

Report of a Birding Trip to

Sri Lanka

28th January to 5th February 2023

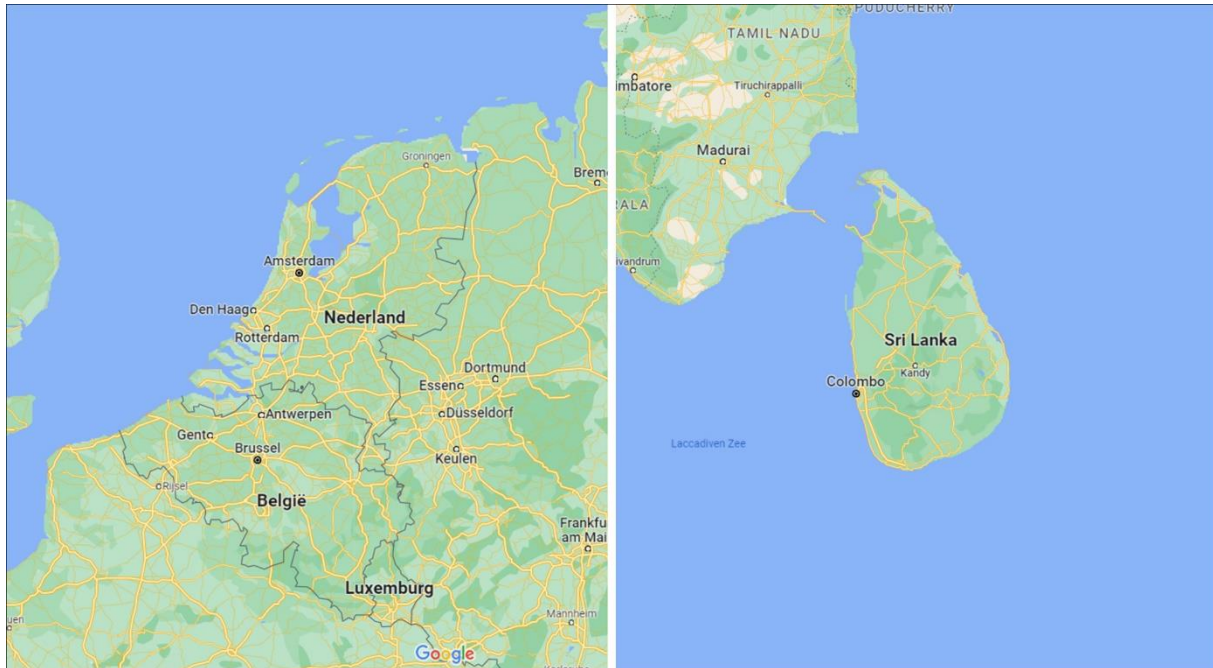
Participants:

Arjan Brenkman, Jan van der Laan

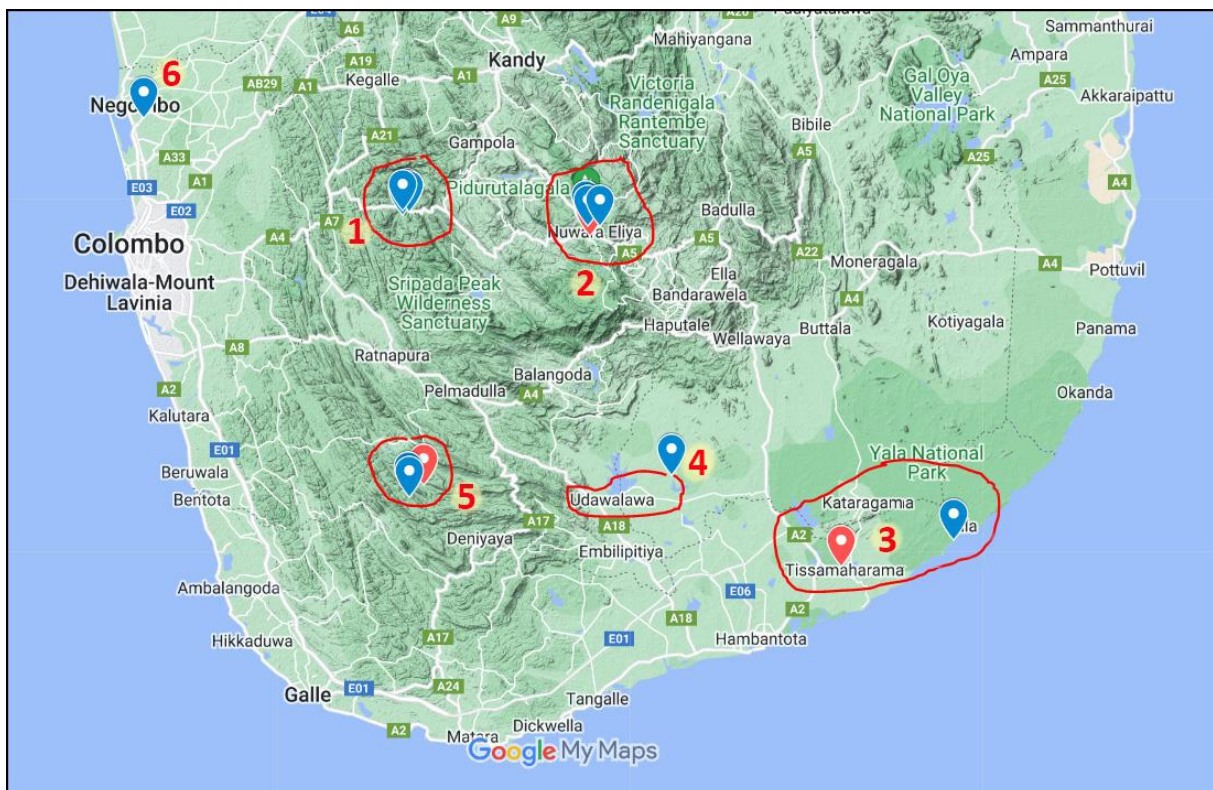


Red-faced Malkoha, 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve, Sri Lanka; © Arjan Brenkman.

Maps I



Left: the Netherlands; right: Sri Lanka, both on the same scale for size comparison.



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|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Kithulgala | 4. Udawalawe NP |
| 2. Nuwara Elya, Victoria Park, Horton Plains | 5. Sinharaja Forest Reserve |
| 3. Tissamaharama, Yala NP | 6. Bandaranaike International Airport |

For more detailed maps of the areas 1-5, see the final pages of this report.

Introduction

Between 27th January and 6th February 2023 Arjan Brenkman and I (Jan van der Laan) finally made it to make a trip together again. We had planned this for February 2022, but a few days before departure I was diagnosed to have Covid-19 and was not allowed to travel. We managed to postpone the trip for 11 months. In the summer of 2022 there was a deep economic crisis in Sri Lanka, affecting tourism severely, but things were getting back to normal again, so there was no reason to postpone it again.

We contacted [Nandana Hewa Gamage](mailto:nandanantgl@gmail.com) (nandanantgl at gmail.com; tel: +94779669367) as advised by Dave van der Spoel to act as tour operator and guide to take us through Sri Lanka. This proved a more than excellent choice. Not only is Nandana a keen birder knowing how to find all the specialties, he is strategically strong, has an unparalleled network of local contacts and is also a great companion, working around the clock to get you on the birds you want to see. In other words, if you fail to see Spot-bellied Eagle Owl or Sri Lanka Bay Owl, they are not seen by others at that moment either.

He has over ten years of independent birding guide experience and more than 30 years working in jobs involved in nature in Sri Lanka. Once reaching out to check if he could guide us, Nandana proved a strong and easy communicator and very reliable. If you plan on taking a trip, do reach out to him and listen to his advice regarding planning. Although everything of the wet zone is found at Sinharaja, you better still visit Kithulgala. This gave us for instance Serendib Scops Owl that was not being heard or seen for at least two weeks at Sinharaja while we were there. Lastly, he arranged nice hotels for us, a sound vehicle plus driver and high quality food.

Itinerary

- 27 Jan** We took flight QR275 from Qatar Airways to **Doha** at 15:15 hours. We arrived at Doha at 23:35 hours local time and had to walk a large distance for the connecting flight QR664 to **Colombo**. For us it is a mystery why this airport won the prize of best airport in 2022. Money buys everything maybe? Both legs were uneventful and the movie choice was duller than ever.
- 28 Jan** We arrived at 8:35 hours at **Bandaranaike International Airport** in **Colombo**. At the airport we met Nandana, our guide and Harry, our driver. We drove to **Kithulgala** with a short tea stop underway. Checked in at 12:00 hours in the [Plantation Hotel](#), which proved to be a fine hotel. After preparing us for birding we went south of the **Kelani River**. We birded till dusk and saw our first endemics like [Red-backed Flameback](#), [Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot](#), [Legge's Flowerpecker](#), [Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill](#) and [Yellow-fronted Barbet](#). At an open spot in the forest we sat down at a small bamboo platform and Nandana told us to wait, while he would look for the [Serendib Scops Owl](#). During this wait we observed our only Black-throated Munias and several Indian Pond Herons. After almost two-and-an-half hours (in which I felt asleep for an hour or so), Nandana came back with the message that he had found it a few hundred meters in the forest. After some bush-whacking we managed to see this very rare owl, perched in a bush, well hidden, next to a small forest stream infested with leeches. After this success we walked back to the car, while seeing other new species like [Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler](#), [Sri Lanka Hill Myna](#) and [Sri Lanka Junglefowl](#). We had dinner at the **Plantation Hotel** and we crashed at about 20:30 hours after c 32 hours without sleep.
- 29 Jan** In the morning we birded the area west of **Kithulgala** and north of the **Kelani River**. This area is actually a small village surrounded by good secondary forest. First birds were Black-hooded Oriole, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Crested Honey Buzzard, Brown-breasted Flycatcher and Indian Pitta. We spent most effort in looking for the [Chestnut-backed Owlet](#). We managed to find two birds in the canopy of large tree. Other birds this morning were [Spot-winged Thrush](#), [Orange-billed Babbler](#), [Sri Lanka Green Pigeon](#), [Sri Lanka Swallow](#), [Red-backed Flameback](#), [White-bellied Sea Eagle](#), [Small and Orange Minivet](#), [Layard's Parakeet](#) and Black Eagle. After breakfast at 9:30 we started birding the area north of

Kithulgala along the along the **Mahabage Road**, c 2 km north of **Kithulgala**, with best birds **Black-capped Bulbul**, Indian White-eye, Purple-rumped Sunbird and Dark-fronted Babbler. Highlight was the finding of a pair of **Crimson-backed Flamebacks**, seen at close range. When it got too hot to do some proper birding, we returned to the hotel, had a late lunch after which we birded the area south of the **Kelani river** at **Kithulgala**. This area has some primary forest, but mainly secondary forest with a stream and several open spaces. Best birds were **Green-billed Coucal**, **Brown-capped Babbler**, Slaty-legged Crake and Legge's Flowerpecker. When the sun set, we started to look for Sri Lanka Bay Owl. We heard one, but it did not come close enough to see it. Sri Lanka Frogmouths eased the pain a little. After three hours of birding in darkness, Nandana phoned a tuk-tuk for us that brought us home safely. We had a late dinner and went to bed at c 00:30 hours.



The tuk-tuk that brought is back from the Sri Lanka Bay Owl with three men in the back and two in front; Kithulgala, 29 January 2023; © Arjan Brenkman.

30 Jan In the morning before breakfast we tried to find Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush along a rocky stream in good secondary forest in the hills c 5 km north of **Kithulgala**. Malabar Trogon, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Black-capped Bulbul, Alpine Swifts and fleeting and unacceptable views of White-faced Starling were the best birds, but no Whistling Thrush. After breakfast we drove eastwards to **Nuwara Eliya**. We had a short stop at a tea shop. Along the road we found Southern Hill Mynas and finally good views of a **Crimson-fronted Barbet**. At 13:15 hours we arrived at the **Ivy Bungalow** (a very nice hotel) in **Nuwara Eliya**. After a quick lunch we headed for the famous **Victoria Park**. First new birds already at the entrance were **Sri Lanka White-eye** and **Yellow-eared Bulbuls**. We positioned ourselves in the stream in the western part of the park, where we quickly found a male Kashmir Flycatcher, Indian Blackbird and the best, two Pied Thrushes, our man target. When I was photographing Kashmir Flycatcher, Arjan and Nandana saw a male Indian Blue Robin. The final hours of daylight were spent doing roadside birding along the **Sandathenna road** just southeast of Nuwara Eliya. There we found a single female Indian Blue Robin, but the biggest surprise were two **Sri Lanka Thrushes** feeding in the garbage that was thrown downhill. Other birds here were Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher and Green Warbler. We did some last birding along a stream behind a food stall at **Seetha Eliya** along the **AA005 road**, which was in the past good for Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. No thrush, but rather good views of another endemic, **Sri Lanka Bush Warbler**. At 18:45 hours we were back at **Ivy Bungalow** and after a quick dinner we went to sleep.

