

Sri Lanka

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

2010

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London	Day 10	Tissamaharama
Day 2/3	Anuradhapura	Day 11/12	Yala
Day 4/5	Sigiriya	Day 13/15	Uda Walawe and Sinharaja Forest
Day 6/7	Kandy	Day 16	Return to Colombo
Day 8/9	Nuwara Eliya	Day 17	Fly London

Dates

Saturday 13th February – Monday 1st March 2010

Cost

£2,395 (London/London) £1,895 (Land Only)

Single room supplement

£375

Grading

A/B. Mostly gentle birdwatching walks but a couple of longer walks included

Focus

Birds and mammals with elements of the island's history and archaeology



Sri Lanka Frogmouth



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NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Introduction

The principal aim of this holiday will be to see a representative selection of the island's diverse birdlife, including most of the 33 species endemic to Sri Lanka. We also hope to encounter a good variety of mammals particularly at Yala National Park where Indian Elephant and Leopard are both possibilities, and Uda Walawe, one of the best Elephant reserves in Asia. Tour members with interests in other aspects of natural history will not be disappointed; the island boasts a wonderful tropical flora, colourful butterflies, including huge bird-wings, and a fascinating variety of reptiles. Everywhere we go on Sri Lanka we will see evidence of the island's extraordinary history, especially during the first few days of the itinerary when we visit the ancient city of Anuradhapura, Mihintale and the rock fortress at Sigiriya.

There is a generally relaxed pace to this tour although early starts are necessary for the excursions to Yala National Park, Horton Plains and Sinharaja Forest. The island roads are not designed for speed but we have relatively few long drives and most journeys will be punctuated by regular stops to look at birds or to photograph scenery. Included in the itinerary will be a visit to a spice garden near Matale and a stop at one of the highland tea estates for a short tour of the factory.

Day 1

Saturday

In Flight

We depart from London on a scheduled service flight to Colombo.

Day 2

Sunday

Anuradhapura

We arrive early - morning local time and will be met at the airport by the Sri Lankan naturalist escort who will be with us throughout the tour. Before beginning the drive north we will pause at an airport hotel to freshen up and maybe have the first of many pots of Sri Lankan tea! Later as we head towards Anuradhapura, a breakfast stop will no doubt be welcome after the overnight flight and will give us an opportunity to make the acquaintance of some characteristic Sri Lankan birds such as Common Myna, Koel, Coppersmith Barbet and Purple Sunbird. Continuing along the coastal road through endless rows of Coconut palms, we soon turn inland and pass through areas of paddy fields and scattered woodland, before reaching the ancient capital of Anuradhapura which is our base for two nights. We stay in a hotel close to the shores of a massive man-made reservoir or 'tank', one of many in this part of Sri Lanka. Anyone wishing to spend the remainder of the afternoon relaxing will find the hotel's landscaped garden an ideal location to do so but for the keen birders it is also a splendid location to see yet more species. The tank provides food for a variety of waterbirds including Spot-billed Pelican, cormorants, Whiskered Tern and wildfowl, whilst the muddy shoreline may be frequented by a number of waders if conditions are suitable. Trees and scrub near the hotel will be worth investigating for Pied Cuckoo, Blue-faced Malkoha and a number of other Dry-Zone birds but the garden area is not without interest and regular visitors include Brown-headed Barbet, White-throated

& Stork-billed Kingfishers, Koel, Purple, Long-billed and Purple-rumped Sunbirds. Indian Pittas often winter in the vicinity, announcing their presence with distinctive whistles as dusk settles and sometimes feeding along the garden paths.

Day 3

Monday

Anuradhapura

Anuradhapura was Sri Lanka's first capital founded about the 4th century BC. It was evidently a very well planned city with a regular water supply assured by the construction of the numerous 'tanks' but eventually a struggle for power led to the re-location of the capital and subsequent abandonment of the city. Today, remarkably well preserved remains of this ancient civilisation can be seen in a pleasant parkland setting and we will spend the morning touring these. Inevitably there will be plenty of birds to look at amid the monuments and on the nearby tanks. Among the species we can expect to see are Pond Heron, White-breasted Waterhen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Brahminy Kite, Crested Tree-Swift, Indian Roller, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Black-rumped Flameback Woodpecker, Indian Robin, Magpie Robin and Ashy Woodswallow. Ubiquitous but always endearing, Palm Squirrels will be a regular sight throughout the tour and two other common mammals should make their first appearance during the morning, the agile Grey Langur and the slower moving Toque Macaque. A variety of lizards may be found, including the possibility of a big Water Monitor which can grow up to a metre in size.

