

India: Big Cats & Birding Species List | March 9 – 26, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Peg Abbott with local guide Saurabh Sawant. Our clients included Marco, Judith, Marcia, Chuck, Diane, Bryan, Nicki, Michelle, Monica, and Tony

This was an epic journey and on which we had extensive time with the Big Cats we hoped to see: Tiger, Leopard, Lion, Jungle Cat, Snow Leopard, and on our extension, rare to see Pallas Cat. In addition to finding Indian and Himalayan subspecies of Gray Wolf, Dhole and a host of other mammals. The “Beautiful Birds” part of our trip title held up equally well, with almost 225 species spotted on the main journey ranging from the iconic Indian Peafowl, Painted Stork, and Sarus Crane to colorful Indian Roller, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Golden Oriole, Orange-headed Thrush, and Plum-headed Parakeet. We saw 22+ species of raptors including Gray-headed Fish Eagle and witnessed impressive numbers of wintering harriers in the grasslands of Velavador NP. A Brown Fish Owl perched out in the open, low by a small pond at close range was a thrill one morning on safari; finding Syke's Nightjar roosting (one of four species of nightjars observed), and a Painted Sandgrouse feeding were also good finds. On two occasions we found Eurasian Wryneck and tiny Barred Buttonquail also came out for inspection. Wetlands were very productive, with 14 species of ducks and geese, and both Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas. In the higher elevation areas of Ladakh we watched Himalayan Snowcock in their native habitat and saw Bearded Vultures almost daily. We voted the Eurasian Magpies as a trip favorite as it was their antics that woke up sleepy Snow Leopards with full bellies at the kills, we watched some memorable stalks with zero-tolerance of magpies by this magnificent cat.

BIRDS: 224 species were recorded. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details and maps out the species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click “Show All Details” on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[India: Big Cats & Birding | March 9-26, 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Below that is an annotated list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family Species or Common Name Scientific Name

— (#) on family line is the number of species seen in that family

— (#) on the species line is the number of days seen on the journey listed for this trip as Pat One and Pat Two due to extreme habitat difference between lower India and the Himalayan/Tibetan Plateau Region of Ladakh.

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae — (14)

- Lesser Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* — (4)
Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* — (1)
Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* — (1)
Cotton Pygmy-Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* — (1)
Garganey *Spatula quequedula* — (5)
Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* — (3)
Gadwall *Mareca strepera* — (1)
Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* — (4)
Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* — (5)
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — (2)
Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* — (2)
Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* — (2)
Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* — (2)
Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* — (1)

PHEASANTS AND PARTRIDGES: Phasianidae — (6)

- Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* — (10)
Red Spurfowl *Galloperdix spadicea* — (2)
Gray Junglefowl *Gallus sonneratii* — (4)
Gray Francolin *Ortygornis pondicerianus* — (6)
Himalayan Snowcock *Tetraogallus himalayensis* — (2)
Chukar *Alectoris chukar* — (6)

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae — (6)

- Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* — (8)
Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris* — (3)
Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* — (8)
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* — (8)
Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* — (8)
Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon *Treron phoenicopterus* — (3)

SANDGROUSE: Pteroclididae — (1)

- Painted Sandgrouse** *Pterocles indicus* — (1)

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae — (3)

- Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* — (8)
Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* — (2)
Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* — (2)

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae — (4)

- Jungle Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus* — (1)
Syke's Nightjar *Caprimulgus maharattensis* — (1)
Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* — (3)
Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* — (3)

TREESWIFTS: Hemiprocnidae — (1)

- Crested Treeswift** *Hemiproctne coronata* — (2)

RAILS, CRAKES, AND ALLIES: Rallidae — (4)

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* — (2)

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* — (4)

Gray-headed Swamphen *Porphyrio poliocephalus* — (5)

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* — (1)

CRANES: Gruidae — (2)

Sarus Crane *Antigone antigone* — (2)

Common Crane *Grus grus* — (2)

THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae — (1)

Indian Thick-knee *Burhinus indicus* — (1)

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae — (1)

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* — (5)

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae — (3)

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* — (3)

Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus* — (2)

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* — (10)

IBISBILL: Ibisbillidae — (1)

Ibisbill *Ibisbill ibisbill* — (1)

JACANAS: Jacanidae — (2)

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* — (2)

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* — (4)

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae — (12)

Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria* — (1)

