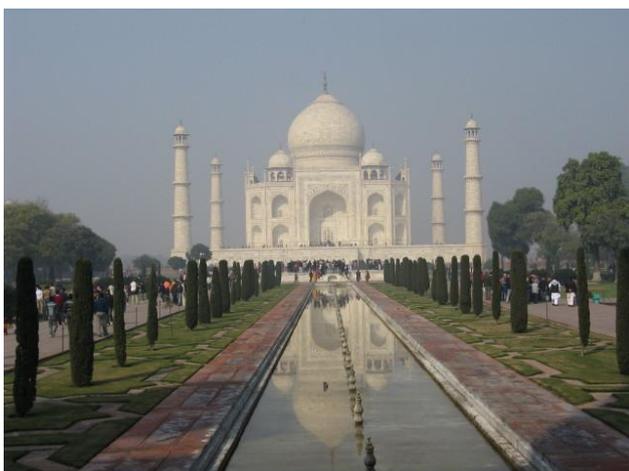


Northern India & the Himalayan Foothills

Naturetrek Tour Report

16 - 30 January 2010



Taj Majal



River Ganges



Elephants in Corbett



Sambar Deer

Report compiled by Bunty Mandhayan

Images by kind courtesy of Julia Panchen



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Introduction

'Northern India and Himalayan foothills' is a Naturetrek tour that focuses on the rich avifauna of the famous north Indian birding destinations of Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Keoladeo National Park better known as Bharatpur (name of the nearby town), Corbett National Park and Nainital. There are visits to the cultural attractions of Fatehpur Sikri, Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal, since we drive through Agra while travelling between birding locations. Highlights of the trip included Tawny Fish Owl, Barn Owl, Ibisbill, Siberian Rubythroat, Hodgson's Bushchat, Wallcreeper, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Long-billed Thrush and Long-tailed Thrush. Among the mammals and reptiles seen on the tour were Tiger, Asian Elephant, Indian Rock Python, Marsh Crocodile and Fish-eating Crocodile (Gharial). A total of 345 species of birds, 15 species of mammals and 5 species of reptiles were recorded.

Weather

Delhi, Bharatpur and Unchagaon were sometimes foggy, windy and partly sunny with temperatures ranging from 8 to 20°C. Bharatpur was cold with clear and sometimes overcast weather and temperatures dipped to 5°C. At Corbett National Park it was, as expected, cold clear and sometimes hazy – misty in the mornings at Dhikala and occasionally windy, with a minimum temperature of 4°C. Nainital was mildly cold but mostly sunny, with occasional overcast conditions and temperatures ranging from 8 to 20°C.

Day 0

Friday 15th January

Travelled from the UK

Day 1

Saturday 16th January

New Delhi, Okhla Bird Sanctuary

Tour leader met the group at The Hans Plaza after they were been transferred by the staff of Travel Inn Delhi. After a quick lunch we set off through the mesmerising traffic chaos of the national capital for a few hours of afternoon birding at Okhla. Birding from the Yamuna barrage and at the Okhla Bird Sanctuary for two and half hours proved good. We had a chance to get familiar with the common birds of the northern Indian wetlands. Some of the highlights were little and Great Cormorants, Grey and Purple Heron, Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis, Greylag and Bar-headed Goose and Greater Flamingo. We also saw various water fowl; including the endemic Indian Spotbill Duck and various waders such as Black-headed Gulls, White-throated Kingfishers and Ashy Prinias. Five-striped Palm Squirrels were seen in good numbers. We had an over-night stay at The Hans Plaza, New Delhi.

Day 2

Sunday 17th January

Delhi & drive to Bharatpur

We left the hotel after an early breakfast and drove for five hours to Bharatpur amidst heavy fog reaching there at lunch time. Then later we did some afternoon bird watching at Keoladeo National Park. Among other interesting birds found here were: Spotted Owlet, Dusky Eagle Owl, Black-rumped Flameback, Black Drongo, Brahminy Starling, White Eared Bulbul, Red-breasted, Taiga, Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers, Magpie Robin, and Black Redstart. Rhesus Macaque, Nilgai and Spotted Deer were the new mammals seen today. We stayed overnight at our hotel, the Laxmi Vilas Palace, in Bharatpur.

Day 3

Monday 18th January

Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur

After an early breakfast and taking our packed lunch, we drove to the Shanti Kutir close to the barrier inside Keoladeo National Park for the morning session of birding. Grey Nightjar was the first of the local specialties to be seen. Among other interesting birds found here were: Barred Button Quail, Spotted Owlet, Black-rumped Flameback, Ashy Drongo, Brahminy Starling, Red-breasted, Taiga, Magpie Robin, Black Redstart, Orange-headed Thrush and Olive-backed Pipit.

After lunch we drove back to the barrier and took a rickshaw ride to the Sapanmori area, from here we did two hour's birding on foot. Various new and interesting species were encountered, and these included Black-necked Stork, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Black-shouldered Kite, Indian Spotted, Short-toed and Crested Serpent Eagles, Indian Courser, White-tailed Lapwing, Spotted Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Greenshank, Red Turtle Dove, Indian Scops and Dusky Eagle Owl, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Southern Grey, Bay-backed and Long-tailed Shrikes. In the evening several Brown Rock Chats were seen perched on the hotel building. Jackal, Sambar, Spotted Deer and Indian Wild Boar were the new mammals seen. We stayed overnight again at Laxmi Vilas Palace, Bharatpur.

Day 4

Tuesday 19th January

Bund Baratha

Today we left with a packed lunch for a full day's excursion to Bund Baratha (a reservoir which gets its name from the nearby village of Baratha) but before that we stopped at the nursery opposite the park gate to observe the Brown Hawk Owl. Situated at a distance of 40 km from the village, one reaches the Bund by driving through the remote north Indian rural landscape. A stop at the irrigation department inspection bungalow was an opportunity to inspect the resident colony of Indian Flying Foxes that roosts in the ficus trees. Thereafter, we drove up to the dam. Highlights of the day included all cormorant species including Oriental Darter, all Egret species, Asian Openbill, Cotton Pygmy-goose, Red-crested and Ferruginous Pochards, Tufted Duck, Comb Duck, common Kestrel, Jungle Bush Quail, Brown Crake, Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas, River Tern, Little and Palm Swifts, Pied and Common Kingfishers, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, Small Minivet, White-cheeked Bulbul, Yellow-eyed, Common and Large Grey Babblers, Grey-breasted Prinia, Grey Wagtail, Oriental White-eye and Red-headed Bunting. Among the mammal species observed during the day were Common Langur, Rhesus monkey and Indian Hare. Overnight again was at Laxmi Vilas Palace, Bharatpur.

Day 5

Wednesday 20th January

Keoladeo National Park & nearby water bodies

Today we visited Keoladeo National Park in the morning and checked out some water bodies outside the park during the post-lunch session, which included the canal and the city's drainage. Highlight of the day was Painted Snipe at city's drainage system and two Rock Python babies basking near the Keoladeo Temple area.

