

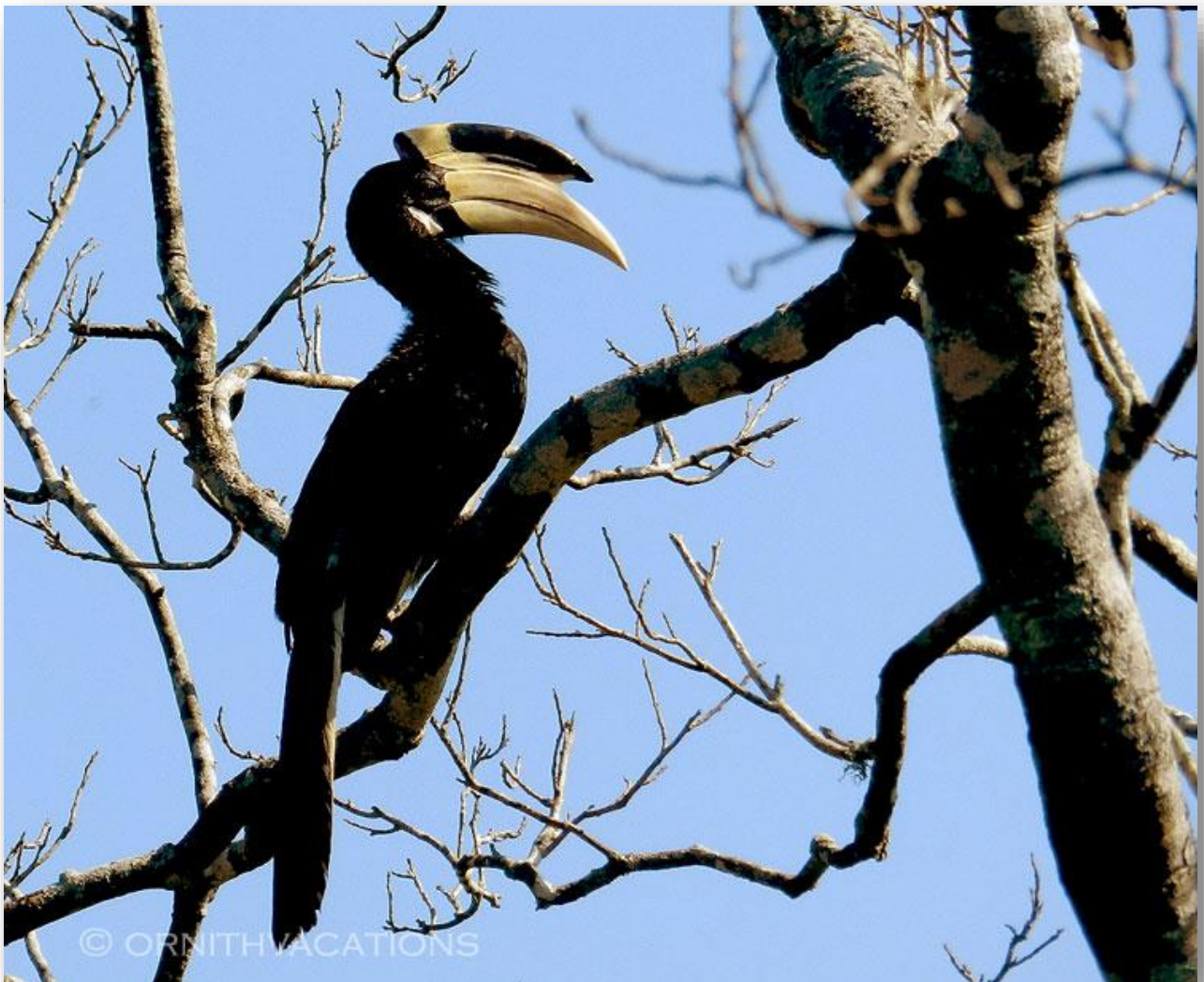


Sri Lanka Birding Tour

(16 days/ 15 nights *with some cultural experiences*)