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* — (2)

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* — (1)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* — (2)

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* — (1)

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* — (2)

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* — (5)

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* — (2)

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* — (1)

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* — (1)

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* — (3)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* — (2)

BUTTONQUAIL: Turnicidae — (1)

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator* — (1)

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae — (2)

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* — (3)

River Tern *Sterna aurantia* — (1)

GREBES: Podicipedidae — (1)

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* — (3)

STORKS: Ciconiidae — (4)

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* — (5)

Asian Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* — (2)

Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* — (1)

Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* — (3)

ANHINGAS AND DARTERS: Anhingidae — (1)

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* — (6)

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae — (3)

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* — (7)

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* — (2)

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* — (2)

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae — (4)

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* — (1)

Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* — (8)

Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* — (6)

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* — (4)

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae — (9)

Yellow Bittern *Botaurus sinensis* — (1)

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* — (7)

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* — (1)

Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii* — (9)

Eastern Cattle-Egret *Ardea coromanda* — (5)

Great Egret *Ardea alba* — (3)

Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia* — (2)

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* — (2)

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* — (5)

PELICANS: Pelecanidae — (1)

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* — (3)

OSPREY: Pandionidae — (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* — (1)

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae — (20)

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* — (4)

Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* — (1)

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* — (4)

Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* — (5)

Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* — (1)

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* — (1)

Indian Spotted Eagle *Clanga hastata* — (2)

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* — (1)
Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* — (2)
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* — (5)
Shikra *Tachypiza badia* — (4)
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* — (2)
Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* — (2)
Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* — (5)
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* — (2)
Gray-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* — (3)
White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* — (5)
Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* — (1)
Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius* — (1)
Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo refectus* — (1)

OWLS: Strigidae — (6)

Indian Scops-Owl *Otus bakkamoena* — (2)
Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* — (1)
Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* — (2)
Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* — (2)
Mottled Wood-Owl *Strix ocellata* — (3)
Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* — (1)

HOOPOES: Upupidae — (1)

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* — (5)

HORNBILLS: Bucerotidae — (1)

Indian Gray Hornbill *Ocyrceros birostris* — (3)

BEE-EATERS: Meropidae — (2)

Asian Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* — (6)
Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* — (1)

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae — (1)

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* — (3)
White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* — (7)
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* — (5)

ROLLERS: Coraciidae — (1)

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* — (4)

ASIAN BARBETS: Megalaimidae — (2)

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* — (4)
Brown-headed Barbet *Psilopogon zeylanicus* — (3)

WOODPECKERS: Picidae — (4)

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* — (2)
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus nanus* — (1)
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Leiopicus mahrattensis* — (2)
Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* — (4)

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae — (1)

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* — (3)

OLD WORLD PARROTS: Psittaculidae — (2)

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* — (7)

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* — (6)

CUCKOOSHRIKES: Campephagidae — (3)

White-bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygus* — (3)

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* — (3)

Indian Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* — (2)

OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae — (2)

Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo* — (3)

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* — (2)

VANGAS: Vangidae — (1)

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* — (7)

IORAS: Aegithinidae — (1)

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* — (7)

FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae — (2)

Spot-breasted Fantail *Rhipidura albogularis* — (2)

White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* — (3)

DRONGOS: Dicruridae — (4)

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* — (9)

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* — (2)

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* — (3)

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* — (2)

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae — (2)

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* — (1)

Indian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* — (2)

SHRIKES: Laniidae — (3)

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* — (1)

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* — (3)

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* — (5)

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae — (5)

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* — (6)

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* — (1)

House Crow *Corvus splendens* — (3)

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* — (8)

Common Raven *Corvus corax* — (1)

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae — (1)

Asian Tit *Parus cinereus* — (3)

LARKS: Alaudidae — (6)

Rufous-tailed Lark *Ammomanes phoenicura* — (4)

Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix griseus* — (1)

Indian Bushlark *Plocealauda erythroptera* — (1)

Tawny Lark *Galerida deva* — (2)

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* — (2)

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* — (2)

CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae — (5)

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* — (6)

Gray-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* — (2)

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* — (2)

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* — (1)

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* — (3)

REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae — (3)

Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama* — (2)

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* — (1)

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* — (4)

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae — (5)

Gray-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* — (1)

Dusky Crag-Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* — (4)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — (1)