New species, among other birds seen, were Red-headed Vulture, Kentish Plover, Temmink's Stint, Pied Avocet, Black-necked Stork and White Wagtail of *baicalensis* race. A new reptilian addition today was the Indian Flapshell Turtle. We stayed at Laxmi Vilas Palace, Bharatpur.

Day 6

Thursday 21st January

Agra

After an early breakfast we drove for 30 minutes to the ruined city of Fatehpur Sikri for sightseeing. After spending an hour and half looking at the magnificent buildings of the ruined city and recording Theobald's Tomb Bat as a new mammal for the trip, we drove for another hour and half to see the grand Red Fort of Agra.

We made a quick visit for lunch at a restaurant before we found ourselves at India's (possibly the world's) most beautiful building, the Taj Mahal. We spent a couple of hours at the great monument and some time looking for birds in the gardens of Taj Mahal and on the River Yamuna behind the monument. New additions today were Woolly-necked Stork and River Lapwing. Highlight of the day was the flock of at least 100 Painted Storks on the River Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

After sight seeing at Agra we drove to Fort Unchagaon situated in the village Unchagaon, which was once the Residential Palace of the local Maharaja. We stayed overnight at Fort Unchagaon.

Day 7

Friday 22nd January

Kumerian (Corbett)

After an early breakfast, we drove from Unchagaon for about six hours before reaching Quality Inn's The Den at Kumerian. Post-lunch birding was restricted to the wonderful habitat near the lodge and we took a trail to the Kosi River below the lodge.

The day's birding included: Spotted Forktail, Little Forktail, Brown Dipper, Wallcreeper, Himalayan Griffon, Tawny Owl, Crested Treeswift, Crested Kingfisher, Lineated Barbet, Greater Yellow Naped and Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, White-crested Laughingthrush, Large-billed Crow, Spangled and Bronzed Drongos, Bar-winged Flycatcher Shrike, Scarlet and Long-tailed Minivets, Himalayan Bulbul, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Yellow-bellied and Black-throated Fantails, Grey-hooded Warbler, Plumbeous and White-capped Water Redstarts, Grey Bushchat, Blue Whistling Thrush, Grey, Black-lored Tits, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Bar-tailed Tree Creeper and White Wagtail (of *leucopsis* race).

Our overnight stay was at the Hotel Quality Inn, in Kumerian.

Day 8**Saturday 23rd January**

Kumerian

We left our lodge after early breakfast and taking our packed lunch, in search of the elusive Ibisbill, we looked for it for at least one hour near Garjia Temple by the River Kosi but didn't succeed there. We spent the next five hours birding between Mohan, Saural and Barrage on the Kosi River at Ramnagar. The elusive Ibisbill was still missing, but while driving back from the Barrage we stopped at the suspension bridge near Garjia Temple, less hopeful, but after about fifteen minutes of looking around, thanks to Pat, she spotted three Ibisbill close to bridge in the river happily feeding - that was the moment of joy for everybody!

The day's birding produced Mountain Hawk Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Slaty-headed and Red-breasted Parakeets, Tawny Fish Owl, Alpine Swift, Blue-throated Barbet, a massive flock of Nepal House Martins, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Black-chinned Babbler, , Rufous-gorgetted and Slaty-blue Flycatchers, and Lemon-rumped Warbler. Indian Muntjac was a new mammal recorded for the trip today. We had another overnight stay at our hotel, the Quality Inn, Kumerian.

Day 9**Sunday 24th January**

Kumerian & Dhikala

After having an early breakfast we left for a drive to Dhikala, situated inside Corbett Tiger Reserve. Post lunch activities included a game-drive. Birds seen during the day included Black Stork, Cinereous Vulture, Osprey, Black Eagle, Lesser Coucal, Brown Fish Owl, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Streak-throated Woodpecker, Red-whiskered Bulbul and Green Magpie. New mammals seen today included Tiger, Asian Elephant and Smooth Indian Otter! We stayed the night at Hutments of the Dhikala forest complex, at Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Day 10**Monday 25th January**

Dhikala

An elephant ride was organised this morning; amidst mist and cold weather, yet it was an amazing experience to see at least thirty Barn Owls feeding in the meadow!! After breakfast we took a game-drive and this was repeated after lunch. The afternoon game drive was very fruitful and we had a lovely sighting of a Tigress just strolling along the river, but the best was when she crossed the river twice, once while crossing the river she took a long bath, this sighting was really mesmerising. New species recorded today were: Lesser Fish Eagle, Hen Harrier, Spotted Dove, Rufous Woodpecker, Lesser Yellownap, Himalayan Flameback, Oriental Skylark, Large Cuckooshrike, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Zitting Cisticolas, and Hodgson's Bushchat. We again stayed the night at Hutments of Dhikala forest complex, at Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Day 11**Tuesday 26th January**

Dhikala & drive to Nainital

This morning we took a game drive around Dhikala before starting our journey towards Nainital, situated at an elevation of 2,100m. On the way we stopped for lunch at the Corbett Motel Ramnagar. We arrived at Nainital before dark.

Birding for the day produced White-tailed Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Cinereous and Red-headed Vulture, Shikra, Black Francolin, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Lesser and Greater Yellow-naped Woodpecker, Ashy Bulbul, Grey-hooded Warbler, Slaty-blue Flycatcher and Bronzed Drongo. We overnighted at Naini Retreat, Nainital.

Day 12

Wednesday 27th January

Mongoli Valley

Today we explored Mongoli Valley, and finds of the day were, Himalayan and Eurasian Griffon, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Pale-rumped Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Blue-throated Flycatcher, Nepal Wren babbler, White-throated Laughing-thrush, Striated, Streaked and Chestnut-crowned Laughing-thrush, Blue-winged Minla, Velvet-fronted and White-tailed Nuthatch, Bar-tailed Treecreeper, lots of Black-headed Jays, Russet Sparrow, Pink-browed and White-browed Rosefinch and a flock of Brown Bullfinch. Overnight was again at Naini Retreat, Nainital.

Day 13

Thursday 28th January

Sattal

We spent the whole day at Sattal, stopping once near bhawali at the abandoned Eureka Forbes Company campus, which proved rewarding as we got the best view of two magnificent Steppe Eagles and above all the beautiful the Siberian Rubythroat, that was the moment of the day! Interesting birds seen for the day were: Steppe Eagle, Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Black-throated Jay, Rufous-chinned Laughing-thrush, Blue-winged Minla, Siberian Rubythroat, Rufous-breasted Accentor and Yellow-breasted Greenfinch. We spent the night at Naini Retreat, Nainital.

Day 14

Friday 29th January

Snow-view Ridge, High Fields, Pangot and Sigrī

We took a walk around the high fields in the morning, followed by a walk on the snow-view ridge. Later again we took a walk in the high fields to look for Lammergeier, but in vain. Interesting species observed today included Oriental Turtle Dove, Asian Barred Owlet, Greater Yellownape, Himalayan Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay, White-throated, Striated and Streaked Laughingthrushes, Rufous Sibia, Buff-barred Warbler, Orange-flanked Bush Robins, Blue-headed and Blue-capped Redstarts, Rufous-breasted Accentors, Green-backed and Black-throated Tits, White-tailed Nuthatch, Russet Sparrow, Pink-browed Rosefinch and Rock Bunting. We spent the night at Naini Retreat, Nainital.

