

# BHUTAN

## Birds and Cultural Highlights of the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan for Golden Gate Bird Alliance

### TOUR AT A GLANCE

**Tour Date:** 20 April – 06 May 2026

**Tour Duration:** 17 Days

**Expected Birds Species:** 300 - 350

**Expected Mammal Species:** 10-15

**Altitude:** 150m/492ft – 3,822m/12,539ft

**Photographic Opportunity:** Excellent

### TOUR COST

**Group Size:** 3 - 8 guests

**Total:** US\$ 4,985 per person, double occupancy

**Total:** US\$ 5,385 per person, single occupancy

Includes all in-country fees and transportation.

### FLIGHTS

Druk Air/Bhutan Airlines

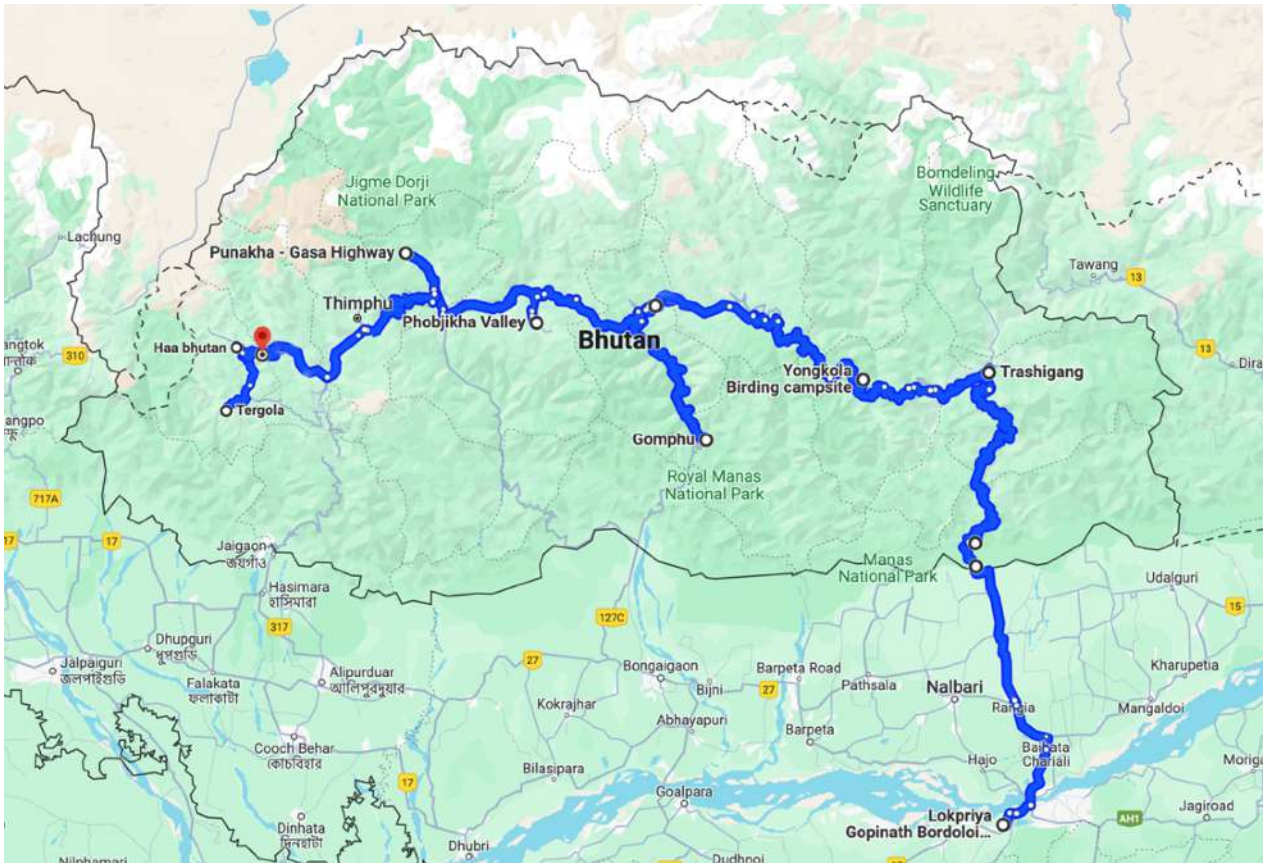
Bangkok to Paro and Guwahati to Bangkok = US\$935 per person