31 Jan In the morning we tried almost every hairpin along the **World's End Road** to **Horton Plains NP** for Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, but no bird appeared. We finally went to the **Pattipola Entrance** of **Horton Plains NP** where we suddenly heard a **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush** singing and it took no time to have good views! Moreover, two leopards crossed the road, but only Arjan and Nandana saw it, because there had better views from the front of the car. Other birds here were Cinereous Tit, **Dull-blue Flycatcher** and more Sri Lanka Bush Warblers. Next we birded at the nursery south of the railroad at **Pattipola**. This place is good for **Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon** and we quickly found a group. Also this place

is a good alternative for Kashmir Flycatcher and we found a beautiful male in the vegetable gardens. Other birds here were Hill Swallow, Loten's Sunbird, Dull Blue Flycatcher and several invisible Green Warblers. After a quick tea we drove back to **Nuwara Eliya**. During this ride we had our first Red-wattled Lapwings, Indian Peafowl and our only Pied Bush Chats. In **Nuwara Eliya** we had a quick lunch opposite the **Race Course**. We next birded the marshy area in the south-eastern part of the Race Course for almost an hour and succeeded in finding our main target, the Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler. The trick is to play its sound and then wait. Usually a bird comes in to inspect and that is the moment when you must have it in your bins as they will never come twice. With this tactic, we managed to see at least two birds quite well. Other birds here were groups of Pin-tailed Snipes, Grey-breasted Prinia and Paddyfield Pipits. Next we birded the **Sandathenna road** again, but it started to rain more and there were hardly any birds present. We were forced to take some tea at a road restaurant and suddenly we saw a group of four **Sri Lanka Blue Magpies**! When the rain stopped a little we did some birding above the restaurant, but it was too cloudy for any raptor and we only heard a Common Hawk-Cuckoo, but encountered a nice group of eleven Yellow-eared Bulbuls. Dinner again at the **Ivy Bungalow**.

1 Feb

In the morning we had good views of a Blyth's Reed Warbler and a pair of Indian Robins in the garden of our hotel. But today we had a long drive on our program from **Nuwara Eliya** to **Tissamaharama**. We arrived at Tissamaharama around 13:00 hours and immediately we saw large amounts of birds: Black-headed Ibis, Whiskered Tern, Indian Cormorants, Oriental Darters, Intermediate Egret and Spot-billed Pelicans. We checked-in at the **Rain Tree Hotel** (very nice) and quickly went birding at **Tissa Lake**, opposite the hotel along the road. In a large Rain Tree we found a pair of **Sri Lanka Woodshrike** and in the marshes we found Jacobin Cuckoo, Rose-ringed Parakeets, Purple and Grey Herons, Black-tailed Godwit, Baya Weaver, Lesser Whistling Ducks, Coppersmith and Brown-headed Barbets, Black-hooded Oriole, Asian Openbill, Painted Stork, Yellow Bittern, Grey-headed Swamphen and Pheasant-tailed Jacana. The rest of the afternoon was spent seeing all the owls at different stake-outs in the outskirts of **Tissamaharama**. First a pair of Brown Fish Owls, followed by an Indian Scops Owl and finally a pair of Jungle Owlets, all in private gardens. Although it rained quite much, we managed to have good views of them all. We ended the day in somebody's garden where a pair of White-naped Woodpeckers normally comes to roost and indeed at 17:30 one female came in and showed itself very well. We had a nice dinner with a large beer at the **Rain Tree Hotel**, not before we saw the thousands of Fruit Bats going to feed. Again (as usual), we went to sleep early.

2 Feb

Already at 4:50 we drove to **Yala NP** to be there at first light. Yala National Park is a large area mainly consisting of waterholes and savanna. Normally it is dry here, but we encountered rain every hour or so. For us there were no new endemic birds to get, but there are so many birds and mammals, that it is a must for every visitor to Sri Lanka. In the morning we checked all shorebirds and terns, resulting in Great Stone-Curlew, Pacific Golden Plover, Wood Sandpiper, Greenshank, Ruff, Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Eurasian Whimbrel, Lesser and Greater Sandplover, Kentish and Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-wattled Lapwing, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Turnstone, Gull-billed, Little, White-winged and Whiskered Terns. Other good birds were Spot-billed Pelican, Oriental Darter, Booted Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Shikra, White-bellied Sea Eagles, Grey-headed Fish Eagles, Painted Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Asian Openbill, Brown Shrike, Crested Treeswift, Plain Prinia, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Purple and Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Indian Silverbill, Jerdon's Bush Lark, Common Iora, Asian Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Eurasian Hoopoe, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Blue-faced Malkoha, White-browed Bulbul, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Brahminy Starling. Suddenly there was the message a Leopard was seen a few kilometres away, but we arrived just a few minutes too late. We had lunch at noon on the beach, which is also a mandatory rest stop for two hours for the drivers. We had company of Indian Jungle Crows and House Crows, a Greater Crested Tern was patrolling the surf and a White-bellied Sea Eagle took a dead fish from the water. Some tourists were climbing the large rock nearby, but were quickly summoned not

to do so. Indeed in less than 15 minutes an Asian Elephant climbed the rock and was feeding and drinking at the very spot where half a dozen tourists had to quit their climbing! After lunch we continued birding, now focussing on Marshall's Iora, Jungle Prinia, Sirkeer Malkoha and Tricoloured Munia. We only succeeded in finding the Iora, plus other nice birds like Brown Fish Owl, Jerdon's Leafbird, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Indian Pitta (discovered from the car!), Rosy Starling, Painted Stork, Baya and Streaked Weavers and Sri Lanka Swallow. We left the park at sunset and waited for Indian and Jerdon's Nightjar to come. During the wait we added Grey Plover and Striated Heron to our list. A Jerdon's Nightjar started to call and flew over our heads at 18:30 hours. Indian Nightjars followed quickly and after half an hour we decided to call it a day and drive back to **Tissamaharama**. A dozen kilometres away we tried another field and added more Indian Nightjars to our list. We were back at the **Rain Tree Hotel** at 19:50 hours, a quick shower and dinner and went to sleep again, while it continued to rain. I counted 114 species this day.

3 Feb We left the Rain Tree Hotel at 5:30 already. The day before we decided to squeeze in a morning visit to **Udawalawe NP**, because we had good chances to see some species we missed in Yala NP, plus it needed no detour. We arrived here at c 6:30 hours in the morning. This visit was a very good choice and we added several new species to our list. Best birds in the park were Alexandrine Parakeet, Rosy Starling, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Jungle Prinia, Sirkeer Malkoha, Yellow-eyed and Tawny-bellied Babbler, Ashy Prinia, White-browed Fantail, several Marshall's Iora's, Indian Robins, Blue-faced Malkoha, Chestnut-headed, Blue-tailed and Asian Green Bee-eaters, Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher, Booted Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle and Barred Buttonquail. At 9:00 hours we stopped at the large **Mau Ara lake** for breakfast. Here we found Indian Stone-curlew, Oriental Darter, Night Herons, Grey-bellied Fish Eagle, Purple and Grey Herons, Indian Cormorant and Brahminy Kite. Golden Jackal and Asian Elephant were the best mammals. At 9:30 we left the reserve again and went to an area just outside the park along the **B427** road. Here we looked for Tricoloured Munia and instantly we found a group, both new for Arjan and me. Also here were Ashy-crowned Finch Lark and Paddyfield Pipit. After this successful visit we drove west to **Sinharaja Forest Reserve**. We had some stops along the **B181** between **Depedene** and **Pothupitiya**, where we heard a White-faced Starling and saw Layard's Parakeet, Southern Hill Myna and Sri Lanka Hill Myna. We arrived at the [Rock View Hotel](#) just east of **Weddagala** at 13:45, our place for the final days. There we had a quick lunch, unpacked our luggage and went to **Kudawa** for birding in the afternoon at the borders of the Reserve. First we birded the area just south of the **Koskaluna River**, where there was a stake-out for Sri Lanka Frogmouth. The pair showed itself very well. While walking back we stuck upon a group of [Ashy-headed Laughingthrushes](#) and with some patience we could see the birds quite well and we managed to take some moderate pictures as well. Just as we were back on the road again, we heard Sri Lanka Spurfowls, but we could not get them into view. We continued birding and climbed the road that goes to Martin's Lodge halfway. In the final hours of light we had good views of Sri Lanka Hill Mynas, heard again a White-faced Starling and saw a group of Brown-throated Needletails. We walked back to the parking place at Kudawa. We tried for a short while to find Sri Lanka Bay Owl, but no success and went back to the **Rock View Hotel** at 20:30, where we had a good shower and good dinner.

4 Feb Today we would concentrate on finding the four remaining endemic species: Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Red-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Drongo and White-faced Starling. We drove in the early morning with a 4-wheel drive to **Martin's Lodge** in the dark. The road was very bumpy and we progressed slowly (it took us two hours...). At 7:30 we were at Martin's Lodge and we waited first for the Sri Lanka Spurfowl to appear, but it was a little crowded with activities and a dog was checking the place too. In the meantime we ate our breakfast, enjoying close views of Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Square-tailed Bulbul and Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill. After an hour or so we were getting impatient and suddenly we heard the call of a [White-faced Starling](#) behind the lodge. We quickly found four birds and had good views of them, although they were high up in the canopy. Next we went to the **Research**

Station, a short walk above **Martin's Lodge**, another place where a pair of Spurfowls regularly appears. Unfortunately, one of the park guides of the reserve was just one step ahead of us and saw a bird running away. We waited a while, but only saw Blue Magpies, Grey Hornbill and an Indian Pitta. We decided to enter the reserve and birded along the **main trail** there. We checked the trail carefully for any thrushes or spurfowls and indeed Spot-winged Thrush was not uncommon here. At a certain point we heard a Sri Lanka Thrush and after play-backing its song, it flew out of cover over our heads, showing its black-and-white underwings and yellow brown underparts. At the end we arrived at the old **Kudawa Research Station** and carefully checked the higher trees. We quickly found [Sri Lanka Drongo](#), Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Common Iora, Sri Lanka White-eye, Legge's and Pale-billed Flowerpeckers. We decided to walk back and check the high canopy trees for feeding flocks. At a stream Arjan and Nandana saw a Slaty-legged Crake. Moreover, it started to rain so we waited at a shelter for the weather to improve. Suddenly, Arjan saw a [Red-faced Malkoha](#). It took some time to explain its whereabouts, but in the end we had quite good views of two birds, albeit at some distance. Very happy and relieved we walked back to **Martin's Lodge** to have some tea and lunch and waited for the spurfowls to come. We hadn't wait for long as suddenly a pair of [Sri Lanka Spurfowls](#) appeared! We were able to take good pictures and after a few minutes they disappeared in the forest again. Our last endemic bird species was in the bag at 14:19 hours! Till 15:00 hours we birded around the lodge until we were picked up by the 4-wheel drive again and brought to the parking place. Dinner at the **Rock View Hotel** and after making up the day list we went to sleep.

5 Feb Final day of birding. Nandana was already birding at 4:00 to find a Sri Lanka Bay Owl, but none was found. We birded the trail east of **Kudawa** north of the river. We found a Green-billed Coucal, a group of Black-capped Bulbuls (finally good views for me), a close pair of Sri Lanka Drongo, Legge's Flowerpecker, Pale-billed Flowerpecker and Brown-breasted Flycatcher. We drove back to our hotel to have some breakfast. A short stop at a bridge revealed a close Red-backed Flameback and an enormous Water Monitor of 2-3 meters in the stream. At 10:00 we had breakfast and we decided to do some birding from the balcony of the hotel in order to find the Legge's Hawk Eagle. In the afternoon we birded till sunset just northeast of Kudawa, again for Legge's Hawk Eagle but this raptor did not show up. We managed to see our second Crimson-fronted barbet, heard a Crimson-backed Flameback and had close views of Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Orange-billed Babbler and Golden-fronted Leafbird. At 17:30 hours we decided to call it a day and drove back to our hotel. We packed our stuff, had a good shower and a final dinner. We both received a nice tea mug with pictures of this successful trip! For the final time at 21:30 we stepped in the car and after an hour we reached the four-lane highway and in no time we arrived at **Bandaranaike International Airport** at c 0:00 hours. We said goodbye to Nandana and Harry and without them we could not have this great trip! We checked in quickly for flight QR663, had to pass three security checks and finally we reached the gate where we had to wait till 4:00 hours till our plane left.

6 Feb Plane departed with a little delay. There was no leg room in this flight, but I could sit at the emergency row. The rest of the flight was without any problems and we were in time at **Doha** to get our connecting flight to **Amsterdam**. Again Doha Airport showed it was a mystery how it won this [Best Airport Award](#): endless waiting in a bus next to the plane, long distances to walk between the connecting flights, bad directions, etc. Our flight QR273 left Doha for Amsterdam at 8:30 hours. We arrived at 13:00 at Schiphol, Amsterdam. Our suit cases came rather quickly and we both went home by train, Arjan to **Culemborg**, and me to **Alkmaar**. On arrival we heard that a pair of Sri Lanka Bay Owls was relocated that morning!

Species Accounts

Order and nomenclature follows IOC's www.worldbirdnames.org, version 14.1, with new splits like Tibetan Sandplover and Black-backed Kingfisher. The photographs are more or less in chronological order.

In version 14.2 of IOC, Sri Lanka Shama was split from White-rumped Shama. Unfortunately, we did not see any Shama. This split results in Sri Lanka having **35** endemic bird species.

Recommended Literature

We used Birds of Sri Lanka by Deepal Warakagoda et al (2012, Christopher Helm) and Birds of the Indian Subcontinent by Richard Grimmett et al (2012, Christopher Helm).

