

BHUTAN

Spring Birding in Bhutan

19th April - 11th May 2010

Trip Report by:

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Tour Participants:

Chubzang Tangbi (guide)

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INTRODUCTION:

This was our second birding trip to the wonderful Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, a paradise for birds and birders. Our first trip there (in 2005) was in late winter, mid-February to early March. On that trip we had multiple sightings of the rare White-bellied Heron, great views of many Black-necked Cranes and also, huge mixed flocks of babblers as well as impressive numbers of wintering thrushes and warblers. But we missed many breeding species and migrants so decided we had to go back in spring. A tribute to this place is that almost all our original group from '05 also repeated.

The company employs a great team of bird guides and support staff. Our guide was Chubzang Tangbi, a young man now studying in Wales who returned to Bhutan to lead our trip. Our field crew contained some good birders as well, Sonam Dorji and our driver Tandin Wangchuk so we had lots of eyes. We saw over 280 species in 22 days with an additional 10 heard-only.

Some highlights included all the "big three": Beautiful Nuthatch, Ward's Trogon and Satyr Tragopan, with multiples of each - plus such cripplers as Wedge-billed (Sikkim), Long-billed and Rufous-throated Wren-babblers, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Black-necked Crane, Black-tailed Crake, Ibisbill, Pallas' Fish-eagle, Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant, etc. We did miss a few targets such as Fire-tailed Myzornis, but luckily had seen this 2-3 times on our first trip.

We did notice many changes in the country since our first visit five years ago. There is quite a lot of construction going on [hotels, hydroelectric plants etc] and many more cars and trucks on the roads. Many of the local people now have mobile phones and satellite television is pretty much everywhere. Most importantly, Bhutan is now the world's newest democracy, having established a parliamentary system of government with a new, young king since our first visit. The goal of the country remains the concept of Gross National Happiness.

Bhutan is still a brilliant place to visit. Most of the development is in the more populous western portion of the country and the eastern and southern regions have changed very little. The forest still extends as far as the eye can see and per the new Bhutanese Constitution, it should remain so into the future.

BOOKS/REFERENCE MATERIAL:

Birds of Bhutan by Carol and Tim Inskipp and Richard Grimmett.
Published by Helm Field Guides. – A slim but essential reference guide.

ITINERARY:

April 19th: The flight into Bhutan was amazingly clear, and we enjoyed great views of Everest and seven more of the world's ten highest mountains. Landing in Paro is always exciting, as the plane's wings seem to graze the steep hillsides on both sides! A bit of a delay going through customs at Paro until Chubzang arrived with our visa letter. After meeting our driver Tandin and loading our luggage, we headed out towards Thimphu with birding stops at Shaba (a Wallcreeper site), Thimphu Sewage Ponds, Cheri Goempa and Tango. Unfortunately the wintering Wallcreepers had left so we consoled ourselves with an active family of Hoopoes. We spent our first night in Bhutan at the brand new Hotel Migmar in Thimphu.

Birding highlights included a pair of Black-tailed Crakes, three Ibisbills, Kalij Pheasant, Ultramarine Flycatcher and several Fire-capped Tits.

April 20th: Our first of many very early morning starts, departing the hotel at 4.30 a.m. and heading to Dochu La (3,116m), our first of many high passes. Birding around the pass was followed by an excellent breakfast, as usual served at the roadside by cook Kado, and his crew Dorji and Tshering. We then visited the relatively new Royal Botanical Gardens where we looked for Red Panda without success (this is supposedly one of the best places in Bhutan to see panda). This was followed by a walk along the upper Lampelri Road east of the pass. Our night was spent at the very nice Hotel Kychu in Wangdue, where we had stayed in 2005. That time we were the only guests, on this visit it was almost full.

Birding highlights included a very obliging Wood Snipe at the gardens, one of only two Ferruginous Flycatchers of the trip, Spot-winged Grosbeak and our first Scarlet Finch. However the hoped-for Fire-tailed Myzornis eluded us.

April 21st: We departed the hotel at 5.00 a.m. with our first stop at the Chuzomsa bridge. Later we birded around the pass at Pele La (3,390m) as well as lower down below the pass in the extensive bamboo stands. The rhododendrons at the pass were spectacular! At Trongsa we turned south towards Tingtibi, with lunch at Ngala and camping at the Royal Camp at Koshala. The road from Trongsa to Tingtibi was damaged by flooding last summer and some of it was very slow and precipitous going.

Birding highlights included about fifteen Himalayan Griffon Vultures, our only Red Junglefowl of the trip, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Yellow-vented Warbler, brilliant views of both Great and Brown Parrotbills, and a flock of thirty Yellow-breasted Greenfinches.

April 22nd: We left camp at 4.30 a.m. and birded around Wangduegang at the most reliable Beautiful Nuthatch site (north of Shemgang) but without success although the bird was heard once. This was followed by a productive walk along a logging road near Shemgang. During the afternoon we spent several hours at another Beautiful Nuthatch site on the Shemgang Road south of town (past the Chorten). This was quite birdy with several babbler flocks including White-browed Babblers and Cutias but again without success for the nuthatch. We camped that night on a farm field just north of Shemgang.

Birding highlights included our first (of many) Rufous-necked Hornbills of the trip, displaying Blue-winged Laughing Thrush and our only sighting of White-spectacled Warbler.

April 23rd: Arrived at the northern Shemgang Road Beautiful Nuthatch site at about 5.30 a.m. All of us including the driver and field crew spread out along the road for maximum coverage. Eventually Dorji saw a very mobile pair of Nuthatches high up in the trees! Thankfully they both flew into a much lower dead tree and we all managed to get satisfactory scope views. Everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief! In the p.m. we drove south on very bad road to a rather barren (and hot!) campsite on a farm south of Tingtibi. That afternoon we drove a secondary road into bamboo forest looking for babblers and parrotbills.

Other birding highlights were a pair of extremely attractive Collared Falconets right at the campsite, a stunning male Citrine Wagtail, and a large flock of White-hooded Babblers together with both species of Rufous-headed Parrotbills.

April 24th: In the morning we birded the road south of Tingtibi. Given the very hot conditions and poor campsite ambiance, we decided to break camp after lunch and drive back to the Koshala campsite north of Shemgang. Also, we had heard that Tony and Peter were now on their way, and this would allow us to meet up with them one day earlier at the hotel in Trongsa. After getting to the Koshala campsite, we experienced a tremendous thunderstorm that very nearly blew away the tents! In fact we had to eat (and the camp crew sleep) in the usually locked building on site -- thankfully the local caretaker drove up in the height of the storm to let us in!

Birding highlights around Tingtibi included a five eagle day with four species in the air together [Pallas' Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent, Golden, and Mountain Hawk Eagle]. Other good birds were Long-tailed Broadbill, and our only Rufous-faced Warblers of the trip.

April 25th: We birded the upper Koshala Road in the morning in an area of gardens and orchards. We then drove back to Trongsa with late afternoon birding around the Puenzhi Guest House. Our night at the comfortable Yangkhil Resort was a welcome change to the camping, even though the electricity was out due to the storm the night before! Much to our delight, Tony and Peter finally arrived at the hotel while we were having dinner, very jet-lagged and exhausted – having been driven straight from Paro by Hishey and one of his guides.