Note: Flight costs are current prices and are subject to change



Satyr Tragopan

## ROUTE MAP



## BRIEF ITINERARY

- Day 01:** Flight into Paro from Bangkok or Delhi. Birding along the Pa Chhu (river).
- Day 02:** Hike up to Tigers Nest monastery (5-hour return). Afternoon drive to Thimphu (55 kms, 1-hour).
- Day 03:** Thimphu to Punakha (78 kms, 3-hour). Stop at Dochu La, Lampelri Park and along Puna Tsang Chu.
- Day 04:** Punakha to Phobjikha over Lawa La pass at 3390m. Birding en-route, (80 kms, 3-hour).
- Day 05:** Phobjikha to Trongsa, birding at Pele La pass, Chendibji and Bji Zam valley (80 kms, 3-hour).
- Day 06:** Trongsa to Tingtibi, bird along Kuenga Rubten, Koshala and Wangduegang valley (110 kms, 4-hour).
- Day 07:** Exploring the north side of Royal Manas NP and the rich bamboo forests of Tingtibi.
- Day 08:** Tingtibi to Trongsa via Dakphai and Zhemgang valley. Birding en-route (140 kms, 5-hour).
- Day 09:** Trongsa to Bumthang, working the areas of Dorji Goenba and Yotong La pass (90 kms, 4-hour).
- Day 10:** Bumthang to Yongkola, birding stops at Selthang La, Ura and Thrumshing La pass, (150kms, 6-hour).
- Day 11, 12 & 13:** Three full days to explore the bird-rich Thrumshing La NP.
- Day 14:** Yongkola to Trashigang, birding along Lingmethang and Kore La pass at 2,298m, (139kms 5-hour).
- Day 15:** Trashigang to Deothang, stop at Yonphu la, Khaling and Morong valleys, (160kms, 6-hour).
- Day 16:** Morning birding at Deothang and continue to Samdrup Jongkhar. (18 kms, 1-hour).
- Day 17:** After breakfast complete immigration and drive to Guwahati Airport, (110kms, 3.5 hour), fly to Delhi or Bangkok.

## ITINERARY

### Day 01: Flight into Paro from Bangkok or Delhi. Birding along the Pa Chhu (river).

This morning, we take the Druk Air/Bhutan Airlines flight to Paro, Bhutan where we should have good views of the Himalayas, including many of the highest mountains in the world. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by your Bhutanese hosts and from there we will drive along the Pa Chhu, where camouflaged amongst the glacial stones, Himalayan riverine species such as the **Ibisbill** can be seen as it dips in the snowmelt, searching for food. In this area we should also find: **Pied Wagtail, Blue Whistling Thrush, Oriental Turtle Dove, Common Hoopoe, Crested Goshawk, Brown Dipper, Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, River Lapwing, Long-tailed and Gray-backed shrikes, Common Kestrel, Eurasian Tree and Russet sparrows.**

**NIGHT: Hotel Olathang, Paro, (2,300m).**



### Day 02: Hike up to Tigers Nest monastery (5-hour return). Afternoon drive to Thimphu (55 kms, 1-hour).

Today you will have a fabulous last day in Bhutan with a great mix of birding and some of the Paro Valley's cultural treasures. The cultural highlight will be the walk up to the famous Tiger's Nest, Taksang Monastery. The monastery is perched some 600m up on a cliff overlooking the valley and was said to be where the legendary Indian saint, Guru Padma Sambhava, flew from East Bhutan on the back of a tiger to defeat demons who were opposing the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan. It is a steep uphill walk, through woods, of about 1½-2hrs, to reach a tea house (an ascent of 340m). After a welcome refreshment at the tea house, one of the principle viewpoints of the monastery you will climb the further half hour's ascent, which brings you to another viewpoint directly across



from the monastery. The final section of the walk takes you from this viewpoint steeply down 100m into the gorge that separates you from the monastery and then climbs back up again to reach the monastery. You will then descend back to the valley floor by your outward route back to where your vehicle will be waiting. The full walk to the monastery and back involves approximately 740m of ascent. Along this hike we will look for, **Green-backed, Coal and Grey-crested tits, White-tailed Nuthatch, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Spotted Nutcracker, White-throated and Spotted laughingthrushes**. Up at the monastery by the rocky ledges we will scan for flocks of **Snow Pigeon** and **Alpine Accentor** while the waterfall next to the monastery often gives us the opportunity to see **Little Forktail, White-capped and Plumbeous water redstarts**.

After walking back to the base of the Tigers Nest, we will take an hour journey to Thimphu for the overnight.

**NIGHT: Hotel Park, Thimphu (2300m).**



**Day 03: Thimphu to Punakha (78 kms, 3-hour). Birding at Dochu La, Lampelri Botanical Park and along Puna Tsang Chu.**

Today we must leave very early in order to see the Himalayas as dawn breaks over Dochu La Pass (3,116m). This is an awe-inspiring sight, the road is festooned with prayer flags and 108 chortens, celebrating the safe return of the fourth king from a threatened invasion. At the pass we will have breakfast and you can spend time looking at the Bhutanese Himalayas from this advantage point.

In Bhutan's high elevation and the mixed evergreen and broad-leaved forests, there is an incredible wide range of birds, mammals, and flowering plants. Here it is possible to see species such as:

**Mrs. Gould's and Green-tailed sunbirds, Lemon-rumped Warbler, Green Shrike Babbler, Olive-backed Pipit, Himalayan Thrush, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Hill Partridge, Brown Parrotbill, Bar-throated Siva, Hodgson's Treecreeper and Golden Bush-Robin.**

Soon it will be time to continue down through the warm broadleaved forests around Punakha where there are cactus, poinsettia and banana plants, then down to the terraced fields of Punakha.