Trip reports can be found at www.cloudbirders.com (skip the Naturetrek reports, they describe lunch and dinner more in detail than any bird sighting).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following persons: Nandana Hewa Gamage for excellent guiding and being good company, Harry for safe and sound driving, Dave van de Spoel for the latest information plus advise which guide to contact, Jens Bokelaar and Mees Swinkels for latest information in observation.org, Theo Admiraal for some details on finding particular species and finally our dear [wags](#) for taking care of the home front (and bringing me to the airport).

Jan van der Laan, Alkmaar, February-March 2023,

Arjan Brenkman, Culemborg, February-March 2023.



Happy crew: Arjan, Harry, Nandana and Jan celebrating that all endemic birds at that time are seen; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot; right: Legge's Flowerpecker; 28 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: male of the scarce Black-throated Munia, one bird out of a group of six birds; right: Indian Pond Heron in winter plumage; 28 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Serendib Scops Owl; 28 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman. Our main quarry at Kithulgala and in retrospect the rarest of all birds this holiday, found after an almost three hours search by Nandana. The bird was well hidden in a thick bush at a stream full of leeches.



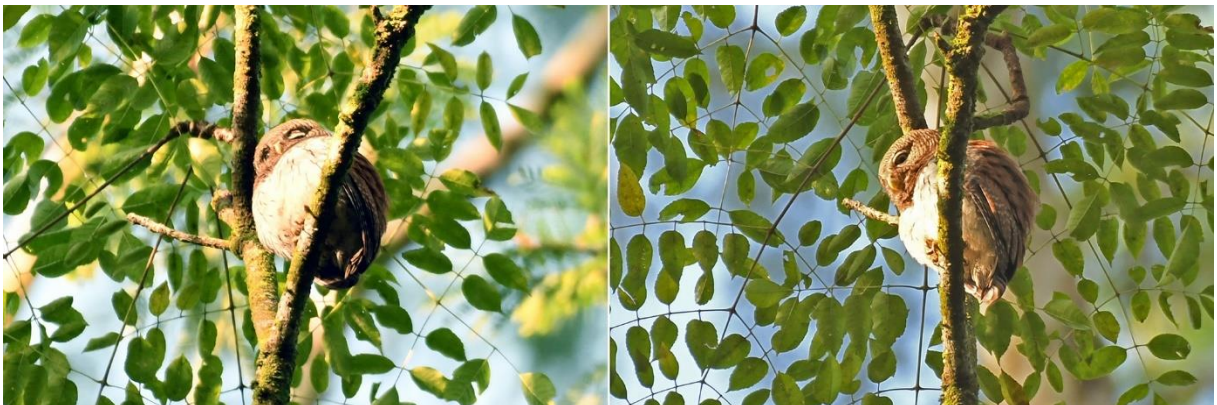
Indian Pitta in the early morning, hence the high ISO and noise; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



The endemic Spot-winged Thrush during its morning song; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Orange-billed Babbler, another Sri Lankan endemic; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



High in the canopy, the endemic Chestnut-backed Owlet; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; Jan van der Laan.



More endemics. Left: a far-away Sri Lanka Green Pigeon; right: Sri Lanka Swallow; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Small Minivet; right: Dark-fronted Babbler; 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman (left); © Jan van der Laan (right).



A pair of the endemic Crimson-backed Flameback, a.k.a. Pale-billed Flameback, with on the left picture the female and on the right the male (red crown); 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).



Left: Yellow-billed babbler; right: endemic Yellow-fronted Barbet; 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Rare vagrants in the Western Palearctic, but not impossible. Left: Crested Honey Buzzard; right: Asian Brown Flycatcher; 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: endemic Green-billed Coucal; right: endemic Brown-capped Babbler, photographed in the last hour of daylight; 29 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).



Left: Malabar Trogon; right: Brown-breasted Flycatcher; 30 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Jan van der Laan.



Crimson-fronted Barbet, a difficult endemic and not actively calling; 30 January 2023, just before Carolina State; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Yellow-eared Bulbul; right: Sri Lanka White-eye; 30 January 2023, Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya; © Arjan Brenkman.



Pied Thrush, a bird that was very high on our wish list; 30 January 2023, Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Blackbird; right: male Kashmir Flycatcher; 30 January 2023, Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya; © Jan van der Laan.



Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, an endemic skulker. You never get the whole bird at once on a photo; 31 January 2023, along the World's End Road, just before the Pattipola Entrance of Horton Plains NP; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).



Finally found after scanning at least seven locations! Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, probably the most difficult to find endemic; 31 January 2023, Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP; © Jan van der Laan.



The same Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush; 31 January 2023, Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Endemic Sri Lanka Wood Pigeons; 31 January 2023, just south of the Pattipola Railway station, Horton Plains; © Jan van der Laan. Note the colours of the breast depends on the angle.



Left: the endemic not so dull Dull-blue Flycatcher; right: Kashmir Flycatcher; 31 January 2023, just south of the Pattipola Railway station, Horton Plains; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).



Left: male Loten's Sunbird; right: Hill Swallow; 31 January 2023, south of the Pattipola Railway station, Horton Plains; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: House Sparrow (*ssp indicus*); Pattipola, right: Pied Bush Chat; Ambewala; 31 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Paddyfield Pipit at the Nuwara Eliya Race Course; right: Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya; 31 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Blyth's Reed Warbler; right: female Indian Robin; 1 February 2023 in the garden of Ivy Bungalow, Nuwara Eliya; © Arjan Brenkman (left); © Jan van der Laan (right).



Left: Asian Openbill; right: Sri Lanka Woodshrike, a dry zone endemic; 1 February 2023, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Black-headed Ibis; right: Jacobin Cuckoo; 1 February 2023, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Common Iora; right: Rose-ringed Parakeet; 1 February 2023, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Grey-headed Swamphen; right: Pheasant-tailed Jacana; 1 February 2023, along the road between Debarawa Lake and Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Brown Fish Owl; right: Indian Scops Owl; 1 February 2023 at Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).



Left: Jungle Owlet; right: female White-naped Woodpecker; 1 February 2023 at Tissamaharama; © Arjan Brenkman.



Male and female Orange-breasted Green Pigeon; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Oriental Darter; right: Gull-billed Tern in the rain; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Painted Stork; right: Great Stone-curlew; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Yellow-wattled Lapwing; right: Red-wattled Lapwing; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Tibetan Plovers (although the left is atypical with the lighter lores); 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Marsh Sandpiper; right: Pacific Golden Plover; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Shikra; right: dark phase of Booted Eagle; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: another Sri Lanka Woodshrike; right: Blue-faced Malkoha; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Asian Green Bee-eater; right: Blue-tailed Bee-eater; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Purple Sunbird; right: Brahminy Starling; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Spot-billed Pelicans; right: Malabar Pied Hornbill swallowing an Indian Long-Tailed Tree Mouse; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Jerdon's Bush Lark; right: Eurasian Hoopoe; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Changeable Hawk Eagle; right: White-bellied Sea Eagle with a fish-head; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: House Crow waiting on us finishing our lunch; right: Indian Jungle Crow; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Kentish Plovers in Yala NP. The ssp *seebohmi* may merit species status and the suggested name will be **Hanuman Plover**. In winter they may be joined by nominate Kentish Plovers, so the ID can be difficult. Left: Arjan Brenkman; right: Jan van der Laan.



Left: Brown Fish Owl, found from the vehicle while driving; right: Jerdon's Leafbird; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



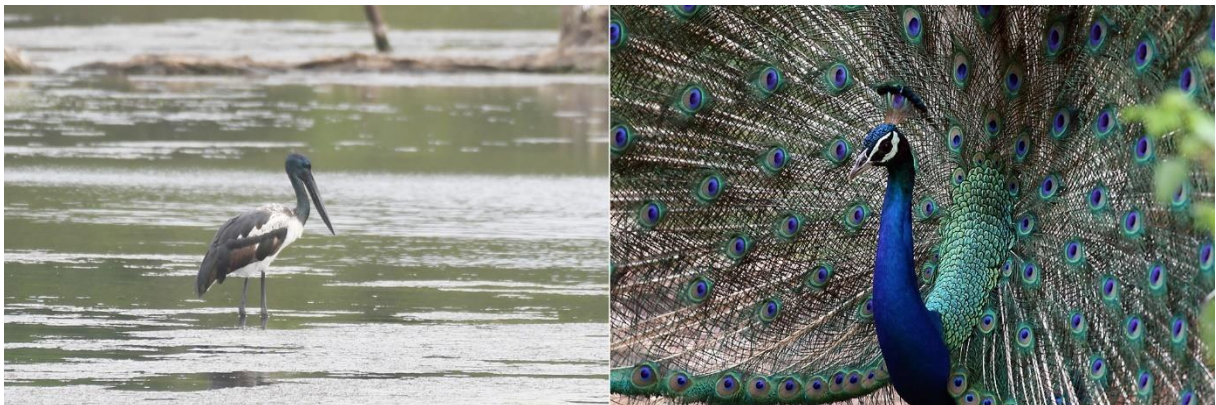
Left: Baya Weaver; right: Streaked Weaver; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: male Marshall's lora; note the olive-green back; right: Indian Pitta; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Yellow-crowned Woodpecker; right: Brown-headed barbet; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: one of the 15 Black-necked Storks of Sri Lanka; © Jan van der Laan; right: male Indian Peafowl; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Grey-bellied Cuckoo; right: Yellow-eyed Babbler; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Jungle Prinia; right: Ashy Prinia; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Sirkeer Malkoha; right: Tawny-bellied Babbler; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



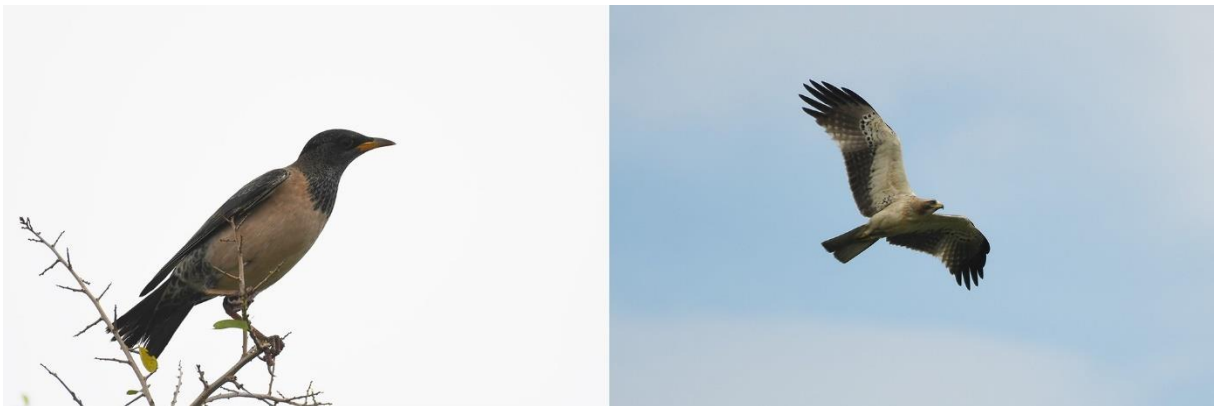
Left: Indian Robin, note the chestnut undertail coverts; right: male Marshall's Iora; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: close-up of Blue-tailed Bee-eater; right: Chestnut-headed Bee-eater; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher; right: Sri Lanka Junglefowl, inspecting an elephant dropping; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Rosy Starling; right: light phase Booted Eagle; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Black-winged Kite; right: Grey-headed Fish Eagle; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Stone-curlew; right: Lesser Whistling Ducks; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Scaly-breasted Munia; right: Tricolored Munia; 3 February 2023, west of Udulawala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Southern Hill Myna; right: Sri Lanka Hill Myna (note the white eye of the male); 3 February 2023 along the B181 road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Ashy-headed Laughingthrush; right: Layard's Parakeet; 3 February 2023, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



A pair of Sri Lanka Frogmouths with female in front, male behind; 3 February 2023, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Sri Lanka Blue Magpie; right: Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill; 4 February 2023, Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Square-tailed Bulbul; right: Yellow-browed Bulbul; 4 February 2023, Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: White-faced Starling; right: pair of Orange Minivets; 4 February 2023, Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Sri Lanka White-eye; right: Spot-winged Thrush; 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Female Red-faced Malkoha, hidden in the foliage of a high tree; note the white eye, red face and light bill on the left photo; on the right photo the large tail with white tips is visible as are the grey upperparts; 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Sri Lanka Spurfowl (male left, female right); 4 February 2023, Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Sri Lanka Drongo; right: Black-capped Bulbul; 5 February 2023, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Greater Coucal; right: Green-billed Coucal; 5 February 2023, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Red-backed Flameback, west of Kudawa; right: Oriental Magpie Robin, Rock View Hotel; 5 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: male Golden-fronted Leafbird; right: female Sri Lanka Green Pigeon; 5 February 2023, just west of Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan (left); © Arjan Brenkman (right).

001. Lesser Whistling Duck - *Dendrocygna javanica*

01-02 c 20 Tissamaharama.
 02-02 c 30 Yala NP.
 03-02 c 15 Udawalawe NP.