Later in the day we drive a short distance from Anuradhapura to Mihintale where Buddhism was first introduced to the island. A huge dagoba marks this important site and is surrounded by parkland and forest. The area is rich in birds and possibilities include Grey Hornbill, Crimson-fronted Barbet, Greater Flameback Woodpecker, Small Minivet, Blue-winged Leafbird, Iora, Black-hooded Oriole, Common (Sri Lanka) Wood-Shrike and White-browed Bulbul. If we are lucky we may also encounter a troupe of Purple-faced Leaf-monkeys, another endemic and a much more timid creature than the other two resident primates. Before visiting Mihintale we will look at a huge tank just outside the village where large numbers of Whiskered Terns congregate and residents include Spot-billed Pelicans, Lesser Whistling Duck, Grey-headed Fish Eagle and the occasional wild Elephant!

Day 4

Tuesday

Sigiriya

Our next destination is the rock fortress at Sigiriya but en route from Anuradhapura we will pause at several roadside tanks inhabited by a variety of waterbirds. Great, Intermediate, Little and Cattle Egrets are all likely to be seen during the journey and other species may include Painted and Openbill Storks, Purple Heron, Black-headed Ibis, Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Purple Swamphen, Red-wattled and Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Blue-tailed and Little Green Bee-eaters, Streaked Weaver and Black-headed Munia.

King Kasyapa was responsible for the building of a city fortress on Sigiriya rock in 477 AD. Standing at the foot of the rock today it seems a staggering achievement but a palace and complex of gardens were constructed on the three-acre summit and for eighteen years served as a royal citadel. Visitors can reach the site by ascending flights of steps hewn in the rock but it is a stiff climb and not recommended for anyone with a fear of heights. A few frescoes are all that remain of some 500 paintings that formerly graced the rock walls and these can be viewed during the ascent. Shahin Falcons nest on the rock and the surrounding primary forest is superb for birds, containing many interesting species which keen birders may find an attractive alternative to scaling the rock. Birds to look for include

Woolly-necked Stork, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Emerald Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Alexandrine Parakeet, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Racket-tailed Drongo, Black-crested Bulbul, Paradise Flycatcher, White-browed Fantail, White-rumped Shama, Forest Wagtail, Oriental White-Eye, Brown-capped Babbler and Pale-billed Flowerpecker.

We stay overnight in the Sigiriya Hotel, which is sufficiently close to the rock for those favouring a restful afternoon to sit drink in hand and watch the exertions of the climbers or perhaps sample the hotel swimming pool. Birdlife in the gardens and surrounding scrub often includes several Indian Pittas, Brown-capped Babblers and most winters, one or more Orange-headed Ground Thrushes.

Day 5

Wednesday

Sigiriya

A second day at Sigiriya to enjoy the forest birdlife or perhaps to scale the rock in the cooler morning air. Later, for anyone interested in seeing a further aspect of Sri Lankan history there is the opportunity to take an optional excursion (at additional cost) to visit Polonnaruwa. The capital was relocated here in the 11th century AD after Anuradhapura suffered an invasion from India, and many remains of the ancient city can still be found including the famous reclining Buddha. Like other such areas of historic interest, Polonnaruwa is also frequented by good numbers of birds and visitors may be lucky enough to find one of the resident Brown Fish Owls.

