Bhutan

Birding the Buddhist Kingdom



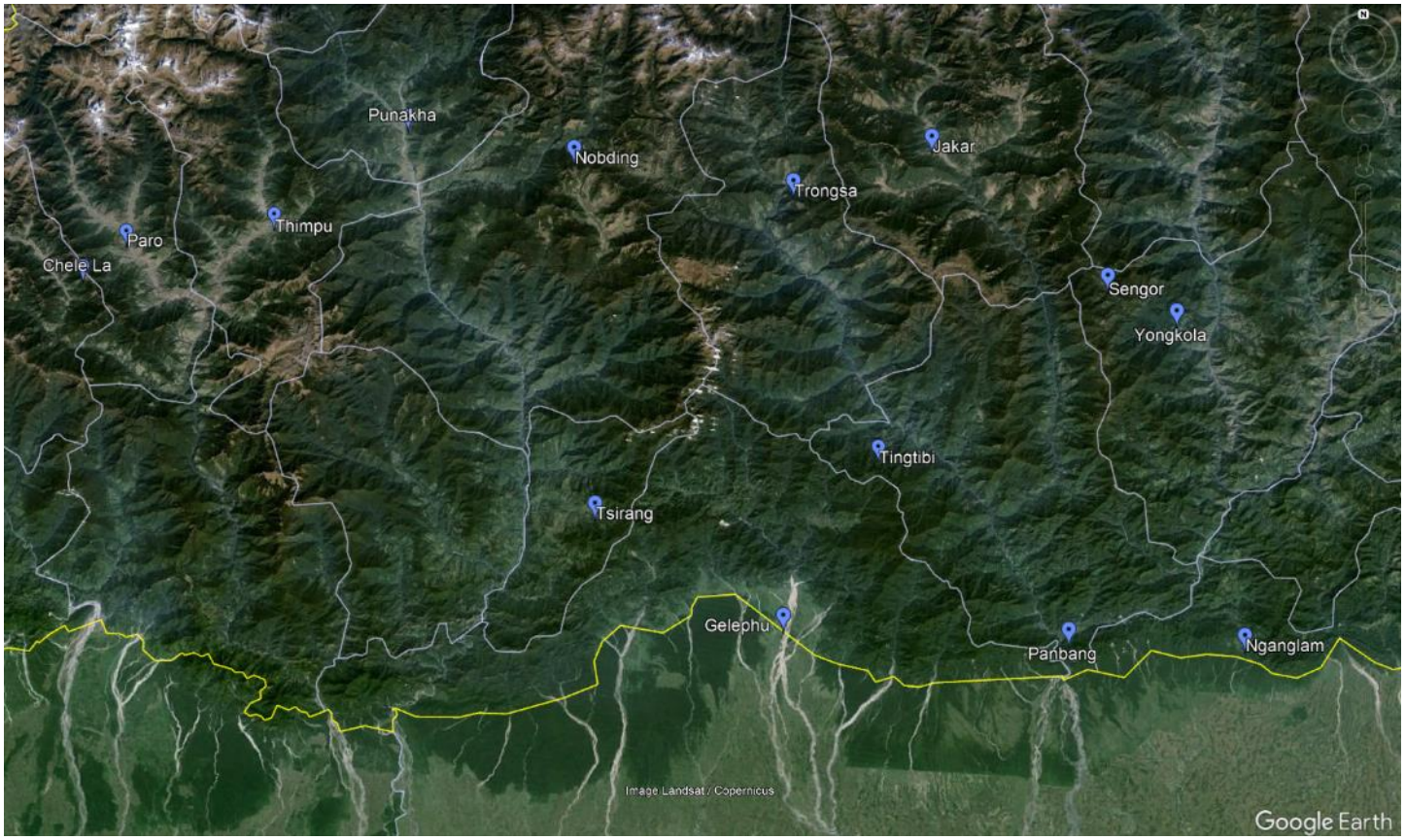
Himalayan Monal by Glen Valentine

One of the least spoilt countries in the mighty Himalayan range, Bhutan boasts incredible mountain scenery and endless verdant forests, whilst shrouded in Buddhist myth and legend and replete with a plethora of incredible and beautiful birds!