February 10, 2024 to February 25, 2024

Ornithvacations
Birding & Wildlife Holidays



SRI LANKA at a Glance

Sri Lanka, an island situated in tropical Indian Ocean has been esteemed as a paradise isle destination. The geographical location supplemented by a vast range of diversity of nature and culture in combination with friendly hospitality has gifted itself its reputation. As a center on the ancient silk route, which linked west to east, the island has been inspiring the western eye, over the centuries. 'Taprobane', 'Serendib' and 'Ceylon' as it was called by traders and explorers from many parts of the world, proves their affection to this magnificent island. British's 'Ceylon' served so long and still appears in some traditions like 'Ceylon Tea' as well as in the nomenclature of the Birds. In continuation with historical era, Sri Lanka attracts folks from all over the world.

Written history of over 2500 years reveals a proud self-sufficient Buddhism based civilization. This long history left remains of a vast range of cultural diversity in the field of arts, architecture, irrigation and engineering. Since the kingdoms shifted from northern cities to south, the ruins and culture of once a glorious civilization spread out in the island, but mainly existing in the Cultural Triangle, where major ancient kingdoms are placed.

Bird Life: Due to the location in the end of the Central Asian migratory flyway supplemented by the high variety of habitats, this small island of 65610 sq. km records over 500 bird species, including 33 that are endemic to the island! This is a very good opportunity to see sub-continent endemics too.

In this specialized 16-day, bird watching tour we have a good chance to see 220- 250 bird species including all endemics. Among these vibrant endemics are the elusive Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush, the widespread Lesser Sri Lanka Flameback, Red-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Sri Lanka Jungle Fowl, Sri Lanka Spurfowl and tiny Sri Lanka Hanging- Parrot. The amazingly camouflaged Serendib Scops Owl is definitely a thrill to locate and to see at its day roost in its typical rainforest undergrowth habitat. Diurnal Chestnut-backed Owlet is another remarkable sight! Apart from the endemics, there is another set of highlights in our tour as they are rather easily seen here than in their breeding grounds. Among these winter visitors, Indian Pitta, Kashmir Flycatcher and Pied Thrush show up well during their stay in Sri Lanka, which is one of the best places in the world to see them! Subcontinent endemics including glowingly colored Malabar Trogon, massive Malabar Pied Hornbill and bizarre looking Sri Lanka Frogmouth with its camouflage at its best are among other resident subcontinent specialties.

Not only the birds but the tour usually yields a number of other wildlife including Asian Elephant, Spotted Deer, several species of Monkeys and Mongooses, Indian Jackal, several species of Squirrels, as well as the Leopard. Mugger Crocodile and other herpetofauna are also seen. Butterflies and dragonflies are also prevalent (with excellent field guide books for them).

We will visit two of the major historical sites along with some cultural experience in this tour.

Tour Itinerary



Day 01:

February 10 - Katunayake/ Sigiriya

Arrival and meet at Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB), Katunayake in the morning and transfer to Sigiriya. Birding around Sigiriya in the afternoon. [to be adjusted as per the flight schedule]

Overnight stay at Sigiriya Village Hotel

Day 02:

February 11- Sigiriya

Birding in Sigiriya in the morning. Visiting Sigiriya ancient fortress in the afternoon.

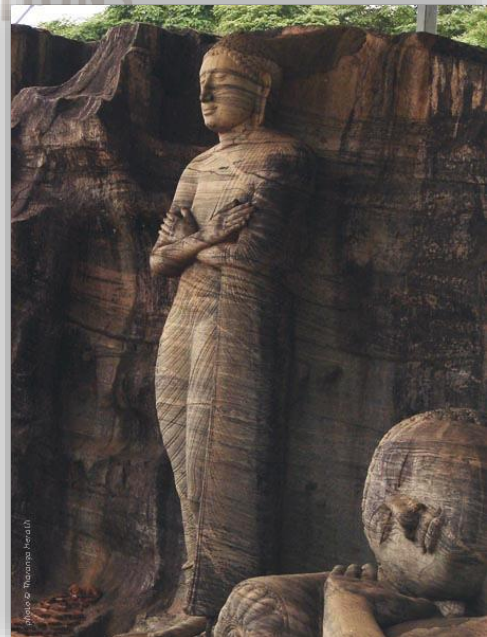
Overnight stay at Sigiriya Village Hotel, Sigiriya.