Birding highlights were the first Yellow-rumped Honeyguide of the trip, five Spot-winged Starlings and three Blanford's Rosefinches.

April 26th: We all started out at 5.45 a.m. and birded along the Kuenga Rubten Road, south of Trongsa. We said goodbye to Hishey at lunch. He would be leaving for Myanmar in a week with his youth football team. Unfortunately there was heavy rain in the afternoon so birding was limited. We spent our second night at the Yangkhil Resort, this time with electricity!

Birding highlights were our last Rufous-necked Hornbill of the trip (a new species for Peter), and an impressive flock of seventy Tibetan Siskins.

April 27th Left the hotel at 5.00 a.m. and birded the lower slopes on the west side of Yotong La. Then we headed east towards the Yotong La (3,425m) with birding and lunch east of the pass. It became progressively colder with heavy sleet and snow as we drove across Shelthang La (3,596m). A cold night was spent at a basic hotel in Ura.

Birding highlights were several Rufous-breasted Accentors, two stunning male Indian Blue Robins, three Green Shrike Babblers, fifteen Hoary-throated Barwings, and our first Red-headed Bullfinches and White-winged Grosbeaks of the trip.

April 28th Left the hotel at 5.30 a.m. and drove from Ura to Thrumshing La (3,780m) with birding stops en route. The pass was amazingly clear, giving panoramic views of the Himalayas blanketed in fresh snow. Breakfast and lunch on road to Yongkola plus more roadside birding stops above Sengor. At one of these a calling Satyr Tragopan was lured out – what a welcome sight as the bejewelled male stepped out into the bright sunlight! Night at the Chengala Shop where they have basic rooms and shared toilets. The shop is just a few minutes' drive from the main birding areas around Yongkola.

Birding highlights included our first Blood Pheasants, Himalayan Monals and Satyr Tragopan of the trip. Other nice finds were a party of ten Black-throated Parrotbills and our only Beautiful Rosefinches of the trip.

April 29th Unfortunately Tony was unwell and unable to participate in the birding today. The rest of the group drove back into the park at dawn and up to about 1,800m to a stakeout site for Ward's Trogon. We birded in this general area for most of the morning and returned to the shop for lunch. In the afternoon we concentrated on the lower section of the Yongkola Road up to about 1,500m.

The birding highlight of the day was superb scope views of a male Ward's Trogon. Yes! Other good birds seen included prolonged, arm's length views of a very obliging Rufous-throated Wren Babbler while a couple of lucky members of the group had brief looks at Spotted Wren-babbler. Unfortunately we only heard Sikkim Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler.

April 30th Left the Chengala Shop guesthouse at 4.30 a.m. and drove from Yongkola to Sengor (3,300m) hoping to see some roadside feeding Tragopans. Returned about 1.00 p.m. for lunch at the shop. Afternoon some local birding outside of the park not far from the shop.

Birding highlights: The early morning strategy worked perfectly with at least three Tragopans (two males, one female) seen from the bus! Other good sightings included two individuals of the uncommon Broad-billed Warbler, and our only Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush of the trip, in a scrubby area near the guest house.

May 1st Left the guesthouse at 5.00 a.m. to bird the middle section of Yongkola. Lunch at the shop. In the afternoon we drove with birding stops to Mongar with night at the Hotel Wangchuk (with welcome showers!).

Birding highlights were Rufous-bellied Eagle and two Chestnut-winged Cuckoos seen on the drive to Mongar. Also, Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler at two sites [one actually seen by Dorji and Gail!] and both Greater and Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbills.

May 2nd Left the hotel at 4.45 a.m. and birded the west side of Kori La with breakfast on the mountain. Unfortunately at breakfast, heavy rain (the first real rain of the trip) forced us back to the hotel. In the afternoon we returned to the west side of Kori La and birded until activity slowed. Dinner at the hotel was a bit too heavy on the mushrooms!

Birding highlights: No major standout birds although we had our first Grey-sided Laughingthrushes of the trip, as well as large numbers of Common Rosefinches and a fairly cooperative Russet Bush-warbler.

May 3rd Departed the hotel at 4.45 a.m. and birded the forest logging road on the east side of Kori La, and later the summit trail at the pass itself. Breakfast and lunch were on the mountain. In p.m. we left Mongar and drove to Yongkola, with birding at Lingmethang. We spent the night at Chengala Shop guesthouse.

Birding highlights were a pair of Lesser Shortwings at Kori La, which, after some difficulty, were well seen. A brilliant pair of Asian Emerald Cuckoos was also very cooperative. Also, our only trip sightings of Streaked-breasted Scimitar-Babblers, Sapphire Flycatcher and a stunning male Crimson Sunbird at Lingmethang on the drive back.

May 4th Departed Chengla Shop at 5.15 a.m. and drove up to the trogon site at Yongkola. We then continued up to Sengor where we camped for the night.

Birding highlights were a pair of Ward's Trogons, again with mind-blowing views. Very welcome for Tony as he had missed the earlier male. Also two male Satyr Tragopans and superb views of a very obliging pair of Slender-billed Scimitar-Babblers. Unfortunately, Bar-winged Wren-babbler eluded us, only giving brief untickable glimpses as daylight faded. A male Satyr Tragopan came in to roost in a fir tree directly behind our campsite, and we watched him in the scope while he bedded down.

May 5th We were awakened by our neighbour Tragopans wailing dawn cries, and later encountered him trotting across the road next to our camp. Morning was spent at lower Sengor

and around the campsite. No luck on the Wren-babbler, it was silent. In the afternoon we drove up to Thrumshing La (3,780m) this time, alas, shrouded in fog. The night was spent at Kaila's Guesthouse at Jakar Bumthang.

Birding highlights included our final Satyr Tragopans of the trip, terrific looks at a stunning male White-browed Shortwing, ten Rosy Pipits and six Dark-breasted Rosefinches.

May 6th Departed the guesthouse at 5.00 a.m. and birded on the eastern slope of Yotong La (3,425m). Breakfasted at the pass and then birded the west slope. Lunch at Trongsa. In p.m. we drove up to the pass at Pele La and birded this area. Late afternoon drove to Phobjikha with night at Phobjikha Hotel, which was far busier than in our 2005 visit when we were its only guests! Birding highlights included White-browed Bush Robin and Black-necked Cranes.

May 7th We left the hotel at 3.45 a.m. hoping for pheasants on the road at dawn – but no luck. Birding at the top end of the old Pele La Road was extremely cold. We had breakfast at the pass and then did the lower end of the old road. This road is now unused and not maintained, and has deteriorated significantly since 2005. Landslides blocked our bus about half-way down, After that, we had a long drive to Punakha with a lunch stop at Nobding. Night at Meri Puensum Resort, Punakha.

Birding highlights were a party of twenty Himalayan Griffon Vultures soaring over the pass at Pele La, two Ibisbills, Golden Bush Robins, a pair of Spotted Laughingthrushes, both Great and Brown Parrotbills, Brown Shrike and point-blank views of a brilliant male Collared Grosbeak.