On a typical day's birding with us in this avian wonderland, you will find yourself in breath-taking surroundings searching for legendary birds in pristine forests, with mighty Himalayan peaks towering in the distance – all in all, Bhutan is a destination like no other! As we journey through this fabled land, we will regularly cross dramatic mountain passes, that are adorned with brightly coloured prayer flags and chortens/stupas (temples), and these give way to vast countryside, often dominated by impressive dzongs (temple-fortresses) that so characterise this unique country. We look forward to having you aboard this adventure through a paradise of culture, birds, and scenic vistas as we explore the heavenly riches of Bhutan!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Paro**
Day 2	**Paro to Punakha via Dochu La & Punakha Dzong**
Day 3	**Punakha to Tsirang**
Day 4	**Tsirang**
Day 5	**Tsirang to Gelephu**
Day 6	**Gelephu**
Day 7	**Gelephu to Tingtibi**
Day 8	**Tingtibi**
Day 9	**Tingtibi to Panbang**
Day 10	**Panbang to Nganglam**
Day 11	**Nganglam to Yongkola**
Day 12	**Yongkola**
Day 13	**Yongkola to Sengor**
Day 14	**Sengor**
Day 15	**Sengor to Jakar**
Day 16	**Jakar to Trongsa via Tharpaling Monastery, Yotong La & Trongsa Dzong**
Day 17	**Trongsa to Nobding via Pela La**
Day 18	**Nobding to Paro**
Day 19	**Chele La**
Day 20	**Final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Dochu La. The higher slopes of the scenic Dochu La harbour some excellent birds and is a great location to find many high altitude species like White-browed Fulvetta, Rufous-fronted Bushtit, Coal, Green-backed and Grey Crested Tits, the outrageous Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Spotted Nutcracker, Chestnut-crowned, White-throated and Black-faced Laughingthrushes, the impressive Great Parrotbill and rosefinches such as Dark-rumped and Dark-breasted. Dochu La is also home to a number of rarer Bhutanese specials and the likes of the radiant-green Fire-tailed Myzornis, stunning Ward's Trogon, and elusive Crimson-browed Finch are all possible. Sometimes we even get lucky and get views of the shy and seldom-seen Hill Partridge or even the rare Long-billed Thrush. If the day is clear, the lofty pass of Dochu La affords outstanding views of the surrounding Himalayan peaks, some of which top 7,500m. We will enjoy the visual splendour of the pass littered with prayer flags.



Great Parrotbill by Daniel Danckwerts

Lower down on Dochu La we will likely spend some time at the Royal Botanical Park which can be an excellent site for roving mixed flocks where species such as Striated Laughingthrush, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Crimson-naped, Rufous-bellied and Darjeeling Woodpeckers, Rufous-capped Babbler, White-tailed Nuthatch, Himalayan Bluetail, Black-

winged Cuckooshrike, Grey-winged and White-collared Blackbirds, unobtrusive and mite-sized Chestnut-headed Tesia, the intensely coloured Ultramarine Flycatcher, Sikkim Treecreeper, scarce Spot-winged Grosbeak, elusive but exquisite Fire-capped Tit, and Rufous-winged Fulvetta can all be found. Blooming Rhododendrons are always a feature and often prove to be a hub of activity, with many of the above mentioned species being present together with gorgeous sunbirds such as Mrs. Gould's, and Green-tailed.