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* — (4)

Eastern Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* — (2)

BULBULS: Pycnonotidae — (4)

White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* — (2)

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* — (4)

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* — (10)

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* — (2)

LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae — (2)

Mountain Chiffchaff (Kashmir race) *Phylloscopus sindianus* — (1)

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* — (2)

LONG-TAILED TITS & BUSHTITS: Aegithalidae — (1)

White-browed Tit Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae* — (1)

SYLVIID WARBLERS: Sylviidae — (1)

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca* — (1)

WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae — (1)

Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* — (6)

BABLERS: Timaliidae — (1)

Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra* — (1)

LAUGHINGTHRUSHES AND ALLIES: Leiothrichidae — (2)

Jungle Babbler *Argya striata* — (6)

Common Babbler *Argya caudata* — (2)

WRENS: Troglodytidae — (1)

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglyodytes* — (2)

DIPPERS: Cinclidae — (1)

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* — (1)

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae — (3)

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* — (2)

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* — (3)

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* — (3)

THRUSHES: Turdidae — (2)

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* — (3)

Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* — (1)

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: Muscicapidae — (8)

Indian Robin *Copsychus fulicatus* — (9)

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* — (7)

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* — (4)

Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* — (1)

White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* — (5)

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* — (3)

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* — (3)

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata* — (1)

FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae — (1)

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Pachyglossa agilis* — (1)

SUNBIRDS: Nectariniidae — (2)

Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica* — (4)

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* — (8)

WEAVERS: Ploceidae — (1)

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* — (1)

WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: Estrildidae — (1)

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica* — (1)

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae — (2)

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides* — (3)

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* — (3)

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae — (2)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* — (4)

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* — (7)

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae — (7)

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* — (1)

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* — (1)

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* — (3)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* — (1)

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* — (4)

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* — (1)

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* — (1)

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae — (4)

Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla* — (1)

Black-headed Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti* — (2)

Twite *Linaria flavirostris* — (2)

Fire-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus* — (1)

MAMMALS: — (28 species)

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* — (2)

Indian (Three-striped) Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum* — (4)

Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* — (1) Seen in Delhi only

Bengal Sacred (Northern Plains Gray) Langur *Semnopithecus entellus* — (7)

Ruddy Mongoose *Urva smithii* — (3)

Indian Gray Mongoose *Urva edwardsii* — (2)

Striped Hyena *Hyaena hyaena* — (1)

Leopard *Panthera pardus* — (3)

Lion *Panthera leo* — (3)

Tiger *Panthera tigris* — (4)

Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* — (2)

Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* — (1)

Snow Leopard *Panthera uncia* — (3)

Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus* — (2)

Dhole *Cuon alpinus* — (2)

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* — (2)

Gray Wolf *Canis lupus* — (2) (Indian & Himalayan subspecies)

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* — (3)

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* — (4)

Sambar *Rusa unicolor* — (6)

Chital (Spotted Deer) *Axis axis* — (5)

Northern Red Muntjac (Barking Deer) *Muntiacus vaginalis* — (3)

Blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra* — (2)

Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus* — (6)

Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur* — (3)

Urial *Ovis vignei* — (3)

Ibex *Capra siberica* — (4)

Gaur *Bos gaurus* — (3)

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: — (4)

Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* — (4)

Oriental Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor* — (1)

Northern House Gecko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis*— (3)

Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis* — (1)

**INDIA BIG CATS AND BEAUTIFUL BIRDS EASTERN LADAKH /
PALLAS CAT EXTENSION
March 27-April 1, 2026**

Compiled by guide Peg Abbott with guide Saurabh Sawant of Vana Safaris, and local expert guide, Stanzin Chamba.

Our intrepid clients for the extension included Marcia, Judy, Marco and Peg.

