

## ASSAM and ARUNACHAL PRADESH

### North East India

14 March - 29 March 2010

by

John van der Dol - Adapted from report by KATHIE CLAYDON

Participants: Chris Dyett, Einar Kongshaug, Jim Law, Andrew Lipczynski, Robert Rackliffe, Brian Short, Brian Summerfield, Morten Venaas

Tour organiser John van der Dol

Guide and local Tour operator Peter Lobo

### ITINERARY

- 14 March Arrived **Delhi** early afternoon. Late afternoon to **Okhla**
- 15 March Mid morning flight arriving **Guwahati** at lunchtime. Drive to **Nameri**  
Arrived too late for any birding O/N **Nameri Eco Camp**
- 16 March Early morning crossed **Jia Bhareli** river to walk in forest  
Early afternoon raft trip along **Jia Bhareli** river  
Late afternoon-dusk walking near **Nameri Eco Camp** by some of the group
- 17 March Early morning start from **Nameri Eco Camp** to **Dirang**  
Visit to **Sangti Valley** pm
- 18 March All day **Mandala Road**
- 19 March Day birding drive from **Dirang** to **Sela Pass** and. Lunch at the top at 4200m. Drive and walk back down to Dirang
- 20 March Morning birding drive to **Lama Camp**. Afternoon walk from camp
- 21 March Morning walk downhill, afternoon drive over **Eaglesnest Pass** to **Bompu Camp**
- 22 March Whole day crossing snow-bound **Eaglenest Pass** to **Bompu camp**
- 23 March Drive below **Bompu** to **Sessni** and lower slopes
- 24 March **Bompu** back to **Lama Camp** (fog)
- 25 March Left day early because of fog/rain. **Lama** to **Kaziranga**. Pm **Tea Plantation**
- 26 March Early morning transfer to **Jupuri Ghar lodge**  
**Kaziranga** safaris Am Western Range, pm Central Range
- 27 March **Kaziranga** safaris. Am Eastern Range, pm Central Range  
Midday **Jupuri Ghar lodge** area
- 28 March Early morning Elephant ride in Central range followed by drive back to **Guwahati** for mid afternoon flight back to Delhi
- 29 March 10.30 flight from **Delhi** arriving London teatime the same day

### SITES MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

- AP**.....Arunachal Pradesh
- Bhalukpong** .....Town on the border of Assam/Arunachal Pradesh. 213m
- Bomdila** .....Main town of West Kameng District, between Bhalukpong and Tawang and north of Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary. 2,530m. AP
- Bompu area** .....Refers to camp (1,950m) + areas we walked around Bompu (Eaglenest WLS) AP
- Bompu to Sessni** .....Refers to the walk from Bompu Camp down to Sessni Camp (Sessni camp now abandoned)(Eaglenest WLS) AP
- Dirang** .....Town 45k northwest from Bomdila, near Sangti Valley. 1,500m AP
- Dirang to Lama** .....Refers to the route from Dirang to Lama Camp, via Bomdila and Tenga. AP

<b>Dirang-Mandala</b> .....	The road from Dirang towards Mandala ridge, passing through good forest. AP
<b>Dirang towards Sela Pass</b> .....	Sela Pass is at 4,500m (2½ hour drive from Dirang without stops) AP
<b>Eaglenest Pass</b> .....	Between Lama and Bompou Camps (Eaglenest WLS). 2,900m. AP
<b>Eaglenest *</b> .....	In this report refers to area from Lama through Bompou to Sessni Camp. AP
<b>Kaziranga to Guwahati</b> .....	The drive westwards from Kaziranga via Nagaon
<b>Kohora</b> .....	The (growing) town around the main entrance to Kaziranga National Park and the Admin Centre. We stayed at Jupuri Ghar lodge, Kohora. Assam
<b>Lama area</b> .....	Refers to Lama Camp (2,350m; 15km from Tenga) + surrounding areas where we walked/drove (Eaglenest WLS) AP
<b>Nameri Eco Camp</b> .....	A privately-run camp just outside the Nameri National Park. Assam
<b>Nameri National Park</b> .....	200km <sup>2</sup> park in Assam, adjoining Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal. The Bhareli river runs along the western and southern boundaries. 80-225m AP
<b>Nameri to Dirang</b> .....	The drive from Nameri in Assam to Dirang (and Sangti Valley) in Arunachal Pradesh via Bhalukpong and Bomdila.
<b>Okhla</b> .....	A stretch of the Yamuna river, 10 kms from Connaught Place, Delhi. Easy access.
<b>Sangti Valley</b> .....	12 kms north of Dirang; known for the Black necked Cranes which stop off for a few weeks in winter to feed in fallow rice field around the valley. 1,600m. AP
<b>Sessni area</b> .....	Sessni Camp (1,250m) and surrounding areas
<b>Tea plantations</b> .....	We visited an area of tea plantation to the west of Kohora (Kaziranga)
<b>Tenga</b> .....	South of Bomdila, 15kms from Lama Camp