In the late afternoon we will visit the magnificent Punakha Dzong situated on a promontory that juts between the crystal-clear waters of the Mo Chhu (female) and Pho Chhu (male), which merge into the Puna Tsang Chhu. This relatively open habitat is home to the **Crested Kingfisher** and the rare **White-bellied Heron** (the world's second largest and the least known), **Pallas's Fish Eagle**, and many migrant water birds.

**NIGHT: Meri Puensum, Punakha, (1,300m).**



*Green-tailed Sunbird*

**Day 04: Punakha to Phobjikha over Lawa La pass at 3,390m. Birding en-route, (80 kms, 3-hour).**

Today, we will embark on a scenic journey along the winding mountain road, ascending through oak and rhododendron forests adorned with lichens, leading us towards Lawa La at an elevation of 3350m. Throughout these diverse habitats, we will have excellent birding opportunities, where we can expect to spot species such as the **Ward's Trogon** (one of the top five species in Bhutan and range restricted to Eastern Himalayas), **Spotted Elachura** (monotypic species and a top target for Bhutan), **Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush**, **Large Hawk Cuckoo**, **Brown-throated Treecreeper**, **Black-faced Warbler**, **Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush**, **Grey-headed Woodpecker**,

**Dark breasted Rosefinch, Speckled Piculet, Long-billed Thrush (rare), Rufous-winged Fulvetta, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Himalayan Cutia (top targets), Large Niltava, and Pygmy Flycatcher.**

Continuing from Lawa La, our journey will take us to the picturesque Phobjikha Valley, renowned for its **Black-necked Crane** (Near Threatened). These majestic birds migrate from the Tibetan plateau to over-winter in the valley from late October to March. Phobjikha is one of Bhutan's few glacial valleys and serves as an important wildlife preserve. The valley is home to a variety of bird species, including the **Oriental Skylark, Hen Harrier, Northern Lapwing, Bar-headed Goose** and **Himalayan Vulture** (Near Threatened).

**NIGHT: Phobjikha Resort, Phobjikha (2800m).**



*Ward's Trogon*

**Day 05: Phobjikha to Trongsa, birding stops at Pele La pass at 3350m, Chendibji and Bji Zam valley (80 kms, 3-hour).**

This morning, we will gradually ascend to Pele La Pass for some high-altitude birds, including **Himalayan Monal, Great Parrotbill, Stripe-throated Yuhina, Altai Accentor, Solitary Snipe, Large-billed Crow, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Himalayan Cuckoo, White-browed Bush Robin, and White-winged Grosbeak.**



From the pass we will continue our journey descending through more beautiful rhododendron forests and thickets of dwarf bamboo where we will stop to bird, looking for the **Black-faced Laughingthrush, Whiskered Yuhina and Hume's Bush Warbler.**

In Trongsa we will bird along the Zhemgang road, looking for **Eurasian Woodcock, Bhutan Laughingthrush, Spotted Forktail, Rufous-capped Babbler, Slaty-bellied Tesia and more.**

**NIGHT: Tendrel Resort, Trongsa, (2,200m).**

**Day 06: Trongsa to Tingtibi, birding stops along Kuenga Rubten, Koshala and Wangduegang valley (110 kms, 4-hour).**

Today's journey will take us through a wide range of altitudes, starting from 2,170m and descending to 600m as we reach Tingtibi. As we drive, we will be treated to magnificent views of the Himalayan landscape. In the morning, our focus will be on spotting various bird species, including **Black Eagle, White-tailed Robin, Barred Cuckoo-dove, Asian Barred Owlet, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Black-throated Prinia, Common Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, Spot-winged Starling (rare), Orange-headed Thrush, Sapphire, White-gorgeted and Little Pied flycatchers, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Black-throated Tit, Striated and Mountain bulbuls, White-bellied Erpornis, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, Tibetan Serin and Grey-headed Bullfinch (rare).**



*Scaly-breasted Cupwing*

Following a satisfying breakfast around Kuenga Rubten, we will continue our journey towards Tingtibi, making additional birding stops whenever time permits. Some of the species we can expect to encounter in the area include the **Peregrine Falcon, Oriental Hobby, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** (summer visitor), **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Mountain Hawk-eagle, Green-billed Malkoha, Great Hornbill** (Vulnerable), **Himalayan Bulbul, Blue Rock-thrush, Common Tailorbird** and **Yellow-vented Warbler**.