Day 6

Thursday

Kandy

We leave Sigiriya after breakfast and drive south towards Kandy but as we pass through the island's main spice growing area around Matale, we will pause briefly to look around one of the numerous spice gardens beside the main road. Here many kinds of spice are cultivated and it is possible to purchase some of the produce, although in many instances it is actually cheaper to buy them in a British supermarket! As we head to Kandy the vegetation becomes very luxuriant and green, signifying our departure from the Dry Zone into the edge of the hill country. Before reaching the city of Kandy we will stop for lunch at Peradiniya Rest House, which is conveniently just across the road from the Botanical Gardens where we spend the afternoon. Once the pleasure gardens of a Kandyan Queen, the 150 acres of gardens are full of interesting trees and plants set out in a very attractive style and the orchid house is particularly worth a visit. Birds flock to enjoy the many fruiting trees in the gardens and we may find two endemic parrots, the diminutive Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot and Layard's Parakeet. Other regular visitors include Hill Myna, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher. A large colony of Indian Flying Foxes can be watched in the heart of the gardens and as dusk approaches, the giant fruit bats become increasingly active as they prepare for their nocturnal forays into the surrounding country.

Kandy is steeped in history and was the capital for a succession of Kandyan Kings until captured by the British in 1815. The famous 'Temple of the Tooth' beside Kandy lake is one of the best known Buddhist temples in the country and attracts thousands of visitors every year. Kandy is traditionally a centre of music and dance and most nights it is possible to witness demonstrations of both art forms at special performances, which will be advertised in our hotel. Tour members wishing to attend a performance of dancing will probably be best advised do so on this first night and will need to leave Peradiniya Gardens a little earlier than the rest of the group to get to the theatre in time.

Day 7**Friday****Kandy**

The lovely forested hills around Kandy are home to a number of endemic birds including the Yellow-fronted Barbet. We will visit Udawattakele Reserve on a hillside overlooking the lake and hope to encounter one of the 'bird-waves' which are a feature of tropical forests. Often the forest will initially appear devoid of birds but the arrival of a mixed species feeding flock will transform the scene, as suddenly half a dozen or more species will appear in the same field of view. Udawattakele residents include Emerald Dove, Greater Flameback, White-bellied Drongo, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Scimitar Babbler, Brown, Brown-breasted and Grey-headed Flycatchers, Indian Blue Robin and Large-billed Leaf-Warbler. A small pool in the forest is often frequented by some particularly large Water Monitors and some years ago suffered the misfortune of being used as a location for a Tarzan film starring Bo Derek!

The birdwatching will be divided into two half-day excursions, so anyone wishing to visit the Temple of the Tooth or just look around Kandy will be able to combine this with a look at the birds. Later in the day we will travel to a tea estate on a ridge about ten kilometres from the city where attractions can include Layard's and Plum-headed Parakeets, Black Eagle and Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike. Over the last few years this picturesque locality has proved to be well worth visiting and one of the best parakeet spots on the tour.

Day 8**Saturday****Nuwara Eliya**

The 70 kilometre drive from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya will take us deeper into the hill country passing through a succession of tea estates. We will stop at one of these to join a tour of the factory, where we can see the various processes leading to the production of top quality Ceylon tea and sample the finished product.

Nuwara Eliya is the capital town of the hill country and a delightful place to stay for two nights. A golf course and racecourse are reminders of its popularity as a resort for the British during the days of the Raj and there are other resonances of a bygone era in the quaint Hill Club and the Victorian style of architecture. Stands of pines are a feature of the area and there is a distinctly cooler feel to the air as might be expected at an altitude of 1,890 metres. After lunch at our hotel we will stroll into the town and visit Victoria Park, a small public gardens very reminiscent of similar areas in many British towns. The birdlife is, however, startlingly different and despite the afternoon crowds we can expect to see a number of interesting species including two more endemics, the handsome Yellow-eared Bulbul and Sri Lanka Hill White-Eye. An untidy little stream running through the park is usually frequented by a small flock of Pied Thrushes, long distance migrants from the Himalayas, and it is often possible to find Indian Pitta and Indian Blue Robin in the same unsavoury ditch. Other birds, which might be seen, include Common Sandpiper, Brown Shrike, Grey Wagtail, Blyth's Reed Warbler and Kashmir Flycatcher.