\* For detailed information on the Eaglenest area see [www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~rathreya/Eaglenest/ebp1reportW.pdf](http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~rathreya/Eaglenest/ebp1reportW.pdf)  
It's a huge document but well worth reading.



Sela Pass

## DIARY NOTES

14 March 2010

### DELHI / OKHLA

Arrived at Star Grand Hotel in Delhi early afternoon and met up with Morten and Einar who had flown in from Norway via Helsinki and arrived earlier this morning. We dumped our bags and immediately set off for Okhla Barrage for a few hours. Plenty of birds along the way but it's so sad that there are no vultures to be seen these days (back in the 80s the Delhi sky was filled with White rumped and Indian vultures and even in the early 90s they were a common sight). This was the first visit to Okhla for most and some nice birds were seen

***SPECIES in the DELHI area included (see also full Species List): Little Grebe, Little and Greater Cormorants, Intermediate, Little and Cattle Egrets, Purple, Grey and Indian Pond Herons, Black headed Ibis, Spoonbill, Greylag Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Spot billed Duck, Pintail, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Black Kite, Peregrine, Kestrel, Western Marsh Harrier, Grey Francolin, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Moorhen, Red wattled Lapwings, Black tailed Godwit, Wood Sandpiper, Stints, Black winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Caspian, Brown headed and Black headed Gulls, Laughing and Eurasian Collared Doves, Yellow footed Green Pigeon, Rose ringed Parakeet, Coucal, Little Swift, White fronted Kingfisher, Green Bee Eater, Barn Swallow, Plain Martin, Western Yellow Wagtail, Red vented Bulbul, Hume's Leaf Warbler, Chiffchaff, Magpie Robin, Purple Sunbird, Long tailed Shrike, Black Drongo, House Crow, Common and Pied Starlings, Common and Bank Mynas, House Sparrow.***

[Type text][Type text]

15 March 2010

### DELHI-GUWAHATI-NAMERI

Morning from Delhi, arriving Guwahati at lunchtime and met by Peter Lobo. Quickly transferred into three vehicles and on our way to Nameri. We stopped for lunch of traditional Indian food in a grubby place but Peter said this was the only place on this road. We had a quick look behind the restaurant after lunch and clocked up a few species. The habitat en route consisted of villages and towns, sparsely wooded hillsides, rice fields, tea plantations and we saw a reasonable amount of birdlife.

***SPECIES from GUWAHATI to NAMERI included (see also full Species List): Little Cormorant, Great, Intermediate and Cattle Egrets, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Lesser Adjutants, Asian Openbill Stork, Indian Grey Hornbill (in Delhi), Spotted Dove, House and Palm Swifts, White fronted and Common Kingfishers, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Green Bee Eater, Indian Roller, Black-hooded Orioles, Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike, Lineated Barbets, Barn Swallow, Black Bulbul, Ashy Wood Swallow, Long tailed Shrikes, Black Drongo, Large billed/Jungle Crow, Chestnut tailed Starling, Common and Bank Mynas, Tree Sparrow.***

### NAMERI NATIONAL PARK

We arrived at **Nameri Eco Camp** at Potasali on the edge of Assam's **Nameri National Park** after dark so no birding was possible. The camp is nicely set up; accommodation is a mix of rustic chalets and large, permanently erected tents with adjoining shower and flush loo. Tasty Indian buffet-style food is served in the large dining area. Plenty of large trees provide habitat for a wide range of birds - a pair of Oriental Hobbies breed here by the entrance gate.

