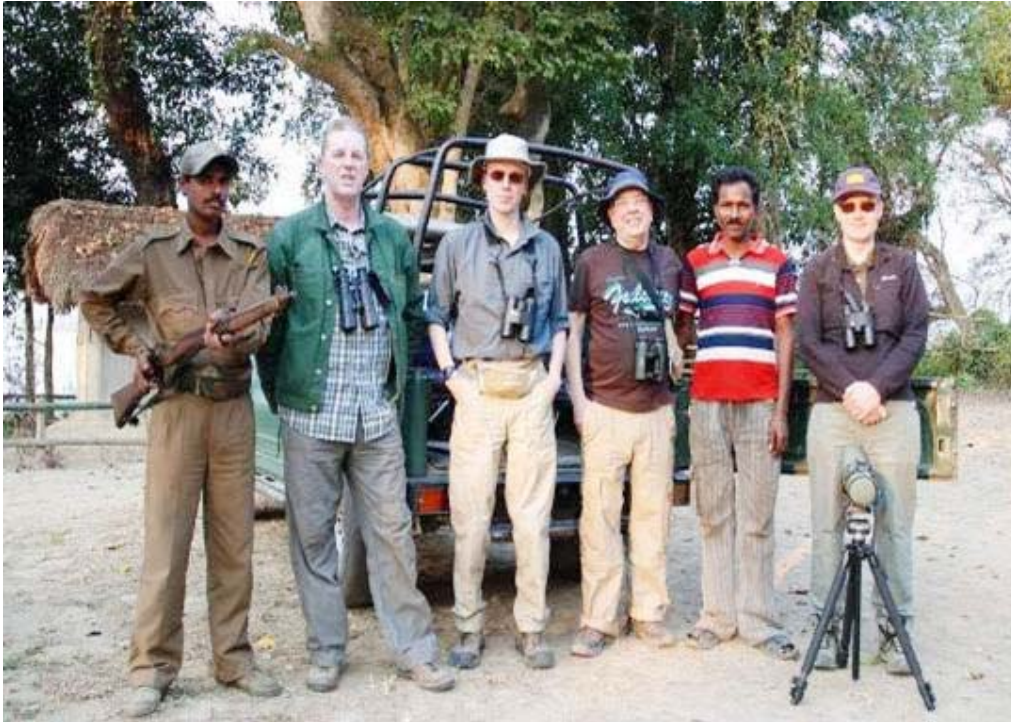


Report of a bird-watching trip to India

- Rajasthan and Assam

1 – 15 February 2010



The UK birdwatchers: Robert Oates (second from left), Jim Lyons (third from left), Stephen Dean (first on the right) and John Wilson (third from right)

Contact:

robert.oates1@btinternet.com, stephenmdean@yahoo.co.uk,
jim.lyons64@hotmail.co.uk, john.wilson27@ntlworld.com.

Tour organisers:

Mr Harsh Vardhan and Mr Manoj Vardhan
Individual and Group Tours (IGT)
C-158A, Dayanand Marg
Tilak Nagar
Jaipur-302 004, India
E mail: giis_jp1@sancharnet.in
www.ourindiantours.com

Arrangements

This tour comprised one week in the desert and semi-desert habitats of the Rajasthan region in the north west of India, by the border with Pakistan; followed by one week in the wetland and woodland habitats of the Assam region, in the far north east of India by the border with Burma. These two very different locations made for an interesting contrast, for the numbers and types of birds and other wildlife seen, and for their different faces of India.

Our tour was arranged by Mr Harsh and Mr Manoj Vardhan through their company 'Individual and Group Tours' (IGT) based in Jaipur, Rajasthan. They arranged the itinerary, internal flights, accommodation, most meals, transport, entry permits and guides. IGT book all of the arrangements direct with local suppliers and so keep the costs down. We had only to book our flight to India. Transport in both regions of India was in local cars or jeeps arranged by IGT. One night was spent on a sleeper train, helping to maximise time in the field. Although we did not all find the sleeper comfortable, it is a part of India that everyone should experience at least once. Transport between regions was via efficient Indigo and Kingfisher Airways internal flights. Accommodation was in moderate to high standard hotels and good standard tented camps. We had only one night where one pair of us was dissatisfied with the standard of the room provided, and that was due to a misunderstanding over a late night arrival in New Delhi. In fact, given the packed itinerary that we created for ourselves, it is a tribute to IGT that we had only this one practical problem.

