



**January 10 – 22, 2020**  
**India: Red Pandas, Rhinos, and Tigers**  
**w/ Kanha Tiger Extension**

With Avijit Sarkhel and Carlos Sanchez, plus participants: Harriet, Stevan, Diane, Lynda, Lynne, Narca, Mariel, James, and Jill

Compiled by Carlos Sanchez

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)= Introduced

**Summary:** This tour flowed as a dynamic ride through the natural history of India, encompassing all of the major habitats found in the northeast corner of that country: Himalayan foothills cloaked in evergreen forest and rhododendrons (Singalila NP), mangrove forest fringed with exposed muddy banks (Sunderbans), seasonal dry woodland teeming with large herds of mammals (Kanha NP), and grassy floodplains where giants still dwell (Kaziranga NP). Experiences engraved in the minds of trip participants included seeing Bengal Tiger and Red Panda for the first time and jaw-dropping views of the mighty Mount Kanchenjunga (the tallest mountain in India). Seventeen birds received nods as bird of the trip between all participants, including Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie, Brown-winged Kingfisher, Bar-headed Goose, Spotted Laughingthrush, Chinese Rubythroat, Great Hornbill, and Red-necked Falcon.

**BIRDS (282 species recorded, of which 6 were heard only):**

**DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae (17)**

**Lesser Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica*—hundreds in wetland areas of Kaziranga National Park, as well as the artificial freshwater pond in the Sunderbans. Whistling-Ducks are nocturnal feeders that gather in large numbers during the day.

**Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*—observed daily at Kaziranga National Park, one of their main wintering grounds. These high-flying geese have been observed migrating at over 23,000 feet over the Himalayas – incredible!

**Graylag Goose** *Anser anser*—one at Kaziranga NP mixed in with the Bar-headed Geese

**Tundra Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*—one very distant individual at Kaziranga NP. This elegant species is a vagrant to India.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*—small numbers observed daily at Kaziranga National Park

**Cotton Pygmy-Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus*—these elegant tropical ‘geese’ were quite common at Kaziranga NP and Kanha Tiger Reserve

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*—small numbers at Kaziranga National Park, an important wintering site for many waterfowl species that breed in China, Mongolia, and Siberia

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*—daily at Kaziranga NP and Kanha Tiger Reserve

**Falcated Duck** *Mareca falcata*—two handsome males spotted at Kaziranga NP on our first afternoon outing – a great find!

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*—good numbers at the large lagoon in Kaziranga NP on our first afternoon safari

**Indian Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha*—this striking, tropical dabbling duck was quite common at Kaziranga

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*—just a few at Kaziranga NP

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*—numerous at Kaziranga with smaller numbers present on one lake in Kanha

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*—medium-sized flocks at both Kaziranga and Kanha

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*—many individuals, some in eclipse plumage, observed from the tall tower at Kaziranga NP – the one with the nearby Asian Elephant herd!

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*— a couple dozen of these handsome ducks on our first afternoon at Kaziranga NP but never seen anywhere else on our tour

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*—one mixed in with a large flock of Common Pochard at Kaziranga NP, observed from one of the tall towers

#### **PARTRIDGES AND PHEASANTS: Phasianidae (5)**

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus*—the national bird of India! These majestic pheasants were common only around Kanha Tiger Reserve, usually in association with herds of deer and other medium to large size mammals

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Painted Spurfowl** *Galloperdix lunulata*—an uncommon and beautifully patterned partridge endemic to India, seen only at Kanha Tiger Reserve **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Swamp Francolin** *Francolinus gularis*—another regionally endemic partridge, we observed a small covey of three individuals in the late afternoon (01/14) at Kaziranga NP

**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus*—the ancestor to the modern-day chicken; we observed (or at least heard) them daily in habitats ranging from mangroves (Sunderbans) to seasonally dry forest (Kanha)

**Kalij Pheasant** *Lophura leucomelanos*—several individuals, including some very handsome males, quickly crossed the road in front of the first vehicle at Singalila NP (01/21)

#### **GREBES: Podicipedidae (1)**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*—observed daily paddling about in ponds in the Mukki Zone of Kanha

#### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (7)**

**Rock Pigeon (I)** *Columba livia*—observed almost daily wherever there was any hint of human habitation at all elevations, from the Sunderbans to the Himalayas

**Oriental Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*—great first views of this elegant dove on our way up to Singalila NP, followed by daily sightings around Kanha

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*—not as common as the following species in eastern India, we observed only a few in the Sunderbans and Kanha

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*—the common dove in the lowlands of India, observed throughout except in the high Himalayas

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*—a couple sightings of these lovely pink doves around human habitation just outside of Kanha **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon** *Treron phoenicopterus*—colorful and beautiful doves that swarm around fruiting trees like waxwings do in North America; near daily sightings at Kaziranga and Kanha, as well as a big flock in a *Ficus* tree at Haroocharai Tea Estate

**Green Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula aenea*—another fruit-eating pigeon, far larger than the preceding species; the whole group had particularly good views of several in a fruiting tree right by the road near Kaziranga on (01/14)

#### **CUCKOOS: Cuculidae (3)**

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis*—one van had good views at Kaziranga NP on (01/13), but everyone caught up with this species on the grounds of Shergarh Lodge outside of Kanha! An impressive, large terrestrial cuckoo that hunts along the ground in pairs and small family groups.

**Green-billed Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*—good views for most on (01/14) at Kaziranga and again on (01/17) in the Sunderbans; these non-parasitic cuckoos are the Asian analogy to the Squirrel Cuckoo of the American tropics

**Common Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx varius*—observed on (01/23) at Kanha and heard daily thereafter at dawn and dusk; these parasitic cuckoos primarily target Jungle Babblers as the host species for taking care of their offspring. Neat! **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

#### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (2)**

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris*—observed only once at Kaziranga on (01/14)

**Asian Palm-Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis*—quite common high overhead at Kaziranga, where we observed this small swift daily

#### **RAILS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (4)**

**Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*—a widespread species formerly considered conspecific with the Common Gallinule of the Americas (together, they used to be called ‘Common Moorhen’); a few in the pond on the grounds of Shergarh Lodge near Kanha **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*—quite a few on our first afternoon at Kaziranga NP in the big lagoon (01/12)

**Gray-headed Swampphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus*—impressive, large, and colorful rails; we observed this species only once (01/12) on the drive from Haroocharai Tea Estate to Kaziranga NP

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*—once everyone knew when and where to look for this common rail, people began seeing them daily on our drives at Kaziranga NP and boat time in the Sunderbans; a common and adaptable rail that will even live in fish ponds and rice paddies by people’s homes!