May 8th Departed the resort at 4.30 a.m. and drove via Tashithang to Jigme Dorji N.P. We were dismayed to see that the lower end of the park had been completely trashed between the road and the river due to road widening operations, with dirt and rubble pushed down into the Mo Chu itself in some places. Where, in 2005, we had seen Red-headed Trogon and Scaly Thrush is now barren land. They are going to have a real problem when the summer rains come, as the roadbed had already starting to deteriorate. You now have to drive past the school on the left and beyond the second metal bridge before you get into good roadside habitat. This involves probably about 1/2 hour's extra driving. Lunch at Zomlithang picnic area and p.m. birding along the Mo Chu on the east (agricultural) side. Night again at the Meri Puensum Resort.

Birding highlight were Ibisbills at the lunch spot and a dark phase Booted Eagle quartering over the rice fields.

May 9th Departed the resort at 4.45 a.m. and drove to the Lampelri Botanical Park. Spent about 2 hours birding this very nice area, but no sign of the Wood Snipe seen here earlier (nor any Red Pandas) but the leeches had arrived! We then continued the drive to Dochu La (3,116m), had breakfast and did some birding at the pass. But again we had no luck with seeing the Myzornis which was the biggest miss of the trip. Drove to Thimphu for lunch. Did some sightseeing and

watched archery competitions (their national sport). Stopped at the Thimphu Sewage Ponds and then on to Paro. Night at the Janka Resort.

Birding highlights were our high count of seven Kalij Pheasants, three Black-tailed Crakes, and six Ultramarine Flycatchers.

May 10th Our last birding day in Bhutan turned out to be a pheasant bonanza. We departed the resort at 4.45 a.m. and drove up to Chele La (3,822m) and had breakfast at the pass. On the lower section of the road we saw at least six Kalij Pheasants and higher up we started to see both Blood Pheasants and Himalayan Monals – in all a total of about twenty pheasants. We spent all morning and early afternoon birding both sides of the pass, hiking up to almost 3,900m. The rhododendron display was amazing, with yellow, peach, rose and red colours ablaze on the higher slopes!

Birding highlights (other than the pheasants) were Golden Bush Robin, good numbers of Blue-fronted Redstarts and Greenish Warblers, and four species of rosefinch including our first Dark-rumped and White-browed.

May 11th Our final day in Bhutan, and no early morning start today which made a nice change. Our Druk Air flight departed Paro at around mid-day which gave us time for a leisurely breakfast at the resort and a short walk around the neighbouring farm fields. Familiar local birds seen included Hoopoe, Red-billed Chough and Russet Sparrow.

The flight to New Delhi gave us an even more spectacular view of Mount Everest and others of the world's tallest mountains.

BIRD LIST:

A total of 286 species were seen by the group (including two species seen in Delhi). Another ten species were heard only. In contrast to our 2005 late-winter trip, we saw no thrushes save rock thrushes and locally-breeding blackbirds, very few waterfowl, but (as expected) a good variety of cuckoos, chats, warblers, and flycatchers. The spectacular winter mixed flocks of 2005 were, in general, absent; most birds were paired off and many were seen nest-building.

Great Cormorant: Small numbers recorded on three days.

Ruddy Shelduck: Two parties totalling nine birds seen at the Thimphu Sewage Ponds.

Common Merganser: A single redhead seen on the Mo Chu River.

Eurasian Sparrow Hawk: Only 3-4 Accepters were seen and all were believed to be of this species.

Black Kite: A single bird seen and photographed in flight near Yotong La, and another south of Trongsa.

Himalayan Griffon Vulture: Parties totalling fifteen and twenty birds seen on two days both times over Pele La.

We had good luck with eagles, seeing six species including four soaring together near Tingtibi.

Pallas's Fish Eagle: A sub-adult seen in loose company with Golden, Crested Serpent and Mountain Hawk Eagle. Also a nest located at the top of a tall tree could be viewed from our campground at Tingtibi. This nest was used last year but appeared not to be occupied this year.

Crested Serpent Eagle: A total of five birds seen, including three at Tingtibi.

Black Eagle: This large impressive eagle was quite widespread. In all a total of about eleven birds seen spread out over seven days.

Common Buzzard: A total of six birds seen including three on Chela La. All were probably of the race *refectus*.

Golden Eagle: An adult seen soaring at Tingtibi. Also, what was probably another seen gliding over the forest near Sengor.

Booted Eagle: A dark phase bird watched for several minutes hunting low over rice fields near Punakha.

Rufous-bellied Eagle: A sub-adult watched soaring on the drive to Mongar.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle: Fairly common and widespread. In all, a total of thirteen birds recorded over ten days. This included one bird carrying a large squirrel.

Collared Falconet: A very pleasant surprise was finding a pair of these attractive small raptors hunting for dragonflies right over our tents at Tingtibi.

Common Kestrel: Ten birds seen over six days. They were considerably paler looking than those seen in England.

Eurasian Hobby: The sole sighting was of a single bird seen near Shemgang.

Hill Partridge: A common and widespread forest species being heard calling almost daily. Thanks to Peter, we all managed to get good views of a male feeding on the ground by vigorously kicking up the leaf litter, then stepping back and peering intently to see what it had uncovered. (This was at our breakfast spot just below Namling). Much more brilliant "in the flesh" than expected, great value!

Chestnut-breasted Partridge: Not nearly as numerous as the previous species. In all, it was heard calling on seven days.

One of the trip highlights was the great connection we had with the numerous pheasants seen including multiple sightings of all species.

Blood Pheasant: A total of about fourteen birds seen over two days with six birds seen on the drive up to Thrumshing La and eight more at Chele La (most were in pairs). Many of the birds were feeding along the side of the road providing great views of this brilliant pheasant. We saw several males displaying along the roadside to their rather oblivious hens.

Satyr Tragopan: As we had missed this pheasant on our last trip to Bhutan, this was our number 1 target of the trip. It did not disappoint us giving multiple close sightings. In all, we recorded at least eight birds, including six stunning males. One bird roosted for the night in a large fir tree adjacent to our campsite at Sengor, and its calling woke us up in the morning! While we recorded birds on four days, the most productive areas were around the campsite several kms south of Sengor and the road between the campsite and Namling.

Himalayan Monal: Despite having seen several birds on our last trip, this large, brilliant multicoloured pheasant was another top target. It was quite common at Chele La with at least six birds seen. Leaving our hotel in Paro well before dawn paid-off as several of the birds were seen right along the side of the road as we drove up to the pass. Additionally, a male and female were also seen at Thrumshing La.

Red Junglefowl: Three birds [including a male] were first seen feeding beside the road and then flying into the forest, en route to Koshala.

Kalij Pheasant: The most common and widespread pheasant being recorded on nine days with a daily maximum of seven birds seen on May 9th.

Black-tailed Crake: The Thimphu Sewage Ponds are a very reliable site for this crake. We saw birds on both of our visits with two birds on the first trip and three on the second, two of which were right beside the road at arm's length!

Black-necked Crane: While we were clearly too late in the year for the wintering flock at the wetland at Phobjikha, we were pleasantly surprised to see an adult and first winter bird feeding out in the marsh. The adult had an injured wing and was unable to migrate and was still accompanied by its offspring of the previous year.

