

SRI LANKA: A FAMILY ‘BIRDING IN STYLE’ TRIP REPORT

16-30TH DECEMBER 2009
by Stephen Lowe, London, UK

I arranged this trip with Amila Salgado of [Birdwing Nature Holidays](#), whose blog; [Gallicissa](#) had impressed me greatly when trawling the internet for suitable guides. The idea was for the family to experience something completely different from our usual Christmas in Florida, given the opportunity to meet our eldest daughter somewhere in Asia. She had been travelling in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam over the previous fortnight, following the end of her Spring term in Auckland NZ, during her third university year exchange with Edinburgh University.



Serendib Scops Owl

During the course of the trip I hoped to see the majority of Sri Lanka’s endemic birds – 33 by Amila’s definition- and for the girls to enjoy other things which, Sri Lanka has to offer of a more general nature. The birding part was unexpectedly successful: all 33 of the endemic “species” (IOC-defined) were very well seen and over 100 lifers were noted on the trip among 224 species (this being my first visit to the Indian Sub-Continent). I also saw a very good range of butterflies- 40 species in all, almost all of which were seen at rest and specifically identified with Amila’s help, as also over a dozen damsel- and

dragonflies. In addition, the family saw a Leopard, had several close encounters with Asian Elephant; close looks after nightfall at two Jungle Cats; and I saw three species of mongoose and monkey, plus a civet and one of Sri Lanka's endemic mouse-deer. We just missed a Sloth Bear and did not go out looking for Blue Whale, which had been reported up to 8th December and subsequently following our departure from the southwest beaches at the end of the month. The girls certainly experienced some interesting and beautiful things, even if the weather was unexpectedly cloudy or rainy for long spells.



Red-faced Malkoha.

Culturally, we benefited greatly from spending many hours in Amila and Nande's company, learning not only about Sri Lanka's natural history, but also about its people, its politics, its history and beliefs. Whilst we did not have time to see Anuradhapura or (from the birding viewpoint) Kithulgala and Udawalawe, we did visit two of the biggest tourist destinations: Kandy's Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic and the rock fortress of Sigiriya. We drove 1800 km at a (necessarily) leisurely pace from Colombo south to Galle and Unawatuna; east to Tissa, Bundala and Yala; north into the highlands via Rawana Falls and Ella to the somewhat shabby but interesting hill town of Nuwara Eliya; and thence northeast through tea estates to Kandy. From our base at Hunas Falls near Elkaduwa, we progressed further northwest via spice gardens and a Batik textile workshop to Dambulla, staying at the luxurious Heritage Kandalama - itself a modern architectural site of some significance- before visiting Sigiriya and then taking the long drive south to Colombo and home.

Weather was decidedly rainy: it rained heavily even in the dry zone at Yala, where the vegetation was verdant. Apparently this is normal for the monsoon, but I had planned the

trip on the basis that the monsoon is supposed to be over by the second half of December. Though something of an unwelcome surprise, the weather was not enough to wreck the trip and certainly not bad for the birding. The sun was not a common sight and this came as something of a disappointment for the girls, though temperatures were generally fairly comfortable as a result. In the highlands it was wet, but not cold. Health hazards appear to be few in the touristed part of the country: we were not advised to take malaria prophylaxis and we had little in the way of stomach upsets. Bottled water was readily available and standards of hygiene were unexpectedly high (though of course our impressions were heavily biased by the high-grade accommodation and restaurants we were using). Leeches were more of a problem than expected however, as were mosquitoes. ATMs are modern and widely available in all the large towns and hotels and shops of the type we visited routinely provide credit card payment facilities at no extra cost. Internet is available- sometimes freely, including at the international airport- and the local Dialog cell phone service is convenient and fantastically cheap, even for international calls, and Amila kindly furnished me with a SIM card, which turned out to be very useful.



Painted Stork

The crucial portion of the trip for me was the two-night stay at the lowland rainforest reserve of Sinharaja. Had there been any major hitch- such as a breakdown or extreme weather- my chances of seeing several of the endemics would have been severely reduced. As it was, 44 hours at Martin's, just on the edge of the reserve, were sufficient to bag all the targets - Sri Lanka Myna and Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, but also Serendib Scops Owl, Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and the Sri Lanka Spurfowl. None of the endemics presented any great difficulties apart from these three, though it should be noted that Sri

Lanka Wood-Pigeon is decidedly scarce and local. Chestnut-backed Owlet is common in suitable habitat but hard to see well, as it seems to stay in the canopy.



Golden Jackal at Yala

Sri Lanka's roads are pretty good and surfaces are well maintained. Car hire would not seem to be a good idea and we were glad to leave it all to our Hiace van driver, Nande, who was unfailingly patient, reliable, helpful and cheerful. Driving practices are rather dangerous by our standards, with plenty of overtaking on blind bends, but very few vehicles travel recklessly fast. Motorbikes- the curse of UK roads- are very rare, though the standard vehicle for an aspiring Sri Lankan to own is a moped. Three-wheeler 'tuk-tuks' are everywhere and a handy means of transport, but they tend to turn onto the highway without warning. Most vehicles seem to have working lights. Traffic is not heavy outside the major towns and even inside them true jams seem to be rare.

The food was a source of great pleasure throughout the trip. Admittedly we stayed in the very best hotels, but on those occasions where we mucked in with the locals, standards were high. Although a la carte or set menus are esteemed, we greatly preferred the convenience of buffets, where we could see what we were eating in advance and did not have to wait for the food to be prepared. The food from buffets generally tasted fresh and did not appear to have suffered from being kept warm. Andrea struggles with oriental spiced food and cannot eat fish or rice, yet she managed to enjoy the gastronomy too.

Our first impressions of the country were gained on the long afternoon drive from Colombo airport, which lies north of the city, to our beach hotel at Unawatuna on the south-western edge of teardrop-shaped Sri Lanka. This stretch comprised of numerous well-designed, attractive brick and stone buildings. Emerging from customs and immigration around 2.15 p.m. on a hot afternoon, we had a joyful reunion with our daughter Ali at a hotel nearby, where she had spent the night and proceeded around Colombo. We stopped at a Geoffrey Bawa-designed hotel, the Blue Water Inn in Wadduwa, for a deliciously refreshing tea-time cup of BOP and butter cake by the sea. This was when I first realised that prices in SL are not particularly low (even allowing for the fact that this hotel is a luxury establishment). By European standards the trip was not expensive, but at around 2400 pounds a head all-in (including flights) it was very definitely a special family holiday. But we were glad to see all our spending going to Sri Lankans.



A male Indian Robin

One had to remind oneself that this road had witnessed one of the most devastating catastrophes of modern times as recently as December 2004. We only noticed evidence of the devastation wrought by the tsunami - particularly around Hikkaduwa -when we travelled back up the southern portion of the coast road again in daylight.

We awoke to a lovely morning at Unawatuna and I was soon on the very picturesque curving beach, scoping the little birdlife visible in the bay, having seen a Stork-billed Kingfisher and a Sri Lanka Small Barbet (Crimson-fronted Barbet according to Clements') from the balcony behind our room at first light. Amila joined me and we tried to capture tickable views of Red-billed Tropicbirds- not to my satisfaction, unfortunately. We checked the whale reports from Mirissa and (rightly) decided it would not be worth a trip. The afternoon saw us venture out to see the impressive and unusual Dutch fort at Galle and thence to Mitiyagoda half an hour inland- close to the site of the greatest loss

of life caused, when the tsunami overcame a stationary Colombo train some distance inland- to see a small moonstone mining operation (very low-tech and quite charming, in its way).



Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush

The following day Amila and I left at 6am for Sinharaja. After a breakfast stop in Bentota on the main Galle Road, we turned east via Dharga town and Matugama. Immediately the busy little road (it being the rush hour by now) was very much birdier and we made frequent brief birding stops as we trundled past small paddies bordered by lots of vegetation and trees along watercourses and small hills, particularly as we travelled further east into the more elevated zone in which Sinharaja lies. At Kalawana we turned south via a cascade by the road where we tried unsuccessfully to get to grips with calling Crimson-backed Flameback (Greater Flameback according to Clements') and Green-billed Coucal.

After Weddagala, we reached Kudawa village where the ticket office is situated. Here we abandoned the van and took a jeep for the last four km up a steep and bumpy track to Martin's Simple Lodge, on the edge of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve. We had a late lunch on the delightful lookout restaurant area, with great views over logged forest and some of the extensive primary forest to our right, before setting off on foot up the track through regenerating logged forest along a stream leading to the Research station. Almost immediately we scoped a Sri Lanka Blue Magpie and Sri Lanka Mynas, following good looks at Legge's Flowerpecker, which are easily seen from the balcony at Martin's.

We were joined by Sunil, forest ranger and obligatory guide, who has often accompanied Amila here. We had the first of several encounters with calling owl. Although we encountered no mixed flocks, we did bump into a group of Ashy-headed Laughing-

Thrushes, which were quite shy but eventually showed well enough. Dusk found us at the end of the main track at the huts, which comprise the research station, where we had flight views of a Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush and before that a Spot-winged Thrush on the path.

Next day we enjoyed the spectacle of the Sri Lanka Blue Magpies coming to the balcony at Martin's to feast on moths attracted to the lights. We then set off back up the research station path. Before entering the forest, we had excellent views of White-faced Starling- probably the same pair we had scoped up more distantly the previous afternoon- and then it was back to owlets, thrush and spurfowl. Orange-billed Babblers were first seen at the edge of the open valley, busily forming a flock for the day, before further encounters with mixed flocks, which eventually held a pair of the gorgeous Red-faced Malkoha, which were detained long enough for us to scope them very satisfactorily. We scored with the Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush, which demanded much patience before we crept up on one feeding in sandy stunted forest. And at length a pair of Green-billed Coucal emerged from the shrubbery above the Research Station, offering marvellous photo opportunities.



Crimson-backed Flameback

We were in the field for over eight hours that day, before returning for a well-earned shower and a late lunch at 3 p.m. This gave us a short time to try again for the spurfowl- close but no cigar, as we heard three calling pairs but could not lay eyes on a bird. We did however have a very nice view of a Slaty-legged Crake – a difficult bird to see, in the

swamp down-slope from the area of forest with sloping open-under-story where we had been working on the spurfowl.