Punakha Dzong by Glen Valentine

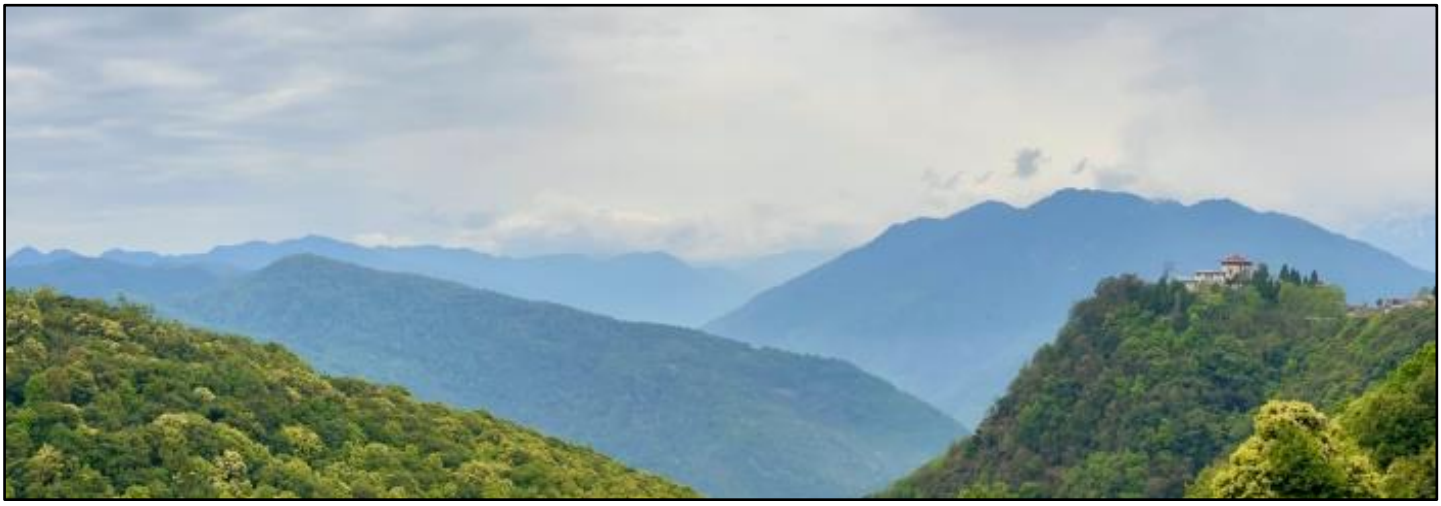
Punakha and Tashitang Valleys. Situated at 1 250m above sea level, the Punakha Valley valley is almost tropical. The large rivers in the valley support the iconic Ibisbill while other river associated species such as River Lapwing and Brown Dipper can also be found. The valley can also be a good location to look for Spot-winged and Chestnut-tailed Starlings, Slender-billed Oriole, Kalij Pheasant, Himalayan Prinia, Russet Sparrow, and Little Bunting. If time allows we may venture into the substantially vast Jigme Dorji National Park but it is worth noting that most of the species found here can be located elsewhere and are relatively easier to find.

The swift Mo Chu River typically forms the basis for birding in the valley and despite ongoing construction in the Punakha area still holds some fabulous species. Top of the list is the very rare and highly threatened White-bellied Heron, which has unfortunately become very rare in this area, Himalayan Swiftlet buzzing overhead, Crested Kingfisher, Plumbeous Water and White-capped Redstarts, the impressive Pallas's Fish Eagle, and migratory Hodgson's Redstart (*March tour only*). We even have chances on the first tours of the season for Wallcreeper (*March tour only*), which winter along the rocky river edges and cuttings before heading to higher elevations in the spring to breed. The river here can also be excelent for waterfowl at times and species to be on the lookout for include Ruddy Shelduck, Bar-headed Goose, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Common Merganser while rarer species could include Red-crested Pochard, Common Shelduck, and Tufted Duck.



Rufous-necked Hornbill by Glen Valentine

Our route takes us beside the impressive fortress and monastery of Punakha Dzong



Bhutan scenery by Forrest Rowland

that serves as a magnificent reminder of the Bhutanese devotion to their religion. This was the second of Bhutan's dzongs to be constructed and until the time of the second king, it served as the seat of the Bhutanese government.