#### **THICK-KNEES: Burhinidae (2)**

**Indian Thick-knee** *Burhinus indicus*—we observed these special, mostly nocturnal shorebirds twice: on (01/14) at Kaziranga NP and (01/14) at Kanha

**Great Thick-knee** *Esacus recurvirostris*—distant but solid scope views on (1/13) at Kaziranga NP, looking across a river with wide sandy banks

#### **PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (8)**

**Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*—small numbers on a wet finger of dry land in one of the Kaziranga NP lagoons (01/14)

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*—observed only a couple times (01/12 and 01/14) at Kaziranga NP, just one or two at a time

**River Lapwing** *Vanellus duvaucelii*—a striking species we observed only once at Kaziranga (01/13); this lapwing specializes on nesting in shingles and sand banks along major rivers in the breeding season

**Yellow-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus malabaricus*—observed only at Kanha in expansive, grassy fields on (01/25 and 01/26); this striking wader is endemic to the Indian subcontinent and completed the set of possible lapwings on our India itinerary! **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Gray-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*—several on (01/12) on the shores of the large lagoon on our first safari at Kaziranga NP; this long distance migrant breeds primarily in northeast China in spring and summer

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*—quite numerous and noisy in open fields at Kaziranga NP and Kanha, where it was the default lapwing

**Lesser Sand-Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*—about a half-dozen of these little plovers on (01/16) in the Sunderbans, wintering on an exposed sand bank

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*—observed at Kaziranga (01/14) and Mukki zone of Kanha (01/24)

#### **PAINTED-SNIPES: Rostratulidae (1)**

**Greater Painted-Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*—a shy and retiring species that we were fortunate to see at Kaziranga NP (01/14), even though it gave us a bit of a challenge with its constant hide and seek between clumps of reeds

### **JACANAS: Jacanidae (2)**

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*—a few winter plumage individuals at Kaziranga on our first safari in the national park (01/12)

**Bronze-winged Jacana** *Metopidius indicus*—seen daily around wetlands at Kaziranga NP, including several at very close range – not at all shy to vehicles or to us!

### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (10)**

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*—several on (01/16) on the exposed muddy banks of the Sunderbans

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*—larger than the preceding species and without the striped crown; several on (01/16) on exposed muddy banks of the Sunderbans

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*—one lone individual feeding on a finger of mud in one of the many lagoons of Kaziranga NP on (01/14)

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*—about a half-dozen individuals feeding in a drying stream bed at Kaziranga NP on (01/14)

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*—a few at Kaziranga and quite common in the Sunderbans, where we observed this species daily; this species is the Old World analogy to the Spotted Sandpiper of the Americas but without the characteristic spots!

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*—our best views by far were at Kanha Tiger Reserve, where there was a reliable one wintering in a ditch right by the road! The Old World analogy to the Solitary Sandpiper of the Americas

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*—big but distant flock of several dozen individuals offered scope views at Kaziranga NP on (01/14)

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*—scattered sightings of singles at Kaziranga and Sunderbans; this Old World species is very similar to the familiar Greater Yellowlegs of the Americas but with greenish legs

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*—seen once on (01/14) at Kaziranga NP

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*—this striking little shorebird was quite common in the Sunderbans, always feeding on the exposed banks and often showing off its characteristic wing pattern while in flight

### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (2)**

**Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*—distant views of one flying gull at Kaziranga NP was this widespread Asian gull species

**River Tern** *Sterna aurantia*—distant scope views at Kaziranga NP (01/14) in the middle of one of the very large lagoons

### **STORKS: Ciconiidae (6)**

**Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans*—very common in the lowlands of northeast India, especially around Kaziranga NP where we saw them daily in good numbers; this species uses its unusually shaped bill to feed on aquatic snails

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*—a few soaring individuals at Kaziranga NP offered good views on (01/13), and we saw them daily while exploring the Kanha Tiger Reserve

**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*—observed daily, only two or three at a time, while at Kaziranga NP

**Black-necked Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*—a tall and stately stork, closely related to Africa's Saddle-billed Stork, that we observed daily at Kaziranga NP

**Lesser Adjutant** *Leptoptilos javanicus*—frequent sightings of these mini-Marabou Storks at Kaziranga and Kanha, often observed along the shores of lagoons or sitting at the top of a tree

**Greater Adjutant** *Leptoptilos dubius*—a rapidly declining, Endangered species that we felt fortunate to see on two dates while at Kaziranga NP (01/12 and 01/14); they were once especially common around cities in India, but there are now only two known nesting colonies in the country

### **DARTERS AND ANHINGA: Anhingidae (1)**

**Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster*—the Asian version of the Anhinga, observed on (01/12 and 01/14) at Kaziranga and (01/23) at Kanha

### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (2)**

**Little Cormorant** *Microcarbo niger*—ubiquitous and numerous in wetland areas everywhere except in the Himalayas

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*—fantastic views of an individual that would perch daily with several Little Cormorant, allowing excellent comparative views of these two dark-plumaged cormorants **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **PELICANS: Pelecanidae (1)**

**Spot-billed Pelican** *Pelecanus philippensis*—observed daily around Kaziranga, where we often saw it feeding in tight groups in the larger lagoons of the park

### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (8)**

**Gray Heron** *Ardea cinerea*—a few of these large herons at Kaziranga NP on all days while there; the Old World analogy to the Great Blue Heron of North America

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*—one on our first safari at Kaziranga NP (01/12)

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*—observed daily throughout India except in the Himalayas

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia*—great views of one at (01/13) at Kaziranga and daily observations at Kanha thereafter; a shorter-necked, smaller version of the Great Egret but otherwise very similar

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*—very common in wetland areas throughout our route in India, except in the Himalayas; the Old World equivalent to the Snowy Egret

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*—daily observations at all the lowland sites visited in India, often in the company of cattle

**Indian Pond-Heron** *Ardeola grayii*—another very common heron species, observed daily in the lowlands on our route but always near (any) water

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*—seen once on (01/16) in the Sunderbans, formerly conspecific with the Green Heron of North America and ironically much greener overall than that species!