Ibisbill: We saw three birds on our first day along the river near Thimphu and two more at the picnic area on the Mo Chu River near Punakha. One was very confiding, allowing close approach and many photographs.

River Lapwing: This very attractive plover was recorded on three days including about fifteen birds along the Mo Chu River.

Red-wattled Lapwing: Four birds seen from the plane as we departed Delhi AP.

Wood Snipe: We obtained multiple great views of the snipe both in flight and on the ground at a pond on the grounds of the Royal Botanical Gardens. BC first flushed the bird and his immediate impression was of a smallish Eurasian Woodcock with heavy direct flight, bulky body and broad-based wings. The bird was noticeably larger and bulkier than a Wilson's or Eurasian Snipe. The base colour to the upperparts was extremely dark rather cold brown. Contrasting sharply with this base colour were two broad bright buffish mantle stripes. Chubzang obtained some photos of the bird on the ground and in flight, allowing direct comparison with photos of the other possibility, Solitary Snipe.

Green Sandpiper: Three birds seen at the Thimphu Sewage Ponds.

Common Sandpiper: Five birds recorded over two days.

Rock Pigeon: Recorded virtually daily.

Speckled Pigeon: This large, handsome pigeon was invariably seen in large parties. Recorded on three days with the maximum being about seventy-five birds seen near Sengor.

Oriental Turtle Dove: A widely distributed species being recorded every day.

Spotted Dove: A common mainly lowland species, being recorded on eleven days.

Barred Cuckoo Dove: Fairly widespread in low numbers. Recorded on nine days with a daily maximum of three birds.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon: Another fairly widespread species mainly in low numbers. Recorded on ten days with a maximum of ten birds at the Lampelri Botanical Park. This bird has quite an amazing call -- a prolonged minor-key fluting that sounds quite un-birdlike.

We were quite surprised at the very large number and diversity of cuckoo species seen [or more often just heard]. In all nine different species with many being widespread and very common.

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo: A nice surprise was seeing a pair of this attractive cuckoo at a road stop on the drive to Mongar. Great birds!

Large Hawk-Cuckoo: A very common and widespread species. We heard many birds calling daily (and saw a few). One of the two most abundant cuckoo species of our trip.

Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo: We only heard this hawk-cuckoo on three days, all along the Lingmethang Road south of Sengor.

Indian Cuckoo: Another very common and widespread species but extremely tough to see. In all multiple birds recorded on fourteen days with our only good sighting a male calling at the Kori La summit trail.

Eurasian Cuckoo: Probably the most widespread and numerous of all the cuckoos being recorded on all but two days. Usually we heard multiple singing birds each day. We even saw a singing bird at 3,500m right near the pass at Chele La.

Oriental Cuckoo: Yet another amazingly common and widespread cuckoo being recorded on all but two days.

Lesser Cuckoo: Not as numerous as the preceding species but we still recorded it on fifteen days. Usually just singing birds but about ten birds seen.

Grey-bellied Cuckoo: Recorded on nine days including five birds seen.

Asian Emerald Cuckoo: This stunning cuckoo was recorded on twelve days which included six birds seen.

Mountain Scop's Owl: We heard this owl calling on at least seven days. The only sighting of a bird was by the guide.

Collared Scop's Owl: We heard single birds calling from our hotel grounds at Punakha but they would not respond to our play-back of the call.

Collared Owlet: Another heard only owl with calling birds heard on four days.

Asian Barred Owlet: We heard this species calling on eight days.

Grey Nightjar: We recorded this species on nine days including three birds seen on April 21st.

Himalayan Swiftlet: A widely distributed species, being recorded on nine days.

White-throated Needletail: This species was recorded on six days including about twenty birds seen between Namling and Sengor.

Asian Palm-Swift: This lowland species was seen mainly between Tingtibi and Koshala with a daily maximum of twenty birds.

Fork-tailed Swift: The most numerous swift being fairly common and widespread.

House Swift: This species was fairly common around Paro/Thimphu but very few seen elsewhere.

Ward's Trogon: We were extremely fortunate to get multiple stunning views of this species along the Lingmethang Road at Yongkola at about 1700m. This was especially gratifying since we had missed the bird on our last trip. On our first attempt a male was seen, followed by a pair on the second visit. The pair was observed feeding, preening and interacting at eye level for long minutes. In addition, another male was heard making its loud distinctive call in the forest below the Namling Falls. – Absolutely brilliant and the bird of the trip for several of us.

White-throated Kingfisher: We recorded this species on just three dates including two birds on May 5th.

Crested Kingfisher: This species was fairly common along the Mo Chu River with at least six birds seen, Otherwise just a single bird recorded.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater: This attractive bird was recorded on six days including three birds seen along the Shemgang Road (while searching for the Beautiful Nuthatch).

Hoopoe: This species was fairly common in the agricultural areas in western Bhutan. In all, we recorded it on six days with a daily maximum of eight birds. This included a pair feeding young in a nest at our hotel in Paro.

Great Hornbill: A pair of this large impressive hornbill was recorded on both our days in Tingtibi.

Rufous-necked Hornbill: We had great success with seeing this brilliant hornbill. In all we recorded it on seven days included at least eight birds seen around Shemgang on April 22nd. – Great value!

Great Barbet: A very common and widespread forest species. It was seen, or more often, heard, multiple times virtually every day.

Golden-throated Barbet: Another very common forest species being recorded almost daily.

Blue-throated Barbet: Not quite as widespread as the previous two species. In all we recorded this barbet on eight days usually with multiple birds each day heard calling.

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide: Single males were recorded at two sites over three days, always associated with cliff-side colonies of Assam Giant Bees. This included a very obliging bird at Namling that gave exceptional views.

Speckled Piculet: A single bird seen at Jigme Dorji N.P.

Bay Woodpecker: We obtained good looks at three birds of this attractive woodpecker along the Shemgang Road.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker: Our sole sighting was of a single bird seen at Tingtibi.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker: We recorded this species on three days with a daily maximum of three birds.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker: Recorded on three days with a daily maximum of three birds.

Darjeeling Woodpecker: Up to two birds recorded over five days.

Greater Yellownappe: This was the most widespread woodpecker with up to three birds being recorded on eight days.

Lesser Yellownappe: Slightly less common than the prior species with a total of five birds seen over four days.

Grey-headed Woodpecker: This species was not seen but heard on two days.

Barn Swallow: This was quite an uncommon species being recorded on just four days; it was, however, the most common hirundine at Mongar.

Asian House Martin: This and the following species usually occurred together in large flocks. In all recorded on eight days.

Nepal House Martin: As mentioned above often seen in mixed flocks with the previous species. Also, both species appeared to be breeding at various cliffs including those at Namling.

White Wagtail: Recorded on four days with a daily maximum of six birds.

White-browed Wagtail: Just a single bird seen along the Mo Chu River.

Citrine Wagtail: A brilliant spring male seen at the pond by our camp site at Tingtibi.

Grey Wagtail: Surprisingly, just two birds seen on the trip.

Yellow Wagtail: A beautiful spring male of the race beema seen at the Thimphu sewage ponds on our first day.

Paddy Field Pipit: Two birds recorded in rice fields adjacent to the Mo Chu River.