Tsirang Valley. We'll be travelling down the scenic Wangdue-Gelephu Highway which traverses the Tsirang Valley. This is another area where we can spend some time scanning ideal habitat for White-bellied Heron. The species is now listed as critically endangered with numbers dwindling throughout its range and the species typically requires some time and effort to see. The surrounding forest has a range of interesting species, and we'll make opportunistic stops in the cool broadleaf forests of for Golden Langur, Assamese Macaque, Himalayan Striped Squirrel, and a plethora of good bird species, such as Bhutan & Striated Laughingthrushes, White-tailed Nuthatch, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Grey Treepie, Black-throated Sunbird, the elusive Scarlet Finch, Black-throated Prinia, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Bar-throated & Red-tailed Minlas, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, Whiskered and White-naped Yuhinas, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Large and Small Niltavas, Rusty-fronted Barwing, Striated and Mountain Bulbuls, and numerous *Phylloscopus* warblers, including Chestnut-crowned, Grey-hooded, Buff-barred, Lemon-rumped, Blyth's Leaf, Hume's Leaf, and Ashy-throated. Some of the rarer and most sought-after species in the Tsirang area include the localised Long-billed and Rufous-throated Wren-Babblers, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Himalayan Cutia, the exquisite Beautiful Nuthatch, Red-faced Liocichla, Black-headed Shrike-Babbler (rare), and Grey-sided Laughingthrush. The difficult to see Spotted Elachura is another distinct target in the Tsirang area and is not uncommon by voice. We will put in time to try and observe this unique species which has recently been elevated from the wren-babbler family into its own unique, monotypic family *elachuridae*. The tiny Collared Owlet is another denizen to be found in these broad-leaved forests and we will use its whistle regularly to attract small groups of birds.



Long-billed Wren-Babbler by Glen Valentine

Gelephu. This is the perfect place to explore for species not found in 99% of the country. Being so thoroughly



Wallcreeper by Stuart Elsom

mountainous, few locations in Bhutan offer birds of more southerly, Indian persuasion that prefer tall tropical forests, grasslands, and marsh. The endless stretches of lowland broad-leaved forest in the area provide us with excellent chances of finding Great and Wreathed Hornbills, Greater Yellownape, Ashy, Greater and Lesser Racket-tailed Drongos, Banded Bay Cuckoo, the scarce Silver-backed Needletail, and if we are very fortunate the dainty Pied Falconet or even Blue-naped Pitta (*April tour only*). We will visit a water treatment works on the outskirts of Gelephu which offers excellent birding, and every visit turns up a surprise. The settling ponds hold some interesting water associated species and we will keep a careful eye open for Lesser Whistling Duck, Red-naped and Glossy Ibis, Cinnamon Bittern, White-breasted Waterhen, Wood and Green Sandpipers, Pin-tailed and Common Snipes, Citrine, White-browed and Western Yellow Wagtails, Grey-headed Lapwing, Asian Openbill, and Lesser Adjutant. The surrounding woodlands offer up a vast array of Indian type species as well and birds like Alexandrine, Rose-ringed and Red-breasted Parakeets, Black-hooded Oriole, Indian Peafowl, Rufous Treepie, Cinereous Tit, Jungle Babbler, Thick-billed and Dusky Warblers, Black-rumped Flameback, Large Cuckooshrike, Ashy Woodswallow, and even Siberian Rubythroat have all been seen in the area before.

Tingtibi. The region of Tingtibi to the south of Zhemgang, has still been relatively little explored, and has turned up amazing birds and rarities in the past. There are a wide variety of habitats here, from mossy, evergreen forest along the main road south of Zhemgang stretching to streamside lowland forest and deciduous thickets in the valleys, as well as several good patches of bamboo. The area also supports the endearing Golden Langur, a highly range-restricted monkey that is common here, while even Tiger and Sloth Bear occur in the area, but we would be extremely fortunate to encounter either of these two very rare mammals.



Ibisbill by Daniel Danckwerts

Another amazing sight we hope to come across on the cliffs of steep roadcuts, are Giant Rock Honeybee colonies. With luck, we'll find the uber-specialized Yellow-rumped Honeyguide in attendance! This is one of but two honeyguides outside of Africa and is certainly the most brightly coloured of the two. They are indelibly linked to Rock Honeybee species.