Day 15

Saturday 30th January

Drive to New Delhi

We started early in the morning from the lodge and left on the long drive for New Delhi. New species of birds observed today were Great Barbet and Indian Blue Robin. Since the flight was delayed alternate arrangements were made, and instead of Ashok Country Resort guests stayed at Metro Heights.

Day 16

Sunday 31st January

Return travel to the UK

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Barred Owlet



Rhesus Macaque

Key:**OBS:** Okhla Bird Sanctuary**KGNP:** Keoladeo Ghana National Park**CTR:** Corbett Tiger Reserve**Birds**

Nomenclature and taxonomy generally follows Grimmett and Inskipp's The Birds of Northern India (2003) which follows the treatments in the The Birds of the Indian Subcontinent (1999) by the same authors with the exception of their revised new taxonomic treatments of Indian Spotted Eagle, the Long-billed Vulture complex and Golden-spectacled Warbler complex. In addition, the recent splits of Collared Scops Owl and Indian Scops Owl, Indian Jungle Crow and Large-billed Crow, Red-breasted and Taiga Flycatchers are followed here.

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* (3:15)

This attractive species was seen in good numbers around Dhikala in the Chours (grasslands), CTR.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* (4:15)

Regularly seen in small groups at KGNP, a single bird was seen at Bund Bathertha and a few birds on the drive from Bharatpur to Agra.

(Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola millardi*)

Seen once at Snow-view Ridge

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus murghi* (3:15)

Distribution of this ancestor of domestic chicken is associated with Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests in the subcontinent and a few birds were seen, mostly on the edge of the forest, around Dhikala, CTR.

Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos hamiltoni* (2:15)

A single bird was seen on the High Fields Nainital.

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* (10:15)

Widespread and regularly seen on the plains and a handful of birds recorded inside CTR, not seen at higher elevations.

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* (1:15)

A flock was seen at Bund Baretha.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser rubirostris* (2:15)

A few birds were seen at OBS and recorded in good numbers at Bund Baretha. It was missing from KGNP due to lack of water.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* (3:15)

A few birds were recorded from OBS and KGNP and atleast 50 birds were seen in mixed waterfowl flocks at Bund Baretha.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* (8:15)

Recorded in small numbers from the lowland areas and a good flock was present at Kosi barrage at Ramnagar.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* (2:15)

Few birds were observed in the mixed waterfowl flocks at Bund Baretha and a single bird was present at KGNP.

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandeliannus* (1:15)

Some birds were seen at Bund Baretha.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* (4:15)

Observed in very small numbers at OBS, KGNP and Kosi barrage, Ramnagar and atleast 100 birds were seen along with mixed flocks of waterfowl species at Bund Baretha.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas Penelope* (2:15)

A few birds were seen at OBS.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (2:15)

A pair was seen through spotting scopes at OBS and Bund Baretha

Spot Billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* (3:15)

A few birds of this stunning resident species were seen at OBS, KGNP and Bund Baretha.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* (3:15)

Seen in very good numbers at OBS and Bund Baretha, missing from KGNP due to lack of water.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* (2:15)

A few birds at OBS and large flocks at Bund Baretha were recorded. Some of the distant waterfowl in mixed flocks at Ramganga reservoir, CTR could be this species. It was missing from KGNP due to lack of water.

Common Teal *Anas crecca crecca* (4:15)

Recorded in very good numbers at OBS and Bund Baretha, a handful of birds were seen at KGNP and a flock of almost 50 birds were present at Ramganga reservoir, CTR.

Red Crested Pochard *Rhodonessa rufina* (2:15)

At least 20 were present at Bund Baretha and four birds were seen at Kosi barrage, Ramnagar.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* (2:15)

Seen in very good numbers at OBS and Bund Baretha.

Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*

Seen at Bund Baretha

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (2:15)

A handful of birds at OBS and Bund Baretha.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator plumbeipes* (1:15)

One bird was seen at KGNP.

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* (1:15)

Recorded once from Mangoli Valley.

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nanus nanus* (1:15)

One bird seen at KGNP.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus mitchelli* (3:15)

Fairly common in the foothills with birds seen close to Kumerian and Dhikala, CTR.

Brown-fronted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos auriceps auriceps* (2:15)

Only seen in and around Naini Tal.

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei* (4:15)

Seen in the foothills and CNP.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Dendrocopos mabrattensis pallescens* (2:15)

One bird was seen at Bund Baretha and another showed up at KGNP.

Himalayan Woodpecker *Dendrocopos himalayensis himalayensis* (1:15)

Seen at CNP.

Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus chlorolophus* or *simlae* (6:15)

Seen regularly in the foothills around Kumerian, Mohan and Dhikala, CTR and was observed around Nainital, Pungot and Sattal.

Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha* (3:15)

A few birds recorded from the foothills, around Nainital and Mongoli Valley.

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* (2:15)

Seen on two occasions in the foothills.

Scally-bellied Woodpecker *Picus squamatus* (2:15)

A single bird seen close to Kumerian and another seen at Mangoli Valley.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus sanguiniceps* (4:15)

A few birds seen inside CTR and a single bird each at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Himalayan Flameback *Dinopium shorii* (3:15)

Very commonly heard in the foothills with single birds seen around Kumerian and Dhikala.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* (3:15)

Widespread but recorded in small numbers in lowland woodlands and foothill forests.

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens marshallorum* (2:15)

The bird was heard countless number of times around Nainital, seen once at Nainital.

Brown Headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica caniceps* (3:15)

A few birds were seen in a *Ficus* tree in the Nursery at KGNP

Lineated Barbet *Megalaima linea rana* (3:15)

Very common in the foothills where this species replaces the previous one. Commonly heard around Kumerian, Mohan and Dhikala, CTR with a few sightings from the same locations.

Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica* (4:15)

Common bird of the foothills and higher elevations, heard commonly in CTR, Nainital, Sattal and Mongoli Valley with most sighting being from the foothills and one bird seen at Sattal

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* (1:15)

Only two birds of this very attractive species were seen in the nursery at KGNP, though heard many times in the lowland areas

Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyrceros birostris* (4:15)

Commonly seen and heard at KGNP.

Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*

Seen once near Dhangarhi gate CTR.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops* (4:15)

Only recorded in ones and twos in the plains at OBS, KGNP, Bund Baretha and the gardens of Taj Mahal.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis benghalensis*

Seen on number of occasions in the plains with a few birds seen close to Ramnagar.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (5:15)

Recorded in small numbers from the foothills at Kumerian, Ramnagar and CTR.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* (12:15)

Very common and widespread on the plains and in foothills and a bird was recorded from Sattal.

Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris continentalis* (5:15)

Seen regularly in small numbers in the foothills.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis leucomelanurus* (6:15)

A pair was seen at Bund Bareths, another was present at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal and a few birds were recorded around Kumerian and CTR.

Blue-Bearded Bee-Eater *nyctyornis Athertoni*

Seen at Dhikala CTR.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis beludschicus* (2:15)

Only recorded in small numbers at OBS.