Olive-backed Pipit: Common and widespread being recorded on 17 days with a daily maximum of at least ten birds.

Rosy Pipit: Two birds seen at the Thimphu sewage ponds and a party of ten seen below Thrumshing La.

Maroon Oriole: A commonly reported species being seen or heard almost daily.

Black-winged Cuckoo-Shrike: A total of nine birds seen over five days.

Grey-chinned Minivet: Recorded on nine days with daily maximum of at least twelve birds.

Long-tailed Minivet: The most widespread Minivet being recorded on fifteen days, six of which we simply ticked it in the log due to being so numerous.

Short-billed Minivet: The least common Minivet. In fact, we recorded it on just two days for a total of six birds.

Scarlet Minivet: Recorded on seven days with a daily maximum of at least twelve birds.

Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike: Just a single bird seen near Tingtibi on April 24th.

Striated Bulbul: Fairly common and widespread.

Black-crested Bulbul: Fairly common around Tingtibi but not seen elsewhere on the trip.

Himalayan Bulbul: Just a single bird seen on May 3rd.

Red-vented Bulbul: Extremely common and widespread with large numbers seen on most days.

Ashy Bulbul: We only recorded this bulbul on four dates. Most were seen between Shemgang and Tingtibi.

Mountain Bulbul: Fairly common, being seen on eight days. Most numerous between Shemgang and Tingtibi.

Black Bulbul: Another extremely common and widespread species.

Orange-bellied Leafbird: Recorded on eight days with the daily maximum of eight birds.

Common Iora: Just a single bird heard but not seen at Tingtibi.

Brown Dipper: This engaging species was seen on five days. This included an entertaining family party of two adults and two juveniles feeding together in a rocky stream near Thimphu.

Winter Wren: Recorded in small numbers on three days.

Alpine Accentor: Brilliant views were obtained of a very tame pair at Thrumshing La. – Great value!

Rufous-breasted Accentor: About five birds seen at Yotong La and a single at Chele La.

Blue-capped Rock Thrush: This very attractive thrush was surprisingly numerous. Recorded almost daily; it was too numerous to estimate on several of these days and was simply noted as a tick in the log.

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush: This handsome thrush was recorded on nine days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Blue Rock Thrush: Just a single bird seen on May 1st near Lingmethang.

Blue Whistling Thrush: An amazingly abundant species. BC noted that it was more common and widespread in Bhutan than in any other place he has visited in Asia. Recorded daily in a wide variety of habitats including farmland!

White-collared Blackbird: This handsome species was fairly common in high altitude forests. Recorded on ten days with a maximum of twenty birds seen mainly along the Old Pele La Road.

Grey-winged Blackbird: Widespread but in smaller numbers than the previous species. In all recorded on eight days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Lesser Shortwing: We spent quite a while trying to see this skulker. Eventually we all obtained good views of a pair at Kori La. Also recorded on two other days.

White-browed Shortwing: Brilliant views obtained of a stunning male at Thrumshing La. Single and/or heard birds recorded on three other days.

Indian Blue Robin: Two beautiful singing males showed well and were enjoyed by the whole group at Yotong La. One of the top birds of the trip.

Orange-flanked Bush Robin: One seen briefly by our guide at Chele La.

Golden Bush Robin: Recorded on two days with a pair along the Old Pele La Road and a female at almost 3,500m at Chele La.

White-browed Bush Robin: Recorded on three days including two birds seen at Pele La.

Oriental Magpie Robin: Common & widespread being recorded on most days.

Plumbeous Water Redstart: This attractive species was recorded virtually daily, and it was invariably seen along fast-flowing rocky streams.

Blue-fronted Redstart: Another very attractive species. It was quite common high up at Chele La with at least eight birds seen. Scarce elsewhere, with only two others seen.

White-capped Water Redstart: This common chat was recorded on most days with a daily maximum of six birds.

White-tailed Robin: We heard this gem singing on five days but regrettably only some of the group saw a male along the Kori La forest road.

Little Forktail: Probably the most widely distributed forktails with 1-2 birds being seen on six days.

Black-backed Forktail: Single birds seen on just three days.

Slaty-backed Forktail: Four birds seen along the Mo Chu River at Jigme Dorji N.P. were our only sightings.

Spotted Forktail: Single individuals were recorded on three days.

Common Stonechat: Four late wintering birds were seen on our first day between Paro and Thimphu.

Grey Bushchat: Common & widespread being recorded virtually every day.

Chestnut-headed Tesia: The group spent many frustrating minutes attempting to get a glimpse of this and the following two Tesias. This species was recorded (mainly heard) on seven days with (characteristically brief) sightings on two of these days. Generally found at the highest elevation of the three species, e.g. at Sengor.

Slaty-bellied Tesia: Recorded on three days which included sightings on two of these days. This is the common Tesia at Yongkola, being heard everywhere along the road.

Grey-bellied Tesia: Heard on six days but with views on only two days (near Trongsa). Generally found in somewhat lower and drier areas than the former.

Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler: A very widespread species (the most common bush-warbler), its sibilant song being heard in many different habitats. In all, recorded on 15 days with individuals seen on five of these (it is quite responsive to playback).

Aberrant Bush Warbler: A migrating flock of ten birds was encountered on our walk below the Royal Campground at Koshala, foraging in low brushy scrub and giving amazing views. This was, however, our only record.

Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler: This bamboo specialist was first encountered at Pele La where several individuals responded well to playback. Recorded on only three days. This species has a very distinctive, see-saw (or “choo-choo” train) song.

Grey-sided Bush Warbler: Found at higher elevations, we recorded this species at both Pele La and Yotong La. Again, quite responsive to playback.

Russet Bush Warbler: Although the book lists this as a vagrant, we encountered several of these scratchy-voiced skulkers, but only managed looks at one on the west side of Kori La in scrubby pasture. The most difficult of the bush-warblers to actually see!

Common Tailorbird: One or two birds recorded on seven days.

Tickell's Leaf Warbler: Fairly common & widespread being recorded on nine days. This included at least twenty birds seen in low brushy habitat along the Kuenga Rubten Road, south of Trongsa. Often seen in small parties.

Buff-barred Warbler: Recorded on six days with a maximum of twenty birds seen at Yotong La. This species was found at the highest elevations (e.g. west side of Thrumshing La) , singing near the top of fir or spruce trees.

Ashy-throated Warbler: Two birds seen at Yotong La and two at near Sengor were our only sightings. Interestingly, in 2005, this was probably our most common warbler.

Lemon-rumped Warbler: Fairly widespread being seen on seven days with a daily maximum of six birds seen between Yongkola and Sengor.

Greenish Warbler: Common at Chele La with at least ten birds seen just before the pass at. Many birds were singing suggesting breeding at this site.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler: Recorded on thirteen days but in low numbers with not more than two birds seen per day (plus others heard – they have a very distinctive, musical song).

Blyth's Leaf Warbler: Easily the most common and widespread *Phylloscopus* warbler. Large numbers seen virtually every day and simply ticked in the log.

Yellow-vented Warbler: Only three individuals of this attractive warbler were seen with two at our breakfast stop near Wangdue and one near Koshala.

Grey-hooded Warbler: Now known to be a *Phylloscopus* (not a *Seicercus*), this attractive warbler was very common, being seen in numbers most days and heard almost everywhere.

