

DOF Travel tour in Sri Lanka - 2015

Tour itinerary - (13 nights / 14 days)

E – Endemic birds / M – Migrant birds

Day 1 – ARRIVAL

We will meet our guide at the airport and 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**



Chestnut Backed Owlet and Serendib Scopes Owl

Day 2 – KITULGALA VILLAGE

In the morning, 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.

Highlights – Sri Lanka Chestnut backed Owtet (E), Sri Lanka Layard’s Parakeet (E), Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot (E), Sri Lanka Green billed Cauca (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 Flame backed Woodpeckers, Lesser Yellow Napped, Orange Minivet, Orange billed Babblers (E) and many more.

Accommodation – **Kitulgala Rest House**

Day 3 - NUWARA ELIYA (HIGHLAND)

Leaving Kitulgala after breakfast 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 – **Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya**



Purple faced Leaf Monkey and Sri Lanka Tree Nymph Butterfly

Day 4 - HILL COUNTRY AND HORTON PLAINS

Bird watching in Horton Plains national park.

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 – **Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya**



Yellow Eared Bulbul and Sri Lanka Scaly Thrush

Day 5

After breakfast we will travel on to Tissamaharama, a drive of approximately five hours depending on stops.

Afternoon 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**

Day 6 - YALA NATIONAL PARK

We leave the hotel early in the morning 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, brackish lagoons and riverine habitats.

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, Woolly 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**



Sri Lanka Leopard and Asian Elephant

Day 7 – BUNDALA RAMSAR WETLAND

Morning 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**



Greater Thick-knee and Green Bee-eater

Day 8

After breakfast, 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 – **Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja village**



Ticklle's Blue Flycatcher and Red Faced Malkoha

Day 9 and 10 - SINHARAJA RAIN FOREST

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 Spur-fowl 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 Coucal (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 – Martin's Lodge, Sinharaja village



Malabar Trogon and Sri Lanka Blue Magpie

Day 11

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

Accommodation – **Bay Beach Hotel, Weligama**

Day 12 – WHALE WATCHING

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 – **Bay Beach Hotel, Weligama**

Day 13 - NEGAMBO CLOSE TO THE AIRPORT

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 14 - DEPARTURE

30 min. drive to the airport

