

Bird watching and wildlife tour in Sri Lanka – 2019 (12th January to 27th January 2019)

Tour itinerary - (15 nights / 16 days)

E – Endemic birds / M – Migrant birds

Day 1 (12th January 2019) – ARRIVAL

Prasanjith, founder of Walk With Jith or a representative will meet you at the airport on your arrival and depart to Kandy.

Afternoon we have following options,

Visit to botanical gardens

Visit to Sacred Tooth Relic Palace

Visit to Kandy city

Birding excursion in Udawatta Kelle forest reserve

Accommodation – **Thilanka Hotel** or **Suisse Hotel Kandy**

Day 2 (13th January) – KITULGALA VILLAGE

Breakfast at 07:00. After breakfast 08:00 we will drive to the forest areas of the Wet Zone in Kitulgala, famed as the spot where The **Bridge on the River Kwai** was filmed (around 03 hours drive).

Along the way you will enjoy some spectacular views of Sri Lanka's country side, so keep your cameras handy! This drive will be approximately three hours depending on stops. Along the way, we are likely to encounter a varied selection of the commoner birds of Sri Lanka's Wet Zone. Possibilities include **Cattle and Little Egrets, White-breasted Kingfisher, Shikra, Spotted Dove, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Yellow billed Babbler, Asian Koel, Oriental Magpie Robin, Red-vented Bulbul, Red wattled Lapwing, White bellied Drongo and Black-hooded Oriole.**

Our hotel grounds and nearby gardens and farms are home to a wealth of exciting birds.

Accommodation – **Kitulgala Rest House**



Photo - Paradise Flycatcher / Indian Black Robin / Yellow billed Babbler / Brown headed Barbet

Day 3 (14th January)

There will be the option of a pre-breakfast bird watching excursion this morning (1:30 hours birding, starting at 06:00). Come back to the hotel for breakfast at 07:30.

After breakfast, if river levels permit, we may be ferried across the river by dug-out canoe or walk through a hanging bridge to explore Kitulgala's quiet forest trails, which are home to such exciting endemics as the tiny Sri Lankan Hanging Parrot, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Orange-billed Babbler and Sri Lankan Grey Hornbill. As well as these unique Sri Lankan residents, the area is rich in other bird life with the shy (but noisy!) Black Bulbuls, Black rumped Falme back Woodpecker, Crested Goshawk and Crested Treeswifts to watch for as Indian Swiftlets swirl overhead.



Chestnut Backed Owlet and Serendib Scopes Owl

Highlights – Sri Lanka Chestnut backed Owtet (E), Sri Lanka Layard’s Parakeet (E), Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot (E), Sri Lanka Green billed Caucal (E), Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill (E), Sri Lanka Spur Fowl (E), Brown capped Babbler (E), Spot winged Thrush (E), Indian Pitta (M), Dwarf kingfisher, Purple-rumped and Loten’s Sunbirds, Green Warblers, Pigmy and Black rumped Falme backed Woodpeckers, Lesser Yellow Napped, Orange Minivet, Orange billed Babblers (E) and many more.

Accommodation – Kitulgala Rest House

Day 4 (15th January) - NUWARA ELIYA (HIGHLAND)

There will be the option of a pre-breakfast bird watching excursion this morning. (1:30 hours birding, starting at 06:00). Come back to the hotel for breakfast at 07:30.

Leaving Kitulgala after breakfast at 08:30 and travel towards Nuwara Eliya highland.

We’ll aim to arrive at our hotel in Nuwara Eliya by mid-afternoon, in time to stretch our legs with a visit to Victoria Park in the middle of town.

Highlights - Kashmir Flycatcher (M), Forest Wagtail (M), Indian Pitta (M) and Pied Ground Thrush (M), Dull Blue Flycatcher (E), Indian blue Robin (M), Yellow eared Bulbul (E), Sri Lanka White-eye (E), Indian Pitta (M)

Accommodation – Leisure Village, Nuwara Eliya



Ceylon tea in highlands of Sri Lanka

Day 5 (16th January) - HILL COUNTRY AND HORTON PLAINS

Bird watching in Horton Plains national park. We leave from the hotel at 05:00 with packed breakfast.

