

Western Ghats, India

25th November – 5th December 2017

Barry Reed, Steve Webb, and Simon King accompanied me on this trip to see the endemics of the Western Ghats. We were guided by the competent Setyan Mepayur (author of “The Shorebirds of Kerala”) and had an equally competent driver who drove our spacious minibus.

We managed to see all the target birds and did very well for night birds(though Bay Owl would have been a nice addition). It's worth noting that Black-chinned Laughingthrush was split into four species shortly after the trip was planned. We managed to see two of the four, but the other two were out of range for the planned itinerary.

Itinerary

<https://tinyurl.com/ybwt4esn>

- 24th – Heathrow to Cochin via Mumbai
- 25th – Thattekkad – Hornbill Camp <http://www.thehornbillcamp.com>
- 26th – Thattekkad
- 27th – Thattekkad
- 28th – Thattekkad/Periyar – Wildernest <http://www.wildernest-kerala.com>
- 29th – Periyar
- 30th – Periyar/Munnar – Olive Brook <http://www.olivebrookmunnar.com>
- 1st – Munnar
- 2nd – Chinnar
- 3rd – Ooty/Mudumalai – Jungle Hut <http://www.junglehut.in>
- 4th – Mudumalai
- 5th – Mudumalai/Cochin
- 6th – Cochin to Heathrow via Delhi

Weather

Very hot and humid with virtually no wind for the first few days, giving hazy, almost fog like conditions at times and making photography very difficult. Later we hit a very unseasonable cyclone that caused torrential rain for a couple of days and some minor problems with driving and power (trees and lines down etc.). This obviously made birding difficult.

Birds

Lesser Whistling Duck

Cotton Pygmy Goose

Grey Francolin

Jungle Bush Quail – about ten birds in a single covey at Mudumalai, mostly juveniles

Painted Bush Quail – a pair at Munnar showed very well

Red Spurfowl – a total of six birds

Grey Junglefowl – a total of fourteen birds

Indian Peafowl – a total of eight birds

Painted Stork – three, Chinnar

Asian Openbill

Woolly-necked Stork – two, Mudumalai

Black-headed Ibis – Manakkobi Wetlands

Glossy Ibis – Manakkobi Wetlands

Indian Pond Heron
Eastern Cattle Egret
Grey Heron
Purple Heron
Great Egret
Intermediate Egret
Little Egret
Little Cormorant
Indian Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Oriental Darter
Crested Honey Buzzard – one, Mudumulai
White-rumped Vulture – five in single flock , Mudumulai
Red-headed Vulture – one, Mudumulai
Crested Serpent Eagle – a total of four birds
Short-toed Snake Eagle – three, Bodi Ghats
Crested Hawk-Eagle – two, Mudumulai
Legge's Hawk-Eagle – a probable seen near in Thattekkad. However, despite being seen both perched and in-flight, as well as several photographs, Crested Hawk-Eagle could not be definitely ruled out.
Black Eagle – three singles
Booted Eagle – two singles
Bonelli's Eagle – two singles
Crested Goshawk – one seen at Urulanthanni
Shikra – two at Urulanthanni
Eurasian Sparrowhawk – one, Manakkobi Wetlands
Western Marsh Harrier – one, Manakkobi Wetlands
Black Kite – surprisingly not that common apart from in a few built up areas
Brahminy Kite – one, Chinnar
White-breasted Waterhen – one, Manakkobi Wetlands
Grey-headed Swampphen
Yellow-wattled Lapwing
Red-wattled Lapwing
Little Ringed Plover
Bronze-winged Jacana
Pin-tailed Snipe – six at Periyar Tiger Reserve, confirmed by photographs
Green Sandpiper
Wood Sandpiper
Whiskered Tern
Rock Dove
Nilgiri Wood Pigeon – six, Munnar
Eurasian Collared Dove
Spotted Dove (suratensis)
Laughing Dove
Common Emerald Dove
Orange-breasted Green Pigeon – one, Urulanthanni
Grey-fronted Green Pigeon – Fairly common at Periyar Tiger Reserve
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon – seven at Mudumalai