### **IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (3)**

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*—about a dozen on our first safari outing at Kaziranga (01/12) was our only sighting of the tour; it is the world's most widespread ibis species and continues to spread naturally throughout the world

**Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus*—observed on two dates at Kaziranga NP (01/12 and 01/14); a black and white ibis that is very similar to the Sacred Ibis of Africa

**Red-naped Ibis** *Pseudibis papillosa*—not quite so dependent on water as other ibis in India; we saw this species daily in Kanha, usually foraging in dry fields. This species is endemic to the Indian subcontinent. **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*—we saw this widespread species a couple of times at Kaziranga (01/12) and the Sunderbans (01/16); it is a winter visitor to India

### **HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (23)**

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*—a juvenile gave us great views daily in the Mukki zone of Kanha; a crepuscular species that specializes on eating rodents at dawn and dusk **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*—one soaring overhead while we were eating lunch al fresco at Shergarh Lodge (01/24) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Oriental Honey-buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*—observed at all main sites but our best views were of a dark morph flyover at Singalila NP (01/21); these weak-beaked raptors are an example of Batesian mimicry in that their plumage mimics that of much larger and more powerful raptors such as hawk-eagles even though they feed primarily on soft insect larvae

**Red-headed Vulture** *Sarcogyps calvus*—one of the vans saw this impressive raptor at Kanha Tiger Reserve on our last day there **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**White-rumped Vulture** *Gyps bengalensis*—a large vulture with a striking wing pattern, observed twice during our time at Kanha Tiger Reserve (01/24); one of the many Asian vultures that are Critically Endangered due to diclofenac poisoning, so we were fortunate to see this one **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Indian Vulture** *Gyps indicus*—a Critically Endangered vulture endemic to India, plagued by the same conservation issues as the preceding two species. Observed several times during our time at Kanha. **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*—great views of these massive vultures soaring overhead at Kaziranga and Tumling on the Nepalese border, perhaps the largest and heaviest bird found in the Himalayas

**Crested Serpent-Eagle** *Spilornis cheela*—daily observations at Kaziranga and Kanha; a large yet surprisingly common large raptor of forest and open woodland

**Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus cirrhatus*—observed daily at Kaziranga and Kanha; we also saw the rare, crestless dark morph in the Sunderbans!

**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga*—one soaring individual on our first afternoon safari at Kaziranga (01/12)

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*—one soaring bird at Kaziranga (01/13)

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*—one of these Endangered raptors soaring overhead at Kaziranga NP (01/13) was a nice find

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata*—soaring overhead while having lunch at Shergarh Lodge near Kanha (01/23)

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*—one glided past the vehicles at Kaziranga on (01/13)

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus*—one distant bird at Singalila (01/21)

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius*—scattered sightings of this dynamic bird hunter throughout our route in India

**Besra** *Accipiter virgatus*—one van got to see this small *Accipiter* at Singalila NP (01/21)

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*—seemed to be the most common raptor around Tumling and Singalila NP; singles observed on (01/20) and (01/21); this subspecies is larger than those found in Europe

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*—quite common in the lowlands, often around human habitation where it is an important scavenger

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*—observed on (01/16) hunting over a flock of hapless Lesser Whistling-Ducks in the Sunderbans, offering fantastic views and a memorable experience!

**Pallas's Fish-Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*—observed daily at Kaziranga NP, including an active nest; this species is considered to be Endangered and nearly endemic to the Indian subcontinent

**Gray-headed Fish-Eagle** *Haliaeetus ichhyaetus*—daily observations of one or two individuals at Kaziranga NP

**Himalayan Buzzard** *Buteo refectus*—fantastic views on (01/19) in the Tumling settlement on the Nepalese border

## **OWLS: Strigidae (9)**

**Indian Scops-Owl** *Otus bakkamoena*—what fantastic views at Kanha in the early morning right at their nest hollow! **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Oriental Scops-Owl** *Otus sunia (HO)*—heard every evening just before dinner at Shergarh Lodge near Kanha

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Dusky Eagle-Owl** *Bubo coromandus*—we saw this large *Bubo* owl, a relative of the Great Horned Owl of the Americas, on our first safari outing at Kaziranga (01/12)

**Brown Fish-Owl** *Ketupa zeylonensis*—brief but solid views in the early morning at Kaziranga (01/13) but not long enough to really 'soak it in'

**Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei (HO)*—heard in the forest downslope from a dirt road at Singalila NP on a bright and sunny day

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides*—seemed to be quite common at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11), where we had great views in the last minutes of daylight left

**Jungle Owlet** *Glaucidium radiatum*—pleasantly numerous and confiding in the woodland areas of Kanha Tiger Reserve **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Spotted Owlet** *Athene brama*—one sleepy individual in a tree hollow at Kaziranga NP (01/12)

**Brown Boobook** *Ninox scutulata*—two on (01/24) at Kanha Tiger Reserve, roosting high up in the tree canopy over our breakfast area **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **HOOPOES: Upupidae (1)**

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*—one flyby individual in the Sunderbans but quite common in the Mukki zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve; this Old World species features prominently in much of the mythology, literature, and religious texts of areas from Morocco to Greece to Scandinavia to Iran

### **HORNBILLS: Bucerotidae: (3)**

**Great Hornbill** *Buceros bicornis*—incredible views on (01/14) in a large fruiting *Ficus* tree by the road near Kaziranga NP; this gigantic fruit eating bird is considered to be Vulnerable by CITES with a highly fragmented distribution in India and Southeast Asia – **VOTED AS BIRD OF THE TRIP!**

**Indian Gray Hornbill** *Ocyrceros birostris*—although common and observed daily around Kanha, it seemed to be quite shy and rarely offered good views **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Oriental Pied-Hornbill** *Anthracoceros albirostris*—great views on two days at Kaziranga (01/13 and 01/14), including a tree where approximately twenty birds steadily flew out of in a steady stream. Incredible.

### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (7)**

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*—these tiny and colorful birds were especially common in the Sunderbans, but we also observed them at Kaziranga and Kanha. Represented in India by both resident and migratory subspecies.

**Brown-winged Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis amauroptera*—a large kingfisher species that depends on healthy, extensive mangrove forest; observed a couple times in the Sunderbans although apparently becoming quite rare there

**Stork-billed Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis capensis*—seen really well on (01/13) and (01/14) at Kaziranga NP; a large and impressive kingfisher

**White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*—one of the ten most common birds in northeast India, and we can attest to that as we saw this lovely species daily at all sites except in the Himalayas

**Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*—several on (01/16) and one at Kanha (01/26), the one at Kanha being a very rare inland sighting of this winter visitor to India

**Collared Kingfisher** *Todiramphus chloris*—a widespread and adaptable mangrove specialist with a distribution ranging from the Arabian Peninsula to Indonesia; we saw quite a few in the Sunderbans

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*—frequent sightings at Kaziranga NP, where it was second only to the White-throated Kingfisher in numbers

### **BEE-EATERS: Meropidae (2)**

**Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis*—our best views of this delightful little bee-eater was at Kanha Tiger Reserve, where they sat on branches by the vehicles and provided excellent photo opportunities

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*—a small flock of about a half-dozen of these larger bee-eaters at Kaziranga NP, hunting for insects by a vegetation choked lagoon (01/13)

### **ROLLERS: Coraciidae (2)**

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*—a more lightly colored version of the following species, quite common on our safari rides at Kanha **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Indochinese Roller** *Coracias affinis*—common and observed daily at Kaziranga NP, near the western limit of its distribution

### **ASIAN BARBETS: Megalaimidae (6)**

**Coppersmith Barbet** *Psilopogon haemacephalus*—this clown-like, small barbet was common in and around Kaziranga NP, especially around fruiting *Ficus* trees; we also saw (and heard) them at Kanha

**Blue-eared Barbet** *Psilopogon duvaucelii*—one or two individuals were frequenting a large *Ficus* by the road outside of Kaziranga NP (01/14)

**Great Barbet** *Psilopogon virens*—we saw a pair of these largest of Asian barbets along the nice forest road at Singalila (01/20) and again on our way down from Tumling at a roadside *Ficus*

**Lineated Barbet** *Psilopogon lineatus*—observed on (01/13) and (01/14) at Kaziranga NP, near the western limit of its distribution

**Brown-headed Barbet** *Psilopogon zeylanicus*—very similar to the preceding species, this Indian subcontinent endemic was the common barbet at Kanha Tiger Reserve and could be heard calling incessantly throughout the day **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Blue-throated Barbet** *Psilopogon asiaticus*—several at the magic roadside fruiting tree outside of Kaziranga NP (01/14) and another at the fruiting tree stop as we made our way down from Tumling (01/22)

#### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (7)**

**Brown-capped Woodpecker** *Yungipicus nanus*—a tiny woodpecker, even smaller than North America's Downy Woodpecker, seen well at Shergarh Lodge during one of our al fresco lunches (01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** *Dryobates cathpharius*—a beautifully colored woodpecker in a Himalayan mixed feeding flock right after our first Red Panda sighting (01/19)

**Greater Flameback** *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*—nice views of this impressive woodpecker at Kaziranga NP on one date (01/13)

**White-naped Woodpecker** *Chrysocolaptes festivus*—we saw this beautiful Indian subcontinent endemic on (01/25) in a roadside tree on our way out of Kanha Tiger Reserve **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Black-rumped Flameback** *Dinopium benghalense*—the most frequently seen woodpecker on our India tour, seen at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11) and daily thereafter at Kanha

**Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus*—a couple sightings at Kanha by one of the vans **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Streak-throated Woodpecker** *Picus xanthopygaeus*—we saw this primarily green woodpecker on two dates at Kaziranga NP (01/12 and 01/13); another woodpecker endemic to the Indian subcontinent

#### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (3)**

**Eurasian Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*—a few observations of this widespread Old World species at Kaziranga NP and Kanha Tiger Reserve; this species is far larger than the American Kestrel of the Americas!

**Red-necked Falcon** *Falco chicquera*—a spectacular small raptor that we got to enjoy on our way back from one of our Kaziranga NP safari rides; we even got to see it in hot pursuit of what seems to have been a wagtail? **VOTED AS BIRD OF THE TRIP (TIED WITH GREAT HORNBILL)!**

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*—a quick flyby in the Sunderbans on one date

#### **PARROTS: Psittaculidae (4)**

**Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*—great perched views of this elegant parakeet at both Kaziranga and Kanha, where we got close studies of its impressive red bill and shoulder patches

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*—quite common in Kaziranga NP, usually in large flocks of several dozen birds; also, a couple sightings in the Sunderbans

**Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala*—great perched views of these small, slender parakeets directly overhead one of the vans at Kanha Tiger Reserve on (01/25) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Blossom-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula roseata*—large flock coming into roost in a bare tree at Kaziranga NP in the late afternoon offered us a show at sunset

#### **CUCKOOSHRIKES: Campephagidae (5)**

**Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*—scattered sightings in the Sunderbans and Kanha

**Gray-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris*—seen only once (01/12) at the Gibbon Sanctuary on our only day there

**Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus speciosus*—these little minivets just glowed blood red in the trees at Kaziranga NP on two days there (01/12 and 01/14)

**Large Cuckooshrike** *Coracina macei*—one resident bird in the garden of Shergarh Lodge on two dates (01/25 and 01/26), apparently nesting in a wooded corner of the property

**Black-winged Cuckooshrike** *Lalage melaschistos*—couple sightings in high canopy mixed feeding flocks at the Gibbon Sanctuary on (01/12)

#### **VIREOS AND SHRIKE-BABLERS: Vireonidae (1)**



**Green Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius xanathochlorus*—one of these Asian ‘vireos’ in a Himalayan foothill mixed feeding flock at Singalila NP (01/21)

