

**BIRDING TOUR**  
**of**  
**Kaziranga, Nameri Tiger Reserve (Assam), Dirang and the Sangti**  
**Valley and Eagle's Nest (Uranachal Pradesh) NE India**  
**Jan 29<sup>th</sup>-Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 2008**  
**By**  
**John van der Dol**

**Participants:**

**Jo Thomas, Steve Lister, Kath and Mick Claydon. Roger Hughes, Sue Pollard, John van der Dol, Mohit Aggarwal ,and our guide Peter Lobo plus a huge logistics/back-up team.**

This report is a list of birds of interest seen by the group in the different areas we visited. It is by no means the comprehensive list.

**Okhla Barrage, Delhi Jan 29<sup>th</sup> pm only.**

Black-headed Ibis  
Greater Flamingo- 350  
Spot-billed Duck- 100  
Northern Shoveler- 10,000  
Peregrine  
Grey Francolin  
Purple Swamphen- many  
White-tailed Lapwing- 2  
Hume's Warbler  
Hume's Whitethroat- 2

**Nameri Tiger Reserve, Jan 30<sup>th</sup>-Feb 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Accommodation at Nameri Eco camp**  
**Forest and lowland river valley.**

Lesser Adjutant- 6 and 5 en route  
Greater Adjutant- 95 just outside Guwahati  
Black-eared Kite- 15  
Pallas's Fish-Eagle  
Crested Serpent Eagle  
Crested Goshawk  
Mountain Hawk Eagle  
Osprey  
Red-headed Falcon  
Oriental Hobby- pair breeding at Nameri  
Shaheen Falcon  
Black-necked Crane- Dirang Valley  
River Lapwing- 6  
Ibisbill- 2  
Small Pratincole- 100+  
River Tern- 10  
Barred Cuckoo-Dove- 6

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon- 3  
Green Imperial Pigeon- 20  
Red-breasted Parakeet -20, 10  
Vernal Hanging Parrot- 5,1  
Green-billed Malkoha- 2  
Collared Owlet- 2  
Asian Barred Owlet- 3  
Red-headed Trogon- 1  
Crested Kingfisher- 2  
Great Pied Hornbill- 6  
Wreathed Hornbill- 2,2  
Lineated Barbet- 1,6  
Blue-throated Barbet- 3,6  
Grey-capped Woodpecker- 4  
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker  
Lesser Yellownape  
Grey-headed Woodpecker  
Greater Flameback- 4  
Sand Lark- 2  
Citrine Wagtail-2  
Olive-backed Pipit- 2,4  
Long-tailed Minivet- 20  
Black-crested Bulbul- 3  
White-throated Bulbul- 2  
Black Bulbul- 100s  
Golden-fronted Leafbird  
Orange-bellied Leafbird  
Common Iora  
Blue Whistling Thrush- 1,20  
Scaly Thrush- single by single observer  
Black-breasted Thrush- 3  
Thick-billed Warbler 1,1  
Lemon-rumped Warbler- 2  
Yellow-browed Warbler- 6  
Greenish Warbler-2  
Yellow-vented Warbler- 2  
Hume's Warbler  
Buff-barred Warbler  
Yellow-bellied Warbler  
Striated grassbird  
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher  
Little Pied Flycatcher  
Verditer  
Large Niltava  
Small Niltava  
Rufous-bellied Niltava  
Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher  
Siberian Rubythroat  
Red-flanked Bluetail  
Golden Bush Robin

Rufous-breasted Bush Robin  
Hodgson's Redstart  
Blue-fronted Redstart  
White-capped River-chat  
Plumbeous Water Redstart  
Little Forktail  
Black-backed Forktail-4  
Spotted Forktail  
Striated Laughingthrush  
Abbott's Babbler  
Buff-breasted Babbler- 2  
Snowy-throated Babbler  
Striped Tit-babbler  
Silver-eared Mesia 20 en route to Dirang  
Sultan Tit  
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch  
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch  
Wallcreeper- 5  
Maroon Oriole  
Asian Fairy Bluebird- 4  
Spot-winged Starling

### **Dirang and Shangti Valley Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Sela Pass up to 3500m only**

We were unfortunately not able to get to the top of the pass due to heavy snow falls. Although the pass was just about open the roads were getting dodgy at 3500m and with two wheel drive cars with no snow chains we were not prepared to risk it. The heavy snow probably contributed to us missing some high altitude species but we are still in one piece and able to return another day.