Golden-spectacled Warbler (*burkii*): Recorded on five days with the daily maximum of four birds at Kori La.

Whistler's Warbler: This split from the previous species was fairly common. In all, recorded on twelve days with the daily maximum of six birds.

White-spectacled Warbler: Only a single bird identified for certain which was seen along the logging road near Shemgang.

Grey-cheeked Warbler: Quite scarce being seen on just four days. Usually just 1-2 birds per day but a party of six birds seen along the Lingmethang Road.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler: Fairly common and widespread usually being seen in mixed warbler and tit flocks. In all recorded on fourteen days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Broad-billed Warbler: Five individuals of this uncommon species were seen (although it may have been overlooked to some extent due to its close similarity to the previous species). Two birds were recorded on both April 30th and May 4th in mixed warbler flocks along the Lingmethang Road south of Sengor.

Rufous-faced Warbler: Two individuals of this attractive warbler was seen at Tingtibi.

Black-faced Warbler: The most attractive of all the warblers seen, this little gem was recorded on seven days with a daily maximum of six birds. Most birds were seen at Kori La and along the Lingmethang Road at Yongkola. In fact, at the latter site, we watched a pair nest-building under a road culvert.

Hill Prinia: Three birds recorded on May 2nd.

Striated Prinia: A total of three birds seen (and others heard). The lack of sightings of these and other grassland species reflects the minimal amount of time we spent in grassland/scrub habitat.

Dark-sided Flycatcher: A common species being recorded on thirteen days with a daily maximum of ten birds.

Asian Brown Flycatcher: Noticeably scarcer than the following species with just three birds recorded.

Ferruginous Flycatcher: Single birds seen at a roadside stops on the drive to Dochu La and at Tingtibi.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher: This attractive flycatcher was recorded on twelve days with a maximum of twelve birds seen on the east side of Yotong La.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher: A male seen by Peter in a small wood near the guesthouse in Yongkola.

Little Pied Flycatcher: Rather surprisingly just two birds seen.

Ultramarine Flycatcher: Recorded on seven days with the maximum of six birds seen at the Lampelri Botanical Park.

Slaty Blue Flycatcher: Just four birds seen over three days including two on the eastern slope of Thrumshing La.

Sapphire Flycatcher: A male seen by Gail at Kori La in a huge flowering tree was the only sighting.

Verditer Flycatcher: An abundant forest flycatcher being recorded in large numbers on most days.

Small Niltava: Fairly widespread in low numbers. Seen and/or heard on eleven days.

Large Niltava: Another fairly widespread species more often heard than seen. In all, recorded on nine days but only two birds actually seen.

Rufous-bellied Niltava: More easily seen than the previous two niltavas with up to two birds seen on nine days.

Pale Blue Flycatcher: Heard only on two days at the Beautiful Nuthatch spot below Shem-gang, unfortunately no sightings.

Blue-throated Flycatcher: Another very attractive flycatcher which was recorded on three days including a brilliant male near Chuzomsa bridge.

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher: A common & widespread forest species being recorded on sixteen days.

Yellow-bellied Fantail: Recorded on nine days with a daily maximum of three birds.

White-throated Fantail: Fairly common being recorded on ten days with a daily maximum of four birds.

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler: This inquisitive species was easily attracted to its call and providing great views. Recorded on seven days with daily maximum of four birds.

White-browed Scimitar Babbler: Recorded on six days including brilliant views of a bird called in at Tingtibi. – Great value.

Streaked-breasted Scimitar Babbler: We had heard only birds on three days, and finally two birds responded well to playback at Kori La.

Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler: This bizarre-looking species was one of our top targets, having had untickable views on our previous trip. Two birds responded well to playback giving excellent prolonged views along the Lingmethang Road between Namling and Sengor.

Long-billed Wren Babbler: After much effort a single bird was seen by some members of the group at Yongkola. The bird was very close and calling constantly, but stayed deep in thick vegetation –frustrating! Quite an odd-looking bird, rather kiwi-ish!

Spotted Wren Babbler: We heard this skulker calling on eight days and eventually most members of the group managed tickable views of up to three birds on May 8th.

Pygmy Wren Babbler: This species' high pitched 2-note call was heard on many days and two birds were eventually seen.

Rufous-throated Wren Babbler: A single bird provided brilliant prolonged views (and many photo-ops) at Yongkola.

Wedge-billed (Sikkim) Wren Babbler: Gail was the only one of the group to get brief but decent views of this skulker at Yongkola. The rest of us had to settle for brief untickable looks. The famous stake-out site at the road culvert near the Yongkola campground had been dis-

turbed by ongoing road works. The birds apparently relocated to a nearby gully that unfortunately contains very thick vegetation, frustrating our efforts. Dorji amazingly found a second pair quite by chance, while helping set up our breakfast later that same morning; this site is well above the first one. He managed good looks at one bird but by the time the group arrived, we only achieved frustratingly brief glimpses.

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler: A single bird was calling but only glimpsed in fading light at the traditional site below Sengor.

Rufous-capped Babbler: Recorded on fifteen days with a daily maximum of four birds.

Golden Babbler: Recorded on five days and when seen are usually in small parties. The daily maximum was twelve birds.

Grey-throated Babbler: Recorded on five days with a daily maximum of four birds seen near Shemgang.

Red-billed Leiothrix: Fairly common & widespread, but could be quite difficult to see. In all recorded on fourteen days with a daily maximum of at least six birds seen and others heard.

Silver-eared Mesia: Recorded on just three days but included about twelve birds seen near Shemgang in mixed babbler flocks.

Cutia: We invariably saw this brilliant species in small parties or in mixed babbler flocks. In all, recorded on eight days with a daily maximum of eight birds. The Shemgang Road and Yongkola were particularly good sites.

Black-headed Shrike Babbler: Our only sighting was a male seen south of Sengor. Unfortunately rather disappointing views obtained. Fortunately this species had been more cooperative in 2005 (also at Yongkola)!

White-browed Shrike Babbler: This attractive babbler was quite common & widespread. Recorded on eleven days with a daily maximum of at least six birds.

Green Shrike Babbler: Only seen on two days included three birds in a mixed babbler flock at Yotong La.

Black-eared Shrike Babbler: Nine birds of this delightful tiny babbler were recorded over three days. This included four birds each at Yongkola and Kori La.

White-hooded Babbler: A fast moving flock of at least twenty birds seen in bamboo at Tingtibi. This included several brown-headed immatures that were we initially confused with Rufous-headed Parrotbills (both of these species were also mixed- in with this flock).

Rusty-fronted Barwing: Recorded on seven days with the daily maximum of twenty birds seen at Yongkola.

Hoary-throated Barwing: Recorded just twice with a party of fifteen birds seen at breakfast near the summit of Yotong La and three seen along the old Pele La road.

Blue-winged Minla: Fairly common & widespread being recorded on ten days with a daily maximum of twenty birds.

Chestnut-tailed Minla: This very attractive babbler was recorded on eight days with a daily maximum of six birds seen on both our visits to Yotong La.