16 March 2010

### NAMERI

A boat took us across the Bhareli river and we soon saw **Great and Wreathed Hornbills** overhead. We spent the morning walking in the forest seeing a good range of species. We succeeded in finding a pair of **White winged Ducks** which was our real target for this morning and one we missed last tour. Other birds of interest included **Green billed Malkoha, Fairy Bluebird, Wedge tailed Green Pigeon, Blue-eared Barbet** and much more. The afternoon raft trip down river was enjoyable but not as productive and 16 **Ibisbills** were found in small parties along the sand and rock banks. Late afternoon to dusk walk along tracks around Eco Camp produced amongst other things a male **Daurian Redstart**.

***SPECIES in and around NAMERI included (see also full Species List): Little and Greater Cormorants, Little Egret, Indian Pond Heron, Lesser Adjutant, Bar headed Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Mallard, Teal, Goosander, Osprey, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Brown Hawk Owls, Mountain Hawk Eagle Common Kestrel, Oriental Hobby, Little Ringed Plover, River and Red wattled Lapwings, Greenshank, Green and Common Sandpipers, Painted Snipe, Greater Thicknee, Small Pratincole, River Tern, Green Imperial Pigeon, Wedge tailed Green Pigeon, Oriental Turtle and Spotted Doves, Barred Cuckoo Doves, Red breasted Parakeet, Green billed Malkoha, Palm Swift, White fronted, Crested, Pied and Common Kingfishers, Indian Roller, Wreathed and Great Pied Hornbills, Lineated and Blue throated and Blue-eared Barbets, Grey capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Lesser Yellownape, Greater Flameback, Sand Lark, Bengal Bush Lark, Plain Martin, Barn Swallow, White Wagtail, Olive backed Pipit, Long tailed Minivet, Black crested, Red whiskered, Red vented, White throated and Black Bulbuls, Golden fronted and Orange bellied Leafbirds, Common Iora, Black breasted Thrush, Common Tailorbird, Tickel's Warbler, Rufous bellied Niltavas, Grey headed Canary Flycatcher, Tickel's Blue and Verditer Flycatchers, Oriental Magpie Robin, White capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts, (Siberian) Stonechat, Yellow bellied Fantail, Black naped Monarch, Striped Tit babbler, Great Tit, White tailed and Velvet fronted Nuthatches, Streaked Spiderhunters, Oriental White eye, Black hooded and Maroon Oriole, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Long tailed and Grey backed Shrikes, Large Woodshrike, Lesser Racket tailed, Haircrested and Black Drongos, Ashy Woodswallow, House and Large billed/Jungle Crows, Asian Pied and Chestnut tailed Starlings, Jungle, Tree Sparrow.***

17 March 2010



White Wagtail

## **DEPART NAMERI**

Early departure from Nameri Camp, leaving by 0800 for Dirang. We hadn't done the park justice - a few more days could be spent exploring the area. Leaving Nameri there's the familiar extensive forest clearance and encroaching settlements. We stopped to watch some White-vented and Hill Mynas then headed for Bhalukpong, the check post on the border between the States of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. **Oriental Hobbies** and **Brown Hawk Owls** were seen in the camp before breakfast.

## **ROUTE NAMERI to DIRANG**

Our Restricted Area Permits for entry into Arunachal had been pre-arranged by Peter Lobo and it was a surprisingly quick and painless procedure to get them issued/authorised. We just waited in the vehicles whilst Peter dealt with the formalities and soon we were on the road again, climbing steep, wooded hills with a few settlements at first, then the forest thickened and our bird list increased rapidly. We stopped in Bomdila for fuel (at 2,530m; quite a climb from Nameri at only 80m or so).