Common Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius varius* (1:15)

One bird was seen at KGNP.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis sinensis* (7:15)

Widespread and common in the lowland areas with birds recorded from OBS, KGNP, Bund Baretha, river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal and a single bird inside CTR.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* (2:15)

A few birds were seen well at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria nipalensis* (2:15)

Uncommon, a few birds seen in the foothills including a sighting inside CTR.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula kramer borealis* (10:15)

Widespread and very common in lowland areas and foothills.

Slaty-headed Parakeet *Psittacula himalayana* (4:15)

Seen in good numbers at Kumerian near hotel Quality Inn, Dhikala, CTR, Nainital, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala bengalensis* (5:15)

Five birds were seen on the road to Bund Baretha and big flocks were recorded in the foothills. It was very common around Dhiklala, CTR.

Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri fasciata* (4:15)

Very common in the foothills near Kumerian, Mohan and inside CTR. On the Eucalyptus trees (exotic) growing at Dhikala campus, on one of the days, hundreds of birds were observed.

Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris brevirostris* (1:15)

A handful of birds were seen at Sattal.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (1:15)

A flock of atleast 30 birds were seen at Garjia.

House Swift *Apus affinis affinis and nipalensis* (5:15)

Recorded in small numbers in the lowland areas (presumably nominate *affinis*) from OBS, Bund Baretha, KGNP and a small flock (presumably race *nipalensis*) was seen at Kosi barrage, Ramnagar.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* (4:15)

Commonly found in the foothills, in flocks of upto 40-50 birds, at Kumerian, Ramnagar and inside CTR.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Flock of atleast thirty birds were seen in the chauras at Dhikala.

Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakamoena* (earlier treated as Collared Scops Owl) (2:15)

Two pairs recorded from KGNP.

Dusky Eagle Owl *Bubo coromandus* (1:15)

A pair attending a nest containing a large chick were seen at KGNP.

Brown-Fish Owl *Keputa zeylonensis* (1:15)

A single birds was seen well, perched in a Sal (*Shorea robusta*) tree at Sambar Road, east of Dhikala, CTR.

Tawny-Fish Owl *Keputa flavipes* (1:15)

One bird was seen from close distance near hotel Quality Inn at Kumerian.

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides cuculoides* (1:15)

Two birds was seen near Nainital.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama indica* (2:15)

A pair was seen at the nursery and another bird was seen close to the temple at KGNP.

Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata lugubris* (1:15)

One bird was of this very attractive species was seen from very close distance at the nursery outside the main entrance to KGNP.

Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*

Seen twice at KGNP

Large-Tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*

Seen at KGNP

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia neglecta* (14:15)

Some of the birds seen at Bund Baretha are presumed to be wild birds as they were in the right habitat. Rest of the birds resembling wild Rock Pigeons, seen in great numbers and almost everywhere on the trip, are considered to be of feral origin.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis meena* (1:15)

Seen in small numbers at Snow-view ridge, Nainital

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* (7:15)

Widespread and very common on the plains with many birds observed from the moving vehicle. Absent in the foothills and hills.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* (4:15)

A single bird was seen on the way to Bund Baretha followed by small numbers in the foothills except Dhikala, CTR where many birds were recorded on one of the days.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* (1:15)

Only recorded from OBS.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (8:15)

Widespread and very common on the plains with many birds observed from the moving vehicle. A single bird was recorded at Dhikala, CTR.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica indica* (1:15)

Two birds seen in the undergrowth at Bhawali.

Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera phoenicoptera* (4:15)

Seen in small numbers at Delhi, OBS, KGNP, Bund Baretha and Agra.

Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool* (2:15)

One bird was seen near the temple at KGNP and another bird was observed on River Ramganga at Gorkha Sot, CTR.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (5:15)

Commonly seen on the plains at OBS, KGNP, Bund Baretha, and river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio indica* (2:15)

Seen in small numbers at OBS and atleast 50 birds were recorded from Bund Baretha.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* (2:15)

Recorded in large numbers at Bund Baretha and a few birds near the temple at KGNP.

Common Coot *Fulica atra* (3:15)

Recorded in good numbers at OBS and Bund Baretha.

Painted Sandgrouse *Pterocles indicus*

Seen at Bund Baretha

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* (5:15)

A single bird at OBS, a pair at Bund Baretha followed by two pairs before the temple at KGNP and three birds near Dhikala on river Ramganga at CTR.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa* (4:15)

A few birds recorded from KGNP, Bund Baretha and river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* (4:15)

Quite a few birds at KGNP, a few seen at Bund Baretha and at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* (6:15)

Frequently seen in small numbers at KGNP, Bund Baretha and at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal followed by a handful of birds recorded at Ramganga reservoir.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (3:15)

Small numbers were seen at KGNP and a couple of birds at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (7:15)

Seen in small numbers at KGNP, Bund Baretha, river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal and river Ramganga near Dhikala CTR.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (8:15)

Recorded in small numbers from all the wetlands in the lowlands, foothills and at river Ramganga inside CTR.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* (4:15)

Commonly seen on the wetlands in the lowlands at KGNP, Bund Baretha and river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* (9:15)

Recorded in small numbers from almost all the wetlands on the plains and foothills including some birds at river Ramganga inside CTR.

Little Stint *Clidris minuta*

Seen at CNP.

Temmincks Stint *Calidris temminckii* (4:15)

Seen in small numbers at KGNP and Bund Baretha.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (4:15)

Present in small numbers at OBS and Bund Baretha and atleast 30 birds seen near the temple at KGNP.

Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus*

At least five birds seen at KGNP

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* (1:15)

Two birds seen at Bund Baretha.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Seen from the suspension bridge near Garjia Temple

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Seen at KGNP and Bund Baretha

Pheasant-Tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Seen at KGNP and Bund Baretha

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* (1:15)

At least a dozen birds were seen at Bund Baretha.

Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris* (2:15)

Two birds seen close to Ramganga reservoir at CTR.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (8:15)

Widespread and very common on the plains and present even on every waterbody including the most polluted road and railside pond.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (3:15)

A few birds seen at Ramganga reservoir, CTR.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus* (1:15)

Only one bird seen near the temple at KGNP.

River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* (6:15)

Four birds were seen at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal and thereafter seen regularly on the rivers in the foothills.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus indicus* (11:15)

Widespread and very common in the plains, absent above the foothills.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* (4:15)

Seen in small numbers at OBS, Bund Baratha, KGNP and a solitary bird at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Steppe Gull *Larus (buglini) barabensis* (2:15)

Two sightings of one bird each at OBS. This species is often taxonomically confused in the subcontinent with Caspian Gull (*L. cachinnans*).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* (2:15)

Few birds were seen at OBS.

River Tern *Sterna aurantia* (4:15)

A few birds were observed flying over the reservoir at Bund Baretha and many birds were seen, some of these from very close at Ramganga reservoir at CTR.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Seen at Bund Baretha

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus* (1:15)

A few birds were seen at Bund Baretha

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (3:15)

One at Bund Baretha was followed by a pair on Ramganga reservoir, CTR that was seen on more than one occasion.