#### **OLD WORLD ORIOLES: Oriolidae (2)**

**Indian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus kundoo*—beautiful views of this Indian subcontinent endemic on (01/24) at Kanha Tiger Reserve, perching at the very top of a tall tree in the morning sun. Spectacular! **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Black-hooded Oriole** *Oriolus xanthornus*—quite common in woodland at Kaziranga and Kanha

#### **WOODSWALLOWS: Artamidae (1)**

**Ashy Woodswallow** *Artamus fuscus*—our best views were in the Sunderbans (01/16), although we did have some distant views at Kaziranga (01/12); these birds resemble a mix between a kingbird and a swallow in behavior but not related to either

#### **VANGAS: Vangidae (2)**

**Common Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*—one was waiting for us in a tall tree in front of the main lodge building at Shergarh upon arrival (01/23); close relations of the Malagasy vangas **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike** *Hemipus picatus*—we saw a small family group of these black and white birds at the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12)

#### **IORAS: Aegithinidae (1)**

**Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia*—scattered sightings of this pretty bird in the lowlands of India throughout the tour; along with the leafbirds and fairy-bluebirds, one of a few bird families entirely endemic to tropical Asia

#### **FANTAILS: Rhipiduridae (1)**

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis*—we saw this lively little forest sprite at Kaziranga (01/12) and the Sunderbans (01/17)

#### **DRONGOS: Dicruridae (6)**

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*—very common and ubiquitous drongo of grassy plains and degraded areas

**White-bellied Drongo** *Dicrurus caeruleus*—we finally got fabulous views of this striking species on our last day at Kanha (01/26); one of the few drongos entirely endemic to the Indian subcontinent **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus*—couple sightings in the Sunderbans (01/16 and 01/17); very similar to Black Drongo but smaller and more closely tied to wooded areas

**Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus remifer*—seen a couple of times in wooded areas of Kaziranga NP

**Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*—several at the Haroocharai Tea Estate in the late afternoon (01/12); another in the roadside fruiting tree on our way down from Tumling

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus paradiseus*—very common and conspicuous in and around Kanha Tiger Reserve, including a resident pair in the Shergarh Lodge garden. These noisy drongos form the nucleus of mixed feeding flocks in tropical Asian forests.

#### **MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae (1)**

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea*—distant views of one high up in the canopy in the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12)

#### **SHRIKES: Laniidae (3)**

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*—we saw this winter visitor to India a few times at Kaziranga and Kanha

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach*—a few sightings of this handsome shrike at Kaziranga and Kanha

**Gray-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus*—great views daily of this winter visitor to Kaziranga NP, where we observed it daily; this species primarily nests on the Tibetan Plateau in spring and summer and spends the winter downslope in the lowlands of Assam and Southeast Asia

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (5)**

**Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie** *Urocissa flavirostris*—beautiful and striking magpie of the Himalayan foothills, especially around the snow-covered forests and hillsides around Tumling (1/19, 1/20, and 1/21)

**Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda*—these jay-like corvids were very common at Kaziranga NP and Kanha Tiger Reserve, where we observed them daily

**Eurasian Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*—Jim saw one of these while we were hiking downslope for our second Red Panda sighting at Singalila NP (01/20)

**House Crow** *Corvus splendens*—abundant and ubiquitous in the lowlands of India, always near humans and never in more natural settings; this corvid is a human commensal much like the Rock Pigeon and House Sparrow

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*—common and ubiquitous in all manner of habitats

### **FAIRY FLYCATCHERS: Stenostiridae (1)**

**Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis*—good views at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/12) and Kaziranga NP (01/13); part of a rather newly bird family of ‘flycatchers’ found to be genetically closer to tits and chickadees

### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (5)**

**Yellow-browed Tit** *Sylviparus modestus*—a few in a Himalayan mixed feeding flock on our last day at Singalila NP (01/21)

**Rufous-vented Tit** *Periparus rubidiventris*—these handsome little birds showed well for us right outside the lodge at Tumling on (01/19) and in a mixed feeding flock right after seeing our first Red Panda on the same day

**Gray-crested Tit** *Lophophanes dichrous*—uncommon and adorable Himalayan foothill specialty with its long and extravagant crest; seen well on (01/19) in a mixed feeding flock

**Cinereous Tit** *Parus cinereus*—formerly considered to be the same species as the familiar Great Tit of European gardens, seen well at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11) and Kaziranga NP (01/13 and 01/14)

**Indian Yellow Tit** *Machlolophus aplonotus* (E)—lucky find of this Indian endemic in a mixed feeding flock at Kanha Tiger Reserve on our last day (01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **LARKS: Alaudidae (1)**

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix griseus*—several birds seen well in a dry field between Raipur and Shergarh Lodge in Kanha (01/23) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES: Cisticolidae (4)**

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius*—seen only at the Haroocharai Tea Estate on our first afternoon (01/11); tailorbirds get their name from their nest construction, usually a large leaf sown together with plant fiber or spider silk to make a cradle for the egg

**Gray-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii*—seen on two days in woodland areas of Kanha Tiger Reserve (01/24 and 01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata*—observed daily at Kanha and Shergarh Lodge garden **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*—numerous in some of the open fields of Kanha Tiger Reserve; named after their bounding display flight where they call repetitively ‘zit, zit, zit’ **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae (2)**

**Thick-billed Warbler** *Arundinax aedon*—seen only once at Kaziranga NP (01/13)

**Blyth’s Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*—nice views on our way to Shergarh Lodge from Raipur; quite a bland and plain warbler **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **GRASSHOPPER WARBLERS: Locustellidae (1)**

**Striated Grassbird** *Megalurus palustris*—seen only once at Kaziranga NP (01/13); a large and bulky ‘Old World Warbler’

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (6)**

**Gray-throated Martin** *Riparia chinensis*—we saw this close relative of the Bank Swallow on two days at Kaziranga NP (01/13 and 01/14)

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—this familiar swallow was common at both Kaziranga and Kanha