Overall, this was an extremely successful trip at a very competitive price. The tour was well organised, with good drivers and guides, so that we could concentrate on watching and photographing the superb wildlife, scenery and sights of two very different parts of India. We are very grateful to Harsh and Manoj for their attention to detail. None of the desert sites (except maybe Khichan) and few of the Assam sites (except Kaziranga) would be easy to find without the help of experts such as IGT.

Weather

The weather was fine and dry for the whole period. Nights and mornings were cool, but not unpleasant. Rajasthan was in the grip of drought as there had been no rain for two years, although how this might have affected our sightings is hard to say. Assam was not humid, as we had expected, and was around the same temperatures as Rajasthan.

Wildlife

On the trip we identified twenty mammal species, two reptiles and one fish species (Annexe A) and 238 bird species (Annex B); with most of us seeing most things. Some particular rarities seen were Great Indian Bustard, White-winged Duck and Ibisbill. The surprise bird of the trip was a Wallcreeper, seen below us on the embankment around the lake at the Gajner Palace Hotel in Rajasthan. It later flew up onto the intricate walls of the palace and was probably wintering there.

PART 1: RAJASTHAN

Sunday 1 February

We boarded the overnight Virgin Atlantic flight from Heathrow airport, London, UK, at 22.00 and after a flight of eight and a half hours arrived in New Delhi at 11.45 local time. At the airport we were met by a car and driver who whisked us off down the road to Jaipur. En route, species noted were (those underlined were seen for the first time on the trip):

Nilgai antelope, *Boselaphus tragocamelus* - one on the outskirts of the city
Rhesus Macaque, *Maccaca mulatta* – around fifty along the roadside
Hanuman Langur, *Semnopithecus entellus* – ten on a wall around woodland

<u>House Crow</u>	<u>Feral Pigeon</u>
<u>Rose-ringed Parakeet</u>	
<u>Black-shouldered Kite</u>	<u>White-breasted Kingfisher</u>
<u>Red-wattled Lapwing</u>	<u>Black Drongo</u>
<u>Eurasian Collared Dove</u>	
<u>Black Kite</u>	<u>Black-winged Stilt</u>
<u>Bank Mynah</u>	<u>Great Cormorant</u>
<u>Indian Roller</u>	<u>Shikra</u>
<u>Indian Peacock</u>	<u>Eastern Cattle Egret</u> <i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>

At 6pm we arrived at The Generals Retreat hotel in Jaipur. This is an intimate little hotel with a small garden. We had dinner that evening with Harsh and Manoj and went through the programme for our participation in the Indian Birdfair the next day.

Tuesday 2 February

Early morning bird-watching around the hotel produced the following species between the four of us:

Northern or Five-striped Palm Squirrel, *Funambulus pennanti*

<u>Red-vented Bulbul</u>	<u>Indian Peacock</u>
<u>Feral Pigeon</u>	<u>Laughing Dove</u>
<u>Eurasian Collared Dove</u>	<u>Dusky Crag Martin</u>
<u>Red Collared Dove</u>	<u>Bank Mynah</u>
<u>House Sparrow</u>	<u>Indian Robin</u>
<u>Rose-ringed Parakeet</u>	

After breakfast we went with Harsh Vardhan to the Indian Birdfair site, on an impressive old embankment overlooking Lake Man Sagar. A report of the Birdfair is attached at Annex C.

At Lake Man Sagar, the following species were noted between us:

Hanuman Langur, <i>Semnopithecus entellus</i> – one	
<u>Wood Sandpiper</u>	<u>Teal</u>
<u>Green Sandpiper</u>	<u>Common Pochard</u>
<u>Common Sandpiper</u>	<u>Shoveller</u>
<u>Marsh Sandpiper</u>	Great Cormorant
<u>Common Snipe</u>	<u>Grey Heron</u>
<u>Ruff</u>	<u>Indian Pond Heron</u>
Black-winged Stilt	<u>Little Grebe</u>
Red-wattled Lapwing	<u>White-tailed Lapwing</u>
<u>Eurasian Spoonbill</u> – 5	<u>Little Egret</u>
<u>Coot</u>	<u>Crested Serpent Eagle</u> – 1 circled low overhead
<u>Moorhen</u>	Black Kite
<u>Pied Wagtail</u>	Common Buzzard – 1 flew from trees on the hillside
<u>Spot-billed Duck</u> – 2	House Crow
Black Drongo	<u>Hoopoe</u>
<u>Southern Grey Shrike</u>	Dusky Crag Martin
<u>Grey-throated Martin</u>	Laughing Dove

