

Itinerary – 07 - Birding and Wildlife tour with a Whale watching extension, in Sri Lanka - 12 Days 11 Nights

Day 01 – Arrival and drive direct to Kandy. Check in at a hotel in Kandy by lunch time (Three hours' drive), for two nights. Afternoon nature walk in hotel gardens, the garden is good for some common birds in the area including endemic Ceylon Small (Crimson-fronted) Barbet and Lesser Hill-Myna, Brown Fish Owl.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Kandy.

Possible highlights of birds: Layard's Parakeet, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Ceylon Junglefowl, Malarbar Trogon, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Crimson-backed Flameback, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Lesser Hill Myna

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Indian Giant Flying Squirrel, White-striped Chevrotain E, Brown Palm Civet E.

Day 02 - Afternoon nature walk in hotel gardens and surrounding, the garden is good for some common birds in the area including endemic Ceylon Small (Crimson-fronted) Barbet and Lesser Hill-Myna.

Afternoon visit the Temple of the tooth relic in Kandy. And back to hotel for lunch.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Kandy.

Possible highlights of birds: Layard's Parakeet, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Ceylon Junglefowl, Malarbar Trogon, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Crimson-backed Flameback, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Lesser Hill Myna

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Indian Giant Flying Squirrel, White-striped Chevrotain E, Brown Palm Civet E.

Day 03 – After breakfast leave for Nuwara Eliya in the high hills. Check in at a hotel in Nuwara Eliya by lunch time (Four hours' drive), for two nights.

After lunch we head in the direction of Moons plains (25 minutes' drive), a well-known site amongst birders world over for some sub continental specialties. It is well known that the majority of Kashmir Flycatchers migrate in winter to this part of Sri Lanka, even in their breeding areas in Kashmir it's known to be difficult observing these birds thus many birders visit this park in order to tick this species. Another interesting bird is the Pied Ground Thrush, once again a difficult bird in its breeding area.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Possible highlights of birds: Yellow-eared Bulbul, Ceylon Whistling Thrush, Ceylon Wood Pigeon, Dusky (Dull) Blue Flycatcher, Kashmir Flycatcher, Indian Blackbird (endemic race *kinnissi* a possible future split from the Indian Blackbird), Ceylon Hill white-eye, Ceylon Bush Warbler, Black-throated Munia (endemic nominate race, the Ceylon Hill Munia, a possible future split from the Indian races), Himalayan Buzzard, Pied Bush Chat.

Possible highlights of mammals: Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (highland race), Sambar, Toque Macaque E (highland race), Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Striped-necked Mongoose e, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (highland race), Golden Palm Civet E.

Day 04 - Early morning proceed to Horton Plains National Park (Hotel to park entrance - one hour drive) on further higher up in the hills, the park consists of grasslands and cloud forest in higher cool climatic conditions, looking for highland open country and forest birds including endemics, and also butterflies, highland forest mammals and other wildlife.

Return to hotel for late lunch. Late afternoon visit Victoria Park in the town or a forest near town.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Possible highlights of birds: Yellow-eared Bulbul, Ceylon Whistling Thrush, Ceylon Wood Pigeon, Dusky (Dull) Blue Flycatcher, Kashmir Flycatcher, Indian Blackbird (endemic race *kinnissi* a possible future split from the Indian Blackbird), Ceylon Hill white-eye, Ceylon Bush Warbler, Black-throated Munia (endemic nominate race, the Ceylon Hill Munia, a possible future split from the Indian races), Himalayan Buzzard, Pied Bush Chat.

Possible highlights of mammals: Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (highland race), Sambar, Toque Macaque E (highland race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (highland race), Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Striped-necked Mongoose e.

Day 05 – After breakfast drive to Kitulgala. Check in at the rest house in Kitulgala by lunch time (Three hours' drive), for two nights. Subsequent to lunch we will cross the river, by the rest house on a ferry to visit Kitulgala rainforest, in search for rainforest birds including endemics and some nocturnal birds and also butterflies, forest mammals and other wildlife.

Overnight stay at the rest house in Kitulgala.