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii*—nice views of two birds perched on the wires on our way out of Kanha Tiger Reserve on (01/24); these swallows are not colonial nesters and quite solitary at nesting sites **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*—these large swallows were about equally as common as Barn Swallow at Kanha, easily told apart by their pale buff rumps and stiff appearance in flight **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Streak-throated Swallow** *Petrochelidon fluvicola*—several of these dull swallows on our way from Raipur to Shergarh Lodge (01/23) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Nepal House-Martin** *Delichon nipalense*—one or two observed by some in a swirling mass of Gray-throated Martins at Kaziranga NP (01/14)

### **BULBULS: Pycnonotidae (3)**

**Black-crested Bulbul** *Rubigula flaviventris*—nice views during a bathroom stop at Kaziranga NP, our only sighting of this bird species on the tour (01/13)

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*—common and conspicuous in the lowlands of India

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus*—seemed to be most common at Kaziranga NP, with especially good views at the famous roadside *Ficus* tree by the road with all the ripening fruit

### **LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae (3)**

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*—great views of this dull, semi-terrestrial leaf warbler at Kaziranga NP on (01/13) and (01/14)

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*—scattered sightings at Kaziranga NP, Sunderbans, and Kanha

**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides*—seen briefly during one of our Kaziranga NP safaris

### **BUSH WARBLERS: Scotocercidae (1)**

**Slaty-bellied Tesia** *Tesia olivacea* **(HO)**—clearly heard in the dense undergrowth of the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12)

### **SYLVIID WARBLERS: Sylviidae (4)**

**Golden-breasted Fulvetta** *Lioparus chrysotis*—a busy little flock of these orange and black birds on our last day at Singalila NP was quite a surprise! (01/21)

**Yellow-eyed Babbler** *Chrysomma sinense*—a few of these 'pseudo-parrotbills' in the dry reeds at Kanha Tiger Reserve on our last day (01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**White-browed Fulvetta** *Fulvetta vinipectus*—the common small bird species in feeding flocks around Tumling, behaving not too dissimilarly from Bushtit

**Brown Parrotbill** *Cholornis unicolor*—two of these very cool birds in a mixed feeding flock at Singalila NP right after our first Red Panda sighting (01/19)

### **WHITE-EYES: Zosteropidae (2)**

**Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis*—common in the Himalayan foothills at Tumling and Singalila NP

**Indian White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus*—strangely, we saw this species only at Haroocharai Tea Estate

### **BABLERS: Timaliidae (1)**

**Indian Scimitar-Babbler** *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* **(HO)**—heard singing by a dirt track in the Kanha zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve on (01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **GROUND BABBLERS: Pellorneidae (1)**

**Abbott's Babbler** *Turdinus abboti*—we saw this rather plain babbler at the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12), where it was nearly the first bird of the morning

### **LAUGHINGTHRUSHES: Leiothrichidae (10)**

**Striated Laughingthrush** *Grammatoptila striata*—behaviorally, more like a giant barwing than a laughingthrush; we saw these arboreal birds on (01/20) and (01/21) in the forest at Singalila NP

**Striated Babbler** *Turdoides earlei*—a flock of these birds perched up in the fading light on (01/14) at Kaziranga

**Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striata*—these adaptable and garrulous birds were a lot of fun to see in the Sunderbans and Kanha Tiger Reserve, where it was very common

**Spotted Laughingthrush** *Lanthocincla ocellata*—a large and spectacular laughingthrush that showed well on (01/20) and (01/21) at Singalila NP

**Black-faced Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron affine*—this cold hardy laughingthrush was common at high elevation around Tumling and Singalila NP

**Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*—we saw this species only once in a mixed laughingthrush flock, right behind the restaurant at Singalila NP

**Silver-eared Mesia** *Leiothrix argentauris* (**HO**)—heard singing at Singalila NP on (01/21)

**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea*—brief views of this lovely bird at Singalila NP on (01/21); sometimes known as the 'Pekin Robin' or 'Pekin Nightingale'

**Hoary-throated Barwing** *Actinodura nipalensis*—nice views of this crested forest species on two dates at Singalila NP, usually in the company of other birds

**Chestnut-tailed Minla** *Actinodura strigula*—a small party feeding along the road at Singalila NP on our last day (01/21) there; this species is sometimes known as the 'Bar-throated Siva'

### **NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (2)**

**White-tailed Nuthatch** *Sitta himalayensis*—one in a mixed feeding flock at Singalila NP on (01/19)

**Velvet-fronted Nuthatch** *Sitta frontalis*—most got to see this bright blue nuthatch on our last day at Kanha, associating with various other small birds by a dirt track (01/26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **TREECREEPERS: Certhiidae (1)**

**Rusty-flanked Treecreeper** *Certhia nipalensis*—nice views for some who continued up the nice forest road at Singalila NP on our last day, in one of the bigger feeding flocks that included the Green Shrike-Babbler and Yellow-browed Tit (01/21)

### **STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (8)**

**Common Hill Myna** *Gracula religiosa*—known for their excellent mimicry, we got to observe these mynas at the fruiting *Ficus* tree outside of Kaziranga NP with all the fruit eating pigeons, barbets, bulbuls, and hornbills (01/14). We had another sighting at another fruiting tree on our way down from Tumling (01/22).

**Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus*—a beautiful and striking starling that winters in India (and used as organic pest control in some countries such as China); a flock of about ten observed on the drive from Raipur to Kanga (01/23) and a single bird at the reserve itself (01/25) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Asian Pied Starling** *Gracupica contra*—quite common at Kaziranga, where we saw them daily; also, a single sighting at the airport in Raipur while waiting for our vehicles

**Brahminy Starling** *Sturnia pagodarum*—a couple flocks on our way from Raipur to Kanha Tiger Reserve, including great views right on the lawn of the airport of Raipur! (01/23) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnia malabarica*—good views of this small, colorful starling at Kaziranga NP on two days (01/13 and 01/14)

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*—perhaps one of the most common and numerous birds in India, seen daily in the lowlands at all sites

**Jungle Myna** *Acridotheres fuscus*—common and numerous at Kaziranga, often outnumbering the preceding species there

**Great Myna** *Acridotheres grandis*—just one sighting of a pair on (1/13) with a mixed flock of Jungle and Common Myna in a restaurant parking lot near Kaziranga NP