Day 9**Sunday****Nuwara Eliya**

We spend today on Horton Plains Sri Lanka's highest and most isolated plateau. Although only 28 kilometres from Nuwara Eliya, the road is in poor condition and the final ascent to the plateau involves some steep inclines. This is a fascinating place, a mixture of open grassy expanses and patches of forest, much of the latter festooned with

epiphytes. The scenery is spectacular and on clear days it is possible to see the distant summit of Adam's Peak. At World's End, the plateau drops steeply to the plains over 1,000 metres below and this becomes a swirling cauldron of cloud as the day progresses. We should certainly hear, and hopefully see, the extremely handsome Purple-faced Leaf Monkey in the forests, a long-coated, highland sub-species also known as the Bear Monkey. Tennant's Giant Squirrels also inhabit the trees, as do the smaller Dusky Squirrels and in the open plains we may see a distant herd of Sambar Deer. Pied Bush Chats are one of the more conspicuous bird inhabitants but other species to look for include Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Black Eagle, Sri Lanka Woodpigeon, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Sri Lanka Orange-billed Babbler, Sri Lanka Dull Blue Flycatcher, Zitting Cisticola, Sri Lanka Bush Warbler and Hill Swallow. The rare Arrenga or Whistling Thrush is another endemic found on Horton Plains but it is extremely hard to find, although one particular pool is always worth checking in the hope that the resident male is in view. The Whistling Thrushes regularly visit this pool during the first half an hour of daylight so an early start from Nuwara Eliya would be desirable to maximise our chance of seeing this attractive thrush. Although at first impression not a typical habitat for reptiles, Horton Plains boasts several rare endemic species although none of these is easy to locate.

If time permits, we will also visit Hakgala Botanical Gardens on the outskirts of the town. Here we have another chance to meet the Purple-faced Leaf Monkey as a troupe often resides in these attractive gardens. A variety of birds may be seen as we follow a circular trail around the perimeter of the gardens including Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-eared and Black Bulbuls, Dark-fronted Babbler, Kashmir and Grey-headed Flycatchers, Scarlet Minivet and Sri Lanka Hill White-Eye.

Day 10

Monday

Tissamaharama

A long descent to the plains involves endless hairpins and frequent photographic opportunities, as the changes in elevation present different views of the hills stretching away to the east. We will punctuate the long drive to the coast with several stops, the first of these at the Surrey Tea Estate where trees surrounding the Managers house attract a great variety of birdlife. Sri Lanka Woodpigeons breed here and the garden's best known residents are a pair of Brown Wood Owls which can be very hard to find at their day-time roost but are a candidate for tour highlight if discovered! After more winding twists and turns we eventually reach Ella where a superbly situated rest house affords spectacular views down a deep valley with rugged hills on every side. This makes an ideal lunch stop and in addition to the chance of raptors sailing over the valley, we should see a good selection of birds during our break including Chestnut-headed Bee-eater and all three sunbirds. Several hours after leaving Ella we will reach the hot and dry southern plains, and as we continue south, the dominant scrub jungle is gradually replaced by increasingly frequent palms. Occasional roadside birds may interrupt our progress but the next planned stop is to look for a nesting pair of the rare White-naped Woodpecker at a site not too far from our overnight hotel at Tissamaharama.

Day 11

Tuesday

Yala

Our accommodation at Tissamaharama is situated near a huge tank and after breakfast we will investigate the marshy western shoreline of this attractive lake. Depending on the water level we could find large numbers of waterbirds here and likely species include Spot-billed Pelican, Indian and Little Cormorants, Oriental Darter, Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Yellow Bittern, Painted Stork, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Purple Swamphen, Caspian Tern,

Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Pied Cuckoo, Clamorous Reed Warbler and Streaked Weaver. Masses of Whiskered Terns congregate over the water and among these we may identify a few of the rarer White-winged Black Terns. Nearby Deberawewa Tank is another good locality to see both Black and Yellow Bitterns plus Black-headed Munia and Streaked Weaver in the waterside vegetation and a selection of passerines in the bushes. Not far from here we pass another roost of Indian Flying Foxes and both langurs and macaques are plentiful around Tissamaharama, which contains a number of important shrines ensuring plenty of hand-outs for the monkeys. A third locality that we intend to visit during the morning is Weerawila Tank, a great place to observe waders, terns and other waterbirds.

Our destination after lunch is the impressive Bundala Reserve, a large tidal lagoon surrounded by scrub jungle, which is frequented by large numbers of birds including masses of wildfowl, waders and herons. Eight species of tern are possible here and many rare waders have occurred among the thousands of stints and sandpipers on the lagoon and the nearby salterns. This is also the most likely place to see Greater Flamingoes and the delightful Small Pratincole. We leave Bundala at sunset and drive to Yala where we stay for two nights at a very comfortable tourist hotel on the coast.