Lake Man Sagar is the focus of a clean-up and restoration operation by a partnership between the Jaipur Development Corporation and Jal Mahal Resorts Pvt Ltd, with advice from the Tourism and Wildlife Society of India (TWSI) led by its Honorary Secretary, Mr Harsh Vardhan. Plans for the restoration of the lake and the creation of a protected area around it, should improve the wetland and hilly woodland habitats in the area, and increase the number of species to be seen. Proposed viewing trails through the area will increase access on foot and improve the chances of seeing wildlife.

After a delicious lunch and an interesting presentation about the restoration and development project by Mr Rajeev Lunkad of Jal Mahal Resorts Pvt Ltd, we went back to our hotel for a short rest and a change of clothes. We then went to College Hall in Jaipur to give public lectures about the restoration of the River Thames and the management of fish in England. From there we returned to our hotel for dinner, after which we caught the midnight sleeper train to Jodhpur.



Man Sagar Lake, Jaipur. Photo: Robert Oates

Wednesday 3 February

We arrived at Jodhpur at 7.30 and were collected from the station by another driver, Mansur, who stayed with us for the next few days. Mansur was a gem for whom nothing was too much trouble. He always had a smile and his English was good. He knew his way around all of the unmarked roads of the desert and its towns and he knew all the best places to stop. Mansur works for:

Rajputana Holiday Tours,
15 Old Park Road,
Rai-ka-Bagh,
Jodhpur 342001

India Tel: 2511207, 2517207 E mail: rajputana@satyam.net.in,

Mansur took us to the nearby Shri Ram hotel for a wash and breakfast before setting off again. The hotel looked a good one for a longer stay. At 09.00 we set off again on the road to Jaisalmer. After only a few kilometres we stopped at a large lake on the left side of the road and saw the following species:

Bank Mynah	Little Grebe
Black-shouldered Kite	Rose-ringed Parakeet
<u>Little Cormorant</u>	<u>Rosy Starling</u> - 2
<u>Gadwall</u>	<u>River Tern</u> - 2
<u>Tufted Duck</u>	<u>Redshank</u>
Black-winged Stilt	Ruff
Coot	Green Sandpiper
Common Moorhen	Wood Sandpiper
<u>Indian Pond Heron</u>	Marsh Sandpiper
<u>White-breasted Waterhen</u>	<u>Great White Egret</u>
<u>Green Bee-eater</u>	Little Egret
<u>Purple Sunbird</u>	Black Drongo
Spoonbill	White-breasted Kingfisher
Laughing Dove	Indian House Crow
Grey Heron	Grey-throated Martin

Further along the road, near Balesar we saw vultures circling close by. We stopped and had good views through telescopes of the following species around a dead goat:

<u>Eurasian Griffon</u> – 5	<u>Red-headed Vulture</u> - 1
<u>Cinereous (Black) Vulture</u> - 3	<u>Steppe Eagle</u> - 6
<u>Egyptian Vulture</u> – 20	

Further along the road a small pool of water held:

<u>Bar-headed Goose</u> – 7	<u>Pintail</u> - 10
<u>Black-tailed Godwit</u> – 1	Gadwall 2

Further along the road, in a grove of thorn trees off to the left we saw our first Indian Gazelles. When we stopped to look around we noted that there was a watering hole amongst the trees and this area we saw:

Indian Gazelle – 13

Indian Mongoose -1

Desert Fox – 1 of this Red Fox subspecies *Vulpes vulpes pusilla*

Variable Wheatear

Black-rumped Flameback woodpecker - 1

Green Bee-eater

Purple Sunbird - pair

A little further along the road towards Pokaran we picked up our guide for the next few days – Mr Manak Lal. Manak works for the Forestry Department and is an expert on the Great Indian Bustard. Harsh had arranged for him to take a few days off to guide us. Just after Pokaran, at the junction with the road to Phalodi we halted for lunch at the Pokaran Desert Resort tourist stop.