Going further east of Leh into Ladakh was fascinating, as we witnessed amazing geology, landscapes and new birds and mammals for the trip. Several bird specialties here are limited in range and frequent only high elevations. We saw at least 4 pair and one single Black-necked Crane, just arriving to nest. Tibetan Larks sang from their marsh vegetation mounds, and finding Blanford's Snowfinches and the odd Ground Tit (formerly Hume's Groundpecker) was a thrill. Having Bearded Vultures (Lammergeier) be locally common and seen daily was a highlight; we found one on a nest and had several fly-bys at eye-level as we searched for cats – wow. Upland Buzzard, both Red and Yellow-billed Choughs, Mongolian Finch, Great Rosefinch, Black-winged Snowfinch and Fire-fronted Serin were good finds. Seeing massive Eurasian Eagle Owl on two different roosts was impressive and our last morning catching up with Tibetan Sandgrouse at two locations was a bonus. Coming and going from Leh, along the Indus River we found Ibisbill (a unique wader in its own family), Wallcreeper, and Brown Dipper. Mammal sightings were terrific too. We found Pallas Cat and watched it hunting in the marshes. We also encountered Tibetan Wild Ass (Kiang) in good number, and a Tibetan Sand Fox chasing a Wooley Hare, also a unique animal to the Tibetan Plateau. We saw one of the world's rarest antelopes, Tibetan Gazelle, the Himalayan subspecies of Gray Wolf, and loads of Plateau Pika.

BIRDS 42 species in 23 families were recorded. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details of birds our group observed during the tour extension. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[INDIA BIG CATS AND BEAUTIFUL BIRDS EASTERN LADAKH / PALLAS CAT EXTENSION
eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is an annotated list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family Species or Common Name Scientific Name — ()

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae — (6)

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* — (2) This species is known for its incredible migration, flying over the high Himalayas to breed in high altitude wetlands. Our high count was mid-say on the drive from Leh to Hanle at a wide section of the river, where at least 40 were in view. We then saw groups of six to eight in meadows along the river at Hanle.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* — (4) This widespread and flexible species seemed much at home in the high elevation wetlands we explored. We saw them daily in pairs and groups with a high count of 24. They breed in Ladakh, the only breeding location in India. They are beautiful, and the low light of late winter made them glow.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — (4) Seen in pairs along the Indus River wetland areas.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* — (3) Not common in Ladakh as they prefer to winter at lower elevations, we encountered them twice on our extension, with 22 the high count at Nyoma, a wide marshy area adjacent to the Indus River.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* — (2) Seen along the Indus River, mainly in areas with other waterfowl species. High count was 9 together near the Loma Bridge.

PHEASANTS AND PARTRIDGES: Phasianidae — (2)

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae* — (2) We saw a pair in a grassy area near Hanle, getting scope views of their intricate plumage. Then a small group of eight an along the rim of the glacial moraine we perched on while watching a Snow Leopard on a kill up the Rumbak Valley.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar* — (1) Seen on our drive back from Hanle at lower elevation and at the Rumbak Valley our final day. In groups of a dozen or more, vocal.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae — (2)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* — (1) Common around Leh. Seen at our hotel, in town and at the Spituk bridge.

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris* — (4) Common around villages and bridges at higher elevations near Hanle. Seen daily.

SANDGROUSE: Pteroclididae — (1)

Tibetan Sandgrouse *Syrhaptes tibetanus* — (1) Some years these are quite common, but Stanzin worked hard to find our first group, which we did on a pre-breakfast loop drive from our Home Stay in Hanle. We got scope views, then walked to a point we could get much better views of this beautiful species. We saw them again when scanning for Pallas Cat and Tibetan Sand Fox on the way out.

CRANES: Gruiformes — (1)

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* — (4) We marveled at the elegance of this iconic species, known to breed in the Tibetan Plateau and Trans-Himalayan region. They were just arriving from wintering areas, and we found 4 pair, and one single bird spread along the wetland complex near Hanle. Their chick survival rate is threatened here by packs of roaming feral dogs, a serious conservation issue several groups are trying to address. Globally they are listed as Near-Threatened but the Ladakh population is declining, despite their being the designated state bird of the territory.

IBISBILL: Ibisbillidae — (1)

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* — (1) We had located a pair using the stone islands and beaches of the Indus River from the Spituk bridge, and returned their descending from Rumbak Valley our last day to let all of the group get good scope views.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae — (1)

Pallas's Gull — (2) Just arriving back, we found them in the wide expanse of wetlands and wide part of the Indus River by Nyoma and the Loma Bridge.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae — (1)

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* — (2) Seen in the same river areas we observed Pallas's Gulls, and various waterfowl species.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae — (1)

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* — (1) One sighting of three individuals near Nyoma, in broad wetlands there as the habitat opened up from steep sided canyons to open floodplains coming from Leh to Hanle.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae — (5)

Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* — (4) Seen well on a number of our outings, including a few at very low level when cliffs ran parallel the roadway. We were lucky to spot on a nest in a location Stanzin was familiar with great scope views.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* — (1) Seen flying over high cliffs in a canyon of the Indus River on the way to Hanle.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* — (2) Seen in flight, often over cliffs and in the same areas we observed Bearded Vultures.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius* — (4) Quite common in the Hanle area, seen all three days there, often as pairs working various wetland areas and grazing fields. We watched several carrying sticks as nest material and found on an active nest.