We passed many army camps. Buddhist prayer flags were on every hillside and around villages. It didn't feel at all like India up here, the people seemed to be a mix of Nepalis and Tibetans? It was lunchtime by the time we reached Dirang (Dirang Dzong) and headed for Sangti Valley. Birds of interest here included a **Long-billed Plover**, **Ibisbill**, a couple of **Black-tailed Crakes**, and a small flock of about 10 **Little Buntings**. Two **Ashy-throated Warblers** were noted also. O/N Hotel Pamelang.

***SPECIES from BHALUKPONG to DIRANG included (see also full Species List): Himalayan Buzzard, Spotted Dove, Hodgson's and Blue fronted Redstarts, White capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts, Large-billed Crow, Common Hill and White-vented Myna, Golden-throated Barbet, Brown-throated Treecreeper and the birds mentioned above.***



**Long-billed Plover**

**18 March 2010**

## **DIRANG--MANDALA ROAD**

After breakfast we set off to the superb, thickly wooded road to Mandala, stopping to walk at many productive spots. We tried to lure out a Bar-winged Wren Babbler but without success and having to be satisfied with just a "heard record" for the time being. However birds were excellent along this road and the day started off with a flock of about 100 Tibetan Siskins. A good start! Other "serious" birds were Chestnut Thrush and Broad-billed Warbler.

***SPECIES around DIRANG-SANGTI VALLEY-MANDALA ROAD included (see also full Species List):***

***Black Eagle, White eyed and Himalayan Buzzard, Oriental Turtle Dove, Wagtails, Red vented and Black Bulbuls, Rufous breasted and Maroon backed Accentors, Blue Rock and Blue Whistling Thrushes, White collared Blackbird, Ashy throated, Lemon rumped, Black-faced, Grey hooded and Humes Warblers, Rufous gorgetted Flycatchers, Red flanked Bluetail (Orange flanked Bush Robin), Hodgson's, Blue fronted and Black Redstarts, Yellow bellied Fantail, Chestnut crowned and Spotted Laughing Thrush, Streak breasted Scimitar Babbler, Beautiful Sibia, Rufous vented Yuhinas, Green backed, Great and Black throated Tits, , Green-tailed Sunbird, , Oriental White eye, Long tailed Shrike, Black Drongo, Spotted Nutcracker, Russet Sparrow, Tibetan Siskin.***

19 March 2010

### DIRANG towards SELA PASS

After a very early breakfast we set off along the valley towards Sela Pass. We did not make too many stops along the way as we wanted to get to the top this year and we were aware of how quickly conditions can change as there had been snow in the last two days. However a **Beautiful Rosefinch** was seen one of the cars and unfortunately this remained the only record for the species. We passed numerous army camps and ammunition depots which meant “no cameras” - very disappointing to be unable to record the beautiful scenery. We stopped for some diesel in a small village and there a flock of about 80 Snow Pigeons gave good views. We passed Baisakhi Army Camp (c.3,500m) and were delighted to be able to continue as two years ago this is as far as we got.

Other birds en route to the top included a Large Hawk Cuckoo, a White-throated Redstart and Rufous-breasted and Maroon-backed Accentors.

We eventually got to the Pass at about lunchtime and went over the top in search of Grandalpas but without success. The place they normally feed by a lake was covered in snow and most of lake was frozen too. We continued further down but with little success apart from some White-browed Rosefinches.

Eventually we returned to the Pass and had our lunch accompanied by some Alpine Accentors. It was quite warm despite the place being covered in snow and spectacularly beautiful.

After our feed we started our descent with a number of stops and short walks in search of target species. A couple of beautiful Blood Pheasants were enticed out into semi view and a male and two Himalayan Monals flew down the slope giving great if not a little brief views.

