India

Northeast – Eaglenest & Beyond

9th April to 22nd April 2023 (14 days)



Himalayan Monal by David Hoddinott

This exotic birding adventure takes us to many seldom visited and remote destinations in northeast India. We will have the rare opportunity to search for a host of Asia's most tantalising and desirable species, including the stunning Temminck's Tragopan, Bengal Florican, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Ward's Trogon, exquisite Beautiful Nuthatch, Bugun Liocichla, incredible Grandala, rare and endangered White-winged Duck, and dazzling Fire-tailed Myzornis – to name just some of the many exciting possibilities! This exciting tour takes us to some of Asia's best birding sites where few birders have ever ventured and we will no doubt encounter many rarely-seen species!.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Guwahati to Nameri National Park**
Day 2	**Nameri National Park**
Day 3	**Nameri to Dirang (Sangti Valley)**
Days 4 to 6	**Mandala Phudong & Sela Pass areas**
Day 7	**Dirang to Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary**
Days 8 to 12	**Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary**
Day 13	**Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary to Tezpur**
Day 14	**Tezpur to Guwahati & depart**



Birding sites in detail



Golden-breasted Fulvetta by Glen Valentine

Nameri National Park. This wonderful reserve is contiguous with the Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, together constituting an area of over 1 000km² (390 mi²) of semi-evergreen forests, moist deciduous forest and narrow strips of grassland along the beautiful crystal-clear, boulder-strewn rivers.

We have a day to explore the forested areas of this park for our main target – the highly endangered White-winged Duck. This large forest duck inhabits forested pools and slow-flowing river channels and our chances of finding it are very good. Whilst searching for this rare species we will also be on the lookout for other forest denizens, including the rare Pale-capped Pigeon, Pin-tailed, Wedge-tailed and Ashy-headed Green Pigeons, seldom-seen Pied Falconet, spectacular Sultan Tit, Common Green Magpie, Greater Necklaced and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes, Green-billed Malkoha, secretive Pale-chinned Blue Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, gigantic Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Vernal Hanging Parrot, the attractive and elusive Black-breasted Thrush, Maroon Oriole, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Wreathed and magnificent Great Hornbills, Oriental Dollarbird, and the scarce Silver-backed Needletail overhead. Depending on the rains, we may even find Hooded Pitta during our forays through this wonderful reserve.

Dirang (Sangti Valley). The area of interest is the poorly explored East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, the north easternmost state of India. The area forms the border between China and India and is situated just west of the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. The eastern Himalayan slopes form a varied and rich landscape and habitat with the most wonderful rainforest – rich with bird and animal life.

Targets species include Grey-headed, White-breasted and Pale-billed Parrotbills, gregarious, White-hooded Babbler, Streak-throated Barwing, extremely elusive Pale-headed Woodpecker, Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, Golden-breasted Fulvetta and Broad-billed Warbler. Other interesting species may include Yellow-bellied, Grey-cheeked and Yellow-vented Warblers, Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Long-tailed Sibia, scarce White-naped Yuhina, Yellow-throated and Nepal Fulvettas, Long-tailed Minivet, handsome Greater and Lesser Yellownapes, and Hair-crested and Ashy Drongos.



Fire-tailed Myzornis by Daniel Danckwerts

Mandala Phudung. The higher elevations of Mandala Phudung hold several wonderful species and we will spend time scouring the area in search of

these many specialities. Notable birds that we will be on the hunt for include the dazzling Fire-tailed Myzornis, Scaly-breasted and Bar-winged Wren-Babblers, Spotted Laughingthrush, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, nomadic Golden-naped, Crimson-browed and Scarlet Finches, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Ferruginous and Slaty-blue Flycatchers, Chestnut-headed Tesia and the localised Brown-throated Fulvetta. We may also encounter a host of other lovely species, including soaring Himalayan Vulture, regal Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Red Junglefowl, Russet Sparrow, striking Crested Bunting, Rosy Pipit and the entertaining Brown Dipper, among many others.