Day 03:

February 12- Polonnaruwa/ Sigiriya

Visiting Polonnaruwa archaeological site in the morning. Birding in Sigiriya/ around the lodge in late afternoon.

Overnight stay at Sigiriya Village Hotel, Sigiriya.



Sigiriya & Polonnaruwa: *Although Sigiriya is a great site for a birder and a wildlife enthusiast, it is also one of the major historical attractions, which gave rise to the world famous Ancient Rock Fortress, which is placed middle of the wilderness. Sigiriya consists of forests as well as scrublands and traditional rural farmlands. This wonderful combination provides habitats for a nice selection of birdlife including forest, scrubland and wetland birds.*

We will be visiting Polonnaruwa archaeological site and surrounding ancient irrigation tank-Parakrama samudra to experience ancient art, architecture, traditional culture as well as the nature with rich wild life.

Day 04:

February 13- Sigiriya/ Kitulgala

Travelling to Kitulgala in the morning, [brief stop at Dambulla temple enroute].
Birding around Kitulgala in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Heritage Rest House, Kitulgala.

Day 05:

February 14- Kitulgala

Visiting Makandawa Forest reserve in the morning. Birding around Kitulgala in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Heritage Rest House, Kitulgala.

Kitulgala is situated deep in the wet zone consisting of tropical rainforests, woodlands and cultivations with a significant birdlife with high endemism.

Day 06:

February 15- Kitulgala/ Nuwara- eliya

Transfer to Nuwara Eliya in the morning. Birding in Hakgala Botanical gardens in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Araliya Red, Nuwara Eliya.

Nuwara- eliya & Horton Plains: *Nuwara Eliya and Horton Plains are scenic and cool areas with mountainous landscape located high over 6000 feet altitude that provide great opportunities for highland birdlife including highland endemics. This is the district where the 'best tea' in the world is grown that provides scenic views of well- managed tea plantations and well as vegetable fields. Nuwara- eliya is known as 'little England' with the present existence of preserved colonial heritage passed down from British colonial era.*

Day 07:

February 16- Nuwara Eliya

Leaving for Horton Plains National Park with picnic breakfast in early morning. Birding in Victoria park in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Araliya Red, Nuwara Eliya.

Day 08:

February 17- Nuwara Eliya

Leaving for Horton Plains National Park with picnic breakfast in the early morning. Leisure or optional birding around Nuwara Eliya/ Bomuruella Forest in late afternoon.

Overnight stay at Araliya Red, Nuwara Eliya.

Day 09:

February 18- Nuwara Eliya/ Kirinda

Travelling to Tissamaharama (Kirinda) in the morning. Birding in nearby wetlands in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Elephant Reach Hotel, Kirinda.

Day 10:

February 19- Bundala / Tissamaharama.

Safari drive at Bundala National Park. Birding in Debarawewa and Tissamaharama wetlands in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Elephant Reach Hotel, Kirinda.

Tissamaharama area, Yala & Bundala National Parks (Ramsar wetland): These are dry zone sites, which comprise large number of wetlands, scrublands and grasslands providing habitats for loads of waders, other waterfowl, other migratory species and also large mammals and other wildlife including Leopard.

Tissamaharama provides land for some ancient monuments including large Buddhist stupas as well as ancient irrigation, culture and agriculture.

Day 11:

February 20 Tissamaharama/ Yala National park

Birding in Debarawewa/ Tissa lakes nearby wetlands in the morning. Safari drive at Yala National park in the afternoon.

