to large brick buildings it still retains a lot of character. The wide main street with small family run businesses serve the community well, children on their way to school in traditional dress and families from remote farms arriving for their supplies. On my way down the high street a **Blue Whistling Thrush** flew straight past me and up into the rafters of a café carrying nesting material. The group were keen to see some of the cultural sites so our expert guides Norbu, Tenzin and Yeshay led us around four monasteries; the large and impressive Jakay Dzong which is the oldest temple in Bhutan (alongside Paro temple), Jambay Lhakhang built in the 7th century followed by the large 17th century Kurjey Lhakhang (photo below) and finally the 15th century Tamshing Lhakhang where we witnessed a community service involving many families from the Bumthang area.



Day Ten 3rd March 2020

Breakfast at 0730 and out into the forest and organic farming fields in the forest clearings above Bumthang. Local farmland and village edge birds were seen very close including **Hodgson's Redstart**, **Blue-fronted Redstart**, **Grey Backed Shrike**, **Russet Sparrow** and a potential future Bhutan endemic; **Black-rumped Magpie**. **Himalayan Griffon** were on view again with at least eight birds patrolling the forest ridge.



'Black-rumped' Magpie, a potential endemic species... Bhutan March 2nd 2020. © Richard Baines

After a short drive we stopped by a beautiful crystal-clear mountain river flowing down through the forest. The view from the bridge was excellent and here we had great views of **Brown Dipper** and **White-capped Redstart**. Three pairs of **Plumbeous Redstarts** were visible from the bridge and we estimated approximately 100m between each pair as their territory size. All the males were singing and displaying to the females a great sight and sound. A smart male **Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** flew across the river and an **Olive-backed Pipit** visited briefly to take a drink.

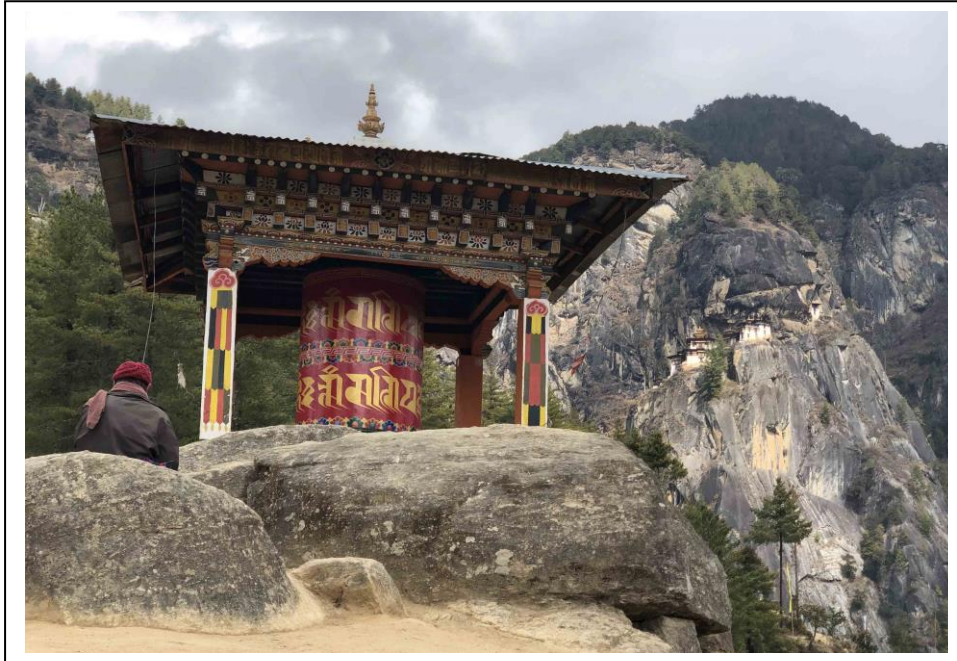


Brown Dipper Bhutan March 3rd 2020. © Richard Baines

As we were concentrating on the river, little did we know it but we were being watched by a **Moupin Pika** close to the bridge. Understandably the birds then came second place to this stubby nosed rodent who had a barrage of paparazzi lined up in appreciation. Further up the road we came across a group of **Eye-browed Fulvetta** and a showy group of **Rufous-fronted Bush tits**.