002. Indian Peafowl - *Pavo cristatus*

First birds were seen on the Horton Plains on 31-01. Quite common at Yala NP and Udawalawe NP. On our last day on 5-02 we had several birds at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

003. SRI LANKA SPURFOWL - *Galloperdix bicalcarata*

03-02 2-3 ([heard only](#) at close range) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 04-02 c 10 (several groups , heard only) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 2 (pair seen well) [Martin's Lodge](#), Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

004. SRI LANKA JUNGLEFOWL - *Gallus lafayettii*

Fairly common, noted at all sites in small numbers. At Kithulgala we observed a female leading two downy chicks on 28-01.

005. Jerdon's Nightjar - *Caprimulgus atripennis aequabilis*

02-02 1-2 ([seen](#)) just outside Yala NP.

006. Indian Nightjar - *Caprimulgus asiaticus eidos*

02-02 4 (seen) just outside Yala NP.
 2 between Yala NP and Tissamaharama.

007. Sri Lanka Frogmouth - *Batrachostomus moniliger moniliger*

29-01 3-4 ([one seen](#), others heard only) just south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 03-02 2 ([pair roosting](#)) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

008. Crested Treeswift - *Hemiprocne coronata*

Fairly common throughout the whole country, with a maximum of c 10 birds each day.

009. Indian Swiftlet - *Aerodramus unicolor*

The most common swift, maximum of c 25 birds each day.

010. Brown-backed Needletail - *Hirundapus giganteus indicus*

03-02 2 [southwest of Kudawa](#), Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 04-02 3 seen from the Rock View Hotel, Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Again on 5-02.

011. Asian Palm Swift - *Cypsiurus balasiensis balasiensis*

Common throughout the whole country, maximum of c 10 birds each day.

012. Alpine Swift - *Tachymarptis melba bakeri*

30-01 3 (seen only by Arjan) Ampana (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).

013. Little Swift - *Apus affinis singalensis*

04-02 3 seen from the Rock View Hotel, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

014. GREEN-BILLED COUCAL - *Centropus chlororhynchos*

29-01 2 (one seen, one heard only) just [south of bridge](#) over the Kelani River, Kithulgala.

05-02 1 (seen well) [Sinharaja Forest Reserve](#).

015. Greater Coucal - *Centropus sinensis parroti*

Observed almost daily, mostly heard.

016. Sirkeer Malkoha - *Taccocua leschenaultii leschenaultii*

03-02 4 Udawalawe NP. None was found at Yala NP, despite maximum effort.

017. RED-FACED MALKOHA - *Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus*

04-02 2 (pair) [Sinharaja Forest Reserve](#).

With 46 cm in length it is the largest of all 34 endemic species, but it proved to be the most difficult to find!

018. Blue-faced Malkoha - *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

02-02 2 Yala NP.

03-02 3 Udawalawe NP.

019. Jacobin Cuckoo - *Clamator jacobinus jacobinus*

01-02 1 [Tissa Lake](#), Tissamaharama.

03-02 1 [Udawalawe NP](#).

020. Asian Koel - *Eudynamys scolopaceus scolopaceus*

01-02 2-3 (heard only) Tissamaharama.

021. Banded Bay Cuckoo - *Cacomantis sonneratii waiti*

Several heard daily at Kithulgala, Yala NP and Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

022. Grey-bellied Cuckoo - *Cacomantis passerinus*

03-02 2 ([adult male](#) and a female or immature) Udawalawe NP.

023. Common Hawk-Cuckoo - *Hierococcyx varius ciceliae*

30-01 1 (heard-only) Ivy Bungalow, Nuwara Eliya.

31-01 1 (heard-only) at high vantage point at the westside of Seetha Eliya.

024. Rock Dove - *Columba livia intermedia*

Flocks of birds with homogeneous wild-type looking plumage of this species were noted at the fields of Horton plains and Nuwara Eliya on 30-01 and 31-01.

025. SRI LANKA WOOD PIGEON - *Columba torringtoniae*

31-01 c 3 (heard only on our way to Horton Plains NP).

7 (seen well) [Pattipola Railway Station](#), Horton Plains.

026. Spotted Dove - *Spilopelia chinensis ceylonensis*

The most common dove throughout, seen daily.

027. Common Emerald Dove - *Chalcophaps indica robinsoni*

Seen almost daily with on average 3-5 birds seen.

028. Orange-breasted Green Pigeon - *Treron bicinctus leggei*

Fairly common in Yala NP and Udawalawe NP, with a total of c 10 birds in each park.

029. SRI LANKA GREEN PIGEON - *Treron pompadora*

29-01 c 5 Kithulgala.

04-02 c 10 (at least a pair seen well) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

030. Green Imperial Pigeon - *Ducula aenea pusilla*

Common at all sites, except at Nuwara Eliya and Horton Plains NP, where none was seen or heard.

031. Grey-headed Swampphen - *Porphyrio poliocephalus poliocephalus*

31-01 3 Gregory Lake, Nuwara Eliya.

01-02 c 20 Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 15 Yala NP.

03-02 c 10 Udawalawe NP.

032. Slaty-legged Crane - *Rallina eurizonoides amauroptera*

29-01 1 (well seen and heard) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.

04-02 1 (Arjan and Nandana only) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

The bird at Kithulgala was found in a small stream bordering rain forest and gardens. At first the bird jumped from a bamboo bridge into the stream and next it perched like a Common Moorhen on a bamboo stem for a while and then moved to the stream bank where it was fanatically calling.

033. White-breasted Waterhen - *Amaurornis phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Small numbers at most sites visited in gardens, rice paddies and near lakes.

034. Barred Buttonquail - *Turnix suscitator leggei*

03-02 1 (crossing the road, only seen by Jan) Udawalawe NP.

035. Indian Stone-curlew - *Burhinus indicus*

03-02 7 (in one group) at the shore of the large lake in Udawalawe NP.

036. Great Stone-curlew - *Esacus recurvirostris*

02-02 5 Yala NP. Most water bodies at Yala contained a single bird or a pair.

037. Black-winged Stilt - *Himantopus himantopus*

01-02 c 30 Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 25 Yala NP.

03-02 c 10 Udawalawe NP.

038. Yellow-wattled Lapwing - *Vanellus malabaricus*

02-02 6 Yala NP.

03-02 4 Udawalawe NP.

039. Red-wattled Lapwing - *Vanellus indicus lankae*

First seen on 31-01 on the Horton Plains, later common at Tissamaharama, Yala NP and Udawalawe NP.

040. Pacific Golden Plover - *Pluvialis fulva*

02-02 3 Yala NP.

041. Grey Plover - *Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*

02-02 1 just outside Yala NP while we were waiting on the nightjars to appear.

042. Little Ringed Plover - *Charadrius dubius*

02-02 3 (ssp *jerdoni* or *curonicus*) Yala NP.

043. Kentish Plover - *Charadrius alexandrinus seebohmii*

02-02 c 10 Yala NP.

Niroshan et al (in press) propose species status for *seebohmii*. It breeds in southern India and Sri Lanka. According to Ebird males of this subspecies do not have a black bar on forecrown and most birds have white lores and no rufous cap, but almost all pictures on Ebird of breeding birds in India do have a black bar on the forecrown, but do have white lores and lack a rufous cap. The proposed name is Hanuman Plover.

044. Tibetan Sand Plover - *Charadrius atrifrons*

02-02 c 10 (either ssp *atrifrons* or *pamirensis*) Yala NP.

We follow here the 13.2 version of IOC where Lesser Sand Plover is split into two species.

045. Greater Sand Plover - *Charadrius leschenaultii leschenaultii*

02-02 2 (one in the [morning](#), one in the [afternoon](#)) Yala NP.

046. Pheasant-tailed Jacana - *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

01-02 6 (at least, all in beautiful summer plumage) Tissamaharama.

047. Eurasian Whimbrel - *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*

02-02 1 [Yala NP](#).

048. Black-tailed Godwit - *Limosa limosa limosa*

01-02 1 c 1 km north of the Rain Tree Hotel, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

049. Ruddy Turnstone - *Arenaria interpres interpres*

02-02 3 Yala NP.

050. Ruff - *Calidris pugnax*

02-02 1 Yala NP.

051. Curlew Sandpiper - *Calidris ferruginea*

02-02 11 (in total, consisting of a group of 3, 6 and 2) Yala NP.

052. Little Stint - *Calidris minuta*

02-02 4 Yala NP.

053. Pin-tailed Snipe - *Gallinago stenura*

30-01 c 20 (several groups flushed) racetrack, Nuwara Eliya.

054. Common Sandpiper - *Actitis hypoleucos*

Seen almost daily in small numbers at rivers and lakes throughout the whole country.

055. **Green Sandpiper** - *Tringa ochropus*
30-01 1 racetrack, Nuwara Eliya.
056. **Common Redshank** - *Tringa totanus totanus*
02-02 c 30 Yala NP.
057. **Marsh Sandpiper** - *Tringa stagnatilis*
02-02 c 5 Yala NP.
058. **Wood Sandpiper** - *Tringa glareola*
02-02 c 10 Yala NP.
059. **Common Greenshank** - *Tringa nebularia*
02-02 c 20 Yala NP.
060. **Gull-billed Tern** - *Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica*
02-02 c 10 Yala NP.
03-02 6 Udawalawe NP.
061. **Greater Crested Tern** - *Thalasseus bergii velox*
02-02 1 at [the beach](#) of Yala NP.
062. **Little Tern** - *Sternula albifrons sinensis*
01-02 1 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
02-02 27 Yala NP.
063. **Whiskered Tern** - *Chlidonias hybrida hybrida*
01-02 c 10 Tissamaharama.
02-02 c 30 Yala NP.
03-02 c 40 Udawalawe NP.
064. **White-winged Tern** - *Chlidonias leucopterus*
02-02 2 ([first-winter](#)) Yala NP.
065. **Painted Stork** - *Mycteria leucocephala*
01-02 6 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
02-02 c 10 Yala NP.
03-02 c 5 Udawalawe NP.
066. **Asian Openbill** - *Anastomus oscitans*
01-02 2 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
02-02 c 5 Yala NP.
03-02 c 5 Udawalawe NP.
05-02 2 Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
067. **Asian Woolly-necked Stork** - *Ciconia episcopus episcopus*
02-02 1 [Yala NP](#).

068. Black-necked Stork - *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus asiaticus*

02-02 2 (immatures) [Yala NP](#). There are c 15 birds in the whole of Sri Lanka.

069. Oriental Darter - *Anhinga melanogaster*

01-02 c 30 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 10 Yala NP.

03-02 c 15 Udawalawe NP.

070. Little Cormorant - *Microcarbo niger*

Small numbers throughout, e.g. at the Kelani river at Kithulgala, the water bodies near Nuwara Eliya, Tissa Lake at Tissamaharama and in both Yala NP and Udawalawe NP.

071. Indian Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

01-02 c 100 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 25 Yala NP.

03-02 c 10 Udawalawe NP.

072. Great Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

Small numbers at Tissamaharama on 1-02 and Yala NP on 2-02. A few were nesting amongst Oriental Darters and large numbers of Indian Cormorants in the rain trees at Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

073. Black-headed Ibis - *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

Small numbers at Tissamaharama, Yala NP and Udawalawe NP (aka the dry zone), particularly in rice fields.

074. Eurasian Spoonbill - *Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*

02-02 c 15 Yala NP.

075. Yellow Bittern - *Ixobrychus sinensis*

01-02 2 (both males) Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

076. Black-crowned Night Heron - *Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*

02-02 1 (immature) Yala NP.

03-02 c 20 Udawalawe NP.

077. Striated Heron - *Butorides striata javanica*

02-02 1 [Yala NP](#).

1 just [outside](#) Yala NP.

078. Indian Pond Heron - *Ardeola grayii*

Fairly common throughout the whole country, all in winter plumage.

079. Eastern Cattle Egret - *Bubulcus coromandus*

Common in rice paddies, tea plantations or fields throughout the whole country. All in dull winter plumage.

080. Grey Heron - *Ardea cinerea cinerea*

Small numbers seen daily at Tissamaharama, Yala NP and Udawalawe NP (aka the dry zone).

081. Purple Heron - *Ardea purpurea manilensis*

Small numbers seen daily in the dry zone, although less common than Grey Heron.

082. Great Egret - *Ardea alba alba*

01-02 1 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
 02-02 c 5 Yala NP.
 03-02 8 Udawalawe NP. Some of them could have been Intermediate Egrets.

083. Medium Egret - *Ardea intermedia*

01-02 1 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
 02-02 2-3 Yala NP.

084. Little Egret - *Egretta garzetta garzetta*

01-02 1 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
 02-02 2 (at least) Yala NP.
 03-02 10 Udawalawe NP.

085. Spot-billed Pelican - *Pelecanus philippensis*

01-02 c 5 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
 02-02 c 10 Yala NP.

086. Black-winged Kite - *Elanus caeruleus vociferus*

03-02 1 Udawalawe NP.

087. Crested Honey Buzzard - *Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis*

Fairly common at Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserve, where both adults and immatures were seen.

088. Crested Serpent Eagle - *Spilornis cheela spilogaster*

One or two birds were seen and heard on daily basis at Kithulgala and at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

089. Changeable Hawk-Eagle - *Nisaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis*

02-02 c 5 Yala NP.
 03-02 3 Udawalawe NP.
 1 Rock View Hotel, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

090. Rufous-bellied Eagle - *Lophotriorchis kienerii kienerii*

29-01 1 (immature) just north of Kithulgala.

