

TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



BIRDING IN THE LAND OF DRAGONS



**Delhi – Paro – Thimphu – Punakha – Gangtey – Trongsa – Zhemgang –
Tingtibi – Gelephu - Delhi**

- Day 1 Travel to Delhi from the UK
- Day 2 Arrive at Delhi. Afternoon sightseeing
- Day 3 Travel to Paro. Afternoon sightseeing at Paro
- Day 4 Morning birding at Paro. Afternoon drive to Thimphu
- Day 5 Morning drive to Punakha. Afternoon birding at Punakha
- Day 6 Morning and afternoon birding at Punakha
- Day 7 Morning, drive to Gangtey. Afternoon birding at Gangtey
- Day 8 Morning drive to Trongsa. Afternoon birding at Trongsa and surrounding areas
- Day 9 Morning drive to Zhemgang. Afternoon birding at Zhemgang
- Day 10 Morning drive to Tingtibi. Afternoon birding at Tingtibi
- Day 11 Morning drive to Gelephu. Afternoon birding at Gelephu
- Day 12 Morning drive into Assam, India and reach Guwahati. Afternoon fly to Delhi
- Day 13 Fly back from Delhi to the UK

Bhutan is a fascinating land – it is a place where the forests still hide unknown animals and birds. The people of Bhutan are warm, smiling and the culture is ancient. The forests are home to species like the Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon, Ibisbill, Black Necked Crane, Rufous Necked Hornbill, Sikkim Wedge-Billed Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch, Oriental Honeyguide, Fire Tailed Myzornis and Bhutan Laughing Thrush. Mammals include the elusive Clouded Leopard, Marbled Cat and the Takin. The high mountains of Bhutan are home to a lot more birds than one manages to see in one trip – that is why Bhutan is best explored – slowly.

Day 1

Depart the UK to Delhi arriving early next morning.

Day 2 Arrive New Delhi

Arrive into New Delhi. On exiting the baggage reclaim you will be met by a representative and transferred in an air conditioned vehicle to your hotel, The Claridges New Delhi (40 minutes' drive from the airport). Time permitting, you will enjoy a privately guided walking tour of New Delhi – after the tour you will be driven back to the hotel.

Overnight - The Claridges, New Delhi - No meals included



Day 3 Delhi to Paro

You will meet your leader at the airport (if it is so arranged) and fly out to Paro. The flight to Paro normally offers excellent views of the Himalayas including many of the highest mountains in the world (Mt. Everest, Chomolhari, Mt. Narsing). After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by your Bhutanese hosts and be driven to your hotel in the beautiful Paro Valley. You will spend the afternoon exploring the lovely Paro Valley, where such species as Ibisbill and perhaps the scarce Black-tailed Crake can be found, apart from species as White Wagtail, White-capped Water Redstart, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Oriental Turtle-Dove and Russet/Cinnamon Sparrow. If you are up to it a trek to the Tatsakang Monastery is an interesting way to get acclimatized in Bhutan.

Overnight - The Dechen Hill Resort - All meals included

Day 4 Paro - Thimphu

Early (Very Early) – you will start for Chele la. Here you will explore the area on foot and look for birds like Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, along with other species like the Collared Grosbeak, Himalayan Griffon, Kalij Pheasant, Spotted Laughingthrush, Rosy Pipit, Blue-fronted Redstart, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch. After breakfast and lunch in the field, you will gradually head towards