After another good meal we had an entertaining chat over our arrack with Gary George from Southern California with fellow birder Joseph and his brother Geoffrey (the latter a birding companion on my Tropical Birding trip to Uganda in 2007). They had arrived late the previous evening and we were to meet them again in Yala.



Oriental Darter

Next day brought us what was the bird of the trip for me, a Serendib Scops Owl, which showed up brilliantly at one of Amila's reliable hotspots just minutes after arriving there. Another owl- and- spurfowl session on the other side of the stream down from the lodge. No joy.

We packed our bags and waited for the jeep to return from transporting Gary and crew back down to the village. For some reason there was an hour's delay. With good birding time running through our fingers, we commandeered a Land Rover from Martin to take us back down the hill. On the way we stopped at the forested edge of a plantation, which provided a last-ditch view of a group of three Sri Lanka Spurfowl- first a male then two females, much to our satisfaction.

Now it suddenly seemed quite likely that all 33 endemics might be seen on my trip! We made our way back to Unawatuna quite speedily (we were running late for a lunchtime rendezvous with the girls by now and there was no time for a daytime detour to see a roosting Serendib Scops located by a villager at Amila's request!). We joked with our driver, Sunny as he related his experiences in Hong Kong as an illegal migrant worker,

(overstaying for 2 ½ years with a 3-day tourist visa!) before eventually managing to be deported back to Sri Lanka to rejoin his young wife and to start a family.

Amila insisted on celebrating our Sinharaja success with a lunch of swordfish-like seer and chips at the atmospheric Refresh Restaurant in Hikkaduwa, famed for its seafood. On arrival at Unawatuna around 1.30, the girls were raring to go. They had spent the morning at the hotel, (which was a shame as there had been time for another snorkelling trip to add to the one they had enjoyed at Hikkaduwa two days before). Confusion over the bill caused by an interim room-switch delayed us and the long drive to the Yala area was further lengthened by the absorbing spectacle of an election rally in the major city of Matara, where the opposition coalition candidate General Fonseka- former commander of Sri Lanka Army, which had expunged the LTTE armed dissidents earlier in the year- was due to speak in a splendid civic area by the sea. Green and red flags of the coalition fluttered in the light breeze along the way, but they were soon supplanted outside Matara by the light blue flags of the incumbent party. The coalition seems an unlikely an opportunistic assemblage of left and right, led by a former close confidant of the President. The election was a month away, but it seemed likely that the Rajapaksa clan would continue their domination of Sri Lanka's government. They appear to be riding a wave of popular approval for the success of the hard line finally taken against the LTTE in the face of international disapproval. The long drive saw Amila introducing us gently to the complexities of Sri Lankan politics, which was very interesting.



Tawny-bellied Babbler

The landscape began to change as dusk fell and cactus-strewn semi-desert confirmed our arrival in Sri Lanka's Dry Zone. Earlier, we had seen flocks of birds in the rice paddies to the north of the highway, one containing a huge number of tightly-packed Black-tailed Godwit.

Night fell before our arrival at Elephant Reach Hotel outside Kirinda, some 11km west of Yala NP. Our spacious adjoining rooms lay a walk around the scenic outdoor pool. The first meal was nothing to write home about, but thereafter the hotel switched to buffets to cater for a full compliment of (mainly Sri Lankan) holiday guests, which produced a turn for the better. Next morning I was up at dawn to do some local birding in the Tissa area with Amila. This was a delight: lots of local colour, as we were mainly birding in people's back gardens and fields around Deberawewa. Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Blue-faced Malkoha, Indian Roller, Tawny-bellied Babbler and many others featured among the wide diversity of birds found in one field, where we attempted to locate a White-naped Woodpecker- a local Indian Sub-Continent species we missed on the trip. Another back-yard amongst this neatly ordered area of middle-class houses produced a roosting one-eyed Brown Fish-Owl. Only 300 metres away was the embankment up to view the "tank"- heavily vegetated- where the highlight was a crouching Black Bittern. But then the rain started and this was to be a recurrent feature of the rest of our stay in the "dry zone". We moved a few km to view another tank at Wirawila, where we had a great chance to study our pipits and a rare view of Asian Koel in the open, drinking at a mud puddle (why it bothered when the stuff was falling regularly from the sky was a mystery). We had a fine view of the magnificent ancient (2nd Century BC) stupa at Tissa on the drive back.



White Four-ring

After lunch back at base with the girls, we set off at 1.30 pm in deceptively sunny weather for Yala NP, where we boarded the obligatory close-topped jeep with driver and park “ranger” (who seemed to have no more idea than we had of the whereabouts of anything, but enabled us to be networked with the official rangers, rather than being treated like ignorant tourists). Yala quickly produced another “endemic” in the form of Sri Lanka Wood-shrike (Common Woodshrike according to Clements’). The more open, heavily browsed acacia bush country offered a new range of birds- including Blyth’s Pipit- and of course plenty of mammals, such as Spotted and Sambar Deer, Wild Boar, Ruddy Mongoose and Golden Jackal. Ali spotted a well-concealed Asian Elephant which provided the first of four encounters (none in herds), the last at dusk being a mother and calf at very close quarters. Maddeningly, we missed a Sloth Bear which had been sunning itself on a rocky area by seconds. It started to rain and spirits dropped as the fauna became familiar. Safari drives have never been my cup of tea and we were all glad to get back to our hotel for a shower and dinner, having seen a Jungle Cat in the roadside vegetation just outside Kirinda (another one-eyed specimen!)



Yellow-wattled Lapwing

Next morning, Amila and I took another capacious packed breakfast to visit Bundala NP to the west of Kirinda. We first stopped before reaching the HQ to scan some big wader flocks, which consisted almost entirely of Curlew Sandpipers and Black-tailed Godwits, with some Little Stints thrown in and muddy fields packed with (presumed) Pintail Snipe, Lesser Sand Plover and a single Ruff. When we got to the HQ, I picked out a couple of Sand Martins among the many swallows – a rare winter migrant in Sri Lanka according to Amila. Then we were back in a jeep for a long drive around this extremely birdy park.

We had enjoyed close studies of Indian Reed Warbler and a pair of Yellow Bittern, among the many other birds, when we had to turn around as the circuit was impassable due to flooding. But in the process of doing a U-turn, our driver got the vehicle's front tyres stuck in the embankment and even the aid of a 4WD (courtesy of some Park Elephant-trackers) was unable to shift it. As the rain intensified, we formed a steaming huddle in the Park vehicle's cab and splashed bumpily back to our Hiace at the HQ. At this point, things picked up again when we stopped at another flooded area and found a pair of Greater Painted Snipe, which looked marvellous in my Zeiss Diascope. Amila was by now becoming firmly attached to and justifiably envious of my optics (he himself has a nice pair of Swarovski binoculars, however and acquired a telescope of the same make in the New Year!)



Leopard at pouring rain at Yala National Park

After lunch with the girls, it was back on the road out east to Yala. We put in another three hours in the jeep for little reward, the most maddening episode being a long drive to view a Leopard in a tree down a narrow, out-of-the-way track, only to hear that the feline had jumped down seconds before our arrival. And it rained hard, again. At supper we were looking forward to a quick morning getaway and drier conditions in the highlands, but Ali was adamant that she should make a further attempt to see a Leopard. This necessitated a 4am start, but she and Christy were up for that. So Andrea and I had a lie-in, listening to the rain beat incessantly on our chalet roof and (in my case) worrying about the state of my optics in their tender care.

As predicted, the girls had got very wet and seen very little on their game drive, but they had certainly earned a change in fortune, which duly arrived at the very last moment when they were leaving the park and heard of a cat in a tree (not as common in the mornings as in late afternoon). Hurriedly arriving at the scene, my scope was invaluable in enabling them to see the Leopard well (much better than the other vehicles) and they arrived back unsurprisingly elated! So a bunch of happier campers departed Yala for the Hill Country. After a stop in Tissa for a roosting Indian Scops Owl, we were climbing the escarpment by 1030 and stopped briefly for pictures of the scenic Rawana Falls, the outflow of which the road crosses. By noon we were seated in the delightful rear garden verandah of the Ella Rest House, where a slow lunch service offered opportunities to study a flock of Sri Lanka White-eyes, a pair of Long-billed Sunbirds, a Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, pairs of Orange Minivet and Ashy Prinia and later, a Crested Hawk-Eagle perched in the valley to our right.



Indian Scops Owls at a daytime roost at Tissamaharama

A 75-minute stop at the Surrey Estate a short drive further up was well worthwhile for me, instantly producing a close pair of the localised and scarce endemic Sri Lanka Wood-pigeon, as well as some other nice birds such as Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher (but no roosting Wood Owls.) The girls went for a short walk but mainly chatted to Nande in the van. By 5 p.m. our vehicle had skirted the lake at Nuwara Eliya (only recently abandoned as a runway for scheduled flights by sea-plane). After our first view of this sprawling, untidy town, our vehicle drew up the stately driveway to the St Andrew's Hotel, a fine memorial to the days of the Raj and its attendant Hill Stations, complete with dark interiors, chequered floor tiles, wood panelling and a Billiard Room. But within an hour we were back in the van for a trip to The Pub, a smoky atmospheric drinking hole for young Sri Lankan males, which the girls found highly amusing, aided by copious servings from a "tower" of Lion beer, which had been placed at our bench. Alcohol

seems to play quite a large part in Sri Lankan life- another reason for its popularity with European visitors.

I was up early on Christmas Eve to reach a ravine on the steep and slippery “Cloud-forest Trail” above the town well before first light, where no whistling-thrush appeared. But several of the other highland endemics were very well studied, including the typically dull but not too invisible Sri Lanka Bush Warbler, my first Dull-blue Flycatcher and multiple looks at the very attractive and showy Yellow-eared Bulbul. We ate our packed breakfasts and moved on down to Victoria Park’s entrance, by the noisy and characterful bus station. But the earlier attempt to see a non-appearing whistling-thrush meant that the park specials had become harder to find. A Forest Wagtail by one of the many makeshift rubbish dumps in every suitable dark corner of the park was a lifer for me. A fine close singing male Kashmir Flycatcher at the far corner, where the stream runs under the road, proved adequate compensation for a lack of views of Pied Thrushes. An Indian Pitta was pursued until I videoed it hopping across a sunlit patch. Our pre-dawn visit the following day provided close views of three male Pied Thrushes near where we had seen the Kashmir Flycatcher.