Day 12:

February 21- Kirinda/ Embilipitiya

Travelling to Embilipitiya in the morning. Visiting Kalametiya bird sanctuary enroute. Birding around Udawalawe National park in the afternoon.

Overnight stay at Centauria Lake Hotel, Embilipitiya.

Udawalawe National Park is a great open woodland habitat area comprising grasslands, scrublands and wetlands, while Kalametiya yields a large number of waterfowl including shorebirds.

Day 13:

February 22- Udawalawe/ Sinharaja

Safari drive at Udawalawe national park starting in the morning with picnic breakfast. Travelling to Sinharaja after lunch.

Overnight stay at Birds Paradise Hotel, Sinharaja

Sinharaja World heritage site: Sinharaja Forest Reserve is the largest tropical rainforest and most diverse eco system in Sri Lanka. Sinharaja village is situated well away from cities and its culture blend with and dependent on rain forest environment

Day 14:

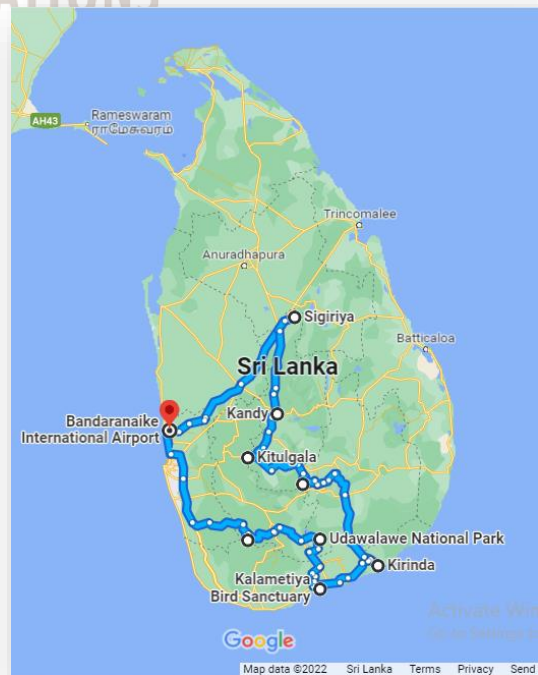
February 23- Sinharaja Forest Reserve

Birding Excursion to Sinharaja Forest Reserve.

Overnight stay at Birds Paradise Hotel, Sinharaja

Day 15:

February 24-Sinharaja



Early morning birding excursion with picnic breakfast to a local site in Sinharaja followed by birding in Sinharaja.

Overnight stay at Birds Paradise Hotel, Sinharaja

Day 16:
February 25-Sinharaja

Possible Birding around Sinharaja in the morning depending on the departure flight time. End of the tour, travelling to Katunayake as per the flight time and departure.

Around 220-250 species including all 33 endemics are possible in this tour.

Some possible **Highlights:**



Yellow Bittern
Black Bittern
Painted Stork
Lesser Adjutant
Eurasian Spoonbill
Lesser Whistling Duck
Cotton Pygmy-goose
Garganey
Oriental Honey- buzzard
Rufous- bellied Eagle
Crested Serpent Eagle
Black Eagle
Changeable Hawk Eagle

White- bellied Sea Eagle
Grey- headed Fish Eagle
Black- winged Kite
Shahin



Barred Buttonquail
Sri Lanka Spurfowl
Sri Lanka Junglefowl
Indian Peafowl
Watercock
Grey- headed Swampphen
Pheasant- tailed Jacana
Indian Thick-knee
Great Thick- knee
Small Pratincole

Common, Wood, Marsh, Curlew, Green
and Broad-billed Sandpipers
Common Redshank
Common Greenshank
Little Stint,
Lesser Sand, Kentish, Little-ringed,
Pacific Golden and Grey Plovers
Red-necked Phalarope
Yellow-wattled Lapwing
Pintail Snipe
Black-tailed Godwit
Whimbrel
Caspian, Great-crested, Lesser-crested
and Little Terns
Sri Lanka Woodpigeon
Grey-capped Emerald Dove
Sri Lanka Green Pigeon
Orange-breasted Green Pigeon
Sri Lanka Hanging-parrot
Alexandrine Parakeet
Blossom-headed Parakeet
Emerald-collared Parakeet
Red-faced Malkoha
Blue-faced Malkoha
Sirkeer Malkoha
Green-billed Coucal
Jacobin Cuckoo
Indian Cuckoo