Day Twelve 4th March 2020

An early flight from Bumthang airport back to Paro saved us a huge drive and only took 25 minutes. A very impressive journey with great mountain views once again. We landed in Paro at 0800 time to quickly check in to our hotel, quick breakfast and then a short drive to Tigers Nest. On the drive we encountered a **Crested Kingfisher** on a wire above the river and a large flock of approximately 40 **Plain Crowned Jay** and a group of 10 **White-collared Blackbirds** in a tree near the entrance to Tigers Nest. One of the top cultural sites in the world Tigers Nest is not just an impressive monastery built high up on a cliff side the area is also good for birding.



View to Tigers Nest March 4th 2020. © Richard Baines

On our walk up the half way Taksang café, a **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** gave good views. Nearby a flock of roving songbirds included our first **Rusty-flanked Treecreeper** of the trip, a group of **Black-faced Laughingthrushes**, **Grey-crested Tits** and a group of **Bar-tailed Siva**.



Rufous-bellied Woodpecker March 4th 2020. © Richard Baines

The view from the café is excellent, several of us stopped longer here to savour the atmosphere whilst the summit crew climbed higher to the Tigers Nest. In this area they had great views of a **Wallcreeper** on the cliff side by the temple, and excellent views of **Darjeeling Woodpecker**. After both of these woodpeckers had eluded most of the group it was good that we had caught up with them again here.

The walk back down was far quicker than the climb. Near the car park area is an open forest clearing grazed by the mules that carry passengers to the half way café. This area is usually a good place to connect with **Rufous-breasted Accentor** and on this occasion, there were at least 12. Nearby was the largest flock of **White-throated Laughingthrushes** I have ever seen at least 100 birds! They were joined by two **Yellow-billed Magpies** that were following the Laughingthrushes in the hope of finding food.

Day Thirteen 5th March 2020

An early start with a packed breakfast meant we were on the road by 0600 and heading for Chelela Pass on the Dantak Road. The highest point of the pass is 3988m so we were expecting snow. The road passes through younger pine forest before gradually changing to old growth Hemlock, Spruce and Pine as we reached 2500m. The Hemlock were huge with many up to 1m DBH with plenty of standing dead wood, evergreen shrubs including Rhododendron. Great habitat for rare Pheasants!... Our first came in the form of **Kalij Pheasant**, after one or two brief sightings we found five (2 males, 3 females) which showed well allowing everyone to get good views. Nearby were three **Spotted Laughingthrushes** another new bird for the trip.



White-winged Grosbeak (male) March 5th 2020. © Richard Baines

Next up brief views of **Monal**, then around 20 **Blood Pheasant** and another two **Himalayan Monal** nearby. The **Blood Pheasants** were spp. *affinis* which is different from the eastern Bhutan spp. *Tibetanus* we saw above Bumthang earlier in the trip. In the same area were several **White-winged Grosbeak** and a flock of **Rufous-vented Tits**.



Frozen prayer flags at the summit of the Chelela Pass March 5th 2020. © Richard Baines

After a great stop we ventured higher above the forest into scrub, snow and a heavy hoar frost. By the side of the road a male and female **White-browed Rosefinch** and our first **White-throated Redstarts** of the day. A little higher and we reached the summit. A packed breakfast took second place to a flock of 12 **Snow Pigeon**, three **White-winged Grosbeak** and a single **Plain Mountain Finch**. Two **Steppe Eagle** soared over the ridge putting icing on a very chilly cake!



White-throated Redstart (male) March 5th 2020. © Richard Baines

After lunch we walked down the road towards the Ha Valley. Within a few minutes we noticed a medium sized raptor over the ridge, a fine adult **Upland Buzzard**, a scarce bird in Bhutan so a great find. Further down the road another new trip bird an **Altai Accentor** feeding in the open in a dry meadow. Nearby an entertaining flock of **Black-faced Laughingthrushes** and lots of **White-throated Redstarts** on the open scrub hillside. Another two **Himalayan Monal** were seen briefly in the Hemlock forest bringing the **Monal** day total to five birds.