Possible highlights of birds: Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Ceylon Junglefowl, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Ceylon Frogmouth, Layard's Parakeet, Green-billed Coucal, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Malarbar Trogon, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Crimson-backed Flameback, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Legge's Flowerpecker, Ceylon Crested Drongo, Ceylon Hill Myna, Ceylon Blue Magpie

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Red Slender Loris E, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Flameback squirrel E, Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Sri Lanka Yellow Spotted Chevrotain E, Sambar, Wholly Horse-shoe Bat, False Vampire Bat, Rainbow Bat.

Day 06 - Morning birding in Kitulgala forest and after lunch leave for Sinharaja rainforest. Check in to Lodge in Sinharaja by late evening (Three and half hours' drive), for three nights. If time permits evening birding around lodge.

The drive to Sinharaja, after an early lunch at the hotel, is around three and a half hours and can be with some birding opportunities en route.

Overnight stay at Lodge in Sinharaja.

Possible highlights of birds: Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Ceylon Junglefowl, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Ceylon Frogmouth, Green-billed Coucal, Red-faced Malkoha, Layard's Parakeet, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Malarbar Trogon, Crimson-backed Flameback, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Ceylon Scally Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush, Legge's Flowerpecker, White-faced Starling, Ceylon Crested Drongo, Ceylon Hill Myna, Ceylon Blue Magpie

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Red Slender Lorises E, Sri Lanka Flameback squirrel E, Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Sri Lanka Yellow Spotted Chevrotain E, Sambar, Wholly Horse-shoe Bat, False Vampire Bat, Rainbow Bat.

Day 07 – Full day birding in Sinharaja Rainforest

Overnight stay at Lodge in Sinharaja.

Possible highlights of birds: Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Ceylon Junglefowl, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Ceylon Frogmouth, Green-billed Coucal, Red-faced Malkoha, Layard's Parakeet, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Malarbar Trogon, Crimson-backed Flameback, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Ceylon Scally Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush, Legge's Flowerpecker, White-faced Starling, Ceylon Crested Drongo, Ceylon Hill Myna, Ceylon Blue Magpie

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Red Slender Lorises E, Sri Lanka Flameback squirrel E, Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Sri Lanka Yellow Spotted Chevrotain E, Sambar, Wholly Horse-shoe Bat, False Vampire Bat, Rainbow Bat.

Day 08 – Full day birding in Sinharaja Rainforest

Overnight stay at Lodge in Sinharaja.

Possible highlights of birds: Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Ceylon Junglefowl, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Ceylon Frogmouth, Green-billed Coucal, Red-faced Malkoha, Layard's Parakeet, Ceylon Hanging- parrot, Malarbar Trogon, Crimson-backed Flameback, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-capped Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Ceylon Scally Thrush, Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush, Legge's Flowerpecker, White-faced Starling, Ceylon Crested Drongo, Ceylon Hill Myna, Ceylon Blue Magpie

Possible highlights of mammals: Toque Macaque E (wet zone race), Purple-faced Leaf Monkey E (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel e (wet zone race), Sri Lanka Red Slender Lorises E,

Sri Lanka Flameback squirrel E, Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel E, Sri Lanka Yellow Spotted Chevrotain E, Sambar, Wholly Horse-shoe Bat, False Vampire Bat, Rainbow Bat.

Day 09 - Morning leave for Udawalawa (three hours drive). Check in to hotel in Udawalawa by lunch time, for one night. Subsequently an afternoon visit to Udawalawa National Park (Hotel to park entrance - 10 minutes drive) on jeeps, the park consists of dry grassland, scrub and forest, looking for open country and grassland birds including some endemics and also butterflies, Asian Elephant and other forest mammals, and other wildlife.

Overnight stay at hotel in Udawalawa.

Possible highlights of birds: Crested Hawk-Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Indian Peafowl, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sirkeer Malkoha, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Scops Owl, Alexandrine Parakeet, Plum-headed parakeet, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Marshall's Iora, Crested Treeswift, Coppersmith Barbet, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Jerdon's Bushlark, Blyth's Pipit, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Lesser Adjutant, Ceylon Woodshrike, Indian Black Robin, White-browed Bulbul, Jungle Prinia, Ashy Prinia, Plain Prinia, Grey-breasted Prinia, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Black-headed Munia, Rosy Starling.

Possible highlights of mammals: Ruddy Mongoose, Asian Elephant, Golden Jackal, Jungle Cat, Indian Flying Fox, Lesser Tube-nosed Bat.