#### **Further interesting additional**

White-eyed Buzzard  
Black Eagle  
Black-necked Crane again in the Shangti Valley  
Snow Pigeon 16  
Black-tailed Crake- 3  
Long-billed Plover- 5  
Ibisbill- another 5  
Nepal House Martin- 60  
Rufous-breasted Accentor- 4,7  
Maroon-backed Accentor- 4,1  
Alpine Accentor- 12  
Plain-backed Thrush again- 8  
White-collared Blackbird- 12  
Ashy-throated warbler  
Grey-hooded Warbler  
White-spectacled Warbler  
Slaty-blue Flycatcher- male  
White-browed Bush Robin – 2 males  
Rufous-breasted Bush Robin- another male

White-throated Redstart- 4 males and two females all together  
 Streaked (Bhutan) Laughingthrush  
 Black-faced Laughingthrush- 16  
 Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush- 15,2  
 Spotted Laughingthrush- 3  
 Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler - 3,3  
 Rufous-capped Babbler- 10  
 Green Shrike Babbler- 2  
 Hoary-throated Barwing  
 Chestnut-tailed Minla- 8,6  
 Red-tailed Minla- 1,1  
 Brown-throated Fulvetta- 12  
 Beautiful Sibia  
 Whiskered Yuhina- 20  
 Stripe-throated Yuhina  
 Rufous-vented Yuhina  
 Black-throated Tit- 10  
 Grey-crested Tit  
 Rufous-vented Tit  
 Rufous-fronted Tit- 4  
 Green-backed Tit  
 Yellow-browed Tit  
 Rusty-flanked Treecreeper  
 Wallcreeper again- 1,1  
 Spotted Nutcracker- 5,1  
 Russet Sparrow- 6,3  
 Blanford's Rosefinch- 25+  
 Dark-rumped Rosefinch – 12  
 Dark-breasted Rosefinch- 12  
 Common Rosefinch- 1  
 White-browed Rosefinch - 10  
 Pink-browed Rosefinch- male  
 Himalayan (Yellow-breasted) Greenfinch- 2  
 Red-headed Bullfinch- female  
 Grey-headed Bullfinch- 11  
 Gold-naped Finch- 4,2  
 Plain Mountain Finch- 6  
 Little Bunting

### **Eagles Nest Wildlife Sanctuary- Feb 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>**

An area of forest ranging 500 to 2900m at Eagles Nest Pass. We stayed at Lama Camp (2400m), Bompu Camp (1900m) and Sesni (1200m). Lama Camp is where the Bugun Liocichla was first discovered in 1996 and named in 2006 after the Bugun tribe. All the camps are temporary affairs (Lama is semi permanent) and one needs to take along a whole logistical team as there are no permanent facilities.

Our visit coincided with the first snow at Lama Camp for 17 years and consequently a lot of the birds had moved out. Despite that we still had a great time and a few bonus birds which had moved down to this elevation. It was however very cold at night but during the day when the sun came out we were able to shed one or two of our six layers of clothing.

### **Further interesting additional**

Long-legged Buzzard – 2 at Bomdila (2500m)  
Black Eagle – 3  
Rufous-bellied Eagle –juv  
Rufous-throated Partridge- heard most days  
Blyth's Tragopan- Unfortunately heard only  
Grey Peacock-Pheasant- heard only on three days  
Mountain Imperial Pigeon- 3, 1  
Large Hawk-Cuckoo  
Red-headed Trogon- 4 singles  
Wards Trogon- single male by single observer  
Rufous-necked Hornbill- 1,2,2,2  
Golden-throated Barbet- 1,2,7  
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker- two singles  
Crimson-breasted woodpecker- 2,1,3  
Bay Woodpecker- seen and heard daily  
Long-tailed Broadbill- Single at Sesni  
Black-winged Cuckooshrike  
Scarlet Minivet  
Grey-chinned Minivet  
Striated Bulbul  
Mountain Bulbul  
Golden-fronted Leafbird  
Orange-bellied Leafbird  
Brown Dipper  
Maroon-backed Accentor- up to 10  
Plain-backed Thrush- Up to 5 a day  
Long-tailed Thrush- one or two a day  
Chestnut-headed Tesia- 2 seen and another heard  
Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler- One or two at Sesni  
Grey-cheeked Warbler  
Chestnut-crowned Warbler  
Back-faced Warbler- common  
Broad-billed Warbler- 2 singles  
Red-flanked Bluetail- common  
White-browed Bush-Robin- 4,3  
Rufous-breasted Bush-Robin- another male  
White-throated Laughingthrush  
White-crested Laughingthrush- heard only  
Striated Laughingthrush- daily in small numbers  
Grey-sided Laughingthrush- 4,2,10  
Streaked (Bhutan) Laughingthrush- 3,3,2  
Scaly Laughingthrush- 2,2  
Blue-winged Laughingthrush- 4  
Black-faced Laughingthrush- fairly common  
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush- fairly common  
Spotted Laughingthrush-3  
Red-faced Liocichla- very brief view of a single  
Bugun Liocichla- 3,1 plus one heard