091. Black Eagle - *Ictinaetus malayensis perniger*

29-01 3 Kithulgala.
 30-01 2 east of Kithulgala, on our way to Horton Plains.

092. Booted Eagle - *Hieraaetus pennatus*

02-02 1 (dark phase) Yala NP.
 03-02 1 (light phase) Udawalawe NP.

093. Shikra - *Tachyspiza badia badia*

28-01 1 between Colombo and Kithulgala.
 29-02 2 west of Kithulgala.

- 02-02 1 (female or immature) Yala NP. At first identified as Besra, but the tail pattern revealed it was actually a Shikra.
094. **Brahminy Kite** - *Haliastur indus indus*
- 01-02 2 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
- 02-02 3 [Yala NP](#).
- 03-02 2 Udawalawe NP.
095. **White-bellied Sea Eagle** – *Ichthyophaga leucogaster*
- 29-01 1 Kithulgala.
- 31-01 1 Nuwara Eliya.
- 02-02 4 Yala NP.
- 03-02 2 (pair on a nest) Udawalawe NP.
096. **Grey-headed Fish Eagle** – *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*
- 01-02 1 (heard only) Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
- 02-02 3 Yala NP.
- 03-02 1 [Udawalawe NP](#).
097. **Sri Lanka Bay Owl** - *Phodilus assimilis assimilis*
- 29-01 1 (heard only) just south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
- A roosting pair at Sinharaja was disturbed by a large group of school children a few days before we arrived. Nandana kept phoning his local contacts at Sinharaja to look for the pair during our stay. The roost of these birds was indeed relocated again. On 6 February, when we were already on our way to Qatar.
098. **Jungle Owlet** - *Glaucidium radiatum radiatum*
- 01-02 2 (roosting) Tissamaharama.
099. **CHESTNUT-BACKED OWLET** - *Glaucidium castanotum*
- 29-01 2 ([pair roosting and mating](#)) just north of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
- Kithulgala seems to be the best place to see this endemic owlet.
100. **SERENDIB SCOPS OWL** - *Otus thilohoffmanni*
- 28-01 1 Kithulgala.
- A near three-hour search by Nandana resulted in a roosting bird at Kithulgala just before dusk. Upon arrival at Sinharaja we learned that no roosting bird had been found in the past week.
101. **Indian Scops Owl** - *Otus bakkamoena bakkamoena*
- 01-02 1 (roosting in somebody's garden) Tissamaharama.
102. **Brown Fish Owl** - *Ketupa zeylonensis zeylonensis*
- 01-02 2 (a pair, getting active) Tissamaharama.
- 02-02 1 ([roosting](#)) Yala NP.
- 03-02 1 (crossing the road) between Tissamaharama and Udawalawe NP.
103. **Malabar Trogon** - *Harpactes fasciatus fasciatus*
- 30-01 1 [Ampana](#) (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).

104. Eurasian Hoopoe - *Upupa epops ceylonensis*

02-02 3 Yala NP.

105. Malabar Pied Hornbill - *Anthracoceros coronatus*

02-02 16 Yala NP.

03-02 6 Udawalawe NP.

106. SRI LANKA GREY HORNBILL - *Ocyrceros gingalensis*

Several daily at Kithulgala and Sinharaja, some birds coming in at the feeding tables at the latter site.

107. Stork-billed Kingfisher - *Pelargopsis capensis capensis*

01-02 1 (heard only) Tissa Lake (opposite the Rain Tree Hotel), Tissamaharama.

108. White-throated Kingfisher - *Halcyon smyrnensis fusca*

Fairly common at Kithulgala, Tissamaharama, Yala NP, Udawalawe NP and Sinharaja Forest Reserve with 2-3 birds seen daily. None was found at Nuwera Eliya or on the Horton Plains.

109. Common Kingfisher - *Alcedo atthis taprobana*

30-01 1-2 Plantation Hotel, Kithulgala.

02-02 6 Yala NP.

03-02 2 Udawalawe NP.

110. Black-backed Dwarf Kingfisher - *Ceyx erithaca*

03-02 1 Udawalawe NP.

Formerly considered a black-backed form of Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, now seen as a separate species.

111. Asian Green Bee-eater - *Merops orientalis ceylonicus*

01-02 c 10 Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 100 Yala NP.

03-02 c 25 Udawalawe NP.

112. Blue-tailed Bee-eater - *Merops philippinus*

Seen in small groups at Kithulgala on 28-01 and 29-01. Two birds were seen on the Horton Plains on 31-01 and daily totals of c 20 birds were seen at Yala NP and Udawalawe NP.

113. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater - *Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti*

Small groups of 3-5 birds seen daily at Kithulgala and the Sinharaja Forest Reserve. On 3-02 one bird at Udawalawe NP.

114. Brown-headed Barbet - *Psilopogon zeylanicus zeylanicus*

29-01 1 Kelani River, Kithulgala.

01-02 2 Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 5 Yala NP.

03-02 2-3 Udawalawe NP.

115. YELLOW-FRONTED BARBET - *Psilopogon flavifrons*

Common at Kithulgala and the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, with daily totals of up to c 10 birds.

116. CRIMSON-FRONTED BARBET - *Psilopogon rubricapillus*

- 29-01 1 (heard-only) just south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 30-01 1 ([seen well](#)) between Kithulgala and Nuwara Eliya.
 04-02 1 (heard only) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 05-02 1 ([seen well](#)) look-out at the forest edge of Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

This barbet was not very vocal during our stay, explaining the low number of sightings.

117. Coppersmith Barbet - *Psilopogon haemacephalus indicus*

- 01-02 1 Tissamaharama.
 02-02 2 [Yala NP](#).
 03-02 3 Udawalawe NP.

118. Yellow-crowned Woodpecker - *Leiopicus mahrattensis mahrattensis*

- 02-02 5 (two pairs, [one single bird](#)) Yala NP.

119. RED-BACKED FLAMEBACK - *Dinopium psarodes*

Seen daily in small numbers (3-4) at Kithulgala and the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

120. CRIMSON-BACKED FLAMEBACK - *Chrysocolaptes stricklandi*

- 28-01 1 (cursory views) Kithulgala.
 29-01 2 ([pair at close range](#)) c 1 km northeast of Kithulgala.
 05-02 1 ([heard only](#)) look-out at the forest edge of Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

121. White-naped Woodpecker - *Chrysocolaptes festivus tantus*

- 01-02 1 (female, getting ready for her roost hole) Tissamaharama.

122. Plum-headed Parakeet - *Psittacula cyanocephala*

- 03-02 1 (flying in front of our car at close range) Udawalawe NP.

123. LAYARD'S PARAKEET - *Psittacula calthrapae*

- 29-01 4 (group flying over) in gardens west of Kithulgala.
 03-02 5 (2 groups) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 04-02 4 Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

124. Alexandrine Parakeet - *Psittacula eupatria eupatria*

- 03-02 4 (group flying over) at the entrance of Udawalawe NP.
 1 Udawalawe NP.

125. Rose-ringed Parakeet - *Psittacula krameri manillensis*

- 01-02 c 10 Tissamaharama.
 02-02 c 15 Yala NP.
 03-02 c 10 Udawalawe NP.

126. SRI LANKA HANGING PARROT - *Loriculus beryllinus*

Seen and heard daily in good numbers (c 10) at Kithulgala and the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

127. INDIAN PITTA - *Pitta brachyura*

29-01	2	(two seen well , one heard only) in gardens west of Kithulgala.
31-01	1	(heard only) Nuwara Eliya.
02-02	1	(found while driving) Yala NP.
03-02	1	(heard only) Udawalawe NP.
04-02	1	(seen well) behind the toilet block of the research center of Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

128. Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike - *Hemipus picatus leggei*

All black-backed birds were seen at Kithulgala, Sinharaja and Nuwara Eliya.

129. SRI LANKA WOODSHRIKE - *Tephrodornis affinis*

01-02	2	Lake Tissa, Tissamaharama.
02-02	1	Yala NP.
03-02	1	Udawalawa NP.

It is not very clear to us how these birds differ from Common Woodshrike in mainland India.

130. Ashy Woodswallow - *Artamus fuscus*

28-01	1	between Colombo and Kithulgala.
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131. Common lora - *Aegithina tiphia multicolor*

Observed at all sites in small numbers (1-3). The males of this race have a smart all black back, making separation with male Marshall's straightforward. [Females](#) have less white in wings.

132. Marshall's lora - *Aegithina nigrolutea*

02-02	1	(male) Yala NP.
03-02	6	(first a pair , later two pairs) Udawalawa NP.

133. Small Minivet - *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus cinnamomeus*

29-01	2	(pair) along the Mahabage Road , c 2 km north of Kithulgala.
02-02	2	(pair) Yala NP.
03-02	2	(pair) Udawalawa NP.

134. Orange Minivet - *Pericrocotus flammeus*

29-01	1	(male) Kithulgala.
04-02	2	(pair) Sinharaja Forest Reserve .

135. Black-headed Cuckooshrike - *Lalage melanoptera sykesi*

29-01	1	(male) along the Mahabage Road, c 2 km north of Kithulgala.
03-02	1	(male) along the B181 road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

136. Brown Shrike - *Lanius cristatus*

Single birds at all sites we visited. At least race *cristatus* was involved, but also birds with grey caps were observed suggesting *lucionensis*.

137. Black-hooded Oriole - *Oriolus xanthornus ceylonensis*

Seen almost daily, especially at Kithulgala, Yala NP, Udawalawe NP and in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve with maximum of 10 birds each day.

138. SRI LANKA DRONGO - *Dicrurus lophorinus*

- 04-02 3 [along the main trail](#) in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 05-02 2 [Kudawa](#), at the road opposite the parking lot of Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

139. White-bellied Drongo - *Dicrurus caerulescens leucopygialis*

- 28-01 1 [south](#) of the river Kelani, Kithulgala.
 29-01 3 ([one bird photographed](#)) north of the river Kelani, Kithulgala.
 03-02 1 [Kudawa](#), Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

140. White-browed Fantail - *Rhipidura aureola compressirostris*

- 29-01 1 [northeast](#) of Kithulgala.
 02-02 1 [Yala NP](#).
 03-02 1 [Udulawala NP](#).

141. Black-naped Monarch - *Hypothymis azurea ceylonensis*

- 28-01 1 south of the river Kelani, Kithulgala.
 30-01 1 (female) Ampana (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).
 04-02 1 (heard-only) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

142. Indian Paradise Flycatcher - *Terpsiphone paradisi ceylonensis*

- 30-01 1 (male white morph) Plantation Hotel, Kithulgala.
 02-02 3 (one male red morph, two females) Yala NP.
 03-02 1 along the B181 road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

143. SRI LANKA BLUE MAGPIE - *Urocissa ornata*

- 31-01 5 in a flock above [the tea house along the AA005](#), Seetha Eliya.
 04-02 2 at the feeder of [Martin's Lodge](#), Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 2 at the feeder of the [research station](#) near Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 1 near the [old research station](#) along the main trail of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

144. House Crow - *Corvus splendens protegatus*

- 28-01 2-3 Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo.
 31-01 1 Nuwara Eliya.
 01-02 1 Tissamaharama.
 02-02 4 [on the beach](#) during the mandatory lunch stop, Yala NP.

145. Indian Jungle Crow - *Corvus culminatus*

Small numbers at most sites, but common at Yala NP and Udulawala NP.

146. Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher - *Culicicapa ceylonensis ceylonensis*

- 30-01 1 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya.
 2 [Sandathenna road](#), Nuwara Eliya.
 31-01 3 [just south](#) of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.
 3 Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya.

147. Cinereous Tit - *Parus cinereus mahrattarum*

- 31-01 5 ([one photographed](#)) at the Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP.

148. **Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** - *Eremopterix griseus*
03-02 4 (three males) [north of the B427](#) on the southern shore of the Udawalawa Reservoir.
149. **Jerdon's Bush Lark** - *Mirafra affinis*
02-02 c 30 Yala NP.
03-02 c 25 Udawalawe NP.
150. **Yellow-browed Bulbul** - *Acritillas indica guglielmi*
Several at Kithulgala (3-4) and common at Sinharaja with up to 8 birds at the feeder of Martin's Lodge.
151. **Square-tailed Bulbul** - *Hypsipetes ganeesa humii*
Very common in the wet zone, like Kithulgala and around the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
152. **BLACK-CAPPED BULBUL** - *Rubigula melanicterus*
29-01 c 5 ([two seen](#), others heard-only) along the Mahabage Road, c 2 km north of Kithulgala.
30-01 3 (bad views only) Ampara (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).
05-02 c 5 ([one seen well](#)) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
153. **White-browed Bulbul** - *Pycnonotus luteolus insulae*
Several daily at all sites. A bulbul of scrubs and gardens.
154. **YELLOW-EARED BULBUL** - *Pycnonotus penicillatus*
30-01 6 [Victoria Park](#), Nuwara Eliya.
31-01 1 along the Pattipola - Horton Plains Road (B512).
 11 ([in one group](#)) at high vantage point at the westside of Seetha Eliya.
Typically a forest bulbul, never seen in scrub habitat.
155. **Red-vented Bulbul** - *Pycnonotus cafer haemorrhousus*
Common throughout the whole country, except on the higher regions of the Horton Plains.
156. **Hill Swallow** - *Hirundo domicola*
31-01 2 (nesting) in a house just south of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.
157. **Barn Swallow** - *Hirundo rustica gutturalis*
Regularly seen in small numbers (1-10 ex).
158. **SRI LANKA SWALLOW** - *Cecropis hyperythra*
29-01 5 Kithulgala.
02-02 2-3 Yala NP
05-02 2 seen from the Rock View Hotel, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
159. **Green Warbler** - *Phylloscopus nitidus*
Heard at all sites, most common at Nuwara Eliya (5+), but not responsive to tape.
160. **Large-billed Leaf Warbler** - *Phylloscopus magnirostris*
30-01 1 Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya.