Some of the many lowland bird species we will be looking for include the very secretive Rufous-throated Partridge, nomadic Pin-tailed and Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, stunning Red-headed

Trogon, scarce Black-crowned Scimitar-babbler, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, localised Rufous-faced, Black-faced, Yellow-vented and Yellow-bellied Warblers, Lesser Necklaced and Blue-winged Laughingthrushes, secretive Spotted Elachura, Grey-throated Babbler, Nepal Fulvetta, the gaudy Long-tailed Broadbill, tiny Speckled and the bamboo loving White-browed Piculets, scarce White-breasted Parrotbill, Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, noisy Bay Woodpecker, the giant black and yellow Sultan Tit, White-throated Bulbul, Banded Bay and Indian Cuckoos, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Crimson Sunbird, and three rare bamboo specialists: the seldom-seen Pale-billed Parrotbill, White-hooded Babbler and Pale-headed Woodpecker. We have also found a nearby site for the rarely seen Himalayan form of Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler!



Beautiful Nuthatch by David Hoddinott

The Tingtibi area also gives us another chance of finding the rare White-bellied Heron. The road passes by several viewing points and if we haven't found this species yet we will spend time scanning the river. Occasionally we get lucky, and an active nest is known which certainly helps making the task of finding one that much easier.

Panbang area. We'll make several productive stops along the Tingtibi-Panbang Highway searching for Pale-headed Woodpecker, Red-headed Trogon, Rufous-faced Warbler, Collared Owlet, Tickell's Leaf Warbler, Lesser Yellownape, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, and Ashy Bulbul.

We may also explore low altitude foothill forests of Bhutan's oldest national park, Royal Manas, for Capped Langur, Black Giant Squirrel, Great Myna, the adorable Collared Falconet, Black-crested Bulbul, Crested Honey Buzzard, Common Hill Myna, Maroon Oriole, Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Lineated Barbet, Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Long-tailed Broadbill, Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, Rufescent Prinia, Black-naped Monarch, Black-chinned and Striated Yuhinas, Long-tailed Sibia, Silver-eared Mesia, Red-rumped Swallow, Indochinese Roller, and Ultramarine Flycatcher. The area can sometimes be good for thrushes and species like Scaly and Orange-headed occur. We will also keep our eyes open for rarer species such as Collared Treepie, Grey-headed Parrotbill, and Rufous-backed Sibia. The rare and little known Rufous-vented Laughingthrush has also been reported from this seldom birded area and is a species that all groups should watch and listen out for very carefully. The valley of Panbang also offers us an excellent opportunity of finding the localised Golden Langur, who move around in small groups.



Fire-tailed Myzornis by Daniel Danckwerts

The area around our campsite can be very productive for owls at night with Brown Boobook, Collared Scops Owl, Mountain Scops Owl and Asian Barred Owlet all occuring.



Ward's Trogon by David Hoddinott

Yongkola (Lower Lingmethang Road). The Lingmethang Road is rightfully famous among birders and is often regarded as one of the best birding sites in all of Asia as it affords the birder an opportunity to access the seemingly endless tracts of pristine broad-leaved and coniferous forest that spans across a vast altitudinal range. All this is protected within the Thrumsing La National Park and we will spend a few days covering the various different habitats and altitudes along this road in search of the area's splendid diversity of birds and interesting mammals.

We will explore the rich forest, peppered with orchids and draped in vines and alive with the sights and sounds of some of the most wonderful birds in all of the mighty Himalayas! Likely to steal the show are several of Asia's most sought-after birds and two of our main targets, the beautiful but rare Ward's Trogon (the male an unbelievable pink and the female an unusual lemon yellow!) and the incomparable and endangered Rufous-necked Hornbill.

Additional delectable species we will be searching for here include flocks of busy White-breasted and Black-throated Parrotbills, Golden-breasted and Yellow-throated Fulvettas, the shy Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler,



Satyr Tragopan by David Hoddinott

Lesser Yellownape, Crimson-naped Woodpecker, the vivid Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Grey-cheeked and often-elusive Broad-billed Warblers, radiant Large Niltava, White-naped Yuhina, White-tailed Robin, the much-desired Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler, unobtrusive Mountain Tailorbird, scarce Blue-fronted Robin, outrageous Himalayan Cutia, Little Forktail, resplendent Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, secretive Blue-winged and Grey-sided Laughingthrushes and one of Asia's most difficult laughingthrushes, the elusive Scaly Laughingthrush. A few of the rarer birds that we might come across here are the bizarre and once near-mythical Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler, Long-billed Wren-Babbler, and unobtrusive Black-headed Shrike-Babbler.



