

Bhutan – Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon

April 19 – May 3, 2023

Itinerary

A more detailed itinerary will be sent to registrants.

Day 1, April 19: Arrival at Paro

We will fly to Paro either from New Delhi, India on Bhutan's only international airline, Druk air. Upon reaching Paro International Airport, we will be taken to our hotel. We will spend the rest of the day birding within the Paro valley, along the riverside looking for Ibisbill, Black-tailed Crake, Wallcreeper, and many other species. ***Night in Paro.***

Day 2, April 20: Paro – Chele La – Thimphu

This morning we'll rise early and drive to Chele La pass to look for the rare and beautiful Monal Pheasant, plus Blood Pheasant, Alpine Accentor, White-browed Rosefinch, Collared and White-winged Grosbeaks, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Spotted Laughingthrush, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Hen Harrier, and many others. In the afternoon we drive to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. ***Night in Thimphu.***

Day 3, April 21: Thimphu – Dochula - Punakha

Today we ascend to Dochu La pass, the highest pass between Thimphu and Wangdi districts and descend gradually to Punakha valley, the old capital of Bhutan. Dzong (fortress) is amazing strategically located in the center of two rivers. Forest type consists of chir pine and Broadleaved. Within these forest types, inhabit rich species of birds, some of which are Fire-tailed Myzornis, Cutia, Brown Parrotbill, White-bellied Heron, Golden Bush Robin, Hill Partridge, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Himalayan Blue-tail, Thrushes, Barbets, Treecreepers, and so on. ***Night in Punakha***

Day 4, April 22: Punakha to Phobjikha

Drive to Phobjikha valley, a place where Black-necked Crane roost in winter. This valley has magnificent views. Gangtey Goempa, the famous monastery is located at the top of the hillock, one of the places where monks undergo learning and practicing religious dharma. Birding en-route we will look for: Satyr Tragopan, Great Parrotbill, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Monal Pheasant, Himalayan Griffon, Blood Pheasant, Red-headed Bullfinch, and many more. ***Night in Phobjikha***

Day 5, April 23: Phobjikha - Tingtibi

Drive from Phobjikha – Trongsa crossing Pelela pass, the highest pass between Wangdi and Trongsa districts. Forests are a blend of conifers and broadleaved forest; rich with diverse birds like; Great Parrotbill, Himalayan Griffon, Alpine Accentor, Green-tailed Sunbird, White-browed Rosefinch, Brown Parrotbill etc. As we approach Trongsa we will see the magnificent Trongsa Dzong (fortress). Descending down to Tingtibi through the lush sub-tropical broadleaved forest, we will look for Rufous-necked Hornbill, Great Hornbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Slaty-backed Tesia, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Speckle Woodpigeon, and many more. ***Overnight: Camp at Tingtibi***

Day 6, April 24: Explore Tingtibi areas

We will spend the day exploring sub-tropical forest, look for the very rare White-bellied Heron, Beautiful Nuthatch, Rufous-necked and Great Hornbill, and Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler. It is also one of best habitat of endangered Golden Langur. ***Overnight: Camp at Tingtibi***

Day 7, April 25: Tingtibi - Panbang

We will head down to Panbang, close to the Indian border, passing through sub-tropical forest and finally reach the less explored areas of Panbang, in Royal Manas National Park. As we bird along the road, diversity of birds can be seen such as Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Cutia, Silver-eared Mesia, and many more. **Overnight: Panbang Eco-camp or camp**

Day 8, April 26: Explore Panbang/Manas areas

Spend a day birding within Panbang and Royal Manas National Park areas. Here we have an option and can either bird by raft or drive along the road. Varieties of sub-tropical birds can be found there such as rare Blue-naped Pitta, and many others like White-rumped shama, Silver-eared Mesia, Indian Roller, and so on. Some of the charismatic wild animals also be seen such as Golden Langur, Asiatic elephant, Barking Deer, Sambar, Wild Buffalo, Black Bear, Leopard, etc. **Overnight: Panbang Eco-camp**

Day 9, April 27: Panbang – Nganglam

Today we gain explore the rich pristine broadleaved forest looking for additional birds.

Overnight: Camp at Nganglam

Day 10, April 28: Nganglam to Yongkola

We will continue exploring great local birding spots as we continue to our overnight through unexplored birding sites en-route. **Overnight: Camp at Yongkola**

Day 11, April 29: Birding Namling Areas

We will bird within Namling areas through lush broadleaved forest in search of the rare Ward's Trogon, Wedge-billed, Long-billed and Rufous-throated Wren-Babblers, Grey-sided Laughingthrush, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Lesser and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler, Cutia, and many more. We will also enjoy the wonderful Namling Waterfall. **Overnight: Camp at Yongkola**

Day 12, April 30: Yongkola - Tashigang

Move further eastern most part of Bhutan passing through broadleaved and chir pine forests which hold rich bird diversity. We will pass through center of Mongar town and finally reached Tashigang where the Dzong is located at strategic point overlooking Sherichu with spectacular views.

Around Tashigang, We will look for: Pygmy Blue Flycatcher, Lesser and Greater Yellow-nape, Brown Parrotbill, Brown-throated Treecreeper, and many others. **Overnight at: Hotel in Tashigang**

Day 13, May 1: Tashigang – Narphung

Today we will travel south-east passing through chir pine forest and sub-tropical broadleaved forest. We bird enroute looking for: Mountain Hawk Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, White-browed Shrike Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch, Bhutan Laughingthrush, amongst many others.

Overnight at: Camp in Narphung

Day 14, May 2: Narphung – Samdrupjongkhar

We will drive further south to Samdrupjongkhar close to the Indian border (Assam). We will bird through sub-tropical broadleaved forest which also has rich birdlife. As we bird along the road, we will look for Rufous-bellied Eagle, Rufous-throated Partridge, Oriental Pied and Rufous-necked Hornbill, Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Chestnut-tailed and Asian Pied Starling, Crested Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher, Spotted Forktail, and many others. **Overnight at: Hotel in Samdrupjongkhar**

Day 15, May 3: Departure: Pick up to Guwahati/Assam