Grey-bellied Cuckoo
Common Hawk-cuckoo

Indian Scops Owl
Chestnut-backed Owlet
Jungle Owlet
Brown Fish Owl
Sri Lanka Frogmouth
Long-tailed Nightjar
Indian Nightjar
Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill
Malabar Pied Hornbill
Malabar Trogon
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater
Little Green Bee-eater
Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Yellow-fronted Barbet
Sri Lanka Barbet



Lesser Sri Lanka Flameback
Greater Sri Lanka Flameback
Lesser Yellownappe
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker
White-naped Woodpecker
Crested Treeswift
Jerdon's Bush Lark
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark
Sri Lanka Swallow
Hill Swallow
Sri Lanka Woodshrike
Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike
Orange Minivet

Black- capped Bulbul
Yellow-Eared Bulbul



Marshall's Iora
Indian Blue Robin
White-rumped Shama
Orange-headed Thrush
Spot-winged Thrush
Sri Lanka Thrush
Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush
Pied Thrush
Indian Blackbird
Indian Pitta
Brown-capped Babbler
Orange-billed Babbler
Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler
Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush
Sri Lanka Warbler
Clamorous Reed-warbler
Indian Paradise Flycatcher
Kashmir Flycatcher
Dull-blue Flycatcher



Velvet-fronted Nuthatch
White-throated Flowerpecker
Sri Lanka White-eye
Sri Lanka Drongo
Sri Lanka Blue Magpie
White-faced Starling
Brahminy Starling
Rosy Starling
Sri Lanka Hill Myna
Lesser Hill Myna



And Many more species...

Other possible wildlife highlights during the tour:

Asian Elephant, Leopard, Indian Jackal, Ruddy Mongoose, Brown Mongoose, Wild Boar, Black-naped Hare, Spotted Deer, Sambar, Mouse Deer, Purple Faced Leaf Monkey, Bear Monkey, Tufted Grey Langur, Toque Macaque, Common Palm Squirrel, Giant Squirrel, Flame Striped Jungle Squirrel, Dusky Striped Jungle Squirrel, Kangaroo Lizard, Green Garden Lizard, Common Skink, Green Pit Viper, Mugger Crocodile, Hard- Shelled Terrapin, Land Monitor, Water Monitor

All Inclusive TOUR PRICE: \$3,600 (\$570 single supplement)

TOUR PRICE INCLUDES;

- Service of Ornithvacations Bird & wildlife Specialist Tour Leader. History experts at each site.
- 15 nights/ 16 days accommodation in Sri Lanka in standard to high- standard tourist hotels and lodges.
- Main meals (variety of food including typical Sri Lankan cuisine) on full- board basis.
- Transport by air- conditioned & comfortable mini-coach throughout the tour from airport pick-up to drop. Switching to safari jeeps in National Parks.
- Entrance fees for all sites as per the itinerary.
- Ornithvacations checklist of birds and other general wildlife.
- Sufficient amount of drinking water will be provided during travelling.

TOUR COST EXCLUDES

- Airfare, Insurance, ETA (visa) costs, extra site entrances, beverages, extra meals/snacks & other expenses of personal nature.

OTHER FACTORS:

- Tours consist of walks through forests and open habitats on better terrain paths as well as several uneven surfaced gravel paths.

Climatic condition

- Our tours cover a variety of climatic zones and habitats including hot dry zone scrublands through humid wet zone rain forests to cool misty hills. Temperature usually varies from 22-33C° in lowlands while in cooler highlands, where it varies typically from 10-20C° during the daytime, falling to the temperatures well below 8- 10C° at night and dawn.