Ward's Trogon by Glen Valentine

Sela Pass. We'll explore the higher reaches of the Sela Pass (weather and conditions permitting) at an altitude of 4 170m (13 800ft). The scenery here is unsurpassed, and we will no doubt enjoy an amazing, bird-filled day. Some of the very special high-altitude species we will be on the lookout for include the spectacular Himalayan Monal, Kalij and Blood Pheasants, Snow and Hill Partridges, unique and rather bizarre Wallcreeper, Snow Pigeon, bold and demonstrative Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, curious Spotted Nutcracker, Red-billed Chough, high-flying Brandt's and Plain Mountain Finches, Collared Grosbeak, Hodgson's Treecreeper, the stunning Grandala, Alpine and Rufous-breasted Accentors, rarely-seen Solitary Snipe, Himalayan Buzzard, Bearded Vulture, Plain-backed Thrush, White-collared and Tibetan Blackbirds, gorgeous Golden Bush Robin, eye-catching Spotted and Black-faced Laughingthrushes, dazzling Fire-tailed Sunbird, Rosy Pipit, White-throated Dipper in the icy mountain streams, Eurasian Wren, Indian Blue Robin and Dark-rumped, Dark-breasted and Himalayan White-browed Rosefinches.

Dirang to Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. After departing Dirang, well make a few stops searching for very special and often elusive birds, including Black-tailed Crake, the rare Long-billed Plover and the shy and seldom-seen Blyth's Kingfisher. We may also find Short-billed Minivet, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Black-chinned and Striated Yuhinas, Spot-winged Grosbeak, Rusty-fronted Barwing, difficult and shy Blue-winged and Scaly Laughingthrushes, immaculate Rufous-throated Wren-babbler, White-breasted Parrotbill and White-tailed Nuthatch.



Grandala by Glen Valentine

Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. Eaglenest is a wonderfully diverse reserve, with altitudes ranging from 500 to 3 200m (1 640 to 10 500 ft) above sea level, and the park protects an impressive 218km² (over 100mi²) of fabulous forest habitat.

We have dedicated several full days to



Snow Partridge by Glen Valentine

explore the splendours of Eaglenest, and we will visit a range of altitudes to enable us to find the host of excellent species that occur here.

Eaglenest has recently attracted a lot of attention in birding circles due to the discovery of a new species of laughingthrush, the Bugun Liochicla (described in 2006), which is named after the local tribe in the area. This is the only site on earth where this beautiful bird has been found and our chances of finding this enigmatic species are very good, though by no means guaranteed. The entire area offers excellent birding, and the list of tantalising specialities is almost endless! Of major significance, however, are Ward's Trogon, Purple and Green Cochoas, Coral-billed and Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers, stunning Himalayan Cutia, Black-headed Shrike-Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch, exquisite and little-known Gould's Shortwing, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Long-billed and Bar-winged Wren-Babblers, the seldom-seen Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler, and we will try our best to locate as many of these highly desirable gems as possible!

Other exciting and noteworthy species that we will be on the lookout for include the incredibly elusive Chestnut-breasted, Rufous-throated and Hill Partridges, Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle, Northern Goshawk, colourful Golden-throated Barbet, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Little Forktail, unobtrusive Ashy Wood Pigeon, Black-throated Prinia, the scarce and erratic Brown Bullfinch, White-throated Needletail overhead, a range of laughingthrushes that include Blue-winged, Bhutan, White-crested, Black-faced, White-throated, Striated and Scaly, Red-faced Liocichla and, in areas of dense bamboo, Brown, White-breasted and Black-throated Parrotbills, as well as the superb but elusive Temminck's Tragopan. Mixed species flocks attract the incredible black-and-yellow Sultan Tit, Long-tailed, Beautiful and Rufous-backed Sibias, range-restricted Brown-throated Fulvetta, White-tailed Nuthatch, Mrs Gould's, Green-tailed and Black-throated



Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler by Glen Valentine



Beautiful Nuthatch by David Hoddinott

Sunbirds, Green Shrike-Babbler, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Slaty-backed and Sapphire Flycatchers, and the scarce and attractive Fire-capped Tit. The forest undergrowth supports a range of specialities too and we will search hard for the secretive White-browed Shortwing, Pygmy, Scaly-breasted, Spotted and Rufous-throated Wren-Babblers, White-tailed Robin, minuscule Chestnut-headed, Grey-bellied and Slaty-bellied Tesias, as well as the rare and ultra-skulking Blue-fronted Robin.

Guwahati. We will make a stop at the local refuse dump that attracts hundreds of regal Greater Adjutant, a rare and extremely localised bird throughout most of its limited range. Guwahati remains the best place on earth to see this stately, yet also very ugly stork, with smaller numbers of the more widespread Lesser Adjutant, Asian Openbill and Black-headed Ibis also being attracted to this site. Citrine and White Wagtails are usually around in good numbers, while Striated Grassbird and Plain and Yellow-bellied Prinias will be looked for in areas of rank grass.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. This a Mega style tour designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. Not suited for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or serious health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions.
Accommodation		Variable. Comfortable in larger towns, homestays in villages and tents at Eaglenest
Walking / Trails		Mostly roadside birding with easy to moderate walks.
Vehicles / Roads		Reasonable quality surfaced roads in some areas, unsurfaced gravel roads.
Photography		Can be good. No dedicated hides. More challenging in forested environments.
Annoyances		Some time at very high latitude with variable weather. Rain is possible on every day around Dirang and Eaglenest. Early starts.

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 dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 14;
- Bottled drinking water;
- 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;
- 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 the Sela Pass above the Sangti Valley is at an altitude of around 4 170m (13 800ft). This can cause altitude problems for some people. The temperature will also be on the low side. We can expect rain and possibly even snow on Sela Pass.
- At Dirang, we will stay at a homestay. Whilst recently built, the accommodation is still quite basic.
- At Eaglenest we will stay a long way from any solid accommodations or civilisation and will be using camping facilities set up by our agents. These will be fairly spacious walk-in, comfortable-for-two tents with a proper mattress to sleep on. Blankets or similar, sheets and pillows will also be provided. However, you are welcome to bring your own sleeping bag if you prefer.
- There is no running hot water at Eaglenest. Hot water is available in buckets/bowls for washing on demand.

- 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.
- While the food is generally good and tasty, it can become quite monotonous as not many different dishes are prepared. The food can also be spicy at times.
- It is important for the comfort of you and your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.
- In areas that contain potentially dangerous animals, you will be confined to the vehicle and are, quite understandably, not allowed to exit.
- Internet provision is scarce and unreliable throughout. It is recommended that you obtain a local SIM card in Delhi which will allow you to communicate from most sites, even the remote Eaglenest (somewhat variably).
- Machine washing/drying is non-existent, only hand wash and dry is possible. Turn around time is delayed given the local weather conditions, so you may wish to pack more clothing that you typically do.
- Power cuts are quite normal, though they tend not to last particularly long. Electricity is provided for 2-3 hours by generator at Eaglenest.

Our Mega tours are very fast-paced birding adventures designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. The focus of the tour is to see as many of the endemics and area specials as possible in our given time. To cover the necessary route to maximise the species list we tend to spend a single night at most sites and travel large distances. There is very little down time aside from that spent driving from one site to the next. These tours are not suitable for dedicated or avid photographers; inexperienced or new birders; as well as anyone with serious mobility or health challenges.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour departs from Guwahati late on the morning of day 1 heading to Nameri National Park area, and conclude after breakfast on day 14 with a transfer to Guwahati International Airport.

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.

Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi (IATA: DEL) is the main port of entry for international flights into India. Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati (IATA: GAU), is most easily reached by domestic flights from Delhi, Mumbai or Bangalore.

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. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

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