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* (6:15)

Two birds at Bund Baretha and three birds at CTR.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (6:15)

Seen at OBS and Bund Baretha on the plains and at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR where it was common.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans govinda* and *lineatus* (9:15)

Abundant in the plains with some birds seen in the foothills and a bird flying over Nainital Lake. Most of the birds seen in plains were resident Pariah Kite (*govinda*) but many migrant Black-eared Kites (*lieatus*) showing very well especially in Delhi, OBS and at Taj Mahal.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (4:15)

Common at CTR with at least two pairs having territories on either side of Ramganga reservoir.

White-Tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Seen flying at CTR

Grey-Headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaeus*

Seen at CTR

Lesser Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* (formerly *I. nana*) (2:15)

One was seen on river Ramganga near Dhikala, CTR.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* (2:15)

One birds near Nainital.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (8:15)

Widespread and recorded in small numbers in the lowland and foothills. Recorded in good numbers at Taj Mahal where a pair was seen perched on the main dome of the monument.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* (1:15)

At least two adults were seen on two nests with one young bird each and another adult was seen perched nearby at a village close to Ramnagar. This critically endangered species breeds here regularly in small numbers.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* (6:15)

Seen in good numbers in the foothills from CTR to the hills around Naini Tal. The Sub-adult birds resemble Eurasian Griffon and this leads to misidentification of the species. On more than one occasions perched birds that looked like Eurasian Griffon were observed through spotting scopes and the color of the feet was confirmed to be pinkish, a characteristic of Himalayan Griffon. The latter species, it seems, does not occur in this part of Himalayas.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (4:15)

Observed in the foothills only with upto 12 birds seen around Dhikala, CTR.

Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* (5:15)

One bird seen on more than one occasions at hotel Quality Inn and atleast three pairs inside CTR. The bird at Quality Inn was seen soaring at 0700 hrs in windy conditions on one morning.

Short-Toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Seen at KGNP

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela cheela* (4:15)

One bird was seen perched close to the temple at KGNP, another was seen in flight over Taj Mahal and a few birds were observed at CTR.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*

Seen at CNP

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus* (5:15)

Two or three birds were seen at OBS, followed by one seen on the road to Bund Baretha and an occasional one at Dhikala chour (grassland), CTR.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (4:15)

At least two birds at KGNP and a few more at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* (4:15)

Widespread and common on the plains and foothills. One of the most common Accipiter of the sub-continent

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus melaschistos and nisosimilis* (5:15)

Seen near Nainital.

Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastata* (2:15)

A single adult was seen flying over KGNP, showing characteristic double whitish carpal crescent and many birds were seen on the drive from Nainital to Delhi near Rudrapur.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* (2:15)

Two birds seen circling over KGNP and another was seen at Bund Baretha.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* (1:15)

One bird was seen at KGNP.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* (6:15)

One adult bird was seen circling over KGNP. Common in the hills with most of the birds seen being juveniles.

Imperial Eagle *Aquila beliiaca* (1:15)

One bird flew overhead while we were coming back from the trek to the ruined palace at Bund Baretha.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* (2:15)

A single bird was seen at KGNP.

Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus limnaetus* (1:15)

Three birds seen on the edge of forest at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Mountain Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis nipalensis* (2:15)

One bird seen in flight over hotel Quality Inn, Kumeria.

Collared Falconet *Microhierax caerulescens* (4:15)

One bird seen at Dhikala, CTR.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (5:15)

Recorded in ones and twos from the foothills at CTR and hills at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus peregrinator* (1:15)

A single bird was recorded from Dhikala, CTR. This handsome race *peregrinator* of Indian subcontinent is known locally as **Saheen Falcon**.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (3:15)

A single bird was seen at OBS, a few at Bund Baretha and one in a roadside pond on the way to Fatehpur Sikri

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

A pair of birds seen from the Barrage at Ramnagar.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* (3:15)

A single bird each at OBS and KGNP and atleast 15 birds were seen at Bund Baretha. Surprisingly none were seen at Ramganga reservoir, CTR.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* (9:15)

Widespread in the lowlands with good numbers at KGNP and Bund Baretha. One flock of almost 50 birds was observed at Kosi barrage, Ramnagar. There were probably many birds seen at the roadside water bodies, from the vehicle, while on the move.

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* (2:15)

A few birds seen at KGNP and a couple of birds at Bund Baretha

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* (9:15)

Recorded in small numbers at OBS, KGNP and Bund Baretha. Massive flocks were observed flying in formation over river Ramganga and were seen fishing on Ramganga Reservoir, CTR.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta garzetta* (12:15)

Widespread and rather common at the wetlands in lowlands and foothills.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (8:15)

Observed in small numbers but present at most of the lowland wetlands and foothills.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (4:15)

One or two birds each at OBS, KGNP and Bund Baretha.

Great Egret *Casmerodius albus modestus* (also known as *Egretta alba*) (9:15)

Widespread with birds present in small numbers at lowland wetlands and present in good numbers at Ramganga reservoir, CTR. Many birds seen in the far distance could be of the species but were left unidentified as they were in mixed Egret flocks.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* (5:15)

Seen in ones and twos at OBS, KGNP, Kosi Barrage, Ramnagar and Ramganga reservoir, CTR. At least 10 birds were observed at Bund Baretha. Many birds seen in the far distance could be of the species but were left unidentified as they were in mixed Egret flocks.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* (11:15)

Present everywhere in good numbers in the lowlands with many birds seen from the moving vehicle in the roadside fields.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* (11:15)

Widespread and very common at wetlands of all shapes and sizes in the lowlands and foothills.

Little Heron *Butorides striatus* (1:15)

Only one bird seen at Kosi barrage, Ramnagar.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (1:15)

One bird was seen very early morning at Dhikala campus, CTR.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (2:15)

One bird seen at KGNP and at least 5 were at Bund Baretha.

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (4:15)

Many birds were present at OBS and Bund Baretha and a single bird was seen at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* (1:15)

Up to a dozen birds were seen in flight and by the roadside fields near Hapur on the drive back from Nainital.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Plalea leucorodia* (4:15)

Upto ten birds were observed at Bund Baretha, a single bird at KGNP, another bird was seen at river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal and three birds were present at Ramganga reservoir, CTR.

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*

A few birds were observed at OBS, KGNP and CTR.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*

Almost 40 birds seen at Bund Baretha and another big flock perched in the roadside trees just before Fatehpur Sikri.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

At least ten were seen at River Ramganga close to Dhikala, CTR.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

A pair was seen poorly in low flight at OBS and a few birds were present at river Ramganga, CTR.

Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* (3:15)

One bird was observed close to the temple at KGNP and atleast two pairs of were present at river Ramganga near Dhikala, CTR.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

Seen at KGNP

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* (3:15)

A handful of birds were recorded from the road to Bund Baretha, KGNP and the gardens of Taj Mahal.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach erythronotus* and *tricolor* (7:15)

Recorded in small numbers on the plains and from CTR where it was rather common and a single bird was recorded from Sattal. Some of the birds seen in Dhikala Chour (grassland) were of race *tricolor*.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis labtora* (1:15)

A single bird was seen at KGNP.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius bispecularis* (2:15)

Small numbers were seen around Naini Tal, and a single bird was recorded from Sattal.