161. **Clamorous Reed Warbler** - *Acrocephalus stentoreus meridionalis*
 01-02 1 Tissa Lake (opposite the Rain Tree Hotel), Tissamaharama.
162. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** - *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
 31-01 1 in the garden of [Ivy Bungalow](#), Nuwara Eliya. Again on 1-02 (when photographed).
163. **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** - *Helopsaltes certhiola rubescens*
 31-01 3 [Nuwara-Eliya Race Course Ground](#), Nuwara Eliya.
164. **SRI LANKA BUSH WARBLER** - *Elaphrornis palliseri*
 30-01 1 [trail behind food stall](#) along road AA005, Seetha Eliya.
 31-01 c 5 ([one photographed](#)) along the Pattipola - Horton Plains Road (B512).
 c 5 south of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.
165. **Zitting Cisticola** - *Cisticola juncidis cursitans*
 01-02 2 Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
166. **Grey-breasted Prinia** - *Prinia hodgsonii pectoralis*
 31-01 1 [Nuwara-Eliya Race Course Ground](#), Nuwara Eliya.
167. **Jungle Prinia** - *Prinia sylvatica valida*
 03-02 c 6 [Udawalawe NP](#).
168. **Ashy Prinia** - *Prinia socialis brevicauda*
 03-02 2-3 [Udawalawe NP](#).
169. **Plain Prinia** - *Prinia inornata insularis*
 First observed at Nuwara Eliya and common in Yala NP and [Udawalawe NP](#) with 10-15 birds seen daily.
170. **Common Tailorbird** - *Orthotomus sutorius sutorius*
 Common at all sites visited. At Pattipola we most probably saw the highland subspecies *fernandonis*.
171. **Yellow-eyed Babbler** - *Chrysomma sinense nasale*
 03-02 3 ([one seen well](#), others heard-only) Udawalawe NP.
172. **SRI LANKA WHITE-EYE** - *Zosterops ceylonensis*
 30-01 4 [Victoria Park](#), Nuwara Eliya.
 31-01 c 10 along the Pattipola - Horton Plains Road (B512), especially in the rhododendrons.
 04-02 2 at the [old Kudawa Research Station](#), Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
173. **Indian White-eye** - *Zosterops palpebrosus egregius*
 29-01 3 [along the Mahabage Road](#), c 2 km north of Kithulgala.
 30-01 2 Plantation Hotel, Kithulgala.
174. **Tawny-bellied Babbler** - *Dumetia hyperythra phillipsi*
 03-02 1 ([seen well](#)) Udawalawe NP.

175. Dark-fronted Babbler - *Dumetia atriceps nigrifrons*

- 29-01 2 [along the Mahabage Road](#), c 2 km north of Kithulgala.
 03-02 1 along the B181 road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

176. SRI LANKA SCIMITAR BABBLER - *Pomatorhinus melanurus melanurus*

- 28-01 2 Kithulgala.
 30-01 1 Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya.
 1 Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya.

Together with Sri Lanka Thrush, these were the only endemic species we did not succeed to photograph.

177. BROWN-CAPPED BABBLER - *Pellorneum fuscicapillus fuscicapillus*

- 29-01 3 (one single bird plus a pair) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 04-02 1-2 (most probably heard only) at official entrance of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

178. ASHY-HEADED LAUGHINGTHRUSH - *Argya cinereifrons*

- 03-02 4 ([in one group](#)) along the Koskulana river, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 04-02 3-4 (heard only) at the old research station, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

179. ORANGE-BILLED BABBLER - *Argya rufescens*

This smart rainforest babbler was fairly common at Kithulgala and Sinharaja. Sometimes together with Yellow-billed Babblers in mixed flocks.

180. Yellow-billed Babbler - *Argya affinis taprobanus*

Common, seen and heard at all sites.

181. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch - *Sitta frontalis frontalis*

- 29-01 2-3 south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 30-01 1 [Ampana](#) (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).

182. SRI LANKA HILL MYNA - *Gracula ptilogenys*

- 28-01 2 at the clearing [south of the Kelani River](#), Kithulgala.
 Between 3-02 and 5-02 several heard and seen at Sinharaja Forest Reserve. The [eye colour](#) easily shows the sexual dimorphism: male has a white eye, the female a dark eye.

183. Southern Hill Myna - *Gracula indica*

- 30-01 3 [along the AA007](#) just before Watawala.
 03-02 2 [along the B181](#) road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

184. Common Myna - *Acridotheres tristis melanosternus*

Seen at all sites but most common at the dry zone.

185. Brahminy Starling - *Sturnia pagodarum*

- 02-02 1 ([one seen well](#)) Yala NP.

186. WHITE-FACED STARLING - *Sturnornis albofrontatus*

- 30-01 3 Ampana (hills c 5 km north of Kithulgala).

- 03-02 1 (heard only) along the B181 road to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 2 ([heard only](#)) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 04-02 4 ([seen well at last](#)) Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 This starling is a canopy specialist and therefore quite hard to find. It is mostly heard in the first place.

187. **Rosy Starling** - *Pastor roseus*

- 02-02 9 (in one flock) Yala NP.
 03-02 30+ (several flocks) Udawalawe NP.

188. **SRI LANKA THRUSH** - *Zoothera imbricata*

- 30-01 2 (seen well in the garbage) [Sandathenna road](#), Nuwara Eliya.
 04-02 1 (singing and flying over our heads) [main trail](#) of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

189. **Pied Thrush** - *Geokichla wardii*

- 30-01 2 (males) [Victoria Park](#), Nuwara Eliya. A truly amazing bird!

190. **SPOT-WINGED THRUSH** - *Geokichla spiloptera*

- 29-01 1 ([singing from a branch](#)) in gardens west of Kithulgala.
 04-02 1 [along the bumpy road](#) to Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 6 feeding [along the main trail](#) of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

191. **Indian Blackbird** - *Turdus simillimus kinnisii*

- 30-01 1 [Victoria Park](#), Nuwara Eliya.
 31-01 1 (singing) along the Pattipola - Horton Plains Road (B512).

192. **Oriental Magpie-Robin** - *Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*

Common at all visited sites. In the Rock View Hotel they entered the building or were singing at [close range](#).

193. **Indian Robin** - *Copsychus fulicatus leucopterus*

- 01-02 2 (pair) [in the garden](#) of the Ivy Bungalow, Nuwara Eliya.
 02-02 c 20 Yala NP.
 03-03 c 20 Udawalawe NP.

194. **Asian Brown Flycatcher** - *Muscicapa dauurica poonensis*

- 29-01 1 along the [Mahabage Road](#), c 3 km north of Kithulgala.
 03-02 1 [south of the Koskulana river](#), Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.
 05-02 1 [north of the Koskulana river](#), Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

195. **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** - *Muscicapa muttui*

Several seen at all sites, especially at Kithulgala and Sinharaja Forest Reserve, also known as the wet zone.

196. **DULL-BLUE FLYCATCHER** - *Eumyias sordidus*

- 30-01 1 Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya.
 31-01 1 [Pattipola Entrance](#), Horton Plains NP.
 6 ([one at close range](#)) south of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.

197. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher - *Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni*

- 29-01 2 (pair) in gardens west of Kithulgala.
 2 (pair) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.

The females of this subspecies have bluish upperparts.

198. SRI LANKA WHISTLING THRUSH - *Myophonus blighi*

- 31-01 1 (male) [seen well](#) after a long search; Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP.

199. Indian Blue Robin - *Larvivora brunnea brunnea*

- 30-01 1 (male) Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya.
 1 (female) [Sandathenna road](#), Nuwara Eliya.

200. Kashmir Flycatcher - *Ficedula subrubra*

- 30-01 1 ([male](#)) Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya.
 31-01 1 ([male](#)) just south of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.

201. Pied Bush Chat - *Saxicola caprata atratus*

- 31-01 5 (with [one male](#) at close range) Horton Plains, Nuwara Eliya.

202. Jerdon's Leafbird - *Chloropsis jerdoni*

- 02-02 2 ([one seen quite well](#)) Yala NP.

203. Golden-fronted Leafbird - *Chloropsis aurifrons insularis*

- 29-01 1 Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 05-02 1 ([seen quite well](#)) look-out at the forest edge of Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

204. LEGGE'S FLOWERPECKER - *Dicaeum vincens*

- 28-02 2 (pair, [male photographed](#)) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 29-01 1 (male) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.
 05-02 4 (three males and one female) Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

205. Pale-billed Flowerpecker - *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos ceylonense*

Common throughout the whole country. We probably also had some Thick-billed Flowerpeckers at Yala NP on 2-02 but did not had the opportunity to check all the flowerpeckers there.

206. Purple-rumped Sunbird - *Leptocoma zeylonica zeylonica*

Fairly common (5+ birds each day) throughout the whole country.

207. Purple Sunbird - *Cinnyris asiaticus asiaticus*

- 02-02 c 10 Yala NP.
 03-02 c 8 Udawalawe NP.

208. Loten's Sunbird - *Cinnyris lotenius lotenius*

- 31-01 1 ([male](#)) south of the Pattipola Railway Station, Horton Plains.
 1 ([female](#)) west of Seetha Eliya
 01-02 1 (female) along the road during the drive from Nuwara Eliya to Tissamaharama.

209. House Sparrow - *Passer domesticus indicus*

A few at Kithulgala village, then common at Nuwara Eliya but disappearing again in the dry zone. [Males](#) seem to be much brighter than the race in Europe with whiter cheeks and more black in the bib.

210. Streaked Weaver - *Ploceus manyar flaviceps*

02-02 5 (four males, some nest building, one female) [Yala NP](#).

211. Baya Weaver - *Ploceus philippinus philippinus*

01-02 c 10 (nesting in Rain Trees) Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.

02-02 c 10 [Yala NP](#).

212. Indian Silverbill - *Euodice malabarica*

02-02 3 [Yala NP](#).

213. Scaly-breasted Munia - *Lonchura punctulata punctulata*

02-02 c 20 Yala NP.

03-02 c 30 Udawalawe NP and [vicinity](#).

214. Black-throated Munia - *Lonchura kelaarti kelaarti*

28-02 6 ([one male, 5 female/female-type](#)) south of the Kelani River, Kithulgala.

We found this group in the trees bordering the rice field during our wait, while Nandana was looking for the Serendib Scops Owl. This munia is the rarest of the four munias that can be found on Sri Lanka.

215. White-rumped Munia - *Lonchura striata striata*

Noted at all sites, e.g. nest-building at the restaurant of the Plantation Hotel, Kithulgala.

216. Tricolored Munia - *Lonchura malacca*

03-02 9 [north of the B427](#) on the southern shore of the Udawalawa Reservoir feeding with a [group of 22](#) Scaly breasted Munias.

217. Western Yellow Wagtail - *Motacilla flava*

31-01 1 Nuwara-Eliya Race Course Ground, Nuwara Eliya.

02-02 c 5 Yala NP.

218. Grey Wagtail - *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*

Several individuals were seen at all sites we visited, not surprisingly in the vicinity of water.

219. Paddyfield Pipit - *Anthus rufulus rufulus*

30-01 1 in the garden of the Ivy Bungalow, Nuwara Eliya.

31-01 1 along the B512 between Ambewela and Meepilimani, Horton Plains.

c 6 [Nuwara Eliya Race Course Ground](#), Nuwara Eliya.

02-02 c 10 Yala NP.