**Overnight: Hotel Twang, Tingtibi (600m).**

#### **Day 07: Exploring the north side of Royal Manas NP and the rich bamboo forests of Tingtibi.**

Our exploration of the rarely visited Royal Manas National Park in Tingtibi will introduce us to one of the most biodiverse areas in Bhutan, where we can witness an incredible variety of rare and special birds. Throughout the day, our target species will include the **White-bellied Heron** (Critically Endangered), **Pale-billed Parrotbill** (a resident species and rarity), **White-browed Scimitar Babbler, White-hooded Babbler** (a local bamboo specialist and rarity), **Pin-tailed Green Pigeon, Banded Bay Cuckoo, White-browed Piculet, Pale-headed Woodpecker** (a bamboo specialist and rarity), **Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher, Northern Goshawk, Sultan Tit, Yellow-bellied and Rufous-faced Warblers, Yellow-browed Warbler, Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Plain Flowerpecker, Silver-eared Mesia, Blue-winged Minla, Common Hill and Common Mynas, Snowy-browed and Slaty-backed flycatcher, Oriental Magpie-robin, Black Redstart, Crimson Sunbird, White-rumped Munia, Forest Wagtail, Bronzed and Ashy Drongos, Grey-throated and Golden Babblers, Striated Yuhina, Small Niltava, Blue-naped Pitta** (rare), **White-throated Kingfisher, Barred Buttonquail, Rufescent Prinia, Plain Martin, Black-crested Bulbul, Great Cormorant, Tawny Fish-owl, Spot-bellied Eagle-owl, and White-throated Needletail**.

In addition to the avian wonders, Tingtibi valley presents us with the best chance to observe one of Bhutan's rare primates, the **Golden Langur**, as they forage along the roadside.

**Overnight: Hotel Twang, Tingtibi (600m).**

#### **Day 08: Tingtibi to Trongsa via Dakphai and Zhemgang valley. Birding en-route (140 kms, 5-hour).**

Today we will start early to get to the habitat of the **Beautiful Nuthatch**, allowing ourselves plenty of time to locate and see this amazing bird. It has been regularly recorded on our past trips and we hope to repeat our sightings this spring. Other species we will look for in the area include: **Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Red-faced Liocichla, Hair-crested Drongo, Pygmy Cupwing, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Mountain Tailorbird, White-browed Shrike Babbler** and more.

After a hot breakfast eaten in yet another stunning location we will continue birding along the Shemgang road, stopping at the prime locations to bird habitats we missed on our way down to Tingtibi. As we drive to Trongsa there are amazing views all along the road and the occasional



waterfall gushing its way down the mountain slopes. Stopping for our hot picnic lunch will give us a good chance to absorb the beauty of this part of Bhutan. Just before arriving in Trongsa we will pass high cliff-faces where we will stop to look for the **Little Forktail** and **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide** amongst the cluster of beehives clinging to the rock.

**NIGHT: Tendrel Resort, Trongsa, (2,200m).**



*Yellow-rumped Honeyguide*

**Day 09: Trongsa to Bumthang, working the areas of Dorji Goenba and Yotong La pass at 3450m (90 kms, 4-hour).**

This morning we will gradually make our way through cascading waterfalls and more magnificent rhododendron and magnolia forests up to Yotong La Pass (3,425m). Some of species that are regularly seen here are: **Chestnut-headed Tesia, Rufous-vented Yuhina, Striated Laughingthrush, Brown Bullfinch, Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, Darjeeling Woodpecker** and **White-winged Grosbeak**. Descending through silver fir and spruce forests we come to the upland valleys of Chumey, the religious heartland of Bhutan where there are many ancient cultural and religious sites dating as far back as the 7th century. This is the only place we can find the **Black-billed Magpie**. One of the common birds around this area is the **Red-billed Chough**, which we can see as they feed in the buckwheat fields. From Chumey we will continue to Bumthang for the overnight.

**NIGHT: Kailas Guesthouse, Bumthang, (2,700m).**

**Day 10: Bumthang to Yongkola, birding stops at Selthang La, Ura and Thrumshing La pass at 3980m, (150kms, 6-hour).**

This drive is considered to be one of the most spectacular in the Himalayas. All around are stunning landscapes of the High Himalayas, auspiciously placed prayer flags, typical Bhutanese villages and spectacular temples – truly a magical land! We will stop and walk through the tranquil valley of Ura, the highest of the four valleys of Bumthang. Lying in the shadow of Thrumshing La, Ura is quite a prosperous village. In the surrounding fields we may encounter: flocks of **Russet Sparrow, Snow Pigeon, Plain Mountain Finch and Red-billed Chough, Himalayan Monal and the Blood Pheasant.**

Leaving Ura we climb through forests of larch, silver fir, spruce and towering hemlocks, until reach Thrumshing La (3,780m), along this magnificent stretch of road we look for **Blood Pheasant** feeding by the road side and where once more, we have breathtaking views of the Eastern Himalayas. From here we can also see the village of Sengor at 3,000m.

Species we may encounter between Sengor and Yongkola are: **Fulvous Parrotbill, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Gray-crested, Coal, Green-backed, Yellow-browed, Black-throated and Black-browed tits, Mrs. Gould's and Green-tailed sunbirds, Ferruginous and Ultramarine flycatchers, Ashy-throated, Lemon-rumped, Large-billed and Blyth's leaf warblers, Emerald Cuckoo, White-browed Fulvetta, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Upland Buzzard, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Blue-fronted Redstart, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Gray-sided Bush Warbler, Red Crossbill, Red-headed Bullfinch, Spot-winged Grosbeak and Gold-naped Finch.** From Thrumshing La, we will descend through truly pristine forest to Yongkola.