Northern or Five-striped Palm Squirrel, *Funambulus pennanti*

Shikra – 1 male

House Crow

House Sparrow

1 Black Kite showing characters of “Black-eared Kite” *Milvus migrans lineatus*

After lunch we carried on towards Jaisalmer and near the small town of Dholia we saw:

Griffon Vulture – 5

Steppe Eagle – 2

Shikra – 1 f.

Arriving at Jaisalmer we visited the fort while our driver and local representative obtained our permits for entry into the Desert National Park. As the park is near the border with Pakistan it is a sensitive area and it is essential for visitors to arrange for entry permits in advance. Like most bureaucracy in India the permits took hours to materialise, even though IGT had sent in the applications weeks before and we had had to provide copies of our passports and visas. So we spent more time than we really wanted to amongst the faded Moghul splendour of the fort, now inhabited by 5,000 mainly Hindu folk whose main business is from tourism. Though as a tourist I would find the crowded conditions and open drains of the fort a little too much for an overnight stay. The good news was that we saw some birds at the fort including:

Brown Rock Chat – 4

Shikra – two harassing pigeons

Little Swift

Common Buzzard – 1 of race *vulpinus* or *refectus*

Barbary Falcon – 1 of *Falco peregrinus babylonicus* perched on a tower.

Finally after dark our permits appeared and we drove 50 kilometres westwards from Jaisalmer to the Rawla Desert Resort. After a long day we were dog tired and really appreciated our comfortable two man tents, with nice warm beds and two quilts. After the overnight train, the silence of the desert night was bliss. In fact everything about Rawla was wonderful, the location, the food and the staff, who could not do enough for us, though we were their only guests at that time.

Thursday 4 February

After a hearty breakfast, at 7.30 am we set off for the entrance to the Desert National Park (DNP), about thirty minutes drive away. But we had only just left the gate of Rawla when we saw on the ground and in small bushes around:

Indian gazelle – c. 15

Pied Bushchat – 2

Trumpeter Finch – 3

Red-vented Bulbul – 5

White-eared Bulbul – 5

Common Babbler – 6

Raven – 2

Variable Wheatear

House Crow

Laughing Dove

Eurasian Collared Dove

Feral Pigeon

Green Bee-eater

On arrival at the DNP entrance, we showed our precious entry permits to the officer at the gate, who just waved us through with a smile! After only 2km we spotted two vultures in an isolated tree. After a good look at them through telescopes we concluded that they were a pair of adult White-backed Vultures, *Gyps bengalensis*, with an immature of the same species and in a nest at least one downy headed chick. This was a significant find. With the collapse in population of this and other species since the 1970s from poisoning by Diclofenac used to treat sick cows, the number of wild breeding pairs left on the Indian sub-continent is so low that they are in danger of extinction. A survey of White-backed and Long-billed vultures in Rajasthan in December 2002 organised by Harsh Vardhan and others¹ found an average of three birds each in Jaisalmer and other desert districts. But these three were the only ones that we saw in our whole trip. Apart that is from two adults feeding at a carcass in the DNP, which could have been the same pair. A captive breeding programme is now in place but it was good to see a pair surviving and breeding in the wild.



At left is head of a chick

White-backed Vulture – pair on nest in Desert National Park, Rajasthan.

Photograph by Robert Oates

¹ *Gyps* Vultures Conservation Strategies, 2004 – With Reports of Censuses Undertaken in Rajasthan. By Harsh Vardhan, Robert R. Risebrough, Harkirat Singh Sangha and Anil k.Chhangani. Published by the Tourism and Wildlife Society of India (TWSI)

We speculated as to why the other vulture species of Griffon, Cinereous, Egyptian and Red-headed had not been so exterminated by the effects of Diclofenac (or other veterinary drugs of the NSAIDs group) as the Gyps species of White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed had been. But we came to no plausible answer and need to research this question.

Continuing along the road to the DNP visitor centre we saw:

<u>Long-legged Buzzard</u> – 1 flew over	Variable Wheatear
<u>Desert Lark</u> – 1	Southern Grey Shrike
<u>Lesser Whitethroat</u> – 1	Steppe Eagle – on ground close by

At the DNP Visitor Centre we waited while a camel was hitched to a cart to transport us around the rough tracks of the area. As we waited we saw:

Black-crowned Finch Lark – a small flock feeding on the ground
Southern Grey Shrike
Long-legged Buzzard – perched on a hut roof
House Sparrow
Tawny Eagle – one flew over
Egyptian Vulture
Plus there were Indian Desert Jird popping out of burrows in the in the area.