Red-tailed Minla: Recorded on six days with a daily maximum of four birds seen in a babbler flock at a birding stop at Thrumshing La.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta: This very attractive babbler was really difficult to pin down. Seen only on two days including four birds in a very large mixed babbler flock at Thrumshing La. Quite a contrast from 2005, when we saw single-species flocks of up to 20 together.

Yellow-throated Fulvetta: Recorded on seven days with a maximum of six birds seen at Yongkola.

Rufous-winged Fulvetta: Recorded on five days with a maximum of six birds seen at Yotong La.

White-browed Fulvetta: Easily the most widespread of the fulvettas. This tame and engaging species was recorded on eleven days with a daily maximum of eight birds.

Nepal Fulvetta: Surprisingly scarce (being a lot more numerous on our previous trip). Recorded on six days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Rufous Sibia: Recorded daily, and this attractive species was one of the most common of all forest species.

Striated Yuhina: Recorded on only three dates with a maximum of ten birds seen at Tingtibi.

Stripe-throated Yuhina: Recorded on seven days with a maximum of twelve birds seen on the lower slopes of Yotong La.

White-naped Yuhina: Recorded on just two days with a party of eight birds in a mixed babbler flock along the Shemgang Road and another of five birds at Yongkola.

Whiskered Yuhina: The most common babbler flock species. We saw many birds daily and often so numerous we just ticked it in the daily log (one day we estimated at least forty-five birds seen).

Rufous-vented Yuhina: Recorded on five days with a maximum of eight birds seen along the Old Pele La Road.

Black-chinned Yuhina: Recorded on four days with a maximum of six birds seen along the extremely birdy Shemgang Road.

White-bellied Erpornis: Another surprisingly scarce species being seen on just two days, including four birds along Shemgang Road. This species has recently been found not to be a Yuhina, nor even a babbler, but probably is most closely allied to the Vireos. We are including it here as it is still often lumped with the Yuhinas in field guides, trip reports and checklists.

White-throated Laughingthrush: This engaging species was extremely common and always found in noisy flocks. Recorded virtually daily with fifty plus seen on several days.

White-crested Laughingthrush: The most vocal of all the laughing thrushes, with a truly raucous “laughing” call. Another flock species, being recorded on seven days with a daily maximum of fifty birds.

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush: Just a single bird heard singing above our camp site at Tingtibi; it stubbornly refused to show despite a lot of iPod effort by Chubzang.

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush: Seen on three days with a maximum of eight birds watched feeding in an overgrown pasture next to the campsite at Tingtibi.

Striated Laughingthrush: This noisy forest species was usually seen singly or in pairs. It was recorded almost daily with a daily maximum of ten birds.

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush: Just a single bird seen by Gail and Peter (as well as several of our crew) on the dirt side road (signed for a primary school) that starts just above the guesthouse/shop in Yongkola..

Spotted Laughingthrush: This was a frustratingly difficult bird to get decent looks at. Two birds were seen at dawn along the Old Pele La Road but in poor light. Otherwise single birds heard singing and seen briefly on three other days.

Grey-sided Laughingthrush: We all managed to get excellent views of three birds in thick undergrowth at Yongkola. Also a total of three others recorded on two days.

Bhutan Laughingthrush: This rather drab species is a recent split [from Streaked Laughingthrush] . It was quite common in brushy secondary growth. In all recorded on thirteen days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Scaly Laughingthrush: Recorded on three days including two birds seen at point-blank range at Yongkola (just below Namling).

Blue-winged Laughingthrush: We were fortunate enough to be entertained by a pair of this species right at the Beautiful Nuthatch stake-out site near Shemgang. At one stage, the male hopped along the roadside wall with wings spread and flashing his bright blue wing patches. In all, we recorded this charismatic bird on eight days with a daily maximum of six birds seen.

Black-faced Laughingthrush: This attractive high altitude Laughingthrush was recorded on nine days with a maximum of ten birds at Chele La, all birds being seen above 3,600m.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush: This beautiful species was fairly common, being recorded on fourteen days with a maximum of twelve birds seen at Yotong La.

Red-faced Liocichla: This secretive species was seen just once at Yongkola, and heard on four other days. It always stayed in deep cover , often in company with Blue-winged Laughingthrushes. Our single sighting came when we encountered another birding group looking at the Liocichla sitting right in the open on a roadside wall – quite amazing since we had met only with calling but completely skulking birds!

Great Parrotbill: Brilliant close views of two pairs of this large impressive Parrotbill were obtained. The birds were in bamboo on the western slope of Pele La. They were carrying bamboo leaves and appeared to be nest building. Additionally, a single bird was observed in bamboo along the Old Pele La Road.

Brown Parrotbill: Recorded on three days, including a party of fifteen birds seen close to the road just east of the summit at Pele La.

Black-throated Parrotbill: A fast moving flock of about ten birds were seen in a very large mixed babbler flock at a roadside birding stop above Sengor. Also, single birds seen two days at Yongkola one of which gave excellent close views.

Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill: Recorded on three days including about six birds associated with a fast moving White-headed Babbler flock at Tingtibi.

Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill: Distinctly scarcer than the prior species with single birds recorded on three days. This included two birds at Yongkola and a one in the mixed Parrotbill/White-headed Babbler flock at Tingtibi.

Fire-capped Tit: This tiny species was quite scarce. In all three pairs seen including birds seen at the Royal Botanical Gardens.

Rufous-vented Tit: We were very surprised how scarce this species was. Recorded only on two days including three birds seen at Chele La.

Coal Tit: Recorded on four days with fifteen birds seen at Thrumshing La and ten birds at Yotong La.

Green-backed Tit: By far the most common tit, seen daily in a variety of habitats.

Yellow-cheeked Tit: This handsome tit was recorded on six days with the daily maximum of ten birds recorded from various sites near Shemgang.

Sultan Tit: This very impressive species was seen just once, with a single bird near Shemgang while looking for Beautiful Nuthatch.

Black-throated Tit: This tit was recorded on seven days, with five or fewer each day. However, fifteen birds were seen on May 8th.

Rufous-fronted Tit: This attractive species was also mainly recorded in low numbers [three or less] on seven days but twelve birds were seen at Yotong La.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch: Single birds seen on just five days.

White-tailed Nuthatch: Widespread but in low numbers, with up to three birds recorded on fourteen days.

Beautiful Nuthatch: We spent two mornings searching for this rare species focusing on the stake-out site on the Shemgang Road north of town, as well as along the very birdy Shemgang Rd south of the town (beyond the Chorten). The first day was unsuccessful, although the bird

was heard. Our searching eventually paid-off when, at about 7:30 AM on our second morning, Dorji located a pair near the 8 KM post along the Shemgang Rd. The birds were extremely active, moving around quite high up in large mossy trees. However, fortunately they moved to a lower dead tree and we all managed to get satisfactory views (including scope views). Needless to say we were delighted and relieved at this experience! (We later met up with a Rock-jumper group who had seen two nuthatches at the southern stake-out so at least two pairs present near Shemgang this year).

Eurasian Treecreeper: Single birds recorded on three days.

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper: Single birds recorded on two days.

Brown-flanked Treecreeper: Just one bird heard calling.

Mrs. Gould's Sunbird: Recorded on six days including eight birds at both Yotong La and Cheri Goempa.