Day 10 - Morning Second visit to Udawalawe National Park. After lunch leave for Thissamaharama. Check in at the hotel by late evening (One and half hours drive), for two nights.

Afternoon visit wetlands around Tissamaharama looking for waterbirds.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Thissamaharama.

Possible highlights of birds: Crested Hawk-Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Indian Peafowl, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Sirkeer Malkoha, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Scops Owl, Alexandrine Parakeet, Plum-headed parakeet, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Marshall's Iora, Crested Treeswift, Coppersmith Barbet, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Jerdon's Bushlark, Blyth's Pipit, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Lesser Adjutant, Ceylon Woodshrike, Indian Black Robin, White-browed Bulbul, Jungle Prinia, Ashy Prinia, Plain Prinia, Grey-breasted Prinia, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Black-headed Munia, Rosy Starling.

Possible highlights of mammals: Ruddy Mongoose, Asian Elephant, Golden Jackal, Jungle Cat, Indian Flying Fox, Lesser Tube-nosed Bat.

Day 11 - Morning visit wetlands around Tissamaharama looking for waterbirds.

Afternoon visit Yala National Park (Hotel to park entrance - 40 minutes drive) by jeeps, the park consists of wetlands, and dry grasslands, scrublands and forest, looking for waterbirds, shorebirds, forest and nocturnal birds including some endemics, and also butterflies, Asian Elephant, Leopard, Sloth Bear and other forest mammals, and other wildlife.

Overnight stay at Hotel in Thissamaharama.

Possible highlights of birds: Black-necked Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Lesser Adjutant, Ceylon Junglefowl, Indian Nightjar, Jerdon's Nightjar, Jerdon's Bushlark, Ceylon Woodshrike, White-browed Bulbul, Marshall's Iora, Brahminy Starling, Rosy Starling.

Possible highlights of mammals: Chital, Sambar, Asian Elephant, Tufted Grey Langur e, Eurasian Wild Boar, Golden Jackal, Sloth Bear e, Leopard, Rusty-Spotted Cat e, Jungle Cat, Striped-necked Mongoose e, Ruddy Mongoose e, Indian Grey Mongoose, Indian Gerbil, Wild Water Buffalo, Indian Hare e.

Day 12 - Morning visit Bundala National park (Hotel to park entrance - 30 minutes drive) or second visit to Yala National Park (Hotel to park entrance - 40 minutes drive) by jeeps, the Bundala National Park consists of wetlands, and dry grasslands, scrublands and forest, looking for waterbirds, shorebirds, forest birds including some endemics, and also butterflies, some mammals, and other wildlife.

After lunch proceed to a hotel near airport (Five hours drive) for departure at late night or next day morning.

Overnight stay at hotel near airport.

Possible highlights of birds: Great Thick-knee, Black and Yellow Bitterns, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Small Pratincole, Watercock, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Scops Owl, Blue-faced Malkoha, Ceylon Woodshrike, Marshall's Iora, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Jungle Prinia, Rosy starling.

Possible highlights of mammals: Chital, Sambar, Asian Elephant, Tufted Grey Langur e, Eurasian Wild Boar, Golden Jackal, Striped-necked Mongoose e, Ruddy Mongoose e, Indian Grey Mongoose, Indian Gerbil, Wild Water Buffalo, Indian Hare e.

Optional Whale watching Extension

Day 12 - Morning visit Bundala National park or second visit to Yala National Park

After lunch proceed to Mirissa for two nights (Two hours drive).

Overnight stay at hotel in Mirissa.

Day 13 – Morning first Whale watching tour, back to hotel at lunch time.

Afternoon leisure at beach

Overnight stay at hotel in Mirissa.

Species often encountered: Bryde's Whale (*Balanoptera edeni*), Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), and Long-snouted Spinner Dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*).

Occasionally observed species: Short-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*), False Killer Whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*), Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), Pantropical Spotted Dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*), and Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*).

Day 14 – Morning second whale watching tour. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon drive to airport for departure at night or next day morning.

Overnight stay at hotel near airport.

Species often encountered: Bryde's Whale (*Balanoptera edeni*), Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), and Long-snouted Spinner Dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*).

Occasionally observed species: Short-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*), False Killer Whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*), Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), Pantropical Spotted Dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*), and Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*).