A male Kashmir Flycatcher

After lunch we drove back downhill to Hakgala Botanical Gardens, stopping en route for a photo of the roadside Hindu temple of Seetha Amman, a gaudy shrine marking the one of the supposed places of captivity of Sita (also spelled as Seetha), wife of king Rama, legendarily abducted to Sri Lanka by the grasping King Rawana. A rather desultory walk around the gardens in the rain was enhanced for the birding splinter-group with a close, if gloomy look at Indian Blackbird. Nande took the girls for tea at a local pancake house for some strawberry pancake and tea, whilst Amila and I negotiated a slippery bridge of logs to cross a ravine at 5.30 p.m. to wait for a Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, a female of which duly appeared in relatively good light on the rocks below our feet and provided satisfying views for a minute or so. The last-but-one tricky endemic was now in the bag!



The St Andrew's Hotel in Nuwara Eliya provided an atmospheric Christmas Eve dinner: a real buzz in the crowded dining room, where almost all the diners were Asian- was preceded by a bizarre glee club session by the fireside, at which a tasteful but distinctively local take on Christmas Carol singing by a neighbourhood youth choir was enjoyed almost exclusively by the Lowe family. Carols were sung mainly in English- definitely the second language of the country- and comprised a delightful mixture of Anglican, Gospel and Hollywood numbers.

After much discussion, it was decided to abandon the planned early start next day for Horton Plains and to try catching up on some sleep, giving Andrea the chance to worship at the Anglican church of Holy Trinity next morning at 8 a.m., an experience she found very rewarding and interesting. Meantime the girls and I were led by Amila through the organic vegetable gardens to the rear of the hotel and up on the Cloud Forest Trail, which is short but steep. We enjoyed plenty of nice birds in the sunshine, but a Pied Bushchat was one of the few new things to go on the list, along with a great view of a male Indian Blue Robin in bankside shrubbery near the hotel's purpose-built dragonfly ponds.

Packed up by 10.30 a.m., we left for Kandy via the scenic Hill Country Tea estates, where Mackwoods' tea factory provided a very interesting tour and a fine cuppa in the adjoining shop. We reached the restaurant overlooking Kandy by 1 p.m. and enjoyed a good lunch, again a buffet shared with plenty of Asian tourists and locals. From here we visited a gem shop where we selected a Sapphire and suitable band and setting, after many options were presented and discussed in a relaxed and agreeable fashion. Next we continued along the road to the impressive and spacious Botanical Gardens, where among several good bird sightings, the highlights were undoubtedly a large group of perched Sri Lanka Green-Pigeons and some vocal and showy Lesser Hill-mynas. At dusk the girls waited as they were attacked by mosquitoes in the humid air.



Chestnut-backed Owlet

We continued uphill from Kandy for the 70 minute drive to Hunas Falls hotel, seen to best advantage the following morning. A truly delightful place and by far the best value on the trip, the girls' stay here was sadly marred by close encounters with leeches on their early morning attempt on Shaheen Peak. Had they gone up Simpson's Trail, the views would have been equally spectacular and the leeches much less troublesome, but such was not to be. Amila and I meanwhile spent our early morning well below Elkaduwa in a forested valley at about 350m elevation, where a pair of Chestnut-backed Owlet obliged in just the manner Amila had hoped (this being a much less birded location). The little road was extremely birdy and we also had very good views of a flock of munia on a strongly sunlit, gleaming mud paddy which had been sown with seeds (rather than planted with seedlings, as is more usual): this contained our first Hill (if split from Black-throated) Munias.



A Layard's Parakeet male

After a late breakfast, made memorable by the sight of a wedded couple stepping off a boat in full regalia (Hunas Falls being a popular romantic getaway for the more affluent Sri Lankans, I joined the girls at the pool for a head massage. Before lunch I squeezed in a round of golf on the very scenic six-hole course, where I heard a Legge's Hawk Eagle but could not locate it [I don't play golf with my binoculars...] I picked off a leech or two during this. I ate with the girls, before we boarded the van for another visit to Kandy. Here we duly collected and paid for the rings and were then driven to view a traditional dance show, in a nice hall full of Western tourists. By now it was getting dark and time for today's torrential downpour, which also marred our exit from the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, which we visited around 7.15 pm after the dance show. The Temple is an impressive sight and those who are ignorant of Buddhism can learn much about the

history of the religion in Sri Lanka from this visit, although one should not hope for much of a view of the relic or even of the micro-stupa in which it is housed. In any event, few visitors to this fascinating country will have the benefit of Amila's superb English explanation of Sri Lankan history, culture and religion. On the drive back Amila disclosed his strong belief in astrology and his dualism, as a highly rational scientific observer of nature who is also a mystic, an adherent of Buddhist philosophy and astrology.

A late dinner back at our hotel in Hunas Falls was followed by a leisurely morning and a long stroll for myself and Amila up the extremely attractive Simpson's Trail, past the "lines" of terraced housing of the Tamil tea-workers and up through the plantations, which were surprisingly birdy, including Lesser Yellownape and a large flock of Tawny-bellied Babblers- to a remnant patch of primary forest. Here we enjoyed superb scope views of Layard's Parakeet and the extremely beautiful (if more widespread) Plum-headed Parakeet.



Infinity pool at Heritance Kandalama Hotel, Dambulla

On our return, we left for Dambulla, stopping on the way at a Batik textile workshop (very interesting and well explained by an articulate, older local woman). Next stop was a lengthy one at a Spice Garden, which for the girls was the highlight of the trip. Here we enjoyed a head and neck massage and spent large amounts of money at the shop on the way out. A tasty late lunch in Dambulla at a large and busy buffet was followed by a drive in the afternoon rain to the tank of Kandalama to the east to reach our magnificent Heritance Kandalama hotel, beautifully designed by the famous Sri Lankan architect,

Geoffrey Bawa to blend into the rocks bordering the tank. We appreciated its setting better the following day in drier weather.

Our first morning at Kandalama saw us retracing our route through Dambulla to visit the magnificent fortified rock at Sigirya, 45 minutes to the north. The weather was mercifully dry, yet not too sunny and hot: perfect for negotiating the many steps up the side of the rock and the slippery surfaces of the Boulder and Terraced Gardens, two of the three gardens laid out at this fairly ancient site (the other being the Water Gardens on the lower, flat level just over the last moat-bridge). Much of the site was excavated in the 1950s and current thinking seems to favour the idea that it was originally an important Buddhist monastery, before being adopted by patricide King Kassapa in the late fifth century AD as a secure fortress against his many enemies back at court at Anuradhapura, where he had murdered his father King Dhatusena to usurp the throne. There is still some disagreement however about the provenance of the many rock-frescoes depicting bare-breasted women who may be representations of goddess Tara or perhaps favourites of the King's harem (the two being assumed to be mutually exclusive theories). Archaeology cannot have been helped by the fact that most of the paintings were vandalized in 1969, though nicely restored.



Brown Hawk Owl

Back at Kandalama as the sun began to shine, Amila and I alighted 2 km back from the hotel on its gravel entrance road to enjoy some very good noontime birding, with many wonderfully obliging butterflies thrown in. A field full of four Prinia species was a highlight, as was a close Woolly-necked Stork. We ate some food we had bought in a surprisingly modern- Dambulla grocery store, saving our appetite and money for the evening meal. Prior to this, Andrea and Amila locked horns in a long-promised game of Scrabble, with Andrea emerging a surprising winner (in view of her rustiness and Amila's underhand tactics). Then we cracked open a bottle of Arrack in our room before dinner, which was predictably very good, but more for its extensive choice than for the unique quality of the food (which was very high everywhere we stayed).

After dinner Amila and I walked down the entrance road listening for nightbirds and after some time we located a Jerdon's Nightjar, which was spotlighted with some difficulty. Back in the same spot after dawn the next day, I had some nice views of birds, which had not been so obliging on previous occasions, before we packed up for our long drive back to Colombo. This was rather uneventful, but when we arrived at the Taj Airport Garden Hotel, we found two owl species along its long driveway: another Indian Scops and the only Brown Hawk-Owl of the trip. We bade farewell to Amila and Nande and after a welcome shower we had a final meal with Ali before putting her in the transport to the airport for her flight back to New Zealand. The following day there was little time for birding as we needed to be packed and at the airport for 1045 and an uneventful, if somewhat tedious flight back to England in the grip of Winter.

Bird of the Trip: Sri Lanka Scops Owl, for its rarity, mystique and the great sighting we had of it. Red-faced Malkoha runs it close.