We set off on the bumpy and uncomfortable camel cart and within ten minutes had good but distant views through the telescopes of three Great Indian Bustards (GIBs) on a ridge. But we then turned in the opposite direction as Manak Lal's local informants had reported seven bustards together about a mile away. On the way, Rob and Jim got separated from the others and saw four GIBs distantly through a telescope. We continued to search together for the reported group of seven GIBs until we received a report that they had been frightened away earlier by the only other visitors in the park that day. But during our search we saw around two thousand Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse in groups of 5 to 500 birds, all attracted to the watering troughs that the DNP provided for the wildlife in the area. After two years of drought, it was clear that many birds and animals were relying on these artificial water supplies, including probably the GIBs at night. There were flocks of House Sparrows and Common Babblers at these watering troughs.

Further on, a group of vultures feeding on a dead gazelle comprised:

Griffon Vulture – 4	Egyptian Vulture - 2
Cinereous (Black) Vulture – 4	

Making our way back to the visitor centre on a circular route we saw:

Desert Wheatear – several pairs Greater Short-toed Lark – in more flocks

As we approached the ridge where we had seen the three GIBs earlier in the morning we saw them take off, flushed by the same tourists again. The frustration was getting hard to bear and it was too hot for us to stay out at 35 degrees centigrade. But fortunately Manak Lal had arranged a sumptuous meal in one of the park guest huts. After an hour siesta we regained our humour. Especially when a park guard approached with a mobile phone call for Mr John Wilson! It was Harsh asking whether everything was going fine for us.

We then used our vehicle to drive further around the park and soon saw a group of birds feeding on a dead sheep, which turned out to be:

White-backed Vulture – 2, possibly the pair seen at the nest earlier

Cinereous Vulture – 1

Griffon Vulture – 10 adults and immature birds

Red-headed Vulture – 1

Steppe Eagle – 1 adult

Raven – 2

This group also included an immature eagle, which our photos suggest may have been Eastern Imperial. It is not possible from the photos to rule out immature Tawny, but it does look good for Eastern Imperial



White-backed Vultures (middle and right) feeding with Cinereous and Griffons in Desert National Park, Rajasthan. Photo by Robert Oates

Another Indian Fox was seen, along with more flocks of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and Short-toed Larks. Indian Gazelles were also all around in singles, pairs and groups of 8-10. Returning to the ridge where we had seen the first three Great Indian Bustards in the morning, we scanned the other side and soon were ecstatic to find two males feeding only a few hundred metres away. Buoyed up by this success, we continued driving across the park to the main road near the visitor centre; en route we saw:

Desert (Red) Fox – 1

Indian Fox - 1

Peregrine Falcon – 1

Long-legged Buzzard

Tawny Eagle

Egyptian Vulture

At 6pm we decided to try our luck along the road away from the Visitor Centre. After just a couple of kilometres Manak shouted 'Bustard' and there only 200 metres away were three male GIBs walking in their stately gait and quietly feeding in the evening light. We had fabulous close views of them until it grew too dark to see. We then returned to Rawla Desert Camp for a well-earned shower and fabulous dinner, followed by the necessary chore of writing up the day's notes.

Friday 5 February

We were up before dawn and off to the DNP Visitor Centre, so as not to be outdone by any other visitors. At the centre we set off on a circular route by camel cart again saw the same species as yesterday, including three Cinereous Vultures, eight Griffon Vultures and various Egyptian Vultures adult and immature, plus:

Rock Dove – which we realised would be the real thing here

Kestrel – 1 seen twice

Merlin - 1 male of *Falco columbarius pallidus* (the scarcer race)

Isabelline Wheatear - 1

We then were picked up by a park ranger in a jeep who sped us further into the park to an area where there was parched long grass between the thorn trees. There we suddenly saw a bustard cross the road. We stopped and found amongst the vegetation two MacQueen's (Houbara) Bustards. One flew away and we had a good view of its striking black and white wing plumage. The other was not re-found, but in searching for it we had good close views of three Cream-coloured Courser. Then within minutes John had located a Long-billed Pipit. A while later, scanning from a rocky ridge produced a distant Pallid Harrier, seen briefly only by the two of us with telescopes in hand. Further searching in the jeep finally produced at 12.00 another GIB male a couple of hundred metres from the roadside. We watched as he walked steadily away amongst the bushes, perhaps wary in case we were hunters.