**NIGHT: Trogon Villa, Yongkola (1,800m).**



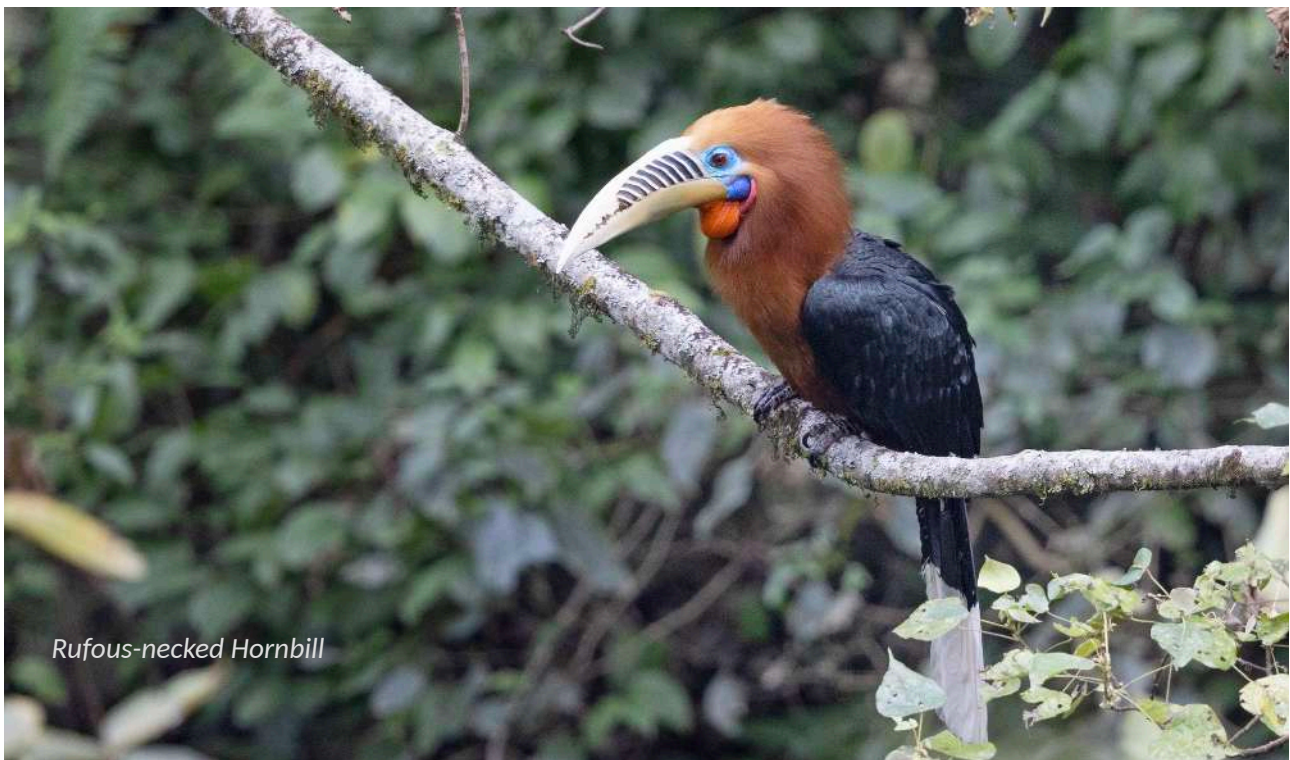
Himalayan Monal

**Day 11, 12 & 13: Two full days to explore the bird-rich Thrumshing La NP.**

Three full days are spent birding the upper and lower Yongkola region. In this breathtaking landscape we will bird in a protected area of pristine forests using a paved yet rarely used road, providing the ultimate beneficiary birding opportunities. It is here in this birding hotspot that we can look for some of Bhutan's most prized bird species and are difficult to find elsewhere: **Satyre Tragopan**, and **Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler**.