Day 12

Wednesday

Yala

An early start will be necessary to enter the National Park in jeeps for a morning of bird and mammal watching. Early morning is the best time to come across a Sloth Bear or Leopard but it is also the time of peak bird activity and there will be much to see in this wonderful reserve. A network of tracks criss-cross the accessible areas of the National Park embracing open country, where herds of Spotted Deer and Sambar graze, riverine forest, secluded lakes and coastal mudflats. It is not permitted to walk inside the park except at designated areas but despite this restriction we should see many birds during the morning. Peacocks are common and in the first few hours after dawn Sri Lanka Junglefowl emerge from cover to display and call. Raptors include Changeable Hawk-Eagle, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, and Grey-headed Fish-Eagle.

Black-necked and Adjutant Storks are among the many waterbirds inhabiting the reserve (albeit both very rare) and waders include the odd looking Great Thick-Knee. Not all the residents are associated with water and in the drier areas we will be looking for Blue-tailed and Little Green Bee-eaters, Hoopoe, Blue-faced Malkoha, Sirkeer, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike, Brown Shrike, Baya Weaver, White-throated Silver-Bill and Brahminy Myna. In places we emerge onto the coast and overlook magnificent stretches of deserted beach straight from the pages of a holiday brochure. One or two small fishing communities exist inside the park and where the catches are brought ashore we may find flocks of Brown-headed Gulls and a scan of offshore rocks could reveal both Great Crested and Lesser Crested Terns.

The Yala Leopards, like big cats everywhere, are unpredictable in their appearances but tales of obliging individuals are frequent. Wild Boar are much more conspicuous and both Ruddy and Grey Mongooses occur, the former distinguished by a black tail tip. Elephants are widespread inside Yala but surprisingly elusive and hard to see amid woodland. If we are lucky we may chance upon a family group bathing in one of the pools. To complete a dazzling array of creatures, Land and Water Monitors are numerous and large Mugger Crocodiles inhabit the bigger pools. As with all such excursions, luck will play a big part in what we see during our time in Yala but no visit is ever dull and we are certain to encounter an impressive variety of species.

The afternoon is free for relaxation at the hotel but there are more active options including hiring a jeep for another visit to Yala (at extra cost) or joining the leader in a birdwatching excursion to nearby areas.

Day 13

Thursday

Embilipitiya

Taking leave of Yala after a final morning at the hotel we begin a three hour drive to an overnight stop at Embilipitiya. The road passes by several interesting tidal inlets and our progress is sure to be delayed by birdwatching stops. Herons, egrets, Painted Storks, Openbill Storks and Spoonbills are all likely to be encountered and large flocks of Pintail and Garganey assemble during the winter months. Waders abound and should include Black-winged Stilts, Marsh, Wood and Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stint, Kentish, Greater Sand and Lesser Sand Plovers.

Embilipitiya is ideally situated for our visit to Uda Walawe the following morning and if time permits the shores of the large lake outside our hotel will be the venue for some late afternoon birdwatching.

Day 14

Friday

Blue Magpie Lodge

Today we leave early to enter Uda Walawe National Park, which we visit for a morning safari. This mix of abandoned teak plantations, grassland, forest and wetlands in the catchment area of a vast reservoir, is in many respects a smaller version of Yala and is similarly excellent for birdwatching. It is possible to see over 100 bird species during a game drive in Uda Walawe, a selection which could include Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Barred Button-Quail, Malabar Pied Hornbill, White-bellied Fishing Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Sirkeer and Blue-faced Malkohas. This will also be our best opportunity to see herds of browsing Indian Elephants as over 200 frequent the reserve and it is easily possible to see 40 or 50 in a visit. Leopards also occur here but as always are masters at remaining concealed during the day. As we leave the Park in late morning we face a three hour drive to overnight accommodation at the Blue Magpie Lodge near Sinharaja Forest but hopefully the prospect of two nights at this pleasant location, and the magnificent scenery en route, will compensate for the long journey into the hills.