Green-tailed Sunbird: The most common sunbird being recorded on seventeen days with twenty plus birds seen on several days.

Black-throated Sunbird: Another common & widespread species. In all recorded on thirteen days with a daily maximum of ten plus birds.

Crimson Sunbird: This beauty was seen just once with a beautiful male at Lingmethang, right along the main road.

Fire-tailed Sunbird: At least six birds, including several stunning males watched feeding on flowering rhododendrons on the west side of Thrumshing La.

Streaked Spiderhunter: Rather uncommon with six birds seen over five days.

Plain Flowerpecker: Just a single bird seen.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker: Fairly common and widespread being recorded on 16 days with a daily maximum of at last four birds.

Oriental White-eye: Common & widespread being recorded on eleven days, four of which so numerous we simply ticked it in the daily log.

Brown Shrike: Somewhat unexpected was a single bird seen at a road-side stop on the drive to Punakha.

Grey-backed Shrike: Common & widespread being recorded on eighteen days several of which were ticks in the log.

Long-tailed Shrike: Another very common shrike being recorded on sixteen days, again including two days when we simply ticked it in the log.

Black Drongo: Fairly common being recorded on at least nine days.

Ashy Drongo: The most common & widespread Drongo with large numbers seen on most days.

Bronzed Drongo: Seen on four days with a daily maximum of four birds.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo: A scarce species with just single birds seen over five days.

Spangled Drongo: Recorded on just four days including six birds seen at to Jigme Dorji N.P.

Eurasian Jay: Recorded on six days with a daily maximum of six birds.

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie: Common & widespread being seen on sixteen days with a daily maximum of fifteen birds.

Common Green Magpie: Scarce and very elusive with one bird seen briefly (at the Beautiful Nuthatch site) and heard on two other days.

Grey Treepie: Common & widespread being seen in good numbers virtually daily.

Black-billed Magpie: Recorded on four days mainly from agricultural areas in central Bhutan. The daily maximum was fifteen birds seen around Bumthang.

Red-billed Chough: Fairly common, seen mostly at fairly high altitude and in agricultural areas. The daily maximum numbers were parties totalling one hundred birds seen on two days.

Spotted Nutcracker: A common high altitude species seen invariably in evergreen forests. In all recorded on eleven days with a daily maximum of twenty plus birds, including a number of rather scruffy fledged juveniles. The birds in Bhutan are less spotted than those in Europe.

House Crow: A couple of birds were seen around Paro, where it has been introduced. Probably overlooked.

Large-billed Crow: Common and widespread and simply just ticked daily in the log. We got very use to 2-3 birds showing up from nowhere and looking for handouts at every picnic stop.

Spot-winged Starling: This rather attractive bird was possibly the most unexpected species of the entire trip. At least five birds seen in open country/farmland not far from the Royal Campsite on the Koshala Road. Inskipp's book notes this as "status uncertain" but it is regularly reported from this area, apparently on migration.

Chestnut-tailed Starling: We had just two sightings with three birds in brushy habitat by our campground at Tingtibi and two more in rice fields near Punakha

Common Myna: Fairly common in urban and agricultural areas in western Bhutan, and as far east as Trongsa.

House Sparrow: Recorded on two days at the hotel garden in Mongar

Russet Sparrow: This attractive sparrow was common and widespread and was quite often seen mixed-in with groups of Tree Sparrows.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Very common in both urban and agricultural areas.

Tibetan Siskin: Our only sighting was of a impressive swirling flock of about seventy birds seen near Trongsa, actively feeding in alder trees.

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch: A flock of about thirty birds seen at our campground at Koshala.

Blanford's Rosefinch: At least three birds watched feeding (with Common Rosefinches) in blossoming fruit trees along the Koshala Road.

Common Rosefinch: The most widespread rosefinch, seen on five days with a maximum of about forty birds seen at Kori La.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch: Recorded on two days with six birds on the eastern side of Thrumshing La and two at Chele La.

Beautiful Rosefinch: A male seen briefly in flock of otherwise unidentified rosefinches at Thrumshing La.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch: Very close views obtained of two birds at Chele La.

White-browed Rosefinch: Five birds including a couple of bright males seen at Chele La.

Scarlet Finch: This attractive finch was seen on four days with a daily maximum of six birds (including several smart males) at Yongkola.

Red-headed Bullfinch: Recorded on five days including six seen at Yotong La.

Collared Grosbeak: This large finch was recorded on three days. This included close views of a brilliant male along the Old Pele La Road and five more at Chele La.

Spot-winged Grosbeak: Recorded on just two days with parties of four birds at Dochu La and six south of Sengor.

White-winged Grosbeak: The most numerous of the grosbeaks being recorded on four days with a maximum of twelve birds seen at Chele La.

Crested Bunting: This attractive open country bunting was recorded on six days with a daily maximum of four birds.

MAMMALS:

We did not see as many mammals as in 2005, in part because some of the high altitude species had already moved into upland areas – thus no Serow or Takin seen this trip.

Wild Pig: Only glimpsed but evidence of their rooting was everywhere. We did find Leopard scat with wild pig hairs in it.

Goral: Three individuals observed, all on the steep slopes along the Kuenga Rubten Road south of Trongsa.

Muntjac: Heard more than seen, singles only at three widely scattered locations.

Yellow-throated Martin: Five recorded, including brilliant views of three individuals running across the road in Jigme Dorji NP on the 8th.

Gray Langur: The species seen west of Pele La, often in troops of a dozen or more. We enjoyed watching one having an altercation with a perched wet Himalayan Griffon just west of the pass.

Golden Langur: This beautiful primate was the most numerous monkey, up to 130 on a day, all seen along the road south of Trongsa. Most were south of Koshala.

Capped Langur: This species is found east of Thrumshing La; again in small troops of a dozen or so.

Assam Macaque: Seen throughout, however most abundant to the south with up to 30 seen on a day.

Orange-bellied Squirrel: Seen on 10 days, in one case being carried off by a Mountain Hawk-Eagle!

Malayan Giant Squirrel: Two of these huge black-and-white squirrels were seen at the Beautiful Nuthatch spot.

Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrel: Two of these large beautiful squirrels were seen on a night drive at Yongkola; unfortunately they remained firmly ensconced in their branches and refused to "fly." Chubzang had identified these as Red Giant Flying Squirrels but a perusal of the literature indicates that they are Hodgson's Flying Squirrels, based on their distinctive head stripes.

5-Striped or Northern Palm Squirrel: This species was seen primarily around Tingtibi, only 1 or 2 on a day.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel: This tiny chipmunk-like squirrel was seen in low numbers on 11 days.

Note: We had some trouble with Pika identification. Wangchuk The Field Guide to Mammals of Bhutan does not give very good separation features and we were dismayed to learn that Bhutan has 7 species!

Himalayan (Common) Pika: The most frequent Pika, seen occasionally in large number (e.g. 50 on July 20 on Dochu La). It inhabits moist forest floor, especially higher altitude Rhododendron thicket, under the roots of which its burrows are constructed.

Black-lipped Pika: We believe this is the species we saw on the open scree slopes at Chele La; it appears to have habits closer to that of the American Pika.