***SPECIES from DIRANG towards SELA PASS (see also full Species List): Himalayan Buzzard, Northern Goshawk,, Hen Harrier, Snow Pigeon, Alpine, Rufous breasted and Maroon backed Accentors, Nepal House Martin, Brown Dipper, Blue Whistling Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, White-throated Redstart, Grey Bushchat, Spotted Laughingthrush, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, White-browed Rosefinch, Beautiful Rosefinch, Spot- and White-winged Grosbeaks.***

20 March 2010

### DIRANG to LAMA CAMP via Bomdila and Tenga

A lie-in this morning! Breakfast at 06.00h and left the hotel at 06.45h. The staff came out to say goodbye and draped silky yellow scarves around our neck - a very nice gesture. Then we were on our way towards “Eaglenest” but of course there were some stops – A group of **Bhutan Laughingthrushes** feeding together in along a roadside bank, **Mrs Gould’s Sunbird, some Fork-tailed Swifts and a couple of Grey Bushchats**. We refuelled at Bomdila, then went food-shopping in Tenga - an amazing number of boxes, bags and cartons were loaded into the vehicles, the beers being particularly carefully packed!

Lama Camp (2,330m) is only 15kms from Tenga but it’s a slow uphill journey. The forest was very degraded at first, with a number of settlements. We saw Lama Camp from some distance away. Camp was ready for us, tents in place, beds made, lunch served. It was a lot warmer than on my last visit and there was no snow to be seen anywhere. The dining hut was as cosy as a bamboo hut can be, with a tiny wood burning stove but this time there was no need to light it.



Shikra

After lunch we walked out from camp and the road went through some decent forest as well as degraded parts. We saw some nice species including **Lesser Fulvous-headed Parrotbills and Golden-breasted Fulvettas, Great Barbet and Bay Woodpecker** amongst others.

One of the local hill-tribes, the Bugun community (after which the new species of *Liocichla* is named) is involved in conservation plans for the area and the camp has been set up to encourage wildlife tourism (read the report at [www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~rathreya/Eaglenest/ebp1reportW.pdf](http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~rathreya/Eaglenest/ebp1reportW.pdf) for a huge amount of information on the Eaglenest area and the Bugun Welfare Society).

Back at camp by 17.30h to be greeted with vegetable pokora to accompany tea and coffee (hot chocolate if you really wanted to indulge).

***SPECIES from DIRANG to LAMA CAMP included (see also full Species List): Oriental Honey Buzzard, Bay Woodpecker, Great Barbet, Bhutan and Striated Laughingthrushes, Lesser Fulvous-headed Parrotbill, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Black-throated and Green-backed Tits, Gold-naped Finch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Humes, Lemon-rumped, Ash-throated Warblers, Brownish-flanked Bush warbler, Long-tailed Minivet, Striated Bulbul, Olive-backed Pipits.***

**21 March 2010**

#### **LAMA AREA (am) BOMPU (pm)**

A bucket of boiling hot water with our 05.00h wake-up call was most welcome. After breakfast we walked down the road to the best *Liocichla* site. It took a while but after some perseverance we got views of our target **Bugun *Liocichla*** of which two were seen. During the day many species were seen of which three in particular stood out, namely a pair of **Ward's Trogons, Bar-winged Wren Babbler**, which we had only heard along the Mandala Road but failed to see, and **Crimson-browed Finches**, also a good species for this area. **Slender-billed Scimitar Babblers** appeared to be everywhere but as usual were not easy to connect with but eventually everybody saw at least one good one.

Overnight Bompou Camp which is now much larger than two years ago and can accommodate two or three groups. The reason it has grown is that the next camp at Sessni has been abandoned because of the troubles caused by wild Elephants. They are particularly aggressive towards humans in this area.