OWLS: Strigidae — (1)

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo* — (3) Memorable sightings for all of us, on two different roost sites, one we walked out to near a Plateau Pika colony and another not far from our lodgings. A massive, impressive owl!

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae — (2)

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* — (2) Seen on two days, circling overhead.

Merlin *Falco columbarius* — (1) Seen once flying over the main valley west of Hanle.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae — (5)

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* — (3) Seen frequently.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* — (3) Seen daily in good number.

Yellow-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus* — (1) Seen our final day in the Rumbak Valley.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* — (1) Seen only at one site, two birds, known by Stanzin, it is not common in Ladakh.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae — (2)

Ground Tit *Pseudopodoces humilis* — (1) Formerly known as Hume's Goundpecker, it was fascinating to watch a pair poke and probe the ground in a barren area above a snow field, hopping up on a rock where we could view the unique curved beak well. They are known to use pika burrows as shelter, one of the many traits of interest in this high elevation species of the Tibetan Plateau.

LARKS Alaudidae — (2)

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* — (4) This species was plentiful at high elevations, much at home in the windswept barren areas, roaming as flocks to feed in the stunted vegetation. The most numerous species at high elevations.

Tibetan Lark *Melanocorypha maxima* — (2) We heard and observed this stout lark on perches adjacent to wet marsh areas it prefers, not far from our lodgings in Hanle.

LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae — (1)

Mountain Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus* — (1)

WALLCREEPER: Tichodromidae — (1)

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* — (1) Two birds seen where canyon walls were steep, adjacent to the river, on the day

we drove from Leh to Hanle, great looks!

DIPPERS: Cinclidae — (1)

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasi* — (1) Seen alongside the Wallcreeper, a pair in the river.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: Muscicapidae — (1)

White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* — (4) Seen near our lodgings in Hanle and on roads that traversed the wet meadows and homes near the village.

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae — (2)

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides* — (2) One of the more common small songbirds.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* — (2) Seen on a couple of occasions on our extension.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae — (3)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* — (2) Seen in villages along the highway

Black-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi* — (3) Large flocks seen roadside as we were scanning for mammals.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi* — (1) Seen at snowfields, good looks on the day we went to the high pass of the Tibetan Plateau.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae — (2)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* — (4) Common

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae — (5)

Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla* — (2) Seen in small willow patches of the main valley west of Hanle.

Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus* — (1) Seen in a rocky area we stopped at driving from Leh to Hanle, good looks.

Black-headed Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti* — (2) Heard and seen, in flocks on two days.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris* — (2) Common where there were bushes, and also seen singing from utility lines.

Fire-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus* — (1) Seen in good number, at close range, in the canyon between Leh and Hanle.

MAMMALS: — (8 Species)

Plateau Pika *Ochotona curzoniae* — (2) Seen in good number, in rocky areas as we drove up in elevation.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus* — (2) Seen running between bushes in the valley west of Hanle, also seen being chased by a Tibetan Sand Fox across the valley.

Silver Mountain Vole *Alticola argentatus* — (1) Seen in wet meadows.

Pallas's Cat *Otocolobus manul* — (1) We watched an individual for quite some time, hunting and moving about the valley. The same day we saw another at a distance.

Tibetan Sand Fox *Vulpes ferrilata* — (1) Seen our last morning as we drove back to Leh, scope views and happy smiles for us!

Gray Wolf (Himalayan) *Canis lupus* — (1) Seen on the slopes as the canyon opened up between Leh and Hanle.

Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass) *Equus kiang* — (4) Seen in good numbers, daily. We took time to watch their interactions and behavior from meadows all the way up to the highest reaches we traveled, so at home in this remote part of the world!

Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur* — (2) Herds on slopes of the canyon between Leh and Hanle.