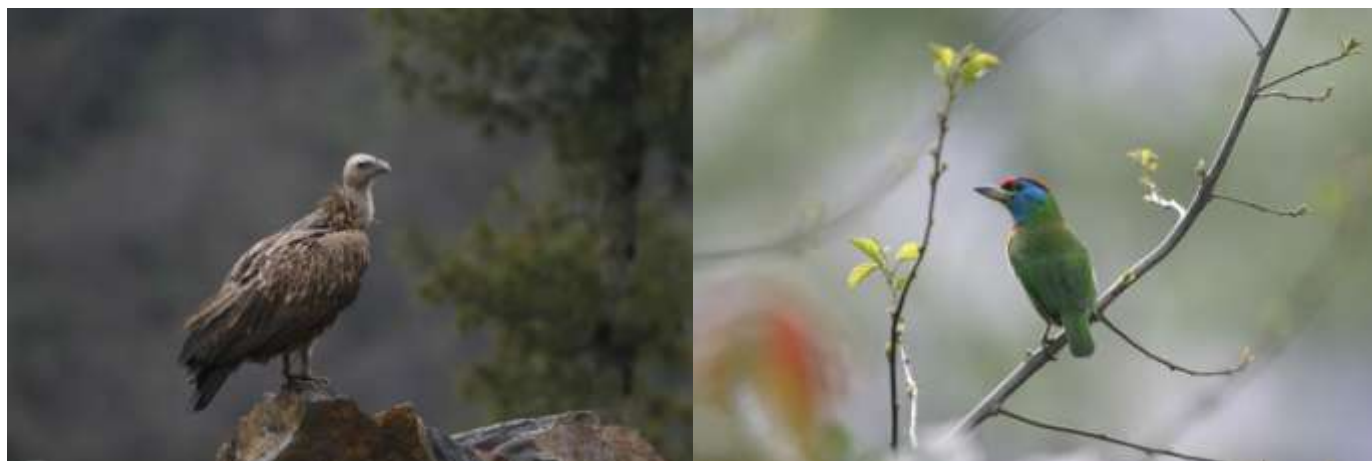
the capital Thimphu during and arrive there late afternoon. On reaching Thimphu – a casual stroll at the market place can be interesting.

Overnight – The Riverview Hotel - All meals included

Day 5 Thimphu – Punakha

Early this morning, you will leave for Punakha – the drive is a spectacular drive through the high pass Dochu la (which offers great views of the Bhutan Himalayas). The drive itself is a bird-rich one with species like Gold Billed Magpie, Dark Rumped Rosefinch, Daurian Redstart, Brown Dipper, Rufous Breasted Accentor, Himalayan Bulbul, White-browed Fulvetta, Whiskered and Stripe throated Yuhina, Gould's Sunbird, White tailed Nuthatch, Rufous vented Tit, Common Buzzard, Blue Whistling Thrush, Common Kestrel, Oriental Magpie Robin, Slaty backed and White crowned Forktail and several other species. You should also see Nepal Grey Langur, Assamese Macaque and with some luck a Barking Deer or a Wild Boar. Here as you cross the Punakha Dzong – you will stop to look for the rare and endemic White Bellied Heron. A few of these birds use this area and you might be very lucky to see one scanning the shallow waters for fish or other rodents/amphibians.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included



Day 6 Punakha

Very early this morning, after a tea and some biscuits – you will start the two hour drive to Jigme Dorji national Park – this is moist broad-leaved forest with trees line with moss and lichen and home to an incredibly rich avifauna. Bird highlights include – Red Headed Trogon, Wallcreeper, Greater Yellownape, Yellow bellied Fantail, Nepal Fulvetta, Ashy throated Warbler, Rufous capped Babbler, Greater Yellownape, Striated Laughing thrush, Streak-throated Barwing, Fire tailed Myzornis, Pale Chinned Flycatcher, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, White Browed Shrike Babbler, Lesser Yellownape, Crested Kingfisher. Mammals include Orange-bellied Squirrel, Assamese Macaque and Barking Deer etc. After enjoying a packed lunch birding would resume and you will be looking for species like the Ward's Trogon, Rusty Flanked Tree creeper, Rufous Chinned laughing Thrush, Lesser Yellownape, Crested Kingfisher, Yellow Breasted Greenfinch, Blue Bearded Bee-eater and more. You will be back in town in time for a quick visit to the magnificent Punakha Dzong and also look for the White Bellied Heron.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included

Day 7 Punakha to Gangtey

After breakfast and a bit of birding here - you will ascend Pele La steadily climbing an increasingly lush, forested valley, making several stops along the way to search for birds and plants, enjoy the of magnificent snow-capped Himalayan peaks. Specialties you may encounter include Kalij Pheasant, the gorgeous Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Spotted Forktail, rare Gold-naped Finch, Black-throated and Brown Parrotbills, Brown Bullfinch, Fire-tailed Myzornis etc. On reaching Pele la – you will be stopping at that area and explore the old road which is a lot quieter (compared to the new road) – this is a good area for the Satyr Tragopan and your guide will try to playback the males which are territorial and do respond to the calls.

Before long you'll be descending through moss-covered trees and some really exquisite temperate mixed conifer forest and thick bamboo forest towards the Phobjika valley. This is where the Black Necked Cranes fly into breed and before long you will see these magnificent birds – several of them – as you slowly head towards the beautiful lodge in one corner of the valley. Other birds include Pintail Snipe, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveller, Oriental Sky Lark.