***White-browed and Black SPECIES in the LAMA area included (see also full Species List): Crimson breasted Woodpecker, Ward's Trogon, -eared Shrike Babblers, Rufous-capped Babbler, Rufous-crowned Babbler, Hoary-throated and Rufous-fronted Barwing, Rufous-winged and Yellow-throated Fulvettas, Spotted Forktail, Scarlet Finch, Grey-headed and Brown Bullfinch, White-browed Bush Robin, Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher, Short-billed Minivet, Scaly Laughingthrush.***

**22 March 2010**

**BOMPU to SESSNI CAMP and Lower Slopes across EAGLENEST PASS** Today we spent the whole day exploring the lower slopes below Bompou to Sessni and beyond with one of our main targets being **Wedge-billed Wren Babbler** four of which were seen without too much trouble. Some fantastic birds were seen today including a couple of **Slaty- and Grey- bellied Tesias, Small Niltava, Rufous-backed Sibia, Long-tailed Sibia, Mountain Tailorbird, Rufous-necked Hornbill** and a host of others. An **Assam Macaque** was also seen.

A fantastic day with as usual hot lunch in the field brought to us by the cooks and helpers. Amazing organisation!

Overnight Bompou Camp. Heavy rain overnight.



Hoary-throated Barwing

***SPECIES from BOMPU to SESSNI and below included (see also full Species List): Black Eagle, Chestnut-breasted Partridge, Rufous throated Partridge, Kalij Pheasant, Red-headed Trogon, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Golden-troated and Great Barbets, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Long-tailed and Grey-chinned Minivets, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Slaty and Grey-bellied Tesias, Mountain Tailorbird, Whistler's Warbler, Grey-cheeked, Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced Warblers, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Small Niltava, Verditer Flycatcher, Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail, Black-backed and Spotted Forktails, Yellow-bellied and White-throated Fantails, White-crested, Striated, and Grey-sided Laughingthrushes, Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler, Sikim Wedge-billed Wren Babbler, Golden and Grey-throated Babblers, Silver-eared Mesia, White-browed Shrike Babbler, Rufous-backed, Beautiful and Long-tailed Sibias, White-naped, Whiskered and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, Rufous-headed Parrotbill, Sultan Tit, White-tailed and Beautiful Nuthatch, Mrs Gould's and Black-throated Sunbirds, Streaked Spiderhunter, Maroon Oriole, Lesser and Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Green Magpie, Assam Macaque, Yellow-throated Marten, Hoary-bellied and Himalayan Striped Squirrel.***

23 March 2010

#### **BOMPU to Lower Slopes**

Today we again covered the lower slopes below Bompu and far beyond Sessni. We actually drove as far as one can to the landslide which stops further passage except for the fool-hardy. From there we walked to a bridge over the river where our target species were Pied Falconet (not seen) and **Blyth's Kingfisher** (seen by all but myself)

Another fantastic day birdwise with further specialities including **Rufous-faced Warbler, Pale-blue and Sapphire Flycatcher, Grey-headed Parrotbill** and brief views of the difficult to see **Grey Peacock Pheasant**. Other great birds included **Long-billed Wren Babbler** and **Rufous-bellied Eagle**.

Overnight Bompu with much rain again during the night.

***SPECIES in BOMPU to Lower Slopes well below Sessni included (see also full Species List): Only new for the trip. Crested Serpent Eagle, Rufous-bellied Eagle, Grey-Peacock-Pheasant, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Blyth's Kingfisher, Speckled Piculet, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Grey Wagtail, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, White-throated Bulbul, Yellow-vented Warbler, Yellow-bellied and Rufous-faced Warblers, Little Pied and Ultramarine Flycatchers, Sapphire and Pale-blue and Rusty-tailed Flycatchers, Rufous-breasted Bush-Robin, Slaty-backed Forktail, Green Cochoa, Long-billed Wren Babbler, White-hooded Babbler, Blue-winged Minla, Nepal Fulvetta, Black-chinned Yuhina, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Common Woodshrike, Bronzed Drongo, Grey Treepie***

24 March 2010

#### **BOMPU to LAMA**

The rain stopped before daybreak. We left camp fairly late by Peter Lobo's standards as the roads may well have been rather slippery after the amount of rain last night. The fog too would have hampered birding but in the event this did not really clear today. Despite the fact we had some good birds today it was a little frustrating especially from a photographic point of view.