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (3)**

**White-collared Blackbird** *Turdus albocinctus*—daily observations of this large, dapper thrush during our time at Singalila NP and Tumling; similar to the Eurasian Blackbird but with silvery white wing markings

**Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis*—daily observations around Tumling, sticking more to the forest edge and open fields than the preceding species

**Red-throated Thrush** *Turdus ruficollis*—a lone female observed on the side of a ridge near Tumling (01/19)

### **OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae (19)**

**Indian Robin** *Copsychus fulicatus*—often found near human habitation in drier areas of India, we observed it at the airport in Raipur (01/23) and near Kanha (01/26); this handsome bird is endemic to the Indian subcontinent  
**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis*—daily observations in Kaziranga NP and even along the edges of mangrove forest in the Sunderbans

**White-rumped Shama** *Copsychus malabaricus*—a couple of observations of this lovely songster at Kaziranga NP

**Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus*—great views of this lovely flycatcher at Kaziranga NP on (01/13); one of the few flycatchers in India that forages from the tops of trees and exposed branches

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*—observed at Kaziranga NP (01/14) and on the way from Raipur to Shergarh Lodge (01/23); a winter visitor in India, migrating

**Blue Whistling-Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus*—daily observations of this thrush-like ‘flycatcher’ in the garden at Tumling, here represented by one of the yellow-billed races; this whistling-thrush is the largest and heaviest of the Old World Flycatcher family

**Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus*—Jim and Narca had views of this pretty streamside bird at Singalila NP (01/21); the forktails are black and white Asian flycatchers that forage and nest along forest streams and rivers

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Calliope calliope*—observed at Kaziranga NP (01/14)

**Chinese Rubythroat** *Calliope tschebaiewi*—seen only by Narca at the edge of some reeds at Kaziranga NP (01/14)

**Himalayan Bluetail** *Tarsiger rufilatus*—several female-type birds came out to feed on the road on a gloomy afternoon at Singalila NP ((01/20)

**Ultramarine Flycatcher** *Ficedula supercilialis (HO)*—heard calling in some thickets by the dirt track at Kaziranga NP on (01/13)

**Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*—singles of this plain little winter visitor at Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11) and daily at Kaziranga thereafter

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*—a couple of observations in the Mukki Zone of Kanha (01/24 and 01/25), including a nice red-throated male during a bathroom stop; this species nests in eastern Europe and migrates southeast to northern India to winter **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis*—a common and colorful bird of the Himalayan foothills, observed daily in the open areas around Tumling

**Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureoreus*—fantastic views of a wintering male at Kaziranga NP (01/13)

**White-throated Redstart** *Phoenicurus schisticeps*—an uncommon and smartly colored redstart, observed on (01/20) near Tumling

**Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*—another thrush-like ‘flycatcher’, we saw this one both at Kaziranga (01/14) and Kanha (01/25)

**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus*—common in open fields and scrubby areas around Kaziranga NP and Kanha NP, where we saw several daily

**Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata*—a tiny, mostly resident chat species in India; observed daily in and around Kanha  
**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae (1)**

**Thick-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum agile*—a couple observations in and around Kanha NP, usually high up in the tree – not a great place to see a very small, brown bird! An interesting one though, as it primarily feeds on parasitic mistletoe and spreads it throughout the forest with its droppings. **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **SUNBIRDS: Nectariniidae (3)**

**Ruby-cheeked Sunbird** *Chalcoparia singalensis*—a pair feeding in the forest at the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12) made enough of an impression that one person nominated it as one of their favorite birds of the trip

**Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticus*—the most common sunbird during our time in the Sunderbans, although we also had a great observation at the airport in Raipur (01/23)

**Crimson Sunbird** *Aethopyga siparaja*—a stunning little sunbird, seen only once at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11)

### **FAIRY-BLUEBIRDS: Irenidae (1)**

**Asian Fairy-bluebird** *Irena puella*—one brief observation at the Gibbon Sanctuary (01/12); not a close relative to the bluebirds of North America (small thrushes), being more closely allied to the Asian leafbirds

### **LEAFBIRDS: Chloropseidae (2)**

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** *Chloropsis aurifrons*—scattered sightings throughout the tour, although our best observation was the second one at Kaziranga NP (01/14); the brightly colored leafbirds of Asia feed on a combination of insects, nectar, and ripening fruit

**Orange-bellied Leafbird** *Chloropsis hardwickii*—one observation on the way down from Tumling in a roadside fruiting tree (01/22)

### **WAXBILLS: Estrildidae (1)**

**White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata*—a small flock in a patch of bamboo at the Haroocharai Tea Estate (01/11)

### **ACCENTORS: Prunellidae (1)**

**Rufous-breasted Accentor** *Prunella strophiata*—a few birds were regulars at the (sometimes frozen!) water drip next to our lodging at Tumling; accentors are a Eurasian family with a passing resemblance to the American sparrows, and this one in particular looks a bit like a Lincoln's Sparrow

### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (3)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—a few observations outside of Kaziranga NP, part of its original native range

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer cinnamomeus*—a few participants noticed this species mixed in with the roving flock of Plain Mountain-Finches near our lodging at Tumling

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*—a couple observations of this little sparrow around Kaziranga NP

### **WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae (9)**

**Gray Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*—nice views of wintering birds at Kaziranga NP and Kanha NP

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*—small numbers in open wet areas at Kaziranga NP (01/14 and 01/15), including a few individuals with brighter yellow heads

**White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla maderaspatensis*—one along the Brahmaputra River while waiting for our boat tour to see the Gangetic River Dolphin (01/13)

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*—frequent, daily observations at Kaziranga NP

**Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus*—several observations at Kanha Tiger Reserve, some at very close range

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*—one observation at Kanha Tiger Reserve, mixed in with a couple Paddyfield Pipits

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus*—seen by a couple of the vans at Kaziranga NP, a heavily streaked pipit that exhibits a pink flush during the breeding season

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*—scattered sightings at Kaziranga NP and Kanha Tiger Reserve

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*—good numbers daily wintering in the open woodland in Kanha NP

**\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

### **FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae (2)**

**Dark-breasted Rosefinch** *Procarduelis nipalensis*—frequenting the water drip in front of our lodging in Tumling one morning