Sri Lanka - 15-29th December 2009

Species list

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|---------------------------|--|--|
| 01 | Little Grebe | <i>Trachybaptus ruficollis</i> | 1 at Werawila |
| 02 | Little Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> | common at various locations |
| 03 | Indian Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i> | mainly on Tanks, first at Tissa |
| 04 | Great Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | a couple on tanks, but scarce |
| 05 | Darter | <i>Ahinga melanogaster</i> | tanks around Tissa and at Yala, in small nos. |
| 06 | Spot-billed Pelican | <i>Pelicanus philippensis</i> | scattered sightings in small nos. on tanks & at Yala & Bundala |
| 07 | Yellow Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i> | a pair at Bundala seen in flight just over a small reedbed and landing in it towards end of the drive. Not especially yellow- dark crown of male called attention to it. |
| 08 | Black Bittern | <i>Dupetor flavicollis flavicollis</i> | Debrawewa tank on first a.m. at Tissa: a singleton crouching in short reeds. |
| 09 | Black-crowned Night Heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | a few sightings of up to 3 together. |
| 10 | Indian Pond Heron | <i>Ardeola grayii grayii</i> | throughout in lowlands, paddies & even on park lawns at altitude |
| 11 | Eastern Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus</i> | split to EASTERN: abundant esp. in paddies |
| 12 | Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | common |
| 13 | Intermediate Egret | <i>Egretta intermedia</i> | widespread but not common, in paddies etc occasionally in small numbers |
| 14 | Great Egret | <i>Egretta alba</i> | mainly tanks in modest nos. |
| 15 | Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | widespread but not many: commonest at Bundala |
| 16 | Purple Heron | <i>Ardea purpurea manilensis</i> | on 3 dates, esp at Yala |
| 17 | Painted Stork | <i>Mycteria leucocephala</i> | scattered singles-Yala, Bundala & tanks at Tissa. The first of this glorious bird noted at Debera Wewa & interesting foraging behaviour sweeping semi-open bill from side to side in shallow water filmed at Yala. |
| 18 | Asian Openbill | <i>Anastomus oscitans</i> | widespread but not in large flocks, frequent in paddies |
| 19 | Woolly-necked Stork | <i>Ciconia episcopus episcopus</i> | close singleton in wet field margin on walk along the track to Kandalama hotel |
| 20 | Black-headed Ibis | <i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i> | paddies & wetlands Yala/ Tissa area only. |
| 21 | Eurasian Spoonbill | <i>Platalea leucorodia leucorodia</i> | up to 20 at Yala & Bundala |
| 22 | Lesser Whistling-duck | <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> | small nos close at Tissa tanks & 40 Bundala |
| 23 | Garganey | <i>Anas querquedula</i> | a pair at Bundala were the only dabbling ducks on trip- this seems fairly typical for Sri Lanka. |
| 24 | Oriental Honey Buzzard | <i>Pernis ptiloryncus</i> | 1 in flight on way back to Colombo last p.m. |

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|-------------------------|--|---|
| 25 | Brahminy Kite | <i>Haliastur indus</i> | Very common in coastal wet areas, filling the niche occupied across much of Asia by Black Kite. |
| 26 | White-bellied Sea Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> | on 5 dates in pairs: immatures too at tanks nr the coast |
| 27 | Grey-headed Fish Eagle | <i>Ichthyophaga ichthaetus</i> | singles perched scoped at Bundala and Yala |
| 28 | Crested Serpent Eagle | <i>Spilornis cheela</i> | 3 on drive to Sinharaja & singles at 5 other locations |
| 29 | Shikra | <i>Accipiter badius badius</i> | 6 individuals noted various places, usually in marginal woodland- the common accipiter here. small endemic race: <i>spilogaster</i> |
| 30 | Besra | <i>Accipiter virgatus besra</i> | a single bird, scoped drying out on a treetop at Sinharaja |
| 31 | Crested Hawk Eagle | <i>Spizaetus cirrhatus ceylanensis</i> | a pair & 3 singletons various lowland locations with several scope studies possible. No distant dodgy raptors on this trip! |
| 32 | Legge's Hawk Eagle | <i>Nisaetus kelaarti</i> | heard but untickable on one occasion at midday at Hunas Falls Golf Course Endemic race; lovely whitish tips to the secretary-bird elongated crown feathers. SW India/SL split from Mountain Hawk Eagle: <i>nipalensis</i> . |
| 33 | Common Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnuculus</i> | single in flight at Yala |
| 34 | Perigrine Falcon | <i>Falco peregrinus</i> | migrant individual- small & slaty, with a dark hood- at Bundala early am. <i>leucocephalus</i> winters in SL, in addition to the resident Shaheen: <i>peregrinator</i> |
| 35 | Sri Lanka Junglefowl | <i>Gallus lafayetii</i> | max 7 on 19th at Sinharaja: various locations, including inside closed-canopy forest where I guess they truly belong. Often not shy. |
| 36 | Sri Lanka Spurfowl | <i>Galloperdix bicalcarata</i> | Tough endemic to see. Heard three pairs at Sinharaja, and then finally saw 3 including a male nr Kudawa village in marginal forest near plantations on the way out. |
| 37 | Indian Peafowl | <i>Pavo cristatus</i> | common in dry zone lowlands around Yala, where some males were perched up in display, despite the inclement weather |
| 38 | Barred Buttonquail | <i>Turnix suscitator leggei</i> | Yala NP: single on 19th & pr on 20th on the drive well seen from the vehicle. Endemic race: <i>leggei</i> |
| 39 | Slaty-legged Crake | <i>Rallina eurizonoides</i> | exceptional view of one at Sinharaja. |
| 40 | White-breasted Waterhen | <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> | common and vocal in lowland wetlands |
| 41 | Common Moorhen | <i>Gallinula chloropus indica</i> | 15 at Bundala and a few at Yala |
| 42 | Purple Swampfen | <i>Porphyrio (porphyrio) poliocephalus</i> | common in reeds/ tank edge. recent split but I don't know if the global complex has received systematic treatment? |
| 43 | Watercock | <i>Gallicrex cinerea cinerea</i> | a female/immature male scoped nr Bundala |
| 44 | Pheasant-tailed Jacana | <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i> | a few around Tissa. |
| 45 | Greater Painted-snipe | <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i> | great view of a pair resting near Bundala. |

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|----|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 46 | Black-winged Stilt | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | common around Yala |
| 47 | Indian Stone-curlew | <i>Burhinus indicus</i> | a pair on first p.m. driving south around Colombo & other pairs at Weerawila & Yala. A recent split from Eurasian: <i>B. oediacnemus</i> |
| 48 | Great Thick-knee | <i>Eascus recurvirostris</i> | 9 at Yala and 2 pairs elsewhere around Tissa |
| 49 | Common Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | single at Yala showed well |
| 50 | Kentish Plover | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | many at Bundala and a few at Yala |
| 51 | Lesser Sand Plover | <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> | many at Bundala & a scattered sightings nr Tissa |
| 52 | Pacific Golden Plover | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i> | single at Yala showed well. |
| 53 | Yellow-wattled Lapwing | <i>Vanellus malabaricus</i> | small numbers around Tissa/ Yala. Sub-continent endemic. |
| 54 | Red-wattled Lapwing | <i>Vanellus indicus</i> | first at Galle a pair, then various lowland locales endemic race: <i>lankae</i> |
| 55 | Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> | big numbers at Bundala and a few at Yala |
| 56 | Curlew Sandpiper | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> | big nos at Bundala and some at Yala and en rte |
| 57 | Ruff | <i>Phiomachus pugnax</i> | 1 at Bundala |
| 58 | Pintail Snipe | <i>Gallinago stenura</i> | first en route from Sinharaja;30+ close at Bundala in one paddy and other groups in the area cannot be reliably separated in the field from Swinhoe's, but sheer numbers and extreme rarity of the latter in SL make ID safe. |
| 59 | Black-tailed Godwit | <i>Limosa limosa</i> | 500 in paddies around Hambantota en route to Tissa & 300+ at Bundala |
| 60 | Common Redshank | <i>Tringa totanus eurhinus</i> | max 35 at Bundala |
| 61 | Marsh Sandpiper | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> | max 30 at Bundala |
| 62 | Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | max 10 at Bundala |
| 63 | Green Sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | |
| 64 | Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | max 7 at Bundala- all tringa seen in the Tissa area |
| 65 | Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | small numbers seen various locales |
| 66 | Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i> | scattered individuals at the coast Unawatuna/Galle |
| 67 | Gull-billed Tern | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica</i> | common coastally and on tanks |
| 68 | Caspian Tern | <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> | single seen Bundala |
| 69 | Large-crested Tern | <i>Thalasseus bergii</i> | 16 at Galle scoped resting plus a few others |
| 70 | Common Tern | <i>Sterna hirundo</i> | a few coastal in SW and 6 at Bundala: <i>longipennis</i> |
| 71 | Little Tern | <i>Sterna albifrons</i> | 4 at Bundala |
| 72 | Whiskered Tern | <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> | common on tanks |
| 73 | White-winged Tern | <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i> | up to 6 at Tissa and Bundala |
| 74 | Rock Pigeon | <i>Columba livia</i> | seen in small numbers in urban areas, including at high elevations |

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|----|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 75 | Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon | <i>Columba torringtonii</i> | 2 pairs on Surrey Estate nr Ella- both scoped very nicely. Related to Ashy & Nilgiri Wood Pigeon. |
| 76 | Spotted Dove | <i>Stigmatopelia chinensi</i> | throughout but very nice to look at <i>suratensis</i> of Pak e Assam according to HBW, but Robson and Rasmussen notes it as endemic race: <i>ceylonensis</i> |
| 77 | Emerald Dove | <i>Chalcophaps indica</i> | good looks at 3 in Sinharaja. SL endemic race: <i>robinsoni</i> |
| 78 | Orange-breasted Green Pigeon | <i>Treron bicincta</i> | 1-3 on 3 occasions in Yala NP & Kandy Botanical Gardens Really does look distinctly orange breasted. Endemic race: <i>leggei</i> |
| 79 | Sri Lanka Green Pigeon | <i>Treron pompadora</i> | 12+ scoped at Kandy BotGds in one tree this nominate must have been split from the Indian taxon (the taxon is not described in HBW). |
| 80 | Green Imperial Pigeon | <i>Ducula aenea</i> | several sightings of presents at various elevations. Race: <i>pusilla</i> of SW India/SL. Lowlands. |
| 81 | Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot | <i>Loriculus beryllinus</i> | common in wetter lower elevation forest. A very colourful parrot which was easy to observe, partly as a result of their habit of perching near the tip of tall Rattan and also their vocal habits and pair bonding. VERNAL of India/SE Asia lacks red crown, is greener. |
| 82 | Alexandrine Parakeet | <i>Psittacula eupatria</i> | several looks at small groups in lower elevation wet forest edge. Nom of S Ind/SL, where steep population decline & mainly now in the N |
| 83 | Rose-ringed Parakeet | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> | common in drier lowland areas. A flock of 100 at Debera Wewa disturbed by a Crested Hawk-Eagle. <i>manillensis</i> of Pen Ind/SL. |
| 84 | Plum-headed Parakeet | <i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i> | scoped views of 4 at Hunas Falls Simpson's Trail at forest edge, including a pair of this gorgeous bird at a lone tree on the ridge with the female inspecting a nest hole. Monotypic. |
| 85 | Layard's Parakeet | <i>Psittacula calthropae</i> | flight views at Sinharaja, scoped 4 foraging close at Hunas Falls. Old name: Emerald-collard Parakeet. |
| 86 | Jacobin (Pied) Cuckoo | <i>Clamator jacobinus</i> | singles in dry zone forest, acacia bushes in reedbeds (observing prinias for parasitism?) & a pair copulating at Yala nom of S Ind/SL |
| 87 | Common Hawk Cuckoo | <i>Hierococcyx varius</i> | scoped nicely calling at Hunas Falls, unusually out in the open for time. A vocal individual, so I infer that the species is distinctly uncommon as we heard no others. endemic ssp <i>ciceliae</i> - darker, w/more banded breast |
| 88 | Grey-bellied Cuckoo | <i>Cacomantis passerinus</i> | scoped 2 at Yala NP Wintering from Indian subcontinent. Split from Plaintive Cuckoo: <i>merulinus</i> . |
| 89 | Asian Koel | <i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i> | females commonly heard at lower elevations; a female scoped bathing by Wirawila Wela, Tissa area. Nominate of Indian Subcontinent. Parasite of Crows, so there should be no shortage of nesting opportunitites.... |
| 90 | Blue-faced Malkoha | <i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i> | pair Debera Wewa in garden/ cultivation. edge dry zone scoped. Also on first Yala drive. Dry zone bush . S.India/ SL endemic species. |