Black-headed Jay *Garrulus lanceolatus* (3:15)

Small numbers were seen around Naini Tal and Sattal and a single bird was recorded from Mangoli Valley.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* (3:15)

A handful of birds were recorded at hotel Quality Inn, Kumerian, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* (1:15)

A pair of these very beautiful birds was seen on the way to Dhikala, CTR.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* (9:15)

Widespread and fairly common in the lowlands and present in the foothills.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* (3:15)

Recorded from the foothills with a few birds at Kumerian, flock of almost 25 birds at Mohan and a pair at Mongoli Valley. This species replaces the previous one in the hills.

House Crow *Corvus splendens splendens* (8:15)

Common on the plains, especially around human settlements, but replaced by the next species at higher elevations.

Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus(macrorhynchos) culminatus* (4:15)

Found in small numbers at the canal in Bharatpur, KGNP, Bund Baretha and on river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus (macrorhynchos) japonensis intermedius* (8:15)

Replaces the previous two species in the foothills and hills where it is very common.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*)

Heard once or twice at Dhikala CTR.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* (3:15)

A few birds were recorded from CTR.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei nipalensis* (3:15)

Recorded regularly but in very small numbers at Dhikala, CTR. Very vocal and was always heard before it was seen.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* (1:15)

Five birds were seen in the nursery close to Bund Baretha.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* (3:15)

More widespread than other species of Minivats with two birds seen at KGNP, flocks of 15-20 birds at CTR and three birds at Mongoli Valley.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* (2:15)

Flocks of approximately twenty birds each were seen on two occasions inside CTR.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus capitalis* (4:15)

Recorded in small numbers in the foothills from Kumerian, Mohan and inside CTR but absent from the higher elevations around Naini Tal.

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha* (6:15)

Common at Kumerian where a few were found in the mango orchard of hotel Quality Inn. Regularly found this species to be present in the foothills and hills.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* (5:15)

Quite common in the foothills at and around CTR and atleast three birds were recorded from Sattal trek.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* (10:15)

Very common in the lowlands where it was a frequent sight on roadside wires and a few were seen at CTR.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus longicaudatus* (2:15)

A bird each was seen at KGNP.

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* (3:15)

Seen in very small numbers in CTR.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* (4:15)

Small numbers were seen quite regularly in forest clearings in the lower foothills at Kumerian, Dhikala and Mongoli Valley.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus remifer* (1:15)

One showed, very surprisingly, in a disturbed forested patch in the foothills, from the moving vehicle on the drive from Nainital to Delhi.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* (3:15)

One was seen surprisingly on the drive from Delhi airport to the hotel on the first day and a handful of birds were recorded in the foothills.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* (1:15)

Surprisingly the two birds seen at the nursery near Bund Baretha were the only ones recorded for this widespread and common species.

Large Woodshrike *Tepbrodornis gularis*

Large flock seen at CTR

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* (2:15)

A single bird was seen close to Bund Baretha and a small party near Dhikala, CTR.

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* (2:15)

A pair feeding a young bird was seen on two consecutive days on river Kosi near hotel Quality Inn

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* (9:15)

A very common bird in the foothills and hills with good numbers seen on every day.

Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina citrina* (1:15)

Three birds seen very well and from close distance near nursery at KGNP.

Long-Tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*

Seen at Snow-view Ridge

Long-Billed Thrush *Zoothera monticola*

Seen at Sattal

Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*

Seen at CTR

Rusty-Tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda*

Seen at CTR

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiatea* (2:15)

After missing this species in the foothills, where it was expected, one bird was seen at Sattal followed by another one at Mongoli Valley.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (4:15)

A few birds recorded from KGNP and Bund Baretha, absent from the foothills and hills where the next species replaces it.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* (5:15)

A couple of birds were seen around the nursery at KGNP and a few recorded from the foothills including one at Dhikala that was seen within the campus itself. A single bird was seen at Sattal as well.

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni*

Seen at Kumerian

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliosus*

Seen at Kumerian

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor tricolor* (3:15)

This common species of the foothills was seen in less numbers than expected with two birds seen at Kumerian, a single bird at Dhikala, CTR and atleast five birds at Sattal where it was common. The bird was however heard in the foothills more often than it was seen.

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara* (2:15)

A very attractive species, a single bird was seen at Kumerian and another one at Sat Tal.

Blue-Throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*

Seen at Mangoli Valley.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Seen at Bund Baretha

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* (4:15)

A bird was seen behind the nursery at KGNP and another one showed up at the nursery near Bund Baretha. One bird was recorded at CTR and another was seen on the Sattal trek.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

A bird was seen at Bhawali.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* (4:15)

A few birds were found at OBS, KGNP and Bund Baretha.

Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*

Seen near Nainital

Orange-flanked Bush Robin *Tarsiger cyanurus* (3:15)

This attractive species was seen in small numbers around Naini Tal, Sattal and many birds were observed on the trek to Mongoli Valley.

Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* (5:15)

A few birds were recorded from the lowland areas and a single bird was seen at Dhikala, CTR.

Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata* (7:15)

Quite common in the lowlands, a single bird was seen close to Ramnagar and was absent in the hills.

Blue-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus coeruleocephalus* (3:15)

Very regularly seen in good numbers at Nainital, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros rufiventris* (4:15)

Recorded in small numbers from KGNP and Bund Baretha.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* (3:15)

Common in the hills around Naini Tal, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

White-capped Water Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus* (7:15)

Found in small numbers but regularly in the foothills and also recorded at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus* (7:15)

Common on the streams and rivers of all shapes and sizes in the foothills and a single bird at Sattal.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri* (1:15)

One showed very well on the River Kosi near hotel Quality Inn, Kumerian.

Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus* (1:15)

A bird was found at the stream near the school at Mongoli Valley.

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus maculates* (2:15)

A single bird was seen on river Kosi near hotel Quality Inn at Kumerian and three birds were seen from close on the way to Sattal.

Hodgson's Bushchat *Saxicola insignis* (2:15)

Dhikala Chour (grassland) is the regular wintering ground of this species and after scanning countless Common Stonechats, we saw a female and an immature male followed by another female on the next day. A Naturetrek group on the same itinerary in February 2002 discovered the bird for the area.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* (*maurus* group) (7:15)

Very widespread, found in small numbers in Bund Baretha and KGNP and encountered in good numbers in the foothills and upto Sattal in the hills. It was particularly numerous in the Chours (grasslands) of CTR where upto 50 birds were seen on one day while looking for more elusive Hodgson's Bushchats.

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata bicolor* (6:15)

Small numbers were seen most days in the lowlands.

Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea* (7:15)

Seen every day in small numbers in the foothills and hills.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* (2:15)

A bird was seen on the way to Bund Baretha and another was found in a dry grassy area close to the temple at KGNP.

Brown Rock Chat *Cercomela fusca* (4:15)

A species closely associated with human habitation and also found near old buildings and monuments. A pair was seen at the ruined palace at Bund Baretha, a few birds were found at Fatehpur Sikri and Taj Mahal, at the breakfast stop at Kathgodam and at Ramnagar.

Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata*

Seen near Garjia Temple

Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum* (4:15)

Recorded in small numbers from the lowland areas at Bund Baretha and KGNP, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra.

Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Seen at KGNP

Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra* (7:15)

Common in the lowlands, normally in the vicinity of water, and a single bird seen at Dhikala, CTR.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis tristis* (15:15)

Widespread and extremely common. It was one of the three species seen on all the days of the trip, the other two being Red-vented Bulbul and House Sparrow.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* (8:15)

Widespread and very common everywhere in the lowland areas and many birds were seen on the drive between Ramnagar and Kaladhungi, on the way to Nainital.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea almorae* (6:15)

Regularly seen in small numbers from various sites in the foothills and a single male recorded from Mangoli Valley.

White-tailed Nuthatch *Sitta himalayensis* (2:15)

Upto a dozen birds were seen around Nainital and a single bird was found at Sattal close to the lake.

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis* (5:15)

Recorded in small numbers in the foothills from Kumerian, Mohan, Ramnagar, inside CTR and a single bird was seen at Sattal.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* (2:15)

One bird of this much sought-after species was seen from close distance at Kosi barrage at Ramnagar and probably the same bird was seen from the moving vehicle at the same spot after three days.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Seen at Nainital

Bar-tailed Treecreeper *Certhia himalayana* (4:15)

A few birds recorded near Dhikala, CTR, commonly found around Naini Tal and a bird each seen at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Spot-winged Tit *Parus melanolophus* (1:15)

Seen at Naini Tal

Great Tit *Parus major* (8:15)

Seen frequently in small numbers in the foothills and surprisingly a bird near Nainital followed by two birds each at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* (3:15)

Common at and around Naini Tal, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Black-lored Tit *Parus xanthogenys* (3:15)

A few birds seen inside CTR and recorded in small numbers from Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* (1:15)

Two birds seen near Nainital.

Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus* (5:15)

Regularly found in small numbers in the foothills and surprisingly only one bird was seen in the hills at Mongoli valley.

Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola* (9:15)

Widespread and common with present at almost all the wetlands on the plains and in large numbers on the rivers of the foothills.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris* (3:15)

Up to 200 birds were counted on electricity lines before Sattal and a few birds recorded around Nainital and Mongoli Valley.

Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor* (1:15)

Four birds seen close to the ruined palace at Bund Baretha.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (9:15)

Very widespread with small numbers recorded from Delhi, OBS, Bund Baretha, KGNP, river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal, Dhikala, CTR and Sattal.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* (5:15)

Found in small numbers at OBS, KGNP, Bund Baretha and river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* (6:15)

A handful at Bund Baretha, KGNP, Dhikala, CTR and Sattal.

Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalensis*

Seen at Kumerian

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* (1:15)

Big flock was seen at plant nursery in Sigri, Pangot

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus flaviventris* (3:15)

A very attractive but scarce species and was found in very small numbers at CTR and Sattal.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* (3:15)

Scarce, only present in the lower foothills and immediately adjacent plains where small numbers were seen.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* (3:15)

Seen in small numbers in the plains at KGNP and Bund Baretha. This species was formerly regarded as conspecific with the next species

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys* (8:15)

Present in the foothills and hills where it was very common and widespread.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* (15:15)

Very common and widespread throughout. Along with Common Myna and House Sparrow this was the only species seen every day.

Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* (3:15)

Commonly found in the foothills around Dhikala, CTR.

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Seen at Sattal

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* (2:15)

A few birds were seen and many heard in Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Bright-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis tytleri* (2:15)

Many birds of this exclusive Cisticola species not found in Africa (all other species, more than 40 atleast, of Cisticolas are found in Africa, hence the Latin name *Cisticola exilis*) were recorded from Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* (5:15)

A couple of birds were seen at Bund Baretha and found in good numbers in the foothills where flocks of upto 20 birds were encountered, also a flock of almost fifteen birds was seen at Sattal.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* (7:15)

Recorded in small numbers, but regularly, in the lowlands with sightings on all the days and a single bird was seen at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata inornata* (7:15)

Small numbers were encountered each day in the lowlands with many birds recorded at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* (9:15)

A few birds were recorded from Bund Baretha and gardens of Taj Mahal and was found commonly in the foothills at Kumerian, Mohan, Ramnagar, inside CTR and in the hills at Nainital, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Aberrant Bush Warbler *Cettia flavolivacea* (2:15)

Found commonly in the foothills and lower hills, heard far more often than seen with one bird showing well at Dhikala, CTR and another one recorded at Sattal.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (1:15)

At least half a dozen birds were seen between Sapan Mori and the temple at KGNP.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* (4:15)

Recorded here and there in the plains in small numbers and a bird at Dhikala, CTR.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* (8:15)

Widespread and commonly found in the plains and hills where many birds were seen close to Nainital and a few were present at Sattal. Surprisingly none recorded from the foothills.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* (3:15)

Only seen in the hills around Naini Tal, Sattal and Mongoli Valley, where it was common.

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* (1:15)

This is an uncommon species in Western Himalayas and it was recorded from Mongoli valley where two birds were briefly seen.

Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* (3:15)

Surprisingly none recorded from the foothills where it should be common in the winters but found in small numbers around Nainital and Sattal and as many as 25 birds recorded on the trek to Mongoli valley.

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei humei* (5:15)

Widespread and found in small numbers, though heard more often than seen, in the lowlands but scarce in the lower foothills and absent around Naini Tal.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus* (5:15)

Small numbers were seen in the lowlands at OBS, KGNP and Bund Baretha and all birds appeared to be race *viridanus* that breeds in Himalayas and is widespread in North India in the winters.

Grey-hooded Warbler *Seiurus xanthoschistos albosuperciliaris* (6:15)

Very common in the foothills and hill where it was part of almost every mixed hunting party. This species was seen in good numbers and heard more often than seen.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Widespread and commonly found in the plains and hills where many birds were seen close to Nainital and a few were present at Sattal

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

Seen at OBS

Chestnut Crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps*

Seen near Nainital

White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus leucolophus* (3:15)

This attractive species was recorded in small numbers at Kumerian, inside CTR and surprisingly high for this species near Nainital.

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus* (2:15)

One bird was seen close to Nainital followed by another two at the Mangoli Valley.

Rufous-chinned laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis*

Seen at Sattal

White-Throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*

Very common in the hills where seen in very good numbers.

Streaked Laughingthrush *Garrulax lineatus* (2:15)

Very common in the hills where seen in very good numbers.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrogeus erythrogeus* (2:15)

After the first pair at CTR few more birds were seen on the Mangoli Valley trek.

Nepal Wren Babbler *Pnoepyga immaculate*

Seen at Sattal

Black-chinned Babbler *Stachyris pyrrhops* (2:15)

Many small parties were encountered at Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Yellow-eyed Babbler *Chrysomma sinense* (2:15)

Recorded a few birds on the way to Bund Baretha followed by a party of five birds at KGNP.

Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei earlei* (1:15)

A few birds were found at OBS, a regular location for this often-elusive species.

Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi* (3:15)

A large flock was seen on the road to Bund Baretha, and another flock was found at KGNP followed by some birds seen from the moving vehicle between Bharatpur and Fatehpur Sikri.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus siddhanti* &/or *striatus* (11:15)

Widespread and very common apart from at the higher elevations around Naini Tal

White-Browed Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius flavicapitatus*

One bird was seen at Kumerian.

Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera cyanouroptera* (2:15)

At least 15 birds were seen at Sattal and a small flock was seen from close distance at Mongoli Valley trek.

Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata capistrata* (3:15)

Common in the hills around Nainital.

Indian Bushlark *Mirafra erythroptera* (1:15)

A single bird was seen at OBS.

Ashy-crowned Sparrow lark *Eremopterix grisea*

Seen at Bund Baretha

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

Seen at CTR

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata chendoola* (1:15)

A few birds were seen on the way to Bund Baretha.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* (2:15)

Common in Dhaikala Chour (grassland), CTR

Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* (3:15)

Surprisingly a few birds at Bund Baretha and a single bird each at KGNP and gardens of Taj Mahal were the only members of this common species of the lowland areas of Northern India were seen.

Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis* (1:15)

A female was seen Mangoli Valley.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus (indica group)* (15:15)

Commonly found everyday on the trip including many birds seen surprisingly at Dhikala, CTR.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* (3:15)

Seen in good numbers at Nainital, Pungot, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Chestnut-shouldered Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* (3:15)

A single bird was seen at KGNP and another close to Ramnagar but large numbers were recorded at Bund Baretha.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alboides, leucopsis, baicalensis* and *dukhnensis* (7:15)

Common in the plains and foothills with *personata* being the most common race. Other races observed in small numbers were *alboides, leucopsis, baicalensis* and *dukhnensis*.

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* (9:15)

Regularly seen in small numbers at the waterbodies on the plains and the rivers in the foothills.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola citreola* (5:15)

A few birds were seen at OBS, Bund Baretha, river Yamuna behind Taj Mahal, Dhikala, CTR and atleast 30 birds were recorded near the temple at KGNP.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava beema* (2:15)

A few birds were seen at OBS and a couple of birds were there near the temple at KGNP. All birds appeared to be race *beema*.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (3:15)

Recorded in ones and twos from Bund Baretha, Kumerian and Sattal.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* (4:15)

Two birds were seen at KGNP and a few were there in Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* (3:15)

Two birds were seen at Bund Baretha and a few were there in Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (3:15)

A single bird was seen at KGNP and a few were present at Dhikala Chour (grassland), CTR.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis baringtoni* (1:15)

Two birds were seen on the way to Bund Baretha.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni hodgsoni* (4:15)

A small flock of four birds was seen at KGNP, seen in small numbers at Kumerian and inside CTR and four birds were recorded from Sattal Valley.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophbiata* (1:15)

Surprisingly only one bird was seen in the fenced fields next to Eureka Forbes at Sattal.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* (2:15)

A flock of more than a dozen birds were seen at the same place on two consecutive days at Bund Baretha.

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* (4:15)

A few birds of this very attractive species were recorded from Bund Baretha and small flocks were seen regularly at Dhikala Chour (grassland),
CTR.

Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* (3:15)

A few small flocks were observed on the reeds at OBS and atleast a flock of 15 birds was present at Bund Baretha.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

A small flock was seen at Bhawali.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Carduelis spinoides spinoides* (2:15)

Three birds were seen at Pungot and another two on the trek to Mongoli Valley.

Pink-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus rodchrous* (3:15)

A few of these beautiful birds were seen near Nainital, Pungot, Sattal and Mongoli Valley.

Brown bullfinch *Pyrrhula nipalensis*

Flock was seen at Mangoli Valley

White-Browed Rosefinch *carpodacus thura*

Seen at Highfields

Crested Bunting *melophus lathami*

Seen at CTR

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia stracheyi* (2:15)

One bird was seen on the rocky slopes at High Fields near Nainital

Red-Headed Bunting *Emberiza stewarti* (1:15)

Three birds of this widespread species were seen in route to Bund Baretha.

Mammals

Rhesus Macaque *Macca mulatta* (13:15)

Very common and widespread

Hanuman (or Common or Grey) Langur *Presbytis entellus* (10:15)

Fairly common and widespread, more common in forested areas than the previous species.

Tiger *Panthera tigris tigris* (2:15)

Seen crossing the Ramganga River twice.

Grey (or Common) Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* (3:15)

A pair was seen at KGNP, and one animal each on two consecutive days at Dhikala, CTR.

Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus* (1:15)

Three animals were seen in the gardens of TAJ Mahal.

Common (or Golden) Jackal *Canis aureus* (4:15)

Seen regularly at both KGNP and CTR.

Indian Fruit Bat (or Indian Flying Fox) *Pteropus giganteus* (1:15)

Several were seen roosting near Bund Baretha

Indian Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus coromandra* (3:15)

A few were seen in the late evening at Agra, one was found at Nainital and a few over Delhi on the last evening.

(Northern) Five-striped Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* (7:15)

Abundant in the plains where they are found near human settlements but also prefer woodlands.

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* (1:15)

One animal was seen at KGNP.

Asian (or Indian) Elephant *Elephas maximus* (2:15)

More than 15 animals were seen on the first day at Dhikala and another 25 were counted the next day.

Nilgai (or Blue Bull or Indian Antelope) *Boselaphus tragocamelus* (2:15)

Present in good numbers at KGNP.

Hog Deer *Cervus porcinus* (3:15)

Only seen at CTR where only few survive in the grassland habitat.

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* (4:15)

A few animals were seen at KGNP and CTR.

Chital (or Spotted Deer) *Cervus axis* (6:15)

A few were seen at KGNP and large herds of more than 100 deer were common at CTR.

Indian Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac* (4:15)

Small numbers were found in and around CTR.

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* (4:15)

Only one animal was seen at KGNP and was seen regularly at CTR.

Reptiles

Indian (or Gangetic) Mud Turtle *Lissemys punctata* (1:15)

What was believed to be this species was seen at KGNP.

Indian Softshell Turtle *Aspideretes gangeticus* (2:15)

Some of these giant freshwater turtles were seen at river Ramganga, CTR.

[Turtle sp]

Unidentified turtles/ terrapins were quite common at CTR.

Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* (2:15)

Many were seen at Crocodile pool and Ramganga reservoir, CTR.

Marsh Mugger *Crocodylus palustris* (3:15)

Several were seen sunbathing on riverbanks and lake shores at CTR.

Indian Rock Python *Python molurus* (1:15)

Two baby were seen well from close distance at KGNP.

Northern House Gecko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis* (6:15)

Commonly and regularly seen on the trip.

Common Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor* (1:15)

One was briefly seen at KGNP.

Fish

Mahaseer *Barbus mosal* (2:15)

This legendary game fish, known to exceed 100 lbs. was seen commonly in river Ramganga, CTR.

Goonch *Bgaririus yarrellii* (1:15)

These massive fish, some of them well over 6 feet in length were seen at Crocodile Pool, CTR.