Blood Pheasant by David Hoddinott

Sengor (Upper Lingmethang Road). We will spend time enjoying the fine selection of birds on offer in the upper reaches of the Lingmethang Road. The forests here exhibit well-known northern hemisphere plants such as spruce, hemlock and fir and are simply a delight to bird.

Targets in this area include Black-faced, Chestnut-crowned and Spotted Laughingthrushes, the secretive Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, shy and reticent Alpine Thrush, Tibetan Serin that flock in large groups, the widespread but bizarre-billed Red Crossbill, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, which skulks through the dense undergrowth, Green Shrike-Babbler, noisy Spotted Nutcracker, striking Golden-naped Finch, skulking Scaly-breasted Cupwing and Himalayan Shortwing (*April tour only*), tiny Chestnut-headed Tesia, and the delightful Bar-winged Wren-Babbler. Notably, the steep forested slopes in this area are well-renowned for harbouring one of the most stunning birds on the planet – the incredulous Satyr Tragopan – and we will endeavour to track down this regal pheasant during our time here!

Sengor to Jakar (Bumthang). We ascend the slopes that surround Thrumsing La National Park through a diversity of habitats, including stands of bamboo where we will search hard for the large and vociferous Great Parrotbill and if we are extremely lucky the minute Fulvous Parrotbill. We can expect to be entertained by Red-billed Chough, which prefers the open montane ranges, along with Russet Sparrow and perhaps Plain Mountain Finch. We will explore the head of the pass for the dazzling Fire-tailed Sunbird, equally spectacular Fire-tailed



White-bellied Heron by Paul Varney

Myzornis, as well as Grey-crested and Rufous-vented Tits. This can also be an excellent place to search for the incredible Blood Pheasant.



Himalayan Cutia by Glen Valentine

Additional species that may entertain us along our journey include Himalayan Bluetail, White-browed Bush Robin and extremely scarce and nomadic Rufous-breasted Bush Robin, the prominently marked White-collared Blackbird, Spotted Laughingthrush, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Eurasian Wren, Dark-rumped, Dark-breasted and Common Rosefinches, Olive-backed Pipit and the erratic but eye-catching Snow Pigeon. The spectacular drive towards Bumthang then weaves through the indigenous hillside forests past rows of prayer flags and through local villages surrounded by snow-capped peaks. If the day is clear we will be able to see Bhutan's highest peak, Gangkar Puensum, which reaches a lofty 7,541 meters and remains the highest unclimbed peak on earth!

Jakar itself holds several specials and birds that we will search for include the secretive Brown Parrotbill and extremely localised and subtly attractive Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch. The river at the town of Jakar, where we overnight, is an excellent location for Ibisbill and small marshy areas along the river edge hold Rosy Pipit, Little Bunting, and the scarce Black-tailed Crake, which we have an excellent chance of seeing in the late afternoon or early morning.

Tharpaling Monastery. This rather cold monastery, often shrouded in snow and situated at 3 600 m (11 800 ft), gives us excellent opportunities of finding one of the country's most sought-after pheasants, the incredible Himalayan Monal. Chances also exist for Blood Pheasant and Satyr Tragopan, but we would need to be very fortunate to see these species at Tharpaling. Other goodies typically include flocks of Snow Pigeon, White-winged Grosbeak, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Spotted Nutcracker, White-collared Blackbird, Rufous-fronted Bushtit, Blue-fronted Redstart, Plain Mountain Finch, Little Bunting, Red-billed Cough, Black-rumped Magpie, and the adorable Large-eared Pika.