Large Scimitar-Babbler- one heard only  
 Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler- 18,2  
 Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler- excellent views of a single  
 Long-billed Wren-Babbler- single  
 Eye-browed Wren-Babbler- 3 heard only  
 Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler- One seen and another heard  
 Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler- Three heard and one seen  
 Sikim Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler- One seen plus another four heard  
 Rufous-capped Babbler- 10,6,4  
 Golden Babbler- 4,4  
 Cutia- 20,3,11  
 Black-headed Shrike-Babbler- 1  
 White-browed Shrike-Babbler- 1  
 Green Shrike-Babbler- 2+  
 Black-eared Shrike-Babbler- 2  
 Rusty-fronted Barwing-9,50,80,10  
 Hoary-throated Bawing- 10  
 Streak-throated Barwing- 2,4  
 Blue-winged Minla- 1,2  
 Chestnut-tailed Minla- common  
 Red-tailed Minla- five singles  
 Yellow-throated Fulvetta- Up to 100 a day  
 Rufous-winged Fulvetta- 25  
 Nepal Fulvetta- 10  
 Rufous-backed Sibia- 3,1  
 Rufous Sibia -1  
 Beautiful Sibia- common  
 Long-tailed Sibia- common at lower elevations  
 Black-chinned Yuhina  
 Fire-tailed Myzornis- two stunning males  
 Black-throated Parrotbill- 20  
 Rufous-headed Parrotbill- 1,4  
 Rufous-vented Tit- 4  
 Yellow-cheeked Tit- 6,2  
 Sultan Tit- 3  
 Beautiful Nuthatch- 3  
 Green-tailed Sunbird  
 Black-throated Sunbird  
 Crow-billed Drongo  
 Yellow-billed Blue Magpie  
 Common Green Magpie  
 Collared Treepie- heard only  
 Scarlet-Finch- 2 males and one female

### **Kaziranga NP Feb 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**

Kaziranga lies on the southern side of the Bramaputra floodplain where the habitat consists of loose woodland and vast areas of grassland. It is inhabited by many Indian Rhino, Wild Elephants and Buffalo as well as Hog Deer and the rare Swamp Deer. Tiger could be encountered here.

Birds here consist of open country species and species which prefer woodland where it exists.

The first day was spent in the Central ranges while the second day was spent in the Western ranges. The Eastern ranges were closed to the public as was a herd of 190 Wild Elephants which had come down from the hills and were causing chaos. No doubt to do with the unusual weather conditions. The Panbari Forest was also closed because of a Hoolock Gibbon breeding program and although we heard them we were unable to see them.

### **Further interesting additional**

Spot-billed Pelican- 20,2  
Oriental Darter- common  
Woolly-necked Stork- 2,10,2  
Black-necked Stork- 4,2  
Greater Adjutant- 2  
Pallas's Fish-Eagle- 4,4  
Grey-headed Fish-Eagle- 6,4  
Slender-billed Vulture- 2 (the only two vultures of the entire trip)  
Pied Harrier- female  
Changeable Hawk-Eagle- 3,1  
Osprey  
Swamp Francolin- 3 plus one heard  
Bronze-winged Jacana  
Grey-headed Lapwing- 5  
Pintail Snipe- 6  
River Tern- 20,10  
Emerald Dove  
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon- 40,20  
Green Imperial Pigeon- 20,4,2  
Stork-billed Kingfisher- 2,1  
Oriental Pied Hornbill- 5 plus one heard  
Great Hornbill- 1 plus 23 in one roost plus one other  
Blue-eared Barbet- heard only  
Greater Yellowthroat  
Streak-throated woodpecker- 2  
Grey-headed Woodpecker- 2,1  
Black-rumped Flameback- 4 singles  
Greater Flameback- 6  
Blue-naped Pitta- heard only  
Bengal Bushlark- 1,6  
Plain Martin  
Citrine Wagtail- 6  
Rosy Pipit- 1,6  
Large Cuckooshrike- 3  
Long-tailed Minivet- 8  
Black-breasted Thrush- another single  
Dusky Warbler  
Tickell's Leaf Warbler  
Striated Grassbird  
Slaty-backed Flycatcher- female

Little Pied Flycatcher- 3,2  
Bluethroat  
Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush- a single by a single observer  
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush- 12  
Rufous-necked Laughingthrush- 16,9  
Striated Babbler  
Ruby-cheeked Sunbird- pair  
Crimson Sunbird- single male twice  
Large Woodshrike- 12  
Rufous Treepie  
White-vented Myna- 2,4,1  
Baya Weaver- 8,6  
Finn's Weaver- 2

### **MAMMALS seen on the trip**

Indian Rhinoceros  
Wild Buffalo  
Asian Elephant  
Rhesus Macaque  
Capped Langur  
Hog Deer  
Swamp Deer  
Wild Boar  
Smooth-coated Otter  
Yellow-throated Marten  
Hoary-bellied Squirrel  
Himalayan Striped Squirrel  
Himalayan Orange-bellied Squirrel  
Indian Flying Fox sp  
Hoolock Gibbon- heard only

### Postscript

This was a fantastic tour despite the cold particularly at night. We were prepared. The snow was a problem in places and stopped us reaching some areas resulting in a few missing species, but some species were more common than they may otherwise have been. I personally got 78 new species out of a group total of about 390 recorded which was a pleasant surprise. The Laughingthrushes, Wren- Babblers and Rosefinches were particularly pleasing and there were many other highlights such as Fire-tailed Myzornis, Sultan Tit and the Scimitar-Babblers.

Thanks are due to Jo Thomas, Mohit Aggarwal and Peter Lobo and his amazing back-up team for putting this tour together.

Another tour is provisionally planned for early spring 2010.

John  
February 2008