Overnight – The Dewachen Resort - All meals included

Day 8 Gangthey to Trongsa

After an early breakfast, you will head back to Pele la and spend quite a while there looking for the Satyr Tragopan. The day would be used to look for species like the Satyr Tragopan, Blood Pheasant, and possibly Himalayan Monal and Hill Partridge, rare Gray-headed Bullfinch, Dark-rumped, Beautiful and Blanford's, and Crimson-broyoud Rosefinch; Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhina, Buff-barred Warbler; Coal Tit, White-broyoud and Rufous-breasted bush-robins, Gray-winged Blackbird and the Wallcreeper. From Pele La you will descend into the central Bhutan's Black Mountain region. Much of our journey will be through mixed broad-leafed evergreen forest - you'll continue on to Trongsa for night-halt.

Overnight – Yankhill Resort - All meals included



Black Necked Crane



Spotted Laughing Thrush

Day 9 Trongsa to Zhemgang

Today you will head south towards Zhemgang, where the forest is a mixed broad-leaved evergreen forest. Birds that you expect today, including the strange and rarely observed Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Wedge-tailed Pigeon, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Himalayan Swiftlet, Fork-tailed Swifts, Crimson-breasted and Darjeeling woodpeckers, Striated Bulbul, Red-billed Leiothrix, Long-tailed Minivet, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush, Scaly Thrush, Slaty-blue, Sapphire, and Little Pied flycatchers and Little and Spotted Forktail. Tonight you will be camping at Zhemgang at a beautiful and quiet location right in the middle of the forest.

Overnight – Camping – All meals included.

Day 10 Zhemgang to Tingtibi

Today morning you will be birding in the Zhemgang Road – here you hope to see several Golden Langurs. Birds that you hope to see here include Rufous-throated and Chestnut-breasted partridges, Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, a few species of cuckoo, Tawny Fish-Owl, Red-headed Trogon, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Rufous-necked and Great hornbills, Whitebroyoud Piculet, Bay Woodpecker, Long-tailed Broadbill, Lesser Shortwing, White-tailed Robin, several scimitar-babblers, Himalayan Cutia, several laughingthrushes, fulvettas and Yuhina, Gray-headed Parrotbill, Rufous-faced Warbler, Pygmy Blue-Flycatcher, Sultan Tit, and the Beautiful Nuthatch. Rarities include White-bellied Heron, Collared Treepie, Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Long-billed Wren-babbler and Pale-headed Woodpecker. Our camp tonight is at an exquisite campsite called Tintingbi.

Overnight – Camping - All meals included

Day 11 Tingtibi to Gelephu

After breakfast a you will drive further down with several birding stops to the border town Gelephu. The forest type will keep changing as you gradually move down and eventually reach Gelephu (apprx. 650 feet). As the drive down is from a high altitude to a low one – you will get a chance to see several birds that you have seen before but might not have seen well enough – as you come down you will be making stops to see them well. There might be a few new birds too – notable among them are Wreathed Hornbill, Coral Billed Scimitar Babbler, Greater Flameback, and with luck Great Slaty Woodpecker.

Overnight – Tshen Hotel - All meals included

Day 12 Gelephu to New Delhi

This morning after breakfast, you will get into India and proceed to Guwahati. Birds that you might see today include Lesser Whistling-Duck; Lesser Adjutant Stork, Greater Painted-Snipe; Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Coppersmith Barbet; Striated Grassbird; Asian Pied Starling etc. On arrival at Guwahati – you will fly to Delhi reaching in the evening. On arrival at New Delhi – met by a Banyan representative and driven to the nearby Trident Gurgaon or similar for an overnight stay.

Overnight – Trident Gurgaon - All meals included

Day 13 New Delhi – you will be driven to the international airport to connect to your flight back home.

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation for 11 nights on Twin share basis and meals as specified in the itinerary
- Transportation by Toyota Innova's - mineral water will be provided in the car. In Bhutan a Toyota Heiss or a similar vehicle will be used
- Porterage fee at the hotel/airports only
- Local English speaking guide and entrance fees (single entry) to Jigme Dorji National Park and other sanctuaries and parks
- All entrance fees at the national parks and walking safari fees
- Bhutan entrance fees
- Air fare from New Delhi to Bhutan and back in economy class.

PRICE EXCLUSIONS:

- International, visa fees, airport tax or any kind of insurance cover
- Drinks and other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips or gratuities • Any car arrangements on free days
- Still and video camera fee at monuments and game parks
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, tips, camera fees, etc

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