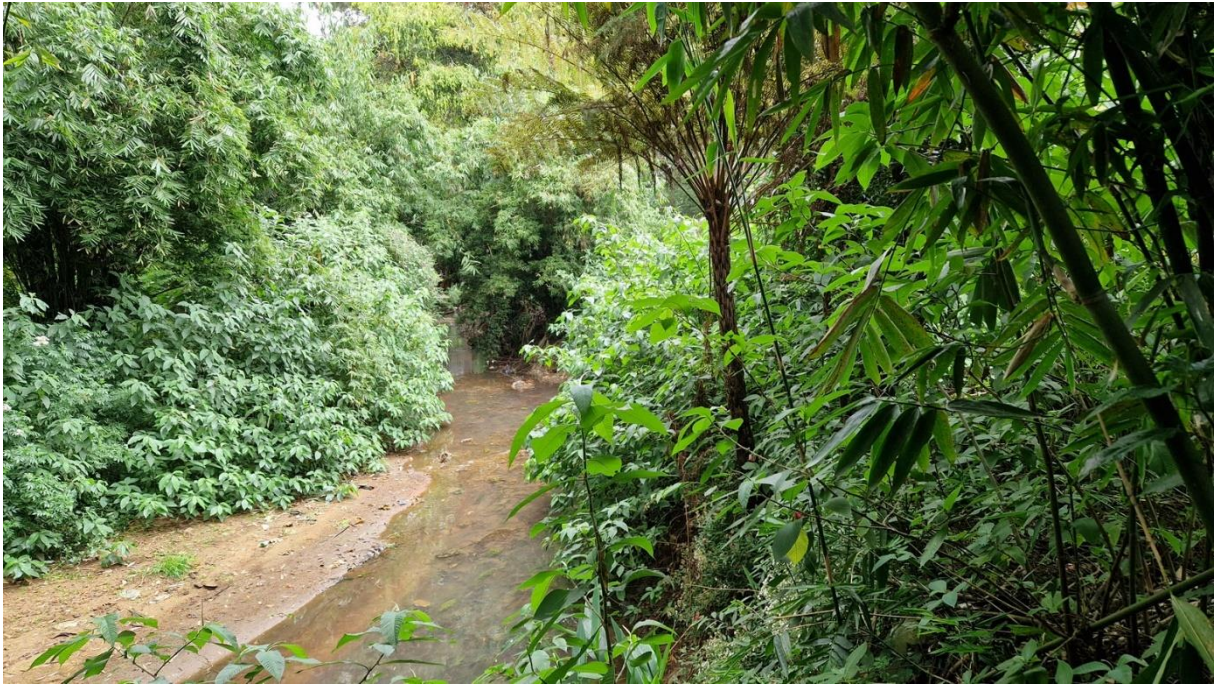
03-02 c 8 Udawalawe NP and [vicinity](#).



Arjan at the Kelani River at Kithulgala, with the suspension bridge in the background. 28 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Forest where Serendib Scops Owl was found; Kithulgala, 28 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Famous stream in the western part of Victoria Park, Nuwara Eliya. The Pied Thrushes and the Indian Blackbird were feeding on the shore at the end on the right; 30 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Place where we found Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush. The bird was perched right of the centre; 31 January 2023, Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Race Course at Nuwara Eliya. The Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers were seen in the bushes just behind the mud; 31 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Place where we saw the Sri Lanka Thrush; two birds were feeding just right of the 45 degrees branch in the centre; Sandathenna road, Nuwara Eliya, 31 January 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Panoramic view of Tissa Lake, with big Rain Tree on the right. There we saw our first Sri Lanka Woodshrike; Tissamaharama; 1 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Yala NP with Elephant Rock in the back; 2 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Beach with rock where an Indian Elephant arrived unexpectedly; Yala NP; 2 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Typical savanna habitat in Udawalawe NP; 3 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



View from Rock View Hotel with Sinharaja Forest Reserve in the background; 3 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Stream in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve; 4 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Same stream in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve; 4 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Three *Rasbora dandia* and a Stone Sucker *Garra ceylonensis* in the stream in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve; 4 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.

Mammals

01. **Common Flying Fox** - *Pteropus giganteus giganteus*
Three at Nuwara Eliya on 30-01 and on 01-02 10.000+ in an enormous colony in the Rain Trees at Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama.
02. **Ceylon Grey Langur** - *Semnopithecus priam thersites*
Several troops at Yala NP on 2-02.
03. **Purple-faced Leaf Monkey** - *Trachypithecus vetulus*
Two races seen: race *vetulus* at Sinharaja Forest Reserve, a troop with several babies and a troop of the montane *monticola* race at Horton Plains NP.
04. **Toque Monkey or Macaque** - *Macaca sinica sinica*
Several troops at Kithulgala, Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains and Udawalawe NP.
05. **Indian Black-Naped Hare** - *Lepus nigricollis singhala*
Two individuals at Yala NP on 2-02.
06. **Three-striped Palm Squirrel** - *Funambulus palmarum*
Race *favonicus* at the wet zone forest sites and race *kelaari* was seen at Yala NP.
07. **Dusky-Stripped jungle Squirrel** - *Funambulus sublineatus obscurus*
Several around Nuwara Eliya, e.g. at the dump site at the Sandathenna road on 30--01.
08. **Western Ceylon Giant or Grizzled Squirrel** - *Ratufa macroura melanochra*
Only one in a fruiting tree at Kithulgala. The national mammal of Sri Lanka.
09. **Indian Gerbil or Antelope-Rat** - *Tatera indica ceylonica*
About 5 at the Indian Nightjar spot just outside Yala NP on 2-02.
10. **Indian Long-Tailed Tree Mouse** - *Vandeleuria oleracea nilagirica*
One just caught and still trying to release itself in vain from the beak of a Malabar Pied Hornbill at Yala NP.
11. **Golden Jackal** - *Canis aureus lanka*
Two, probably parent and youngster, at Udawalawe NP on 3-03.
12. **Ruddy Mongoose** - *Herpestes smithii*
Up to four at Yala NP on 2-02 and one at Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.
13. **Ceylon Leopard** - *Panthera pardus lankae*
Unexpectedly, two already fairly sized kittens crossed the road at the Pattipola Entrance, Horton Plains NP on 31-01.
14. **Asian Elephant** - *Elephas maximus*
Up to five including a tusker (only 1 in ten bulls) at Yala NP on 2-02 and three singles at Udawalawe NP on 3-02.
15. **Indian Wild Pig** - *Sus scrofa cristatus*
Common at Yala NP on 2-02 and Udawalawe NP on 3-02.

16. **Spotted Deer or Chital** - *Axis axis ceylonensis*

Common at Yala NP on 2-02 and Udawalawe NP on 3-02.

17. **Sri Lankan Sambar Deer** - *Cervus unicolor unicolor*

A stag crossed the road pre-dawn along the World's End Road to Horton Plains NP on 31-01 and fairly common at Yala NP on 2-02.

18. **Indian Water Buffalo** - *Bubalus bubalis*

Common at Yala NP on 2-02. There is debate as to whether there are Asiatic Wild Buffaloes *B. arnee* in Sri Lanka. However, evidence for this is apparently not conclusive, according to the Handbook of Mammals of the World.



Male Asian Elephant with tusks; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Common Flying Fox, 30 January 2023, Nuwara Eliya; right: a congregation of Toque Macaques, 31 January 2023, Pattipola, Horton Plains; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Water Buffalo; right: Spotted Deer or Chital; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Sri Lankan Sambar Deer, male left, females right; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Wild Pig; right: Ruddy Mongoose; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Ceylon Grey Langur; right: Asian Elephant on the rock where a few minutes ago a group of tourists was asked to leave instantly; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Black-naped Hare; 2 February 2023, Yala NP; right: Golden Jackal (mother with young) and a photo-bombing Spotted Dove; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Same Golden Jackal with young looking at us; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Toque Macaque, waiting for the remains of our breakfast; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; right: Purple-faced Leaf Monkey; 3 February 2023, Kudawa, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.

Reptiles

01. **Kangaroo Lizard** - *Calotes wiegmanni*
One at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.
 02. **Whistling Lizard** - *Calotes liolepis*
One at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve at the entrance of the research station on 4-02.
 03. **Green Garden Lizard** - *Calotes calotes*
One at Kithulgala on 30-01 and three, including an adult male at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.
 04. **Mugger or Marsh crocodile** - *Crocodylus palustris*.
Singles at Lake Tissa, Tissamaharama on 1-02 and up to three in Yala NP on 2-02. Unbelievable that people still enter the marsh, although we saw people wearing a motorcycle helmet!
 05. **Hard-shelled Terrapin** - *Geomyda trijuga thermalis*
A turtle that jumped into the small pond at the Sinharaja research station on 4-02 was probably this species.
 06. **Spotted House Gecko** - *Hemidactylus parvimaculatus*
Several kept us company at our accommodation at Kithulgala between 28-01 and 30-01.
 07. **Asian Water Monitor** - *Varanus salvato*
One huge 2m+ individual at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 5-02.
 08. **Bengal Monitor** - *Varanus bengalensis*
One crossed the road at Tissamaharama on 1-02, common at Yala NP on 2-02 and one at Udawalawe NP on 3-02.
 09. **Rock Python** - *Python molurus pimbura*
An individual of at least 2 meters in length at Yala NP on 2-02.
 10. **Indian Rat Snake** - *Ptyas mucosa*
One at Tissamaharama on 1-02 and another at Yala NP on 2-02.
 11. **Sri Lankan Vine Snake** - *Ahaetulla nasuta*
One at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02; a beautiful snake!
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Left: Bengal Monitor; right: Marsh or Mugger Crocodile; 1 February 2023, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Indian Rat Snake, Tissamaharama on 1 February 2023; right: Rock Python at Yala NP on 2 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Marsh or Mugger Crocodile waiting for a deer coming to drink; Yala NP on 2 February 2023; © Jan van der Laan.



Another Bengal Monitor; 3 February 2023, Udawalawe NP; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: adult Green Garden Lizard, along the B181; right: a young Green Garden Lizard, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; 3 & 4 February 2023 resp. © Jan van der Laan.



Left: male Green Garden Lizard; right: Kangaroo Lizard; 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan.



Left: Sri Lankan Green Vine Snake; right: Whistling Lizard; 4 February 2023; Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Jan van der Laan (left); Arjan Brenkman (right)



Asian Water Monitor of more than two metres! 5 February 2023; west of Kudawa; © Jan van der Laan.

Dragonflies (endemics in capitals)

01. **GREEN'S GEM** - *Libellago greeni*
One in the Kelani river, Kithulgala on 30-01.
02. **SHINING GOSSAMERWING** - *Euphaea splendens*
A pair in display showing the bright greens and blues north of Kithulgala on 29-01, and twice a single at Kithulgala on 30-01.
03. **Sri Lanka Orange-faced Sprite** - *Pseudagrion rubriceps*
About five seen from the Plantation hotel on the Kelani River on 30-01.
04. **Green Skimmer** - *Orthetrum sabina*
A copula and a single at the Serendib Scops Owl site on 28-01. The Dutch name is Slanke Oeverlibel.
05. **SPINE-TUFTED SKIMMER** - *Orthetrum chrysis*
One at Kithulgala and one north of Kithulgala on 29-01
06. **Common Blue Skimmer** or **Blue Marsh Hawk** - *Orthetrum glaucum*
A male at north of Kithulgala on 29-01.
07. **PINK SKIMMER** - *Orthetrum pruinsum*
One north of Kithulgala on 29-01.
08. **Blue Percher** - *Diplacodes trivialis*
One at Kithulgala at the Serendib Scops Owl site on 28-01.
09. **Indigo Dropwing** - *Trithemis festiva*
Common in the Kelani river, Kithulgala on 29-01 and 30-01. Dutch name is Blauwe Zonnewijzer.
10. **Wandering Glider** - *Pantala flavescens*
At least five at the Serendib Scops Owl site, Kithulgala on 28-01.
11. **Sri Lanka Black-tipped Flashwing** - *Vestalis apicalis nigrescens*
A female was photographed at the wall of the Rock View restaurant early morning, Sinharaja on 4-02.
12. **Ditch Jewel** - *Brachythemis contaminata*
Several at Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama on 1-02 and at least five at Udawalawe on 3-02.



Left: Green Skimmer, 28 January 2023, Kithulgala; right: Spine-tufted Skimmer, 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Shining Gossamerwing; right: Common Blue Skimmer; 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Shining Gossamerwing; right: Green's Gem; 30 January 2023, Plantation Hotel, Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Pink Skimmer, 29 January 2023, north of Kithulgala; right: Ditch Jewel, 1 February 2023, Tissa Lake, Tissamaharama; © Jan van der Laan.

Butterflies (endemics in capitals).

01. **Common Jezebel** - *Delias eucharis*

This beautiful butterfly was seen once, at Sinharaja Forest Reserve at the lookout for Legge's Hawk-Eagle on 5-02.

02. **Grass Yellow** - *Eurema spec*

Several at Kithulgala including a copula on 29-01. It is unclear which *Eurema* is involved: One-spot, Three-spot or Common Grass Yellow? Suggestions are welcome.

03. **White Four-Ring** - *Ypthima ceylonica*

One at Kithulgala on 28-01.

04. **Chocolate Soldier** - *Junonia iphita*

One at Kithulgala together with the White Four-Ring on 28-01.

05. **Lemon Pansy** - *Junonia lemonias*

One drying out in Yala NP after another big downpour on 2-02.

06. **Peacock Pansy** - *Junonia almana*

One seen well while waiting for the Red-faced Malkoha in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.

07. **CEYLON TREE NYMPH** - *Idea iasonia*

About three, all in primary forest of Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.

08. **Blue Mormon** - *Papilio polymnestor*

This beauty was seen twice at Sinharaja Forest Reserve, the last one in the garden of Martin's Lodge on 4-02.

09. **Red Helen** - *Papilio helenus*

One close to the Green Vine Snake in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.

10. **Dark Evening Brown** - *Melanitis phedima*

This butterfly becomes active at dusk and was indeed seen at dusk at Kithulgala near the Sri Lanka Bay Owl stakeout on 29-01.

11. **Angled Pierrot** - *Calete calete*

One at the Sinharaja Forest Reserve on 4-02.

12. **Forgot-me-not** - *Catochrysops strabo*

A female laying eggs at some beach scrubs at Yala NP on 2-02.