Other regularly seen species include: **Hill and Rufous-throated partridges**, **Rufous-bellied and Crested Serpent Eagles**, **Rufous-necked Hornbill** (the forests of Bhutan are the stronghold for this impressive species), **Speckled Wood Pigeon**, **Blue-bearded Bee-eater** and **Ward's Trogon**, and the elusive and strange **Wedge-billed Wren Babbler**, **Bay Woodpecker**, **Lesser Yellownape**, **Golden-throated and Blue-throated barbets**, **Collared Owlet**, **Himalayan Treepie**, **Gray-chinned, Short-billed and Long-tailed minivets**, **Yellow-bellied Fantail**, **White-browed Shortwing**, **Large Niltava**, **Hodgson's Redstart**, **Slaty-backed Forktail**, **Sultan** and **Yellow-cheeked tits**, **Mountain Bulbul**, **Hill and Striated prinias**, **Chestnut-headed and Gray-bellied tesias**, **Gray-hooded**, **Chestnut-crowned**, and **Broad-billed warblers**, **White-crested**, **Gray-sided laughingthrushes**, **Lesser Cuckoo**, **Streak-breasted**, and **Coral-billed scimitar babblers**, **Rufous-throated Wren Babbler** (a little known and endangered species), **Grey-throated Babbler**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Black-headed** (rare), and **Black-eared shrike babblers**, **Rusty-fronted Barwing**, **White-naped** and **Black-chinned yuhinas**, and the exquisite **Golden-breasted** and **Yellow-throated fulvettas**, **White-breasted Parrotbill** (rarely seen), **Crimson-browed Finch** and **Scarlet Finch**.

**NIGHTS: Trogon Villa, Yongkola, (1,800m).**



*Rufous-necked Hornbill*



**Day 14: Yongkola to Trashigang, birding along Lingmethang and Kore La pass at 2,298m, (139kms 5-hour).**

After a final morning's birding around our hotel we will continue to lower region of Yongkola where the different vegetation supports species such as the **Streaked Spiderhunter, Blue-throated Barbet, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Plaintive Cuckoo, Greater Yellownape, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler** and **White-browed Piculet** to name few. We will descend into Lingmethang a small town at 700m before climbing again to the Town of Mongar.

Our journey continues east. From the town of Mongar, we will ascend through a mixed broad-leaved evergreen forest. For the photographers among us, the opportunities will be endless.

Some of the more commonly seen species are **Little Bunting, Grey-sided** and **Scaly laughingthrushes, Kalij Pheasant** and the rare **Rufous-necked Hornbill**. After crossing the Kore La, we commence the last section of today's journey, which takes us through a series of switchbacks as we descend to the Gamri River through Chir pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) forest where we will look for **Himalayan Bulbul, Crimson Sunbird and Crested Bunting**.

As we arrive in Trashigang, we should have a superb view of the Trashigang Dzong, one of Bhutan's justly famous fortified monasteries. Built in 1659, it is superbly located on a spur overhanging the Gamri Chu and is protected on three sides by rivers or ravines. The dzong commands a fine view over the surrounding countryside.

**Night: Lingkhar Lodge, Trashigang, (1,100 m).**



*Crimson Sunbird*

**Day 15: Trashigang to Deothang birding stops at Yonphu la, Khaling, Womrong and Morong valleys, (160kms, 6-hour).**

This region of Bhutan is the most settled and populous, making today's journey primarily take us through densely cultivated landscapes. Despite this, the area remains captivating, with a rich diversity of birdlife to observe. We'll begin birdwatching below Yonphu La, in a marshy rice field, where we've previously spotted a pair of the elusive Black-tailed Crakes. Afterward, we'll descend to Khaling, a small town situated at 2,000 meters. From the Khaling Pass, we'll continue our drive south towards Morong, passing through the towns of Womrong, Reserbu, and Moshi. Throughout the day, the panoramic views are awe-inspiring, with mountain ridges covered in untouched forests stretching endlessly toward the horizon, offering an array of birding prospects.

During the drive, we may encounter species such as: **Eurasian Jay, Drongo Cuckoo, Beautiful Nuthatch, Large-billed Crow, Maroon Oriole, Long-tailed Minivet, White-throated Fantail, Little Pied Flycatcher, Common Stonechat, White-tailed Nuthatch, Fire-capped and Green-backed tits, Striated, Black, and Red-vented Bulbuls, Aberrant Bush Warbler, Ashy-throated Warbler, White Wagtail, Maroon Accentor (rare), Crimson-breasted Woodpeckers, Himalayan Swiftlet, Collared Owlet, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Besra, Bonelli's Eagle and Orange-bellied Leafbird.**

**NIGHT: Dungsam Trashiling Resort, Deothang (700m).**



*Beautiful Nuthatch*

**Day 16: Morning birding at Deothang and continue to Samdrup Jongkhar. (18 kms, 1-hour).**

At this point, we have travelled deep into the south eastern part of Bhutan. Very few birders have ever visited this part of Bhutan, therefore we anticipate finding a number of rare and little known species. Although many of the birds will be familiar, we also hope to encounter a number of the more elusive lower elevation species such as **Long-tailed Sibia, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Thick-billed Pigeon, Emerald Dove, Indian Cuckoo, Plaintive Cuckoo, Green-billed Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters**, with luck, the very rarely seen **Blyth's Kingfisher, Wreathed, Oriental Pied** and **Great Hornbills**, the spectacular **Greater Goldenback** (woodpecker), **Asian Fairy-bluebird, Black-naped Monarch, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Black Kite, Savanna Nightjar, Red-collard Dove, Coppersmith Barbet, Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Rufous Treepie, Grey-throated and Jungle babblers, White-throated Bulbul, Chestnut-tailed Starling, Taiga Flycatcher, Hooded Pitta (rare), Dollarbird and Red-headed Trogon.**

**NIGHT: Hotel Menjong or similar, Samdrup Jongkhar, (250m).**



*Red-headed Trogon*

**Day 17: After breakfast complete immigration and drive to Guwahati Airport for your onward connections. (110kms, 3.5 hour).**

Today you exit Bhutan and connect with your onward journey.