Set at an elevation of nearly 2,000 meters, Nuwara Eliya is a famous old hill-station that lies at the hub of Sri Lanka’s tea estates. Extensive areas of superb montane forest still remain, holding hill-forest specialties such as Sri Lankan Woodpigeon, Sri Lankan White-eye, the

extremely secretive Sri Lankan have any chance of seeing what is generally regarded as the island's trickiest endemic, the rare and shy Sri Lankan Whistling Thrush. With luck, we will also encounter the highland form of Purple-faced Monkey, known as the 'Bear Monkey' and Giant Squirrel.

Highlights – Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon (E), Dull Blue Flycatcher (E), Sri Lanka White-eye (E), Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush (E), Yellow eared Bulbul (E), Sri Lanka Bush Warbler (E), Greater Flameback Woodpecker (E), Grey headed Canary Flycatcher, Pied Bushchat, Common Buzzard, rare Mountain Hawk Eagle and stunning Black Eagle

Accommodation – Leisure Village, Nuwara Eliya



Purple faced Leaf Monkey and Sri Lanka Tree Nymph Butterfly

Day 6 (17th January)

Breakfast at 06:30. After breakfast we will travel on to Tissamaharama, a drive of approximately five hours depending on stops.

Afternoon around 15:00 walk to nearby wetland where **Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Yellow and Black Bittern, Baya Weaver, Black headed Munia, Brown Fish Owl and the scarce White-naped Woodpecker** can sometimes be seen.

Accommodation – Hibiscus Garden Hotel, Tissamaharama



White naped Woodpecker / Crested Serpent Eagle / Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl / Greater Thicknee

Day 7 (18th January) - YALA NATIONAL PARK

We leave the hotel early in the morning at 05:30 with picnic-breakfast and lunch for a full day jeep safari in Yala national park, lies about an hour's drive from your hotel and forms part of Sri Lanka's oldest and most famous National Park, comprising of a diversity of habitats including scrub jungles, water reservoirs, brakish lagoons and riverine habitats.



Leopard



Elephant / Malabar Pied Hornbill / Crested Hawk Eagle / Indian Pea Fowl

Mugger Crocodiles frequent the river banks and, as we explore through the southern sector of the park, we'll find plenty of Tufted Grey Langurs as we watch eagerly for mammals such as Sambar and Spotted Deer. Leopards are probably easier to see here than anywhere else in Asia, and Yala is world famous for its large population of this most beautiful 'big cat'. With luck, we should have at least one encounter during our stay here. Sloth Bear is also common in the park, but less easily seen.

Highlights – Indian Pea Fowl, Black necked, Painted, Wooly necked and Adjutant Storks, Blue faced Malkoha, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Greater Flemingo (M), Brahminy Myna (M), Rosy Starling (M), Southern Sirkeer, Mammels including Elephant, Leopard, Sloth Bear, Spotted Deer, Sambar, Wild Boar, Grey Langer, Marsh & Estuarine Crocodiles.

Accommodation – Hibiscus Garden Hotel, Tissamaharama

Day 8 (19th January) – BUNDALA RAMSAR WETLAND

Morning we leave from the hotel at 05:30 (with packed breakfast) we will bird watching and photographing in and around **Bundala Ramsar Wetland** in the area (half a day safari).

Bundala Ramsar Wetland was the first wetland declared as Ramsar wetland in Sri Lanka, comprising of a scrub jungle bordering the sea together with large shallow pools. This is a very good place to watch water birds & migrant waders during northern winter. Water birds, Terns and waders will be our principal targets.