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|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 91 | Red-faced Malkoha | <i>Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus</i> | finally located a mixed flock at Sinharaja containing a pr scoped Related CHESTNUT-BREASTED & YELLOW-BILLED of Sulawesi |
| 92 | Green-billed Coucal | <i>Centropus chlororynchus</i> | fabulous view of a pair by the Research huts at Sinharaja: the sexes call at different pitches and the male also gave a harsh kiaow-kiaow-kiaow on one occasion. Another was heard near a cascade by the road near Weddagala en route to Sinharaja. Rare & local endemic, declining in tall humid evergreen forest <800m. Closely related to Greater/ Southern Coucal but clearly ecologically, vocally and morphologically distinct. |
| 93 | Southern Coucal | <i>Centropus (sinensis) parroti</i> | commonly heard & seen except inside forest <i>parroti</i> split from GREATER by Rasmussen. |
| 94 | Indian Scops-owl | <i>Otus bakkamoena</i> | roosting daytime under eaves of an outbuilding in Tissa; on our final night, one in the torch at the airport hotel grounds. Large white ear tufts & frons, dark crown, indistinct pale scapular markings; buff nuchal collar; large; us. ochre morph. Lowland groves/cultivations. Frog-like whuks |
| 95 | Serendib Scops-owl | <i>Otus thilohoffmanii</i> | Great view at Sinharaja not far from Martin's lodge, where its single, very typical owl call was also heard later that morning. BBOC 124(2) 2004 D. Warakagoda noted vocals 1995, 1st seen Jan 2001. A close relative of REDDISH SCOPS O. <i>rufescens</i> of the Sundaic region |
| 96 | Brown Fish Owl | <i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i> | a one-eyed rooster at Tissa. Nominated is endemic to SL in large SE Asian range |
| 97 | Chestnut-backed Owlet | <i>Glaucidium castanonotum</i> | heard 6 at Sinharaja, before scoping 1 of a pair on track off the road north down from Elkudawa |
| 98 | Brown Hawk Owl | <i>Ninox scutulata</i> | 1 at dusk at Taj Airport hotel gdn final night Sub species: <i>hirsuta</i> of subcontinent. In large SEAs. Range |
| 99 | Sri Lanka Frogmouth | <i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i> | a female roosting in bamboo at head height close to the trail at Sinharaja: the female is rufous, the male greyer. Amila suspected that the male was sitting on the nest somewhere close by. We did not hear any calling at night- a liquid chuckling. This frogmouth is short-tailed. SW Ind./SL |
| 100 | Jerdon's Nightjar | <i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i> | nice look at one with its large tail in which there is much white after dinner at Kandalama, in semi-open woodland with granite outcropping. Liquid "ch-wo-wo" endemic race: <i>aequabilis</i> . |
| 101 | Crested Treeswift | <i>Hemiprocne coronata</i> | 4 pair sighted at diff lowland locations, including great perched scope views of a pair above Kudawa |
| 102 | Indian Swiftlet | <i>Aerodramus unicolor</i> | seen in moderate nos mainly in the highlands |
| 103 | Little Swift | <i>Apus affinis</i> | seen in the west at 6 localities near habitations. |
| 106 | Asian Palm Swift | <i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i> | up to 5 seen at 5 lowland locales |
| 107 | Malabar Trogon | <i>Harpactes fasciatus</i> | a male and female seen on 2 days at Sinharaja, assoc. mixed species flocks nominate race endemic to SL: grey not black hood |

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|-----|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 108 | Stork-billed Kingfisher | <i>Pelargopsis capensis</i> | 4 individuals in west: best seen at Kandalama |
| 109 | White-throated Kingfisher | <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> | noted in gardens/wayside throughout below 2000m: one filmed subduing a large caterpillar which looked pretty toxic |
| 110 | Common Kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> | 2 individuals seen |
| 111 | Pied Kingfisher | <i>Ceryle rudis</i> | only seen at Bundala where 6 and 1 at Yala Surprisingly uncommon in SL |
| 112 | Little Green Bee-eater | <i>Merops orientalis</i> | common at Tissa/ Yala in pairs |
| 113 | Blue-tailed Bee-eater | <i>Merops philippinus</i> | Very obliging & common at Bundala/Yala, also in wetter South West. |
| 114 | Chestnut-headed Bee-eater | <i>Merops leschenaulti</i> | pairs at Ella, SW lowlands & Tissa area |
| 115 | Indian Roller | <i>Coracias benghalensis</i> | 2 individuals in SW and west: both perched |
| 116 | Common Hoopoe | <i>Upupa epops</i> | 4 individuals including a pair at Yala/Bundala |
| 117 | Malabar Pied Hornbill | <i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i> | A flock of 3 in a bare tree crown at Yala NP Sub-continent endemic. |
| 118 | Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill E | <i>Ocyeros gingalensis</i> | max 5 at Elkaduwa where some great video taken from the vehicle of a roadside pair; first heard at Sinharaja, also filmed at Tissa & seen at Kandalama . Call reminiscent of Helmeted Hornbill. |
| 119 | Brown-headed Barbet | <i>Megalaima zeylanica</i> | common throughout excluding in highlands Sub-continent endemic |
| 120 | Yellow-fronted Barbet | <i>Megalaima flavifrons</i> | the first a good look at one first morning nr the clearing at Sinharaja; fc heard except in the highlands |
| 122 | Sri Lanka Small Barbet | <i>Megalaima rubricapillus</i> | fc but less so in the dry zone or highlands. Easy enough to observe, as are all the barbets in SL, it seems nominate, endemic taxon now split from red-throated: <i>malabarica</i> |
| 123 | Coppersmith Barbet | <i>Megalaima haemacephala</i> | heard close on the track to Kandalama but not seen |
| 124 | Indian Pygmy Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopus nanus</i> | a pair at Elkaduwa Red periorbital, pale eye of nanus group. Race: <i>gymnophthalmus</i> SL form - whiter unders, darker crown |
| 125 | Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopus mahrattensis</i> | nice look at one at Yala NP, associated with a mf nominate |
| 126 | Lesser Yellownappe | <i>Picus chlorolophus wellsi</i> | single at Hunas Falls Simpson Trail; also heard near Kudawa SL endemic race: <i>wellsi</i> : |
| 127 | Black-rumped Flameback | <i>Dinopium benghalense</i> | Widespread outside the highlands. Crimson back in SL race, reddish iris, dk bill;only hindcrest crimson in F. <i>psarodes</i> endemic SL |

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|-----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 128 | Crimson-backed Flameback | <i>Chrysocolaptes stricklandi</i> | 2 sightings at Sinharaja, the first a nice view on the Research Station trail, the other a pair near Kudawa village at edge of plantation HBW does not split...13ssp variable, esp Philippines split from GREATER - crimson back but NB also in Negros form & in general the Philippine taxa in this complex are more distinctive than <i>stricklandi</i> |
| 129 | Indian Pitta | <i>Pitta brachyura</i> | 6 encounters-the first in Victoria Park, N Eliya; a night-roosting bird spot-lit at Kandalama A garden bird in SL in winter, e.g. in Amila's backyard. Migrant. |
| 130 | Jerdon's Bushlark | <i>Mirafra affinis</i> | 4 in the lowlands, all being excellent studies of singletons close on the ground split on song, buffer uppercolour, from <i>assamica</i> RUFIOUS-WINGED nka as BENGAL |
| 131 | Ashy-crowned Finch-lark | <i>Eremopterix griseus</i> | 6 incl at least one full plumage male at Bundala wetlands& one at Yala NP Indian Sub-cont. endemic |
| 132 | Oriental Skylark | <i>Alauda gulgula</i> | single noted nr Bundala well studied & video: distinctly buffy and short-tailed, long-legged with a neat necklace <i>australis</i> warmer col. |
| 133 | Sand Martin | <i>Riparia riparia</i> | 2 at Bundala: scarce in Sri Lanka |
| 134 | Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | in large nos in dryzone lowlands <i>rustica</i> and <i>gutturialis</i> winters commonly in SL |
| 135 | Hill Swallow | <i>Hirundo domicola</i> | good looks at a few at Hunas Falls but it is hard to see any green in the upperparts.... spl fr PACIFIC nka HOUSE S. on habits, green uppers not blue |
| 136 | Sri Lanka Swallow | <i>Hirundo hyperythra</i> | scattered pairs lowlands, a distinctive song noted in Hunas Falls early in the morning split from RED-RUMPED |
| 137 | Richard's Pipit | <i>Anthus richardi</i> | 1 close at Weerawila tank made for a good comparison with Paddyfield and Blyth's later that day: good video; & 2 at Yala NP-bill,tail big w/ long, stout bill, pale lores, flushed flies hi w/explosive shreep |
| 138 | Paddyfield Pipit | <i>Anthus rufulus</i> | goodd looks at 9 indivs mainly Tissa area-tail, length and bill size and shape ID features smaller than RICHARDS:chip-chip-chip & fluttery flight |
| 139 | Blyth's Pipit | <i>Anthus godlewskii</i> | a singleton well studied at Yala NP: shorter, more conical bill one-toned bill than Richard's and chip-chip flight call noted. pointier shorter bill, tail also shorter cf RICHARDS; pale lores, breast well-streaked; call a wheezy speeu |
| 140 | Forest Wagtail | <i>Dendronanthus indicus</i> | 3 at Vic Park Nuwara Eliya: video |
| 141 | Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | widely in suitable habitat |
| 142 | Sri Lanka Woodshrike | <i>Tephrodornis affinis</i> | first seen at Yala in a mixed flock, this species seems to be common in suitable habitat & several at Kandalama, often close up, singing their sweet song. Recent split suggested by Rasmussen, less marked supercil, shorter tail, voice cf COMMON |