**Note: We strive to provide the best itinerary and program for our guests. However, please be aware that the itinerary may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control. We reserve the right to modify the itinerary as necessary. Rest assured, we will notify you of any changes in advance, if applicable.**



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Full country name

Kingdom of Bhutan

### Capital city

Thimphu

### Area

38,364 sq km

### Population

742,600 (2019 estimate)

### Main Language

Dzongkha

### Main Religions

Buddhism and Hinduism

### Currency

Bhutan - Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN)

Ngultrum has the same value as the Indian rupee (INR), which is also legal in Bhutan. Indian rupee denominations can be used in Bhutan, but Ngultrum cannot be used in India.

### Local Laws and Customs

Local customs and traditions are taken very seriously. You should respect them at all times to avoid giving offence. You should dress respectfully in temples and Dzongs. You cannot wear hats in religious buildings and government offices.

## What to Expect

### Accommodation

The hotels are of medium to good quality with good locations. In some areas they are more basic, but rooms are clean and comfortable. Two nights are in camp, organized by Langur Eco Travels with walk-in-tents and camp beds.

## **Climate**

Generally dry and cool, there may be some rain. It will be cold in the early mornings, evenings and at altitude (0-25°C). It will be much colder when at altitude; it could possibly drop to -02°C.

## **Drinking Water**

We encourage all participants to bring their own refillable water bottles to reduce plastic waste. Drinking water will be available for refills at all times on the bus.

## **Electricity**

The voltage in Bhutan is 230 volts AC, 50Hz. A variety of power outlets are used, but most plugs have two or three round pins. A multi power adapter may be useful

<https://www.amazon.com/International-Universal-Worldwide-Electrical-Countries/dp/B09YLS861P?th=1>

## **Food**

Most breakfasts and all lunches are hot picnic style, taken in the field. Dinners are mostly buffets served at the hotels where we stay, with continental, Indian, Chinese and Bhutanese options usually available.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in any of the vehicles, or in close company of the group. In Bhutan, smoking is forbidden inside public spaces such as hotels, restaurants and bars.

## **Time Zone**

Bhutan is 6 hours ahead of GMT and half an hour ahead of India.

## **Tipping**

Tipping is increasingly recognized as a way to show appreciation for the hard work of those in the tourism industry, particularly in the Indian subcontinent. Our suggested tipping amounts are intended to provide you with a reasonable guideline, helping to reflect the efforts of the staff while establishing fair expectations for future tips. Of course, the final amount is entirely up to you.

We recommend that each group member budgets approximately \$400 for tips during the trip. This amount would cover tips for the guide, assistant guide (scope man), van driver, cook, helper, and pick-up driver.

## **Wi-Fi**

Free Wi-Fi available at most hotels but it may be very slow at times. Bhutan has a comprehensive mobile phone network with global roaming also assessable. Our local agent can arrange a local SIM card with data, for Ngultrum 500 (US\$ 10), please let us know if you wish to purchase one.

## **Walking**

You should prepare for certain factors of travel in Bhutan. A few of the most important are: elevation, windy mountain roads and uneven trek paths. Average elevation on this trip is 2,400m. Pass crossings may be up to 4,000m. The walk to Tiger's Nest Monastery is on uneven forest trails, with 740m of ascent. All walking at a relaxed pace, as at altitude.

## **Health and Paperwork**

### **Passports**

Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months after the date you intend to leave Bhutan. There must be clear pages available for your visas and entry stamps; we recommend at least 3 blank pages.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport information page, for just in case you may need.

### **Bhutan Visa**

A tourist visa is required for entry to Bhutan; this can only be issued on arrival. We will arrange these and forward the visa clearance letter via email prior to your trip. You can print a copy and also carry a digital copy on your phone/device to present if the authorities ask.

### **Health precautions/vaccinations**

Although no mandatory vaccinations are required for entry into Bhutan, health requirements change frequently so we suggest guests consult your local doctor or travel clinic for the latest health precautions. It is advised that standard vaccinations such as tetanus are up to date.

### **Insects**

You may encounter mosquitoes, so bring repellent. Many travellers choose a repellent which contains a high percentage of DEET. Alternatively, there are other types of repellent which can be sprayed directly on to clothes. Antihistamine creams are useful in reducing irritation from stings or bites.

### **Clothing**

The temperature will vary from very cold first thing in the morning/at altitude to hot during the day in some areas. For maximum flexibility, it is better to bring a number of thin layers from which to choose for the conditions. Sun hats and sunscreen will be needed at times. In the evenings we tend to dress informally. It will be much colder when we are at altitude.