Highlights- Golden, Greater & Lesser Sand Plovers (M), Marsh, Wood, Green, & Terek Sandpipers (M), Turnstone (M), Red necked Palarope (M), Pintail Snipe (M), Black tail Godwit (M), Greater Flemingo (M) & Terns such as Great Crested, Lesser Crested, Caspian, Gull billed, Little Terns, both Greater & Eurasian Thicknees, Watercock, Yellow Bittern, Black Bittern, Ashy crowned Sparrow Lark, Yellow wattled Lapwing

Afternoon leisure at hotel

Accommodation – **Hibiscus Garden Hotel**



Indian Darter / Painted Stork / Rose ringed Parakeet / Grey headed Fish Eagle

Day 9 (20th January) – EXTRA DAY IN TISSA

Extra day in Tissa. The program of this day is open for the group. If anybody want to do an extra drive in Yala, we can organize for extra cost. We will arrange an extra early morning trip to Bundala until lunch or you can stay and enjoy the garden of Hibiscus Garden Hotel. In the afternoon we will relax at Hibiscus Garden Hotel.

Accommodation – **Hibiscus Garden Hotel**

Day 10 (21st January)

Breakfast at 07:00. After breakfast 08:00, we'll start to make our way to Sinharaja village where the most impressive Sinharaja rain forest is. This is about 5 hours' drive.

Sinharaja World Heritage Rain Forest is the last remaining significant primary forest patch in the island. It is home to most endemic flora & fauna species. This is the single most important site in Sri Lanka in term of endemic birds and encounter spectacular mixed feeding flocks of birds.

Accommodation – **Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja village**

Day 11 and 12 (22nd and 23rd January) - SINHARAJA RAIN FOREST

Early breakfast at 06:00. These days are set aside for exploring Sinharaja rain forest site in the heart of the wet zone. The park's extensive bird list includes most of the country's endemics and we have a good chance of seeing the majority of them, although some are easier to find than others. The ground-dwelling Sri Lanka Spurfowl requires stealth and sharp eyes, whereas roving flocks of Ashy-headed Laughing Thrushes and Orange-billed Babblers are much more obliging. Ceylon Hill-Mynas call loudly and clearly from exposed positions while Ceylon Hanging-parrots shriek past.

The exquisite Ceylon Blue Magpie is a real gem and, several will be seen here. We'll also be keeping a sharp eye open for Red-faced Malkoha cavorting around the tangled vines and creepers. Another rare and shy inhabitant of the forest here is the Scaly Thrush and we'll listen carefully for the distinctive call that will betray the presence of this remarkable bird.

Highlights – Green billed Cauca (E), Red faced Malkoha (E), Sri Lanka Blue Magpie (E), White faced Starling (E), Orange billed Babbler (E), Ashy headed Laughing Thrush (E), White throated Flowerpecker (E), Sri Lanka Myna (E), Sri Lanka Spur Fowl (E), Serendib Scops Owl (E), Brown capped Babbler (E), Scaly Thrush (E), Spot winged Thrush (E), Sri Lanka Crested Drongo (E) to name just a few endemics.

Accommodation – Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja village



Sri Lanka Blue Magpie / Red faced Malkoha / Yellow fronted Barbet / White throated Flowerpecker

Day 13 (24th January)

Breakfast at 07:00. After breakfast we are driving to Galle beach area in south coast. We'll aim to arrive at our hotel by mid-afternoon.

Accommodation – **Paradise Beach Resort, Mirissa or Insight Beach Resort, Ahangama**

Day 14 (25th January) – WHALE WATCHING

We leave from hotel at 06:00 with packed breakfast. Morning Dolphins, Whales and Sea birds watching cruise in Mirissa deep sea. (www.mirissawatersports.com). It is regularly seeing large pods of dolphins and blue whales just few miles offshore.

Afternoon leisure at beach resort.



Whale watching in south coast

Accommodation – **Paradise Beach Resort, Mirissa or Insight Beach Resort, Ahangama**

Day 15 (26th January) - NEGAMBO CLOSE TO THE AIRPORT

Breakfast at 08:00. After breakfast we are driving close to the airport. We'll aim to arrive at our hotel by mid-afternoon.

Accommodation – **Tamarind Tree Hotel**

Day 16 (27th January) – EARLEY MORNING DEPARTURE

10 min. drive to the airport