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|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 143 | Black-headed Cuckooshrike | <i>Coracina melanoptera</i> | pair at Hunas Falls from Simpson's Trail <i>sykesi</i> |
| 144 | Orange Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i> | widely mainly pairs excluding highlds flammeus of Ind, SL SCARLET now used for the Himalayan taxon <i>P. speciosus</i> |
| 145 | Small Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i> | pair at DeberaWewa close, in a Wood Apple tree: a couple of others sighted here. Also at Surrey Estate. They really are very small: hardly much larger than an Asian Brown Flycatcher. this race colourful |
| 146 | Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike | <i>Hemipus pictatus</i> | small nos in mixed flocks at various elevations <i>leggei</i> endemic to SL: both sexes are black above |
| 147 | Black-capped Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i> | group of 4 at Sinharaja of this rather distinctive species split fr BLACK-CRESTED-black head, no crest. Tail short & rounded, white-tipped. Yellow throat and dark iris shared with BORNEAN (which also split) |
| 148 | Red-vented Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> | Very common throughout: distinctive and unconfusing, undeserving of Amila's appellation "vermin" <i>haemorrhosus</i> endemic to SL |
| 149 | Yellow-eared Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus penicillatus</i> | only at Nuwara Eliya, where common & easily viewed NT in its very RR. |
| 150 | White-browed Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i> | furtive in undergrowth in lowlands: well seen at Kandalama |
| 151 | Yellow-browed Bulbul | <i>Iole indica</i> | lowland wetter forested areas in small nos. SW Ind./ SL endemic species |
| 152 | Square-tailed Black Bulbul | <i>Hypsipetes ganeesa</i> | a few observations of pairs in lower el. wetforest; this taxon all blackish w/ darker crest. spl fr HIMALAYAN BLACK. Endemic to W Ghats & SL. <i>humii</i> in SL may be vocally distinct |
| 153 | Jerdon's Leafbird | <i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i> | 2 pairs in drier lowland areas Favours drier conditions Ind/SL endemic: a recent split from BLUE-WINGED, lacks blue in prim's & tl |
| 154 | Golden-fronted Leafbird | <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i> | 2 pairs studied in lowland wetter forest areas. <i>insularis</i> of far swInd/SL |
| 155 | Common Iora | <i>Aegithina tiphia</i> | common by voice, many excellent looks around Kandalama hotel in particular. <i>multicolor</i> |
| 156 | Marshall's Iora | <i>Aegithna nigrolutea</i> | seen close at Yala from the vehicle- voice noted and white in tail, as well as unmarked olive-yellow nape-collar supposed to be monotypic, mainly N India |
| 157 | Indian Blue Robin | <i>Luscinia brunnea</i> | heard at Sinharaja & Kakgala, then a great look at one in the hotel gardens at Neliya Winters SL |
| 158 | Oriental Magpie Robin | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> | common and vocal in edge habitat all elevations |
| 159 | White-rumped Shama | <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i> | bathing in puddle on the track at YalaNP, 2 other malabaricus acc HBW but Robson as well as Rasmussen lists as endemic ssp (yes...) <i>leggei</i> |

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|-----|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 160 | Pied Bushchat | <i>Saxicola caprata atratus</i> | 1 in N Eliya hotel vegetable gardens: slaty, white vent <i>atratus</i> in SL: darker & more streaked |
| 161 | Indian Robin | <i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i> | pretty common in stony dryzone edge low in vegn- some good looks <i>leucopterus</i> in SL: glossier black, not brownish |
| 162 | Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush | <i>Myiophoneus blighi</i> | female at dusk close, at a small stream below the road at a bend above Hakgala Bo Gardens. |
| 163 | Pied Thrush | <i>Zoothera wardii</i> | UM, se 3 males after dawn by stream Victoria Pk N Eliya after no good views of birds the previous afternoon. One or two males subsequently sighted: no females. Later in the morning they move up into the trees & are hard to locate. wintering Indian Sub-Cont endemic which breeds at high elevations in the Himalaya |
| 164 | Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush | <i>Zoothera imrbicata</i> | Satisfying close views of an individual foraging on the ground at Sinharaja in shaded flat sandy substrate by a small stream. Very long bill is striking. split from SCALY/WHITE'S- shorter tail & legs, relatively longer bill. |
| 165 | Spot-winged Thrush | <i>Zoothera spiloptera</i> | 3 birds seen on trails at Sinharaja & 6 heard: a fine song, recorded on video. Easiest of course to see on paths at dusk and dawn, when the light is not conducive to great video. terrestrial: wet zone NT RR <2200m |
| 166 | Indian Blackbird | <i>Turdus simillimus</i> | 2 males seen in poor light on the ground close Hakgala Bot Gardens, in the rain: slaty with yellowish bill and orbital SL ssp <i>kinnisii</i> - HBW thinks this might be further candidate for splitting..... |
| 167 | Sri Lanka Bush Warbler | <i>Elaphrornis palliseri</i> | nice looks in shrubbery below my feet from the N Eliya Cloud Forest Trail: another heard and seen less well here. A large typically dull <i>Bradypterus</i> w/ buffer throat. |
| 168 | Zittinging Cisticola | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> | a few in the Tissa area, not in song display |
| 169 | Grey-breasted Prinia | <i>Prinia hodgsonii</i> | scoped in a Tissa scrubby gdn; heard at Kandalama: Robson lists as <i>leggei</i> , but <i>pectoralis</i> according to Rasmussen. |
| 170 | Plain Prinia | <i>Prinia inornata insularis</i> | singles at Bundala & Kandalama, where 4 Prinia species in the fields SL song chinkit-chinkit-chinkit. <i>insularis</i> endemic to SL voice differs.... |
| 171 | Ashy Prinia | <i>Prinia socialis brevicauda</i> | Pairs of this brightly marked prinia seen close at Ella lunch spot & at Kandalama in a roadside field <i>brevicauda</i> endemic SL: tail very short. |
| 172 | Jungle Prinia | <i>Prinia sylvatica valida</i> | Single in a weedy scrub field Kandalama hotel road song pulsing zong zee chu. Dry scrub <1800m <i>valida</i> endemic to SL. |
| 173 | Common Tailorbird | <i>Orthotomus sutorius sutorius</i> | a few sightings; highland <i>fernandonis</i> - darker green above w/ darker grey flanks endemic ssp- seen at Victoria Pk SL endemic ssp: <i>sutorius</i> lowlands. |
| 174 | Blyth's Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i> | common by voice in lower el rank scrub, seen at the Surrey Estate |

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 175 | Indian Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus (stentoreus) meridionalis</i> | Bundala 3 close This form showed a greyish wash to the breast & a slightly grey cast to the crown: it appears relatively short-billed and round-headed within its superspecies: <i>meridionalis</i> of SW Ind/SL |
| 176 | Bright Green Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i> | scattered records at mid-elevations Not as bright as I was expecting it to be Breeding Turkestan/ wintering swIndia /SL. Supposedly bright:lg yell supercil w/ prom wh lower eyecrescent, broken greatr covt wgbar, no crown stripe: aka GREEN,spl fr GREENISH |
| 177 | Large-billed Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i> | good looks at 2 in Sinharaja mfs & singles elsewhere winters from Himalayas |
| 178 | Tickell's Blue Flycatcher | <i>Cyornis tickelliae jerdoni</i> | 1 well seen SurreyEstate, heard 3 others at lower elev SL <i>jerdoni</i> : could be split (but no pic. In HBW!) Orange throat & breast extend into belly of male & song more varied |
| 179 | Dull blue Flycatcher | <i>Eumyias sordida</i> | exceptional looks at 3 individuals N Eliya & Hakgala |
| 180 | Brown-breasted Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa muttui</i> | 9 sightings in the lower storey of Sinharaja. Bug-eyed for darker foraging conditions, lower storey than Brown Flycatcher. Named after Layard's Tamil cook, Muttu. (a name commonly pronounced Muththu by locals according to Amila) wintering fr NE India. |
| 181 | Asian Brown Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa dauurica</i> | scattered sightings in wetter forested areas <i>poonensis</i> , wintering from Himalaya |
| 182 | Kashmir Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula subrubra</i> | great looks at a male singing in low vegetation by the stream near bridge at Victoria Park, N Eliya VU tiny Western Him RR |
| 183 | Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher | <i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i> | 2 in mf at N Eliya ravine & heard elsewhere at high elevations <i>ceylonensis</i> of Indian Subcont. |
| 184 | White-browed Fantail | <i>Rhipidura aureola</i> | exceptional views below Elkadawa & Hunas Falls area <i>compressirostris</i> SW Ind&SL |
| 185 | Black-naped Monarch | <i>Hypothymis azurea</i> | noted on all Sinharaja outings, Also at Surrey Estate. Race: <i>ceylonensis</i> endemic to SL. |
| 186 | Asian Paradise Flycatcher | <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i> | Sinharaja area & Kandalama <i>ceylonensis</i> - also an SL endemic ssp. |
| 187 | Brown-capped Babbler | <i>Pellorneus fuscicapillus</i> | 1 close at Sinharaja <i>fuscicapillum</i> wet zone nom <i>babaulti</i> : presumed same also heard below Elkudawa. Dry zone ssp: great views of group of 4 at Kandalama. Nom in wet zone, <i>babaulti</i> in dry N&E dry zone ssp w/ paler under parts, greyer uppers. |
| 188 | Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler | <i>Pomatorhinus (horsfieldii)</i> | <i>melanurus</i> widespread in various habitats from wetzone closed forest to open tea plantations with scattered trees at higher elevations. Generally vocal and not especially shy. spl fr INDIAN & WHITE-BROWED shorter-bil much shortertail than INDIAN. Melodious, higher pitched voice. |
| 189 | Tawny-bellied Babbler | <i>Dumetia hyperythra</i> | pair at Debera Wewa field shrubbery & an unusually large group of 12 moving rapidly through tea by Simpson's Trail at Hunas Falls <i>phillipsi</i> endemic to SL white throated. |