Not that much new today. We spent some time at Eaglesnest pass where we managed to disturb a **Hill Partridge** and a Temminck's Tragopan was heard in the distance but it refused to come in when taped. The afternoon was spent walking below Lama Camp but for most the fog ended play.

***SPECIES from BOMPU to LAMA CAMP included (see also full Species List): Only new species for the trip***

*.Hill Partridge, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Red-headed Bullfinch*

**25 March 2010**

**Lama to Kaziranga**

It was the intention to return to Eaglesnest Pass early this morning as we obviously dipped out on a number of potential species yesterday due to the fog. However the skies did not look promising so it was decided to get out of the mountains and make for the lowlands and hopefully better weather. It was not long after we left for Kaziranga that it started to rain and this kept up for most of the way. We arrived at our one night accommodation in time for lunch. We dumped our luggage and set off for one of the tea plantations in search of yet more new species. The accommodation was OK but the service was not as good as the Jupuri Ghar Lodge which is where we will leave for first thing in the morning.

**SPECIES LAMA TO KAZIRANGA including Tea Plantation species (see also full Species List): Only new species for the trip**

*Greater Adjutant, Lesser Whistling Duck, Slender-billed Vulture, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Brown Fish-Owl, Blue-naped Pitta (Target species), Red-throated Flycatcher, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Great Tit, Baya Weaver, Indian One-horned Rhino*

**26 March 2010**

**KAZIRANGA AREA Western Range (am) Central Range (pm)**

Two jeep safaris in the morning and afternoon proved very successful and some lovely stuff was seen and photographed. The main target today was **Bengal Florican** and a distant male was seen. A great lunch and evening meal were provided by our new lodge. Good birds can be found in the grounds too and some of the group took great advantage to add to their lists in the grounds from first light to breakfast time.

**New trip birds today (see also full Species list)**

*Spot-billed Pelican, Grey-headed Fish-Eagle, White-rumped Vulture, Black Vulture, Pied harrier, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Swamp Francolin, Bengal Florican, Kentish Plover, Northern Lapwing, Grey-headed Lapwing, Little and Temminck's Stints, Dunlin, Pied Avocet, Greater Sandplover, Red Collared Dove, Alexandrine Parakeet, Lesser Coucal, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Black-rumped Flameback, Chestnut-capped Babbler, Black-headed Munia, Swamp Deer, Hog Deer, Wild Boar, Tiger, Water Buffalo.*

**27 March 2010**

**KAZIRANGA AREA Eastern Range (am) Central Range (pm)**

Again two safaris. The Eastern range was new to us as last tour we were unable to visit this area as a herd of wild Elephants some 190 or more strong had come down from the hills and were causing chaos. Too dangerous for visitors! What about the local who live here?



Large-tailed Nightjar

**New birds today (see also full Species list)**

*Common Shelduck, Himalayan Griffon Vulture, Indian Spotted Eagle, Booted Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Pacific Golden Plover, Pintail and Common Snipe, Black-bellied Tern, Large-tailed Nightjar, Streak-throated Woodpecker, White-tailed Rubythroat, Bluethroat, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Finn's Weaver, Jungle Cat.*

**28 March 2010**

**KAZIRANGA**

An early morning elephant ride before breakfast produced a Black-shouldered Kite and surprisingly a Blue-breasted Quail. Amazingly the only Zitting Cisticolas of the trip were seen today. People who stayed behind were fortunate enough to see a pair of Painted Snipe just by the lodge. These were the only new species today.

After breakfast we set off to Guwahati and despite a couple of short stops we did not really see any more. We arrived in Guwahati in good time for our flight back to Delhi. We said goodbye to Peter and the drivers and waited for our flight. We arrived in Delhi at teatime and after freshening up and doing our list sat down to a tasty meal of rice and curry! Fortunately our flight tomorrow was not until about 10am so we could have a beer and a lie in.

**29 March 2010**

**Delhi to London or Helsinki for our Norwegian friends.**

A few birds from the hotel roof top were added to the list including new ones being **Brown Rock Chat, Indian Blackbird** and **Brahminy Starling**



Black-billed Roller