We then returned to Rawla Camp for another excellent lunch and packed our things to set off en route for Phalodi. We had been extremely lucky to have so many sightings of GIBs as well as MacQueen's Bustard, which Manak Lal had not seen in the area for twenty years. Along with all of the other species seen, the Desert National Park really was an area worth taking the trouble to get to.

After lunch we set off on the road to Phalodi and before Pokaran saw along the road:

Grey Francolin - 1

Barn Swallow - 1

We stopped once again at the Pokaran Desert Resort tourist stop, from where we saw:

Indian House Crow

Common Babbler

Purple Sunbird – 1 female

Red-vented Bulbul - 3

Rock Dove

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides* – 1 male

Red-wattled Lapwing – 4

Five Striped Palm Squirrel - 1

We arrived at Phalodi at 6.30pm having seen en route several more Indian Gazelle, which it was good to see were surviving outside of the park. Or were they desperately roaming for food because of the drought? Also along the way were four Indian Peacocks and one Common Buzzard. At Phalodi we stayed at the Hotel Lal Niwas in the old quarter. This is a wonderful example of classic Indian mansion house architecture, run by the descendents of the rich merchant family who built it. We recommend a stay there.

Saturday 6 February

After a quick breakfast we set off on a short drive to Khichan village, where we arrived at 8am. There we found the classic sight of hundreds of Demoiselle Cranes already feeding in the square especially created for them, with thousands more gathered on the dunes around the village ready to flight in for their turn. As is usual, local people invited us onto the roof of their house to overlook the square and enjoy one of the great bird spectacles of the world. We stayed on the roof for two hours watching the great cacophony of cranes and sharing tea and biscuits with the very poor but very hospitable local people. We also saw there:

Common Crane – 2

Peregrine Falcon – 1 flew over



Brown Rock Chat – several on the houses

Demoiselle Cranes feeding at Khichan Village. Photo by Robert Oates

For hundreds of years the Jain residents of this village have fed the cranes on locally grown Millet in the belief that their presence brings good luck, as Europeans similarly believe of the White Stork. There are now an estimated 15-16,000 Demoiselle Cranes visiting Khichan village each winter. The cost of grain for them is around £15,000; which is donated by the local community and Khichan expatriates around India and the world. The organising of the funds and the feeding of the birds is led by Mr Ratan Lal Malooj. We visited Mr Malooj at his home and made a donation towards the cost of feeding the birds. He proudly showed us his certificate awarded by the Bombay Natural History Society in 2009 for his conservation work on behalf of the cranes. As we left Mr Malooj's house, on a bare tree in the lane there were three Spotted Owlets in full view. A Grey Francolin was also seen on a piece of scrubby ground.

At 10.00 we set off on the road to Bikaner, and soon saw at a roadside pool:

<u>Pintail</u> – 4 male, 4 female	White-breasted Kingfisher - 2
<u>White-browed Wagtail</u> – 2	Little Cormorant - 1
<u>Striated Babbler</u> – 1	Moorhen - 4
<u>Chiffchaff</u> – 3	Coot - 1
<u>Bluethroat</u> – 1	Pochard - 1
<u>Spotted Redshank</u> – 2	Teal – 2
<u>Greenshank</u> – 2	Marsh Sandpiper – 2
<u>Green Sandpiper</u> – 1	

We continued on route to Bikaner and along the way saw one Cinereous (Black) Vulture, four Griffon Vultures, two Egyptian Vultures and one Indian Gazelle. At 3.30 we arrived at the dead animal dump at Bikaner, an interesting place that would be impossible to find without the right guide. Due to the packs of roaming feral dogs we had to observe from the vehicle as we drove around the piles of carcasses and stripped bones. Although it was late in the day, there were still good numbers of birds feeding on the piles of free meat, including several hundred Egyptian Vultures, at least one hundred Griffon Vultures and twelve Cinereous Vultures. Many more birds of all these species, and probably eagles also, had been seen amongst the thorn trees on the approach to the dump. They had obviously fed earlier in the day and were resting by the time we arrived. The morning is obviously best time to visit this site, which also held:

Steppe Eagle
Tawny Eagle
Black Kite – whose numbers also appear to be declining in Northern India
Hoopoe – 1 feeding on the insects attracted by all the carrion
Eastern Cattle Egret
Little Egret
Common Starling – 1 alone in a bush was a surprise find
Raven – several

We left the site and stopped opposite the entrance to get out and look around when Stephen called a Laggar Falcon flying over. At 5pm we moved on 30 kilometres to the luxury of the Gajner Palace (photo below). This was formerly the home of Maharajahs and is now a fabulous hotel with a lake and gardens that is an oasis in the desert and attracts many species.