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| 190 | Dark-fronted Babbler | <i>Rhopocichla atriceps nigrifrons</i> | Sinharaja 2 gps of 6 Reminded me strongly of the endemic "white-eyes" of the Lesser Sundas monotypic genus: SW form richer toned w/ whole hd blackish: pale under |
| 191 | Yellow-eyed Babbler | <i>Chrysomma sinense</i> | a close pr from jeep Yala NP of this distinctive but not very well-named babbler with its stout tubular black bill on a pale face, with reddish eye. <i>nasale</i> endemic to SL: stouter-billed, shorter-tailed |
| 192 | Ceylon Rufous (Orange-billed) Babbler | <i>Turdoides rufescens</i> | 20 on 2nd day at Sinharaja, but no mfs on first afternoon there. Next morning, at first seen in a monflock of 12+ NT RR but fc incl logged fores |
| 193 | Yellow-billed Babbler | <i>Turdoides affinis</i> | vc and conspic lower el ex forest taprobanus endemic ssp |
| 194 | Ashy-headed Laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax cinereifrons</i> | party of five Sinharaja first pm, not appearing to be in a mixed flock and at chest height VU RR. Estimated only 2500-5000 left, but still in half of all mixed flocks |
| 195 | Great Tit | <i>Parus major</i> | several at higher els in small nos, the first a pr at Ella Rest House lunch stop. Often in higer-el mfs, along with Greer-h Canary Flyc, Dull Blue Flyc. & Bar-w Fly-Shrike maharrattarum-in the cinereus complex, diff fr minor of E Asia. Outertl white. |
| 196 | Velvet-fronted Nuthatch | <i>Sitta frontalis</i> | pr on tall trunk above N Eliya |
| 197 | Purple-rumped Sunbird | <i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i> | widely outside the highlands nominate |
| 198 | Loten's Sunbird | <i>Cinnyris lotenia</i> R, | mid-el sightings of 5 indivs incl 3 males; also seen at Debra Wewa S Ind/SL endemic |
| 199 | Purple Sunbirds | <i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i> | a few at lower els: best views were of a pr at Kandalama &at Ella Rest House |
| 200 | Thick-billed Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum agile</i> | single on last am in mf at Kandalama nr hotel not common in SL, it seems |
| 201 | Legge's Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum vincens</i> | c at Sinharaja , where max 8 in day |
| 202 | Pale-billed Flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i> | fc & distinctively vocal at lower els ceylonense endemic ssp |
| 203 | Oriental White-eye | <i>Zosterops palpabrosus</i> | v yellow colour: 6 at Kandalama & 2 Ella RH |
| 204 | Sri Lanka White-eye | <i>Zosterops ceylonensis</i> | sev sightings of gps in NE area, first at Ella RH |
| 205 | Black-hooded Oriole | <i>Oriolus xanthornus</i> | regularly seen and heard outside highlands endemic ssp ceylonensis has a distinctive call to Craig Robson's ears |
| 206 | Brown Shrike | <i>Lanius cristatus</i> | several: one with a grey crown, brown mantle-all indivs assignable to <i>cristatus cristatus</i> ; <i>lucionensis</i> has grey crown but according to HBW also grey mantle |
| 207 | White-bellied Drongo | <i>Dicrurus caeruleus</i> | both ssp noted: sev of leucopygialis in Sinharaja area & en route there, sev of dryzone insularis in Kandalama area leucopygialis in swSL is endemic cf insularis in dry flatlands w/ annual rainfall <150cm |

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 208 | Sri Lanka Crested Drongo | <i>Dicrurus lophorinus</i> | 6 seen on the 19th Sinharaja. Long deeply forked tail lacks rackets of GTER-RACKET-TLED. Very sociable. Voice may be higher, less irregular too. Heard mimicking Banded Bay Cuckoo at Sinharaja. |
| 209 | Greater Racket-tailed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus paradiseus ceylonicus</i> | scoped from my Kandalama hotel room's balcony. Smaller form w/ shorter crest: imms have fully webbed retrices <i>ceylonicus</i> of NE, E & S SL dry zone <700m |
| 210 | Ashy Woodswallow | <i>Artamus fuscus</i> | a pr scoped on the road back to Colombo mono(typic) of SE Asia & India |
| 211 | Sri Lanka Blue Magpie | <i>Urocissa ornata</i> | up to 8 around Martins Sinharaja at first light, foraging v successfully for moths attracted to the dining platform lights |
| 212 | House Crow | <i>Corvus splendens</i> | vc in lowlands though not around Kandy/Sigiriya |
| 213 | Jungle Crow | <i>Corvus leuallantii</i> | widely in dryzone Less heavy, less arched bill, more domed crown and less wedged tail of small <i>leuallantii</i> according to BirdLife International (2008, 2009). |
| 214 | White-faced Starling | <i>Sturnia albofrontata</i> | a pair in clearing by Martin's lodge at Sinharaja scoped & seen several times on both days. Observed eating a caterpillar. Very distinctive monotypic genus. |
| 215 | Brahminy Myna | <i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i> | 3 close to vehicle were videoed at Yala NP. A very attractive starling. |
| 216 | Rosy Starling | <i>Sturnus roseus</i> | 20 at Yala and 200-300 at Bundala. Generally rather dirty looking. |
| 217 | Common Myna | <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> | seen everywhere at all els in good nos. <i>melanosternus</i> is SL endemic. |
| 218 | Sri Lanka Myna | <i>Gracula ptilogenys</i> | "up to 8 on each of our 3 days at Sinharaja" like HILL, but orange bill is stouter & yell wattles on side hind neck. Moist forest/edge. |
| 219 | Lesser Hill Myna | <i>Gracula indica</i> | 8 well seen at Kandy Botanical Gardens split from <i>religiosa</i> , a S Indian subcontinent endemic |
| 220 | House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | in scattered prs around buildings widely <i>indicus</i> -distinctive ssp |
| 221 | White-rumped Munia | <i>Lonchura striata</i> | common at lower else nominate: very Black & white |
| 222 | Scaly-breasted Munia | <i>Lonchura punctulata</i> | widely excluding at high elevations |
| 223 | Black-throated Munia | <i>Lonchura kelaarti</i> | HILL M. 2 sightings of up to 9 Elkadawa area-wet recently seeded paddies in a mixed munia flock & in a mixed munia flock at tea plantation edge on Simpsons Trail. Has barred belly and rump, unlike <i>jerdoni</i> -lumped with the South Indian relative by Rasmussen, pending studies of its song. A potential split. |
| 224 | Tricoloured Munia | <i>Lonchura malacca</i> | 8 & nest at Bundala nominate: <i>atricapilla</i> of N/NE India lacks any white |

Mammals.

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 01 | Palm Squirrel | <i>Funambulus palmarum</i> | commonly seen except in Sinharaja forest |
| 02 | Giant Squirrel | <i>Ratufa macroura</i> | a few nice looks at two forms: melanochra in Sinharaja (inebriated by the side of the path guarding a jack-fruit) & the grizzly- tailed macroura in the Elkudawa area & Dambulla road |
| 03 | Layard's Squirrel | <i>Funambulus layardi</i> | 2 at least at Martin's Sinharaja |
| 04 | Dusky-striped Squirrel | <i>Funambulus sublineatus</i> | 3 in the Nuwara Eliya zone |
| 05 | Black-naped Hare | <i>Lepus nigricollis</i> | a couple of sightings in Yala NP & also at Kandalama, where not very shy, surprisingly |
| 06 | Toque Macaque | <i>Macaca sinica</i> | common nuisances around Kandalama/ Sigirya |
| 07 | Tufted Grey Langur/Hanuman L | <i>Semnopithecus priam</i> | common in the acacia woodland in the Tissa/Yala/Bundala area |
| 08 | Purple-faced Leaf Monkey | <i>Trachypithecus vetulus</i> | some of the wetzone ssp seen around Sinharaja & another form around Kandalama |
| 09 | Leopard | <i>Panthera pardus</i> | [the girls had a nice scope view of one on the thirsd -early am - drive in Yala NP. We missed one by seconds on the second pm drive..] |
| 10 | Jungle Cat | <i>Felis chaus</i> | two different individuals on successive evenings on the way out of Yala NP |
| 11 | Brown Mongoose | <i>Hepestes brachurus</i> | one hunting at Debera Wewa |
| 12 | Grey Mongoose | <i>Herpestes edwardsii</i> | one crossed the road at Kandalama |
| 13 | Ruddy Mongoose | <i>Herpestes smithii</i> | 3 well seen from the vehicle at Yala NP & nice video |
| 14 | Ring-tailed Civet | <i>Viverricula indica</i> | one by the road pre-dawn near Elkudawa |
| 15 | Asian Elephant | <i>Elephas maximus</i> | a maximum of six noted at Yala NP- 2 on the first pm and a mother and calf at dusk on the 2nd evening. A pair also at Bundala |
| 16 | Wild Buffalo | <i>Bubalus arnee</i> | many at Yala NP- perhaps 50+, usually in the water |
| 17 | Water/Domestic Buffalo | <i>Bubalus bubalus</i> | Plenty at Tissa, Bundala and Yala areas |
| 18 | Spotted Deer (Chital) | <i>Axis axis</i> | 100+ in Yala NP |
| 19 | Sambur | <i>Cervus unicolor</i> | 10 seen at Yala NP |
| 20 | Wild Boar | <i>Sus scrofa</i> | 35+ at Yala NP |
| 21 | Common House Rat | <i>Rattus rattus</i> | |
| 22 | Flying Fox/Giant Fruit Bat | <i>Pteropus giganteus</i> | 300+ in Kandy Bot Gdns; also seen in the Yala and Hikkaduwa areas in small nos. |
| 23 | Yellow-striped Chevrotain | <i>Moschiola kathygre</i> | nice view of one by the road near Hunas Falls pre-dawn |
| 24 | ?? Spinner Dolphin | <i>Stenella longirostris</i> | dolphins of some sp. offshore Unawatuna |

Butterflies.