The following list will help make your trip comfortable and more enjoyable:

Walking boot	For hiking
Training shoe	For comfort
Waterproof jacket	Best made with breathable, waterproof fabric
Waterproof over-trousers	Best made with breathable, waterproof fabric
Lightweight dovet jacket or down gilet	For colder evening/morning or incase of cold snap
Trekking trousers	Suggest two pairs, plus trousers to change into the evening
T-shirts/ undershirts	
Long sleeved shirts	Prevent sunburn on your arms and keep airborne biting insects at bay
Thermal underwear	You may like to take to change into this in the evening or have it to sleep in.
Micro fleece	
Warm Jacket	
Thicker socks	
Woolly hat or gloves	For cold weather
Sun hat	With adequate protection for your neck
Smart/casual clothes	For air travel, in cities and for evenings in hotels

### Laundry

Laundry facilities are available at all accommodations.

### What to Bring

#### Paperwork/Passport

Don't forget these important documents:

- Valid passport with at least 2 blank pages for visa, entry/exit stamp spaces
- Copy of your Bhutan visas (sent prior to your trip)
- Air tickets
- Copy of your travel insurance (organized by yourselves)

## **Money**

We do advise you have some local currency for purchases of any snacks, refreshments or souvenirs. You cannot purchase local currency outside of Bhutan; you can exchange dollars, euro or sterling at a bank or currency bureau on arrival. In Bhutan most shops will also accept foreign currencies. You can bring Indian rupee into Bhutan, which are accepted throughout Bhutan but old Indian notes cannot be used. Credit cards can be used at the hotel in India and also most hotels in Bhutan, but only some shops in western Bhutan will accept credit cards. One of the great things about this trip is that the holiday is just about fully inclusive. Included are all food, all lodging, and ground transportation. It does not include alcoholic drinks, tips, phone calls, laundry or items of a personal nature.

## **Medicines & Toiletries**

Glasses/contact lenses and supplies

Lip balm with sun block

Sunscreen (30-50 SPF)

Minor first aid items: aspirin, antihistamine, band aids, antiseptic Toothbrush and paste

Shampoo and soap

Hand sanitizer

Insect repellent

Shaving items

Skin cream

Imodium tablets are recommended for traveller's diarrhea

Anti-bacterial hand gel

We recommend that you bring a supply of any medications you think you might need during the trip and that you carry medications in the original labeled packaging, plus a copy of your prescription and a letter from your doctor is also advised.

## **Re-usable water bottle**

Very useful for re-filling and using when walking.

## **Sunglasses**

Very useful for dealing with any glare.

## **Flashlight/Headlight**

Will be useful.

## Watch & Alarm clock

## Spare Batteries for cameras

## Luggage

We find the lighter you pack the happier you will be (keeping in mind the recommended items). Soft luggage is best, as it is easier to carry and takes up less space. We recommend bringing only one checked-in bag along with one carry-on bag.

Drukair Baggage allowances are one cabin baggage (Max weight 10kg) and one checked-in-baggage (max 30kg).

- Small heavy articles can be carried in your day-sack or grip, which can go on as hand baggage. Drukair will allow only one item of hand baggage.
- Excess baggage charge are at approx. US\$3 per extra kilogram.

Electrical equipment and lighters should be packed in your hold luggage.

## Recommended Books and Maps

### Lonely Planet Bhutan Travel Guide

[https://www.amazon.com/Lonely-Planet-Bhutan-Travel-Guide/dp/1786573237/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.com/Lonely-Planet-Bhutan-Travel-Guide/dp/1786573237/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)

### Birds of Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas

Helm Field Guide

[https://www.amazon.com/Birds-Bhutan-Eastern-Himalayas-Guides-ebook/dp/B07PX98KFN/ref=dp\\_kinw\\_strp\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/Birds-Bhutan-Eastern-Himalayas-Guides-ebook/dp/B07PX98KFN/ref=dp_kinw_strp_1)

### Other books:

#### Beyond the Sky and the Earth, A journey into Bhutan

Jamei Zeppa

[https://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Sky-Earth-Journey-Bhutan-ebook/dp/B0031Y9D78/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=Beyond+the+Sky+and+the+Earth%2C+A+journey+into+Bhutan&qid=1577235447&s=digital-text&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Sky-Earth-Journey-Bhutan-ebook/dp/B0031Y9D78/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=Beyond+the+Sky+and+the+Earth%2C+A+journey+into+Bhutan&qid=1577235447&s=digital-text&sr=1-1)



## **Map**

Comprehensive Trek Planning Guide Map by NEPA MAPS

<https://www.mapsworldwide.com/maps-charts-atlases-c1811/trekking-maps-c1856/nepa-maps-himalayan-map-house-bhutan-himalaya-trekking-guide-nepa-map-cr702-p41135>

## **Married To Bhutan**

Linda Leaming

## **The Raven Crown: The origins of Buddhist Monarchy in Bhutan**

Micheal Aris

# TASHI DELEK