Sunday 7 February

We were woken at 7am by the clanging of bells at a temple in the hotel grounds. But that did mean we were scanning the hotel gardens, lake and wooded far shore early; where we saw before breakfast:

Wild Boar – 9 + 14, including a baby
Blackbuck – 4 males and 4 females
Nilgai antelope – 1 male, 3 females
Five Striped Palm Squirrel

Black-winged Stilt – 5	<u>Bar-headed Goose</u> - 4
Spoonbill – 4	<u>Jungle Babbler</u> - 10
Little Grebe	<u>Common Mynah</u> - 2
Little Cormorant	<u>Gadwall</u>
Great Cormorant	<u>Mallard</u>
Ruff	White-breasted Waterhen
Indian Pond Heron	<u>Green Sandpiper</u> - 1
Dusky Crag Martin	Rock Dove
Indian Peafowl	Eurasian Collared Dove
White-breasted Kingfisher	Rose-ringed Parakeet
Common Coot	Common Moorhen
Shoveller	Teal
Pochard	Tufted Duck
White-browed Wagtail – 4	Red-wattled Lapwing
Grey Heron	Black Kite - 1
Chiffchaff – 6	Grey Francolin - 2

As we were standing on the embankment overlooking the lake, Jim looked down and spotted a Wallcreeper on the face of the embankment, just above the water! This was the surprise bird of the trip. After some minutes it flew up onto the intricate wall of the palace and was lost from view. It was probably wintering there. Also below us in the water a large dark terrapin surfaced for two seconds, not long enough to be identified. At 9.30 we finally went for a sumptuous breakfast in the luxurious dining room of the hotel. As we emerged, we saw a Southern Coucal, which is a recent split from Greater Coucal. At the same time an Oriental Honey Buzzard glided over us to perch in the trees on the other side of the lake. There was so much to see at this beautiful oasis in the desert that we did not leave until 11.00, which was later than planned, but well worth it.

Passing through Bikaner on our way west we saw House sparrow, Little Swift and Brown Rock Chat.

Past Bikaner en route west to Ratanagarh, we noted along the road Desert Wheatear, Indian Roller, Barn Swallow, Egyptian Vulture, Indian House Crow and more than one Black-shouldered Kite. It was by now over 30 degrees and becoming overcast. We were surprised to pass through an area of irrigated fields and more surprised when we saw by the roadside two Black Ibis.

At 3.30 we arrived at the Tal Chapar Wildlife Sanctuary south of Ratanagarh. This is one of two reserves set up in India specifically to protect the Blackbuck, an antelope endemic to this country. This 717ha reserve is a rare surviving example of flat grassland habitat, which the Blackbuck needed to outrun its now extinct main predator, the Indian Cheetah. We had been told that up to 2,000 Blackbuck congregate at this reserve at certain times. However, we saw only around 200 and found it hard to believe how the reserve could support more. Admittedly we were there after two years of drought, so that the grassland was withered and bare in places. The food shortage was evident by the way that the Blackbuck came to feed on hay put out for them. Also the reserve is bisected by a road and surrounded on three sides by buildings and on the fourth side by a salt works, which is extracting the groundwater and drying the reserve out: though this is mitigated in part by artificial water holes. This encirclement by roads and development made it hard for us to see how 2,000 Blackbuck could migrate into or out of the reserve. But it had been a long day and we were tired so maybe we did not appreciate what we were seeing. It was an excellent place to take photographs of the rather tame Blackbuck, including males displaying on their mating ground. The Deputy Director of regional reserves came with us in our vehicle on a tour of the reserve, where we saw:

Nilgai – 13

Red-headed Vulture – 1 on a nest and one in flight.