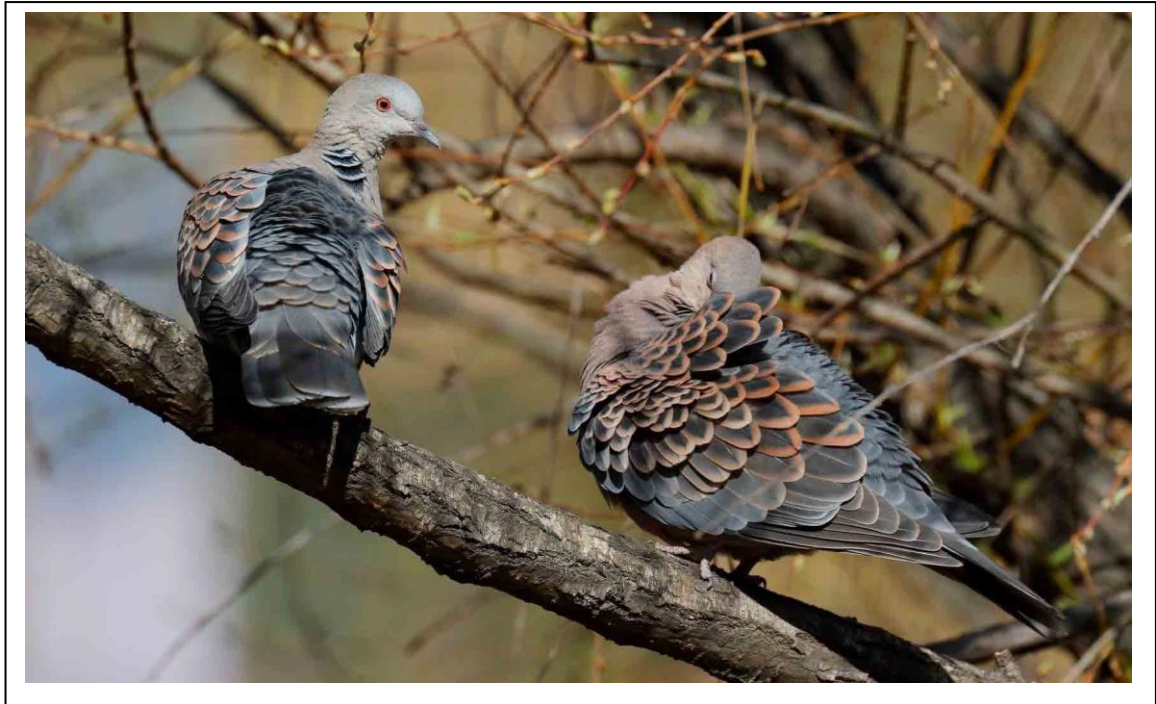


Hemlock, sun, snow, swirling clouds and mountains below the Chelela Pass March 5th 2020.
© Richard Baines

After such a great morning the drive down was far less productive. The road was starting to get busy with tourist vehicles heading for the pass, we were very pleased we had made an early start! Lunch was taken back in Paro at the Mountain Café before a final riverside birding walk. Our first great bird of the trip was an **Ibisbill** in Thimpu on day two. It was fitting therefore that this same iconic bird was our last great bird. Right on cue two **Ibisbill** were found by Norbu roosting in the riverside rocks in the mid-afternoon sun. With nesting **Oriental Turtle Doves** and a singing **Grey-backed Shrike** nearby it really felt like spring!



Grey-backed Shrike Bhutan March 5th 2020. © Richard Baines



Oriental Turtle Doves near Paro Bhutan March 5th 2020. © Ian Slingsby



We flew back to Kathmandu early on the 6th March and spent a wonderful day taking in the sights, food and sounds of this great city. This allowed us to rest before our flight back to the UK on the 7th March.

Join us in 2021. Two trips available. Two weeks in February/March and three weeks April/May. For more details [Click Here](#). There are itineraries on these pages to download. To register your interest or query anything please email richard.baines@yorkshirecoastnature.co.uk

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