**Plain Mountain-Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola*—a large flock of these were frequenting the gardens in front of our lodging at Tumling; a close relative of the more colorful rosy-finches of North America! (01/19 and 01/20)

### **MAMMALS (30 species recorded):**

**Capped Lutung (Langur)** *Trachypithecus pileatus*—observed daily in small numbers in Kaziranga NP, a striking arboreal primate

**Northern Plains Gray Langur** *Semnopithecus entellus*—very common at Kanha Tiger Reserve, where they could often be seen associating with herds of Chital (Spotted Deer) and flocks of Indian Peafowl **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Assam Macaque** *Macaca assamensis*—several observed asking for handouts on the roadside on our way down from Tumling (01/22)

**Rhesus Macaque** *Macaca mulatta*—the most common primate in northeast India, often near the roadside or buildings asking for handouts

**Northern Pig-tailed Macaque** *Macaca leonina*—beautiful views of a few individuals in the tree canopy at the Gibbon Sanctuary on (01/12)

**Western Hoolock Gibbon** *Hoolock hoolock (HO)*—heard in the distance at Kaziranga NP (01/13)

**Golden Jackal** *Canis aureus*—daily observations of this small canid at Kanha Tiger Reserve, often in bonded pairs **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Sloth Bear** *Melursus ursinus*—amazing views by one of the vans at Kanha Tiger Reserve, including video footage of it feeding right by the vehicle! (01/24) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Jungle Cat** *Felis chaus*—great views of a mother and her kittens along the mangrove edge in the Sunderbans (01/18)

**Tiger** *Panthera tigris*—seen at Kanha Tiger Reserve on several dates (01/23, 01/24, and 01/26), but our first sighting was by far the most memorable – seeing this majestic cat with its half-grown cub in the waning afternoon light will forever be remembered by all members of the group. **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Red Panda** *Ailurus fulgens*—arguably, one of the most adorable mammals in all of Asia; we saw this one very well on (01/19) and (01/20) in Singalila NP **\*\*VOTED AS MAMMAL OF THE TRIP\*\***

**Smooth-coated Otter** *Lutrogale perspicillata*—nice views (01/13 and 01/14) at Kaziranga NP of two separate family groups

**Gangetic Dolphin** *Platanista gangetica*—brief but solid views of at least two individuals on the Brahmaputra River (01/13); an Endangered river dolphin due to human disturbance and pollution

**Asian Elephant** *Elaphas maximus*—we saw several herds of this majestic animal at Kaziranga NP (01/12 and 01/14); an Endangered species due to poaching and habitat loss

**Indian Rhinoceros** *Rhinoceros unicornis*—truly fantastic to see so many of these incredible mammals at Kaziranga NP, as they become so rare everywhere else; we saw approximately thirty individuals during our time there, including several calves **\*\*VOTED AS MAMMAL OF THE TRIP\*\***

**Indian Boar** *Sus scrofa*—daily observations at both Kaziranga NP and Kanha NP, where this adaptable mammal was still quite common

**Chital (Spotted Deer)** *Axis axis*—a few individuals in the Sunderbans followed by big herds of them at Kanha Tiger Reserve, where it was the most common and conspicuous herbivorous mammal

**Indochinese Hog Deer** *Axis porcinus*—daily observations of one or two individuals at Kaziranga NP; a small, unique deer with an interesting sloping head shape

**Barasingha (Western Swamp Deer)** *Rucervus duvaucelii*—a large and majestic deer, still quite common at Kanha Tiger Reserve where we had daily observations; we saw the subspecies *R. d. branderi*, which survives only in Kanha NP **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Eastern Swamp Deer** *Rucervus ranjitsinhi*—a few observations in Kaziranga NP, the last stronghold for this Endangered Assamese endemic

**Northern Red Muntjac** *Muntiacus vaginalis*—great views (01/24 and 01/25) at Kanha Tiger Reserve; this species holds the distinction of having the smallest number of chromosomes of any mammal

**Sambar** *Rusa unicolor*—we saw this large deer species several times at Kaziranga NP and Kanha NP

**Wild Water Buffalo** *Bubalus arnee*—daily observations of this very large buffalo at Kaziranga NP, usually wallowing in water or not far from it

**Gaur** *Bos gaurus*—a small herd of these wild forest cattle were regular in a tract of bamboo at Kanha Tiger Reserve, and we saw them there every time we drove by (01/23-26) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Blackbuck (Antelope)** *Antilope cervicapra*—we saw this beautiful mammal in the open plains of Kanha Tiger Reserve; this antelope has significant religious significance in Hinduism **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Black Giant Squirrel** *Ratufa bicolor*—one of the largest species of squirrel in the world (perhaps the largest arboreal one); seen on two dates in Kaziranga NP and again in the roadside fruiting tree on our way down from Tumling

**Five-striped Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus pennantii*—we saw this adaptable species along a cement wall on our way from Raipur to Kanha (01/23) **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Himalayan Striped Squirrel** *Tamiops mccllellandii*—a couple observations of this small squirrel in Kaziranga NP

**Three-striped Ground Squirrel** *Lariscus insignis*—seen once on the tour at Kaziranga NP

**Hoary-bellied (Irrawaddy) Squirrel** *Callosciurus pygerythrus*—quite common in and around Kaziranga NP, where it was the common arboreal squirrel

#### REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (6 species recorded):

**Salwater Crocodile** *Crocodylus porosus*—two observations in the Sunderbans, including one medium-sized individual; this crocodile is a true giant at adulthood! (01/16 and 01/17)

**Assam Roofed Turtle** *Pangshura sylhetensis*—one observation at Kaziranga NP (01/14)

**Tokay Gecko** *Gekko gekko*—two seen in a tree hollow at Kaziranga NP on one of our safaris (01/14)

**Common Water Monitor** *Varanus salvator*—a couple observations of this medium-sized predator in the Sunderbans (01/16 and 01/17)

**Checkered Keelback (Water Snake)** *Fowlea piscater*—one was frequenting the edges of the pond at Shergarh Lodge **\*\*EXTENSION ONLY\*\***

**Assam Toad** *Duttaphrynus melanostictus*—one observation at Kaziranga NP