Black-throated Parrotbill by Glen Valentine

Jakar to Trongsa via Yotong La. Our journey today passes through numerous small villages and goembas (Buddhist monasteries) settled neatly within the Chume valley. Birds that we will search for along the way include the secretive Brown Parrotbill and extremely localised and subtly attractive Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch. Passing over the top of Yotong La, at approximately 3,400m (11,150ft), we can keep an eye out for migrant Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Himalayan Vulture, and



Great Hornbill by Glen Valentine

Mountain Hawk-Eagle overhead, White-browed and Golden Bush Robins, Red Crossbill, Coal, Rufous-vented & Grey-crested Tits, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Spotted Nutcracker, Himalayan White-browed & Dark-rumped Rosefinches, White-browed Fulvetta, Green Shrike-Babbler, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, Alpine Accentor, Hoary-throated Barwing, Whistler's Warbler, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Hume's and Grey-sided Bush Warblers (often picked up when singing), Green-tailed and Mrs. Gould's Sunbirds, and the strange and rare Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler. This another area where Fire-tailed Myzornis is sometimes seen, and the uncommon Fire-capped Tit can also sometimes be found in mixed flocks or at flowering trees. The pass is often decked out with flowering rhododendrons and is a spectacle to bird during the spring, with stunning scenery and excellent mixed flocks.

This afternoon, we will have the opportunity to visit the spectacular Trongsa Dzong, the ancestral home of Bhutan's royal family. The wide stair rockwork and enchanting stone courtyards provide access to the elaborate internal structure, where resident monks go about their pious endeavours. Located in central Bhutan, Trongsa holds one of the most singularly magnificent dzongs in the entire kingdom, replete with magnificent architecture, an extensive history and golden roofs that glimmer in the sunlight across the valley. Situated high above Mangde Chhu, the Trongsa Dzong is a spectacular sight to behold! The remainder of the afternoon will be spent exploring the nearby broad-leaved evergreen forest in search of specialities like the handsome and boldly-patterned Spotted Forktail, mite-sized Grey-bellied Tesia and Spotted Elachura (Wren-Babbler), which has recently been placed in its own monotypic family Elachuras.

Trongsa to Nobding via Pele La. There will be opportunistic birding on our drive today with Pele La being our primary birding location. We may encounter the strange Wallcreeper *(On March trips only)* that forages along the impossibly steep cliffs and gorges as well as the gregarious Snow Pigeon. This is also a good site for the sought after Satyr Tragopan. Other rare species to search for here include the outrageous Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Golden and White-browed Bush Robins, and Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler. Darjeeling Woodpecker, White-spectacled Warbler, and Great Parrotbill, which prefers stands of rhododendron and bamboo, are other specials that are possible while the skulky Grey-sided Bush and Hume's Bush Warblers are additional targets for the area.



Mrs. Gould's Sunbird by Keith Valentine

The top of the pass may yield White-winged and Collared Grosbeaks as well as Himalayan Vulture

soaring overhead, Spotted Laughingthrush, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Fire-tailed Sunbird, and Northern Goshawk, whilst mammals could include Royle's Pika and Northern Red Muntjac.



Spotted Laughingthrush by Julian Parsons

Nobding. The broad-leaved forests surrounding Nobding hold a vast array of typical Himalayan species with birds such as laughingthrushes, minivets, sibias, fulvettas, niltavas and bullfinches well represented. The forests around Nobding offer up another chance for the rare Ward's Trogon while other sought-after species such as Himalayan Cutia can also be found. Mixed flocks are again a feature and species such as White-tailed Nuthatch, Sikkim Treecreeper, Black-throated Bushtit, White-throated Fantail, Eurasian Jay, Yellow-browed Tit, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Short-billed Minivet, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, White-bellied Erpornis, Brown and Red-headed Bullfinches, and Maroon Oriole can all be found. Thickets and roadside vegetation can be good areas to search for *ficedula* flycatchers such as Snowy-browed, Rufous-gorgeted and the uncommon Pygmy, while Rufous-bellied Niltava, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Bhutan Laughingthrush, Grey-bellied Tesia, and Yellow-billed Blue Magpie are additional species that are always great to see.

Nobding to Paro. This morning we embark on another scenic drive towards Paro. It will be interesting to note how the habitat becomes progressively drier as we move west where Green-billed Malkoha, Orange-bellied Leafbird and Speckled Wood Pigeon may entertain us before we reach the icy rivers of the valley. Here we can scan for Brown Dipper as it braves the frigid waters alongside striking White-capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts.