Green Imperial Pigeon – single at Urulanthanni
Mountain Imperial Pigeon – a total of six birds
Greater Coucal – one, Idamalayar
Blue-faced Malkoha – one, Bodi Ghats
Asian Koel – Mudumalai
Banded Bay Cuckoo – one, Urulanthanni
Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo – one, Idamalayar
Common Hawk-Cuckoo – Idamalayar and Urulanthanni
Indian Scops Owl – two
Oriental Scops Owl – one near the Hornbill Camp
Brown Fish Owl – one, Periyar Tiger Reserve
Brown Wood Owl – one near the Hornbill Camp
Jungle Owlet – two
Spotted Owlet – single at Mudumalai
Brown Hawk-Owl – single at Urulanthanni
Sri Lanka Frogmouth – two singles at Urulanthanni
Great Eared Nightjar – about ten flying around a river plain in Thattekkad
Jungle Nightjar – two seen incredibly well at Mudumalai
Jerdon's Nightjar – two Kalapara and one at Mudumalai
Indian Nightjar – about ten at Mudumalai, including one roosting bird
Savanna Nightjar – two at Mudumalai, including one roosting bird
Crested Treeswift – Mudumalai
Indian Swiftlet
White-rumped Spinetail
Asian Palm Swift
Little Swift
Malabar Trogon – Idamalayar and Periyar Tiger Reserve
Indian Roller
White-throated Kingfisher
Common Kingfisher
Green Bee-eater
Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater
Eurasian Hoopoe
Great Hornbill
Malabar Grey Hornbill – fairly common in Thattekkad and at Periyar Tiger Reserve
Brown-headed Barbet – one, Bodi Ghats
White-cheeked Barbet
Malabar Barbet – a total of four birds
Coppersmith Barbet
Speckled Piculet
Heart-spotted Woodpecker – one, Urulanthanni
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker – a total of four birds
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker – two, Mudumalai
Common Flameback – fairly common
Black-rumped Flameback – fairly common
Greater Flameback – one, Thattekkad
Rufous Woodpecker – one, Periyar Tiger Reserve

Common Kestrel

Plum-headed Parakeet – Mudumalai

Malabar Parakeet – common in Thattekkad and Periyar Tiger Reserve

Rose-ringed Parakeet – just two birds

Vernal Hanging Parrot – common in Thattekkad and Periyar Tiger Reserve

Indian Pitta – seven birds, two seen well

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike – one, Sandynallah

Malabar Woodshrike – common at Idamalayar

Common Woodshrike – Mudumalai

Ashy Woodswallow

Common Iora – Mudumalai

Black-headed Cuckooshrike – Mudumalai

Small Minivet – fairly common

White-bellied Minivet – one Mudumalai

Orange Minivet – fairly common

Brown Shrike

Bay-backed Shrike

Long-tailed Shrike

Indian Golden Oriole

Black-hooded Oriole

Black Drongo

Ashy Drongo

White-bellied Drongo – one, Bodi Ghats

Bronzed Drongo

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo

White-spotted Fantail – one, Mudumalai

White-browed Fantail – Mudumalai

Black-naped Monarch – one, Mudumalai

Indian Paradise Flycatcher

Rufous Treepie

White-bellied Treepie – a total of eight birds seen

House Crow

Indian Jungle Crow

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher

Cinereous Tit

Indian Black-lored Tit – three, Munnar and Eravikulam National Park

Jerdon's Bush Lark – Mudumalai

Malabar Lark – Mudumalai

Eastern Short-toed Lark – one at Manakkobi Wetlands

Grey-headed Bulbul – one seen well, Mudumalai

Flame-throated Bulbul – a total of five birds seen

Red-whiskered Bulbul

Red-vented Bulbul

Yellow-throated Bulbul – four, Bodi Ghats

White-browed Bulbul – one, Bodi Ghats

Yellow-browed Bulbul – Idamalayar and Urulanthanni

Square-tailed Bulbul – Munnar and Cairnhill Forest Reserve

Barn Swallow

Hill Swallow – Eravikulam National Park and Sandynallah

Dusky Crag Martin – Munnar

Red-rumped Swallow

Tickell's Leaf Warbler – a total of four birds seen

Yellow-browed Warbler – one, Mudumalai

Tytler's Warbler – one, Munnar

Green Warbler – constantly heard calling in the lowlands and a few seen well. Call similar to **Greenish Warbler**, but more drawn out, with tones reminiscent of Pied Wagtail.

Greenish Warbler – replaces Green Warbler on higher ground. Common, but mostly heard. Call more concise and hurried compared to Green Warbler.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler – a total of three birds

Western Crowned Warbler – one, Mudumalai

Blyth's Reed Warbler – constantly heard and occasionally seen

Sykes's Warbler – common at a single sight near Mudumalai

Plain Prinia

Common Tailorbird

Indian Scimitar Babbler

Dark-fronted Babbler – Periyar Tiger Reserve

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta – three birds in total

Puff-throated Babbler – five birds in total

Rufous Babbler – eight, Idamalayar

Jungle Babbler – common around The Hornbill Camp

Yellow-billed Babbler – Chinnar and Mudumalai

Wynaad Laughingthrush – Periyar Tiger Reserve. On both visits, there was no sight or sound until near to dusk when the birds suddenly became active. They did not respond to tape. The reserve officially shuts before dusk which is presumably why this species is sometimes missed.