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 01 | Sri Lanka Birdwing | <i>Troides darsius</i> | a female at Sinharaja |
| 02 | Red Helen | <i>Papilio helenus mooreanus</i> | three singles including one above Nuwara Eliya spotted by Ali from the pumping station, sunning itself in the morning on the rockery vegetation below the waterfall |
| 03 | Blue Mormon | <i>Papilio polymnestor parinda</i> | up to 8 in a day at Sinharaja and several others around Elkudawa & Sigirya area. Rarely perched, but video of one such at Sinharaja. |
| 04 | Common Roser | <i>Pachliopta aristolochiae</i> | common around Kandalama |
| 05 | Crimson Rose | <i>Pachliopta hector</i> | 4 after noon along the Kandalama road and 1 there next morning. Nice looks at Bundala and Yala at a pair too. |
| 06 | Tailed Jay | <i>Graphium agamemnon</i> | two seen at Sinharaja |
| 07 | Bluebottle | <i>Graphium sarpedon</i> | one seen, in the plantation above Kudawa near Sinharaja |
| 08 | Psyche | <i>Leptosia nina</i> | 4 around Debera Wewa |
| 09 | Common Jazebel | <i>Delias eucharis</i> | 6 at Debera Wewa of this lovely, widespread Asian butterfly and 2 at Kandalama |
| 10 | Common Grass Yellow | <i>Eurema hecabe</i> | yellows of one species or another seen on 6 dates in wet zone and Kandalama/ Sigirya area |
| 11 | Three-spot Grass Yellow | <i>Eurema blanda</i> | Seen at Sinharaja. |
| 12 | Common Gull | <i>Cepora nerissa</i> | 8 noted on one pm drive at Yala |
| 13 | Mottled Immigrant | <i>Catopsilia pyranthe</i> | a single videoed from the track into Kandalama on our noon walk to the hotel which was so productive for birds and insects |
| 14 | Lemon Emigrant | <i>Catopsilia pomona</i> | many sightings, including 20 or so on one pm drive at Yala, 5 at Sigiriya and 15 at Kandalama |
| 15 | Sri Lanka Tree Nymph | <i>Idea iasonia</i> | 4 on the first day in the Sinharaja area & 2 others nr Weddagala at the cascade; a pair videoed in courtship. |
| 16 | Blue Glassy Tiger | <i>Ideopsis similis</i> | one or two in the lowlands into Sinharaja & 1 at Kandalama |
| 17 | Glassy Tiger | <i>Parantica aglea</i> | a couple sighted around Sinharaja |
| 18 | Dark Blue Tiger | <i>Tirumala septentrionis</i> | 1 identified by Amila on the road to the Kandalama hotel |
| 19 | Plain Tiger | <i>Danaus chrysippus</i> | one near the granite outcrops at Kandalama |
| 20 | Common Tiger | <i>Danaus genutia</i> | 2 along the road to the hotel at Kandalama |
| 21 | Common Crow | <i>Euploea core</i> | many in the Colombo area on the first afternoon and a few in the Kandalama area |
| 22 | Great Crow | <i>Euploea phaenareta</i> | one near Kudawa below Sinharaja |
| 23 | Leopard | <i>Phalanta phalantha</i> | two or three in-flight from the road to the Kandalama hotel |
| 24 | Cruiser | <i>Vindula erota</i> | a nice view of one at Sinharaja |

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|----|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 25 | Blue Admiral | <i>Kaniska canace</i> | very nice view of two along the path back from the Research Station at Sinharaja around noon on the 19th Dec |
| 26 | Grey Pansy | <i>Junonia atlites</i> | 1 on the last morning at Kandalama |
| 27 | Chocolate Soldier | <i>Junonia iphita</i> | after a single at Debera Wewa, about half a dozen well seen along the road to Kandalama hotel |
| 28 | Blue Oakleaf | <i>Kallima philarchus</i> | Amila did brilliantly to pick up a female of this scarce endemic resting on a leaf by the Research Station at Sinharaja, which we scoped up well |
| 29 | Common Sailor | <i>Neptis hylas</i> | a couple seen at Kandalama of this widespread species |
| 30 | Clipper | <i>Parthenos sylvia cyaneus</i> | a couple on the 18th at Sinharaja |
| 31 | Tawny Coster | <i>Acraea violae</i> | one at Kandalama |
| 32 | Nigger | <i>Orsotriaena medus</i> | individuals of this species which needs re-naming noted below Elkudawa & next day on the Simpson's Trail at Hunas Falls |
| 33 | Common Bushbrown | <i>Mycalesis perseus</i> | one at Debera Wewa |
| 34 | White Four-ring | <i>Ypthima ceylonica</i> | 3 on 2 days at Kandalama |
| 35 | Glad-eye Bushbrown | <i>Nissanga patnia</i> | one near Kudawa |
| 36 | Common Cerulean | <i>Jamides celeno</i> | 4 on the 19th at Sinharaja |
| 37 | Common Pierrot | <i>Castalius rosimon</i> | one at Kandalama |
| 38 | Angled Pierrot | <i>Caleta caleta</i> | one settling on a heap of road top minerals at Kandalama |
| 39 | Forget-me-not | <i>Catochrysops strabo</i> | Seen well at Elkaduwa. |
| 40 | Indian Sunbeam | <i>Curetis thetis</i> | 2 together ovipositing just below the entrance drive to the hotel at Kandalama in a <i>Pongamia pinnata</i> tree (Family: Fabaceae). |

Damselflies.

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 01 | Yellow Waxtail | <i>Ceriagrion coromandelianum</i> | 12 in the DeberaWewa/ Tissa area were noted |
| 02 | Malabar Sprite | <i>Pseudagrion malabaricum</i> | I am guessing the blue-tailed damsel we saw in the Tissa area was this species? |

Dragonflies.

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 01 | Sombre Lieutenant | <i>Brachydiplax sobrina</i> | 1 at Debera Wewa |
| 02 | Pruinosed Bloodtail | <i>Lathrecista asiatica asiatica</i> | 1 at our lunch stop en route back to Colombo near Dambulla |
| 03 | Spine-tufted Skimmer | <i>Orthetrum chrysis</i> | 1 in the sw lowlands en route to Sinharaja |

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|----|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 04 | Green Skimmer | <i>Orthetrum sabina sabina</i> | one near the off-license in Weddagala |
| 05 | Asian Groundling | <i>Brachythemis contaminata</i> | lots at Kandalama & a few in Bundala |
| 06 | Blue Percher | <i>Diplocodes trivialis</i> | Yala NP & Kandalama |
| 07 | Pied Parasol | <i>Neurothemis tullia tullia</i> | Debera Wewa- 5 or so- and one also at Kandalama |
| 08 | Crimson Dropwing aka Dawn D | <i>Trithemis aurora</i> | a nice pair of this widespread species seen at Kandalama |
| 09 | Indigo Dropwing | <i>Trithemis festiva</i> | by cascades at Weddagala and Hunas Falls |
| 10 | Wandering Glider | <i>Pantala flavescens</i> | quite common Kandalama area |
| 11 | Sri Lanka Cascader | <i>zygonyx iris ceylonicum</i> | 1 at a falls en route to Sinharaja |

Reptiles

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 01 | Marsh Crocodile (Mugger) | <i>Crocodylus palustris</i> | several at Yala, Bundala and Kandalama tank |
| 02 | Land Monitor | <i>Varanus bengalensis</i> | at Galle, en route to Sinharaja & 3 around Yala NP |
| 03 | Water Monitor | <i>Varanus salvator</i> | some impressive beasts seen: common in wet zone drainage near villages. Gravid females noted twice. |
| 04 | Common Garden Lizard | <i>Calotes cersicolor</i> | one near Weddagala nicely videoed and nr Martin's above Kudawa |
| 05 | Green Forest Lizard | <i>Calotes calote</i> | Several sightings in the Sinharaja area & again around Kandalama. Changes colour in chameleon fashion: a couple were almost black. |
| 06 | Kangaroo/Earless Lizard | <i>Otocryptis wiegmanni</i> | 6 noted on three days in the Sinharaja area, including two pairs. Glowing ear covers on a couple of males, which they are able to switch on and off. A gravid female videoed looking for a suitable patch of earth in which to oviposit using its snout. |
| 07 | Gecko sp. | | a perfectly camouflaged small gecko on a sandstone rock by the path at Sinharaja, looking like the pale stem or root of some mossy plant |
| 08 | Asian House Gecko | <i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i> | heard at Sinharaja on several occasions |
| 09 | Kandyan Day Gecko | <i>Knemaspis kandianus</i> | one at Sinharaja |
| 10 | Four-clawed Gecko | <i>Gehyra mutilata</i> | Seen at Kandalama |
| 11 | Sri Lanka Keelback Water Snake | <i>Xenochrophis asperimus</i> | one hunting quietly at a trackside pool in Sinharaja |
| 12 | Common Bronzeback Tree Snake | <i>Dendrelaphis tristis</i> | one at the bottom of a well in the Water Gardens at Sigirya |

Other fauna

| No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Comments |
|----|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| 01 | False Lantern-fly | <i>Pyrops maculata</i> | one on a tree by the track down from Martin's to |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | | Kudawa |
| 02 | Giant Millepede | <i>Spirostreptus sp.</i> | one near the Spurfowl site above Kudawa, videoed. |
| 03 | Landsnail sp-1 | <i>Arcavus superbus</i> | 3 of these Gondwana relicts in Sinharaja |
| 04 | Landsnail sp-2 | <i>Arcavus phoenix</i> | 1 at Sinharaja |
| 05 | Sri Lanka Land leech | <i>Haemadipsa zeylanica</i> | rather too many noted at Hunas Falls as well as a few at Sinharaja |
| 06 | Tree frog sp. | <i>Philautus sp.</i> | in leaf litter on closed-canopy floor of Sinharaja where we spent much time trying to see Spurfowl |
| 07 | Hummingbird Hawk-moth | <i>Macroglossum sp.</i> | one nectaring on a fuchsia-like pink flower on Nuwara Eliya's Cloud-Forest trail |

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Pruinosed Bloodtail female