Chele La. Situated in the forest-cloaked hills above Paro, Chele La is probably the best place in the world to see the unbelievably vibrant Himalayan Monal, perhaps the most spectacular bird in the entire Himalayan range! Additional pheasants that may appear this morning include Blood and Kalij Pheasants. Satyr Tragopan also occurs but would be an exceptional find. Other species we may see here include Hodgson's Treecreeper, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Himalayan White-browed and Dark-rumped Rosefinches, the bright Red-headed Bullfinch, Collared and White-winged Grosbeaks, high-flying Plain Mountain Finch, the warbler-like Goldcrest, retiring Rufous-breasted Accentor, White-browed Bush Robin, Himalayan Bluetail, elusive but sometimes vocal Long-tailed Thrush, giant Spotted Laughingthrush, Brown Parrotbill and perhaps even a lone Eurasian Woodcock concealed motionless on the forest floor.

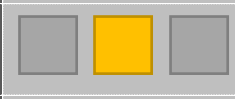


Snow Pigeon by Glen Valentine

Paro. We will spend a short time searching along the Paro Chu for the secretive Black-tailed Crake, Rosy Pipit and one of the most sought-after shorebirds in the world – the beautiful Ibisbill! This elegant wader, placed

in its own monotypic family, is often found here while it searches for food amongst the boulders of fast-flowing streams in the region. We will also keep watching carefully for any snipe that we might see as the Paro Chu is a famous river for the scarce Solitary Snipe during the winter months. Pin-tailed Snipe also occurs in the area and is the usual snipe that we tend to see during the spring months.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Mostly undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels & most mobility capabilities.
Birding Ease		Most species provide good visuals in open conditions.
Accommodation		Comfortable, several nights in mobile camps (glamping). Two nights at high elevation (2 600 m / 8 500 ft).
Walking / Trails		Mostly easy roadside birding (typical level walking or downhill), occasional moderate uphill walks.
Vehicles / Roads		Several long drives. Most roads are reasonable but can be impacted by weather conditions. Mountainous terrain means most roads are winding (ie: motion sensitive).
Photography		Average to good. No dedicated hides. Very good cultural photo opportunities.
Annoyances		Weather can be cold to very cold. Expect occasional rain & even snow. Winding roads & high altitude.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 20;
- Bhutan Visa Fees,
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees (except as noted above);
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- Be aware that some of the passes that we will traverse are at altitudes of around 12 000 to 13 000 feet. This can cause altitude problems for some people and means that the temperatures tend to be quite low on these days. We can also expect rain and possibly even snow on some days of this tour. If you have problems with altitude, please do let the Rockjumper office know. Very hot conditions with high radiation for sunburn are also likely to be encountered in the southern areas of the country on a few days of the tour.
- On some nights we will stay a long way from any solid accommodations or civilisation and will be using camping facilities set up by our agents. There will be walk-in, comfortable-for-two tents with cots, sheets, pillows, and blankets. While our ground agents do provide very comfortable and warm sleeping bags, you may bring your own sleeping bag if you prefer. If participants would prefer a tent to themselves, please advise the office. Single tent space is limited and will be assigned in order of tour registration.
- The food is generally good and tasty, and an excellent variety of dishes are typically prepared by our camping team and at the various hotels we visit. Food is always served buffet style. Do note that some of the dishes can be quite spicy at times but there is always a variety of options prepared. Please be sure to let us know of your dietary requirements in advance of the tour.
- Bhutan is still relatively untouched by tourism and the local people are friendly and courteous. It is seen as being inappropriate to hand out sweets or other items to interested bystanders or anyone who we may encounter along our tour. Your sensitivity in this regard is appreciated.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour starts in Paro in the afternoon of day 1 in Paro and will conclude here after breakfast on day 20.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Paro Airport, Paro (IATA: PBH) Bhutan, is the main port of arrival and departure for the main tour, it is well connected to larger cities such as New Delhi (India) or Bangkok (Thailand) with Druk Air.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.