Black-chinned Laughingthrush – Doddabetta

Kerala Laughingthrush – Munnar

Hume's Whitethroat – two, one heard only

Yellow-eyed Babbler – Mudumalai

Oriental White-eye

Asian Fairy-bluebird – Periyar Tiger Reserve

Indian Nuthatch – Mudumalai

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch

Southern Hill Myna

Jungle Myna

Common Myna

Chestnut-tailed Starling

Malabar Starling – common in Thattekkad

Brahminy Starling – Mudumalai

Orange-headed Thrush – a total of four birds

Nilgiri Thrush – one eventually seen after many hours trying in the grounds of The Jungle Hut

Indian Blackbird – a total of three birds

Indian Robin – Chinnar and Mudumalai

Oriental Magpie-Robin

White-rumped Shama

Asian Brown Flycatcher

Brown-breasted Flycatcher – two birds at Urulanthanni and Periyar Tiger Reserve

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher – three birds at Periyar Tiger Reserve
White-bellied Blue Flycatcher – one seen well at Periyar Tiger Reserve
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher – a total of three birds
Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher – a single at Urulanthanni
Verditer Flycatcher – Idamalayar
Nilgiri Flycatcher – fairly common in the Munnar area
Indian Blue Robin – a single at Periyar Tiger Reserve
Nilgiri Blue Robin – missed at Doddabetta, despite spending several hours in torrential rain. Seen within minutes at dawn, with good weather, the following day at Cairnhill Forest Reserve
White-bellied Blue Robin – two, in Munnar area
Malabar Whistling Thrush – three birds seen, more heard
Black-and-orange Flycatcher – two pairs at Eravikulam National Park and Cairnhill Forest Reserve
Pied Bush Chat
Jerdon's Leafbird – four at Mudumalai
Golden-fronted Leafbird – two singles at Periyar Tiger Reserve
Pale-billed Flowerpecker – Mudumalai
Nilgiri Flowerpecker – three birds in total, Urulanthanni and Eravikulam National Park
Purple-rumped Sunbird – fairly common
Crimson-backed Sunbird – Thattekkad
Purple Sunbird – Mudumalai Loten's Sunbird
Little Spiderhunter – Periyar Tiger Reserve
House Sparrow
Yellow-throated Sparrow – flocks at Mudumalai
Baya Weaver – a very large, but very distant flock at Manakkobi Wetlands
Indian Silverbill
Scaly-breasted Munia – several in the Jungle Hut grounds
Western Yellow Wagtail – Grey-headed Wagtails (thunbergi) at Manakkobi Wetlands
Grey Wagtail
White-browed Wagtail
Blyth's Pipit – a single loose flock of about ten birds near Mudumalai
Red-throated Pipit – one heard only at Manakkobi Wetlands
Nilgiri Pipit – two birds eventually seen at Eravikulam National Park

Mammals

Asian Elephant – Mudumalai
Bonnet Macaque
Black-footed Grey Langur
Tufted Grey Langur
Nilgiri Langur
Indian Giant Squirrel
Indian Palm Squirrel
Dusky Palm Squirrel
Black Rat – one on the ledge of a restaurant in Thekkady (near Periyar Tiger Reserve)
Indian Flying Fox
Wild Boar
Chital Deer
Gaur – a herd disrupted a search for Wynaad Laughingthrush, blocking our path for some time on

the first afternoon

Nilgiri Tahr – Eravikulam National Park

Butterflies

Blue Mormon

Great Eggfly

Dragonflies

Copera marginipes

Pantala flavescens

Orthetrum chrysis

Neurothemis tullia

Trithemis aurora

Snakes

Green Vine Snake

Common Cat Snake

Photos

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/xGxHfWJeVUjXv5Lo1>

Daily Lists

- 25th – Cochin – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013565>
- 25th – Hornbill Camp – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013564>
- 25th – Urulanthanni – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013561>
- 26th – Idamalayar – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013559>
- 26th – Hornbill Camp – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013558>
- 27th – Urulanthanni – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013556>
- 27th – Hornbill Camp – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013555>
- 28th – Kalapara – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013554>
- 28th – Periyar Tiger Reserve – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013553>
- 29th – Periyar Tiger Reserve – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013552>
- 29th – Periyar Tiger Reserve – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013551>
- 30th – Bodi Ghats – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013550>
- 30th – Munnar – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013549>
- 1st – Eravikulam National Park – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013548>
- 1st – Munnar – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013547>
- 2nd – Chinnar – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013546>
- 2nd – Doddabetta – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013545>
- 3rd – Cairnhill Forest Reserve – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013543>
- 3rd – Sandynallah – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013563>
- 3rd – Mudumalai – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013562>
- 3rd – Mudumalai – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013542>
- 4th – Mudumalai – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013541>
- 5th – Mudumalai – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013540>
- 5th – Manakkobi Wetlands – <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S41013539>