13. **Blank Swift** - *Caltoris kumara*

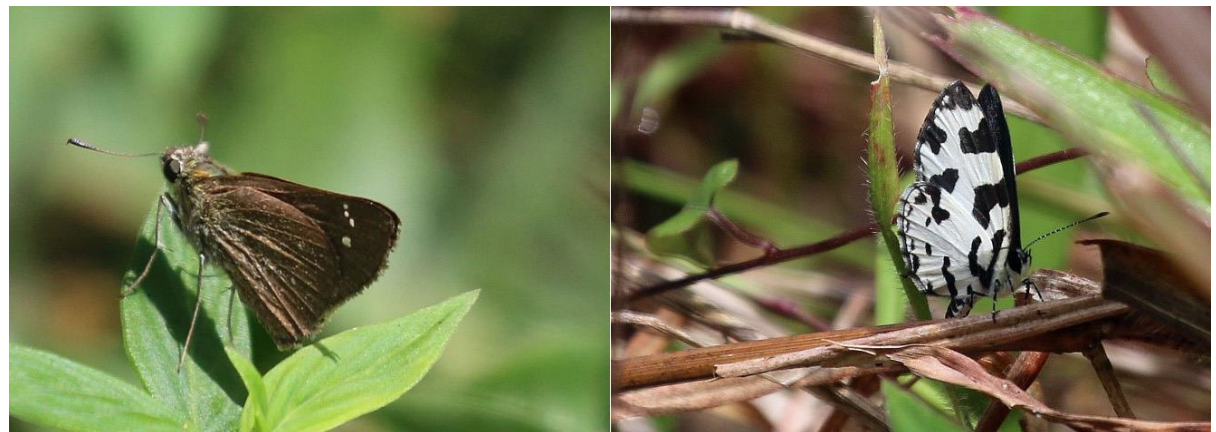
One just before Watawala while watching Southern Hill Mynas and Crimson-fronted Barbet on 30-01.



Ceylon Tree Nymph; 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Arjan Brenkman.

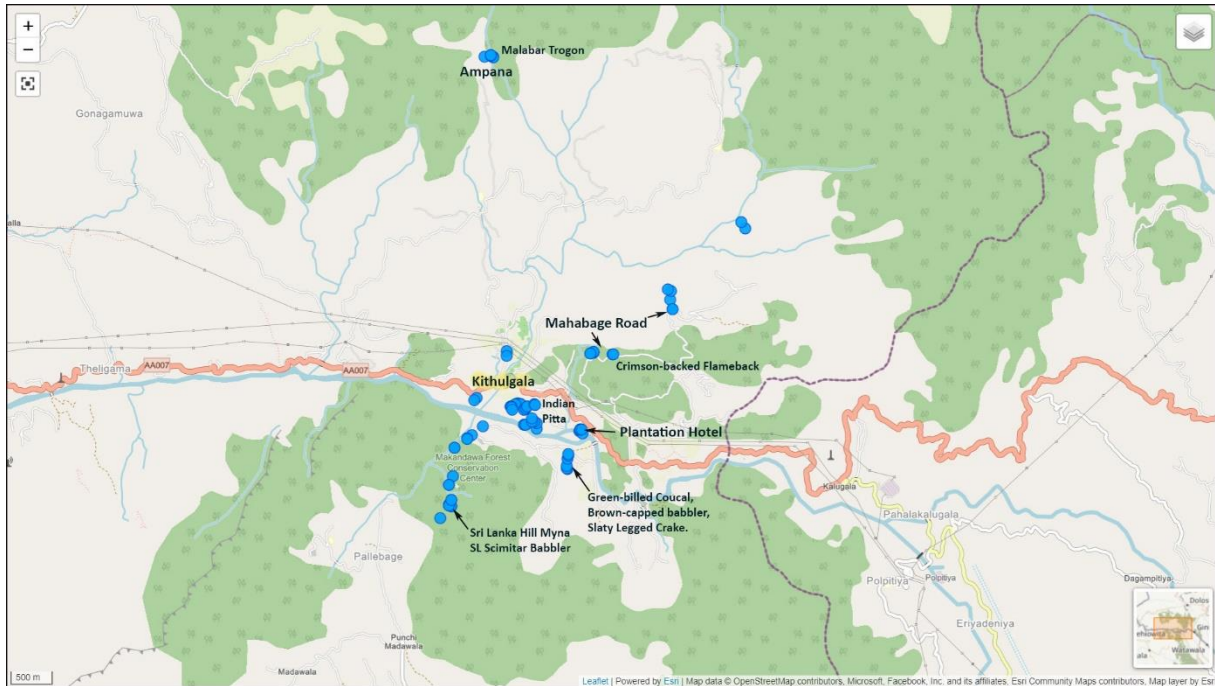


Left: White Four-ring; 28 January 2023, Kithulgala; right: Grass Yellows; 29 January 2023, Kithulgala; © Arjan Brenkman.



Left: Blank Swift; 28 January 2023, Watawala; right: Angled Pierrot, 4 February 2023, Sinharaja Forest Reserve; © Arjan Brenkman.

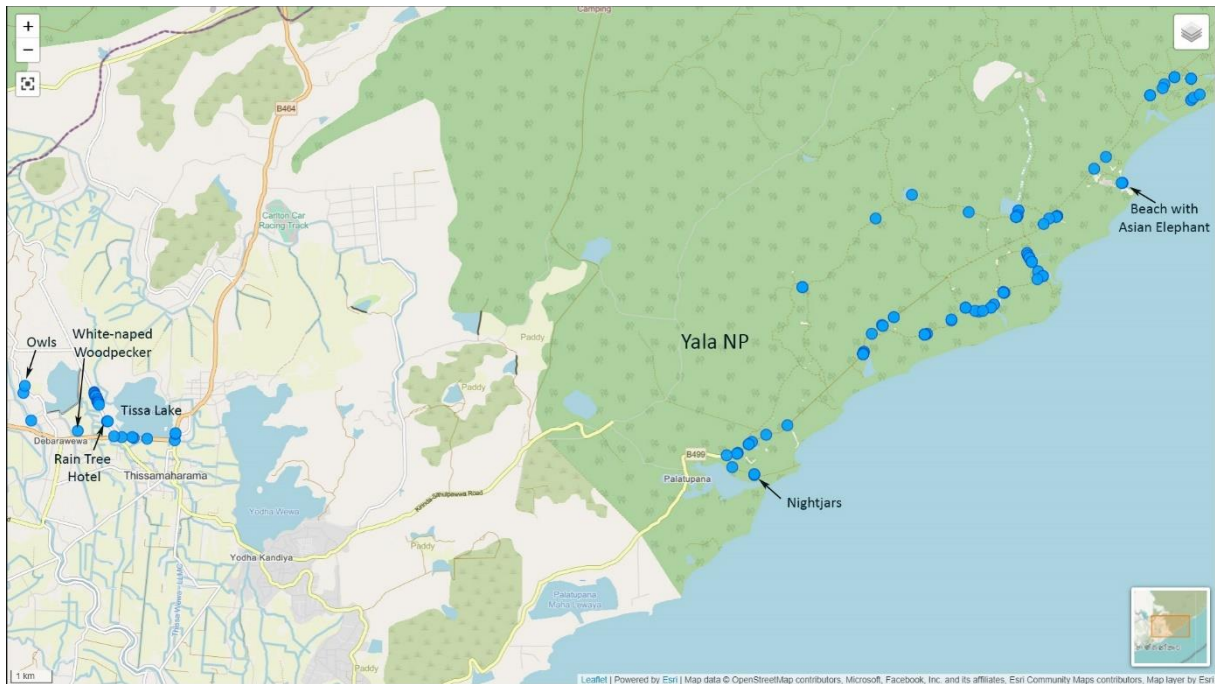
Maps II



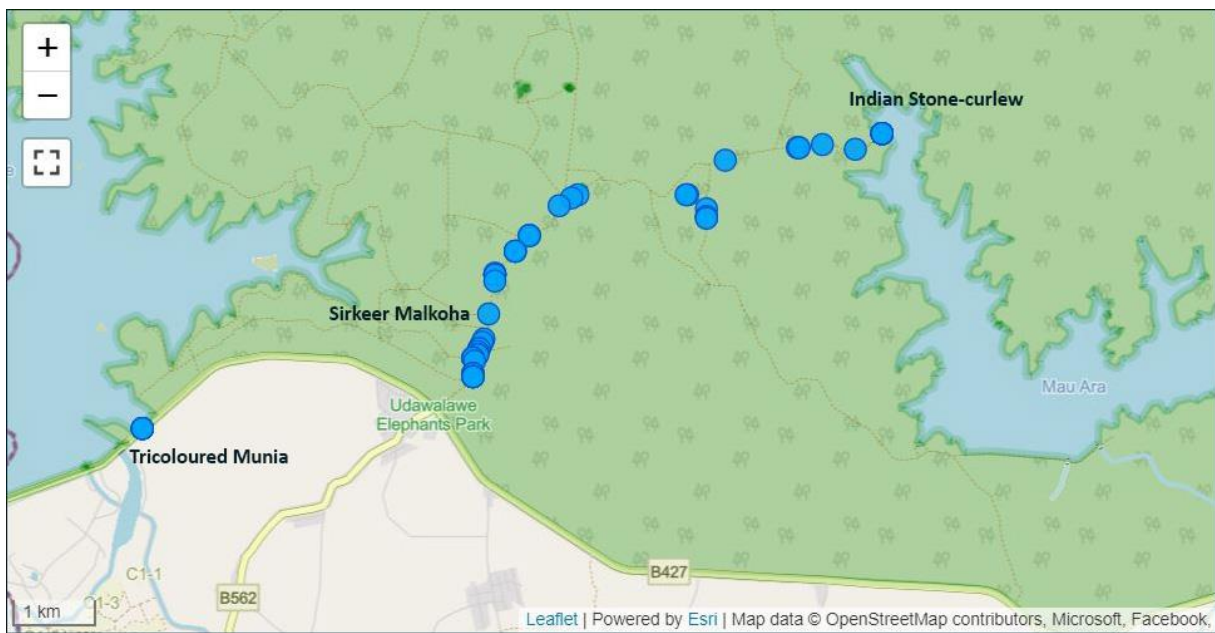
[Heat map](#) of our observations around Kithulgala between 28 and 30 January 2023.



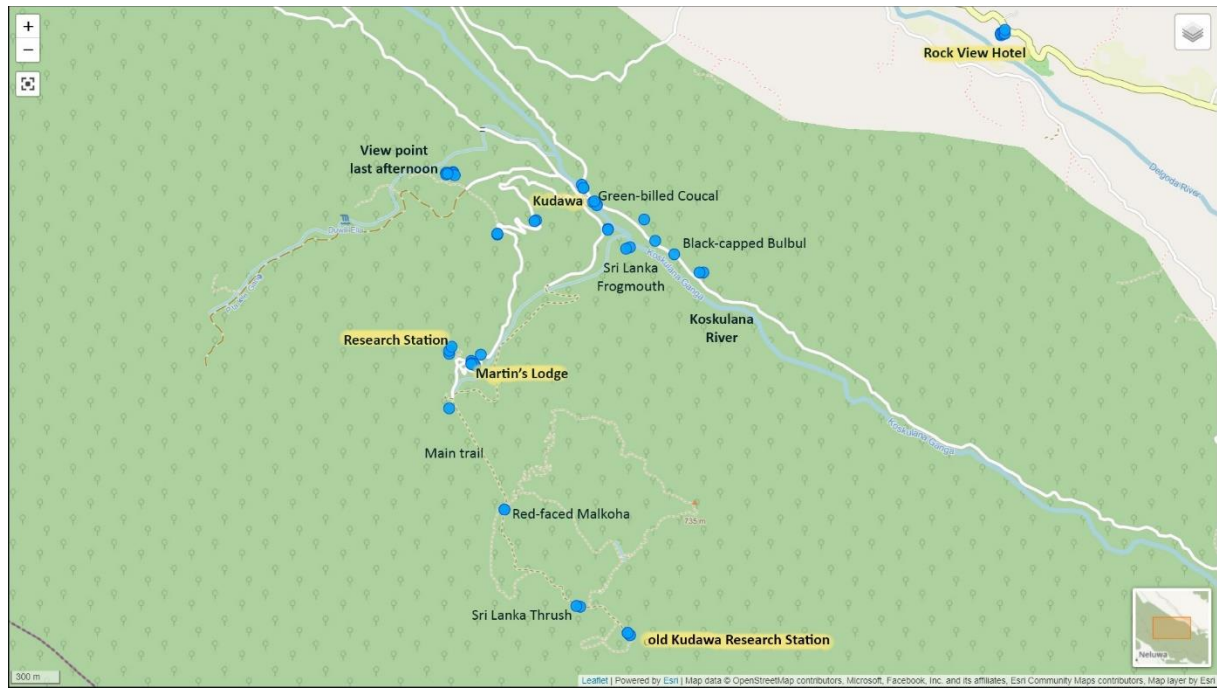
[Heat map](#) of our observations between 30 January and 1 February 2023 at Nuwara Eliya and the Horton Plains.



[Heat map](#) of our observations on 1 and 2 February 2023 at Tissamaharama and Yala NP.



[Heat map](#) of our observations on 3 February 2023 at Udawalawe NP.



[Heat map](#) of all our observations between 3 and 5 February 2023 at Sinharaja Forest Reserve.