DAY 15

Saturday

Blue Magpie Lodge

One of the highlights of the tour will be today's excursion to Sinharaja Forest, the largest and most important lowland rainforest in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, a fairly early start is necessary to reach the forest by first light but the effort is worthwhile to catch the early morning activity, which greatly increases our chances of seeing the forest inhabitants. The approach roads are of very poor quality and despite being only a few kilometres from the lodge, the journey by jeep can take almost an hour. Sinharaja is something of a stronghold for endemic birds and its importance was acknowledged by recognition as a World Heritage Site in 1988. Old logging trails facilitate access into the primary forest and from these we will be looking for such species as Mountain Hawk Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Layard's Parakeet, Red-faced Malkoha, Green-billed Coucal, Malabar Trogon, Brown-backed Needletail, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Black-crested Bulbul, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Spot-winged Thrush, Orange-billed Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, White-

faced Starling, Hill Myna, Sri Lanka Myna and Black-throated Munia. Inevitably we are unlikely to see all of these in a single visit but Sinharaja is one of those magical places that can suddenly be alive with birds following periods of relative quiet. Even at mid-day it is possible to encounter one of the mixed species 'bird waves' which usually comprise Orange-billed Babblers in association with Crested Drongos, Malabar Trogons, Red-faced Malkohas and a miscellany of other species.

Everything about Sinharaja is special and the flora contains many species found nowhere else. Pretty Bamboo Orchids grow commonly beside the trails and many of the trees are adorned with epiphytes. A wonderful diversity of butterflies occur in the forest, including the spectacular Blue Morpho and Tree-Nymphs, dancing like windblown paper through the high canopy. Lizards are plentiful and the residents include a number of rare endemics. Although plenty of mammals inhabit Sinharaja, sightings are always a matter of luck but troupes of Purple-faced Leaf Monkeys are likely to reveal their presence by the fearsome roaring calls of the males.

It will be a long and tiring day at Sinharaja involving uncomfortable jeep journeys but the forest is truly unique and represents a privileged view of a fast disappearing habitat, along with a selection of species that will also become extinct if their fragile eco-system is eventually destroyed. After dark it may be possible to undertake a somewhat uncomfortable 90 minute journey by coach and jeep to look for the delightful Serendib Scops Owl, a tiny forest dweller which was only discovered in 1995 and is the most recent addition to the list of endemic bird species.

Day 16

Sunday

Colombo/In Flight

We return to Colombo today but before leaving the Blue Magpie we will enjoy another morning of birding in the vicinity of the hotel where Green-billed Coucals are often easy to find at first light and other interesting residents include Spot-winged Thrush, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher and Black-throated Munia.

Eventually we can postpone the moment no longer and will set off on the five hour drive north, finally passing through the bustling city of Colombo to the airport which is 30 kilometres north of the capital. Rooms will be provided at one of the airport hotels to permit a shower and change of clothes in preparation for the homeward flight. After a leisurely meal and a period of relaxation, we will make our way to the airport and check-in for the London flight which leaves early in the morning of day 17.

Day 17

Monday

London

We are scheduled to arrive back at London Heathrow late morning.

Climate

Generally hot and sunny with temperatures in the low country ranging from 20°C to 30°C with high humidity, particularly in the Wet Zone. Temperatures decrease in the hills to a range of 10°C-16°C around Nuwara Eliya. Rain

can occur at any time but is not usually prolonged outside the monsoon seasons, although showers are an almost daily occurrence at Sinharaja.

Accommodation & food

We use standard tourist hotels throughout the itinerary and these are of three or four star standard, most with swimming pools and other amenities. The exception is the Blue Magpie Hotel near Sinharaja which is a simple but comfortable Rest House. Accommodation for this tour is in twin rooms with private facilities (single rooms being available on request). All food is included in the price of the tour.

Grading

This tour is graded A/B. Most of the birdwatching walks are gentle and suitable for any age and level of fitness. There are also a couple of slightly more strenuous longer walks included in the itinerary. (Horton Plains & Sinharaja)

Mammal, bird & plant lists

Where available these are automatically provided on booking, and will gladly be sent to you before, if you wish for a more detailed preview.

Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Sri Lanka. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – www.fco.gov.uk regularly prior to travel.

How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read our main Naturetrek brochure and complete and return the enclosed booking form together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus the cost of the insurance premium if required. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us now on 01962 733051.