Steppe Eagle – 4

Raven - 1

Grey Francolin - 3

Large Grey Babbler - 1

Southern Grey Shrike

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse - 3

Greater Short-toed Lark – c. 25

Indian Peafowl - 6

Kestrel – 1

Demoiselle Cranes – 116

Desert Wheatear – 2

After a couple of hours at Tal Chapar we departed for Jaipur, where we arrived at 9.30 totally exhausted after a long and exciting day. We were invited to dinner and welcome drinks with Harsh and Manoj Vardhan at their house.



Blackbucks at Tal Chapar Reserve. Photo Robert Oates

PART 2: ASSAM

Monday 8 February

We took an early morning flight from Jaipur to Guwahati, via Calcutta. At Jaipur airport we said a sad farewell to the excellent Mansur. Jim saw a Eurasian Curlew from the plane, the only one of the trip. On arrival in Guwahati at 1.30 we were taken straight to the city refuse dump to find birds. On the dump, people were foraging for materials to recycle for a living. Many birds were also taking advantage of the refuse, including the speciality of the site, the Greater Adjutant Stork, of which there were more than 100. In an hour or so at the dump and its adjacent small wetland we also recorded:

Lesser Adjutant Stork – 3

Black Kite – c. 300

Eastern Cattle Egret – c. 20

Asian Pied Starling – c. 20

White Wagtail – 1

Citrine Wagtail – 1

Little Cormorant - 1

Indian House Crow

Common Mynah

White-breasted Kingfisher

Barn Swallow

Black Drongo

Richard's Pipit – 1



Greater Adjutant Stork Photos Robert Oates **Wetland adjacent to the dump**

We then went up the road towards Kaziranga and stopped at an airy, straw-roofed café for a meal and coffee. It took more than an hour of bumpy, uncomfortable driving to cover the 20km to the café, due to the old road being demolished and the new road not yet being completed. At the café we noted that the people, buildings and vegetation were typical of the Indo-Malay region, rather than the rest of Indian sub-continent. And this was proven when we saw three Oriental Magpie Robins flitting around the café. We then continued along the awful road for three more hours until nearer Kaziranga it turned into regular tarmac and after another hour and a half we arrived after dark at the excellent Wild Grass Resort near the Kaziranga Nature Reserve main entrance. In future years, the new road will make this a far quicker journey.

Tuesday 9 February

Our rooms at the Wild Grass Resort were full of old world charm. After an early breakfast in the atmospheric wooden dining room we set off for the Kaziranga National Park with an excellent young guide by the name of Gokal and a driver. Arriving at 7.30 we set off from Mihimukh on the backs of domesticated elephants for an hour's exploration of the tall grassland. From the elevated position of elephant back we were above the ten foot tall grass and able to obtain views impossible otherwise, such as close-ups of ten Greater One-horned Rhinoceros and a Bengal Florican gliding over the grass before disappearing down into it. Rob and Jim saw two harriers very distant and impossible to identify with binoculars. Other species noted were:

Asiatic Wild Buffalo - 2

Hog Deer – 100+ during the day

Swamp Deer – c. 100 during the day

Great Tit

Bar-headed Geese

Common Iora

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher

Red-throated Flycatcher

Spotted Dove

Grey-backed Shrike

Red-whiskered Bulbul

Pied Kingfisher

Stonechat

Barn Swallows

Jungle Mynah

Brown Shrike



Crested Serpent Eagle – 1 perched low in a tree

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros from elephant back. Photo Robert Oates

From 10.00 onwards we took a jeep safari around the central drive of the park. Our guide quickly proved that he knew the park and its species. We passed several large shallow lakes, with grazed grassland around their margins. Between them the jeep track ran through areas of tall Elephant grass and wetland vegetation, or sometimes through belts of woodland. We noted:

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros – 2	Wild Boar – 9
Asiatic Wild Buffalo – 2 + 2 with young + 8	
<u>Grey-headed Fish Eagle</u> – 6	Great Cormorant
<u>Grey-headed Starling</u> – 1	White-breasted Kingfisher
<u>Red Jungle Fowl</u> – 5	Bar-headed Goose – 30
<u>Northern Lapwing</u> – 1	Lesser Adjutant Stork - 2
Redshank – 6	<u>Bronze-winged Jacana</u> - 1
Red-wattled Lapwing	<u>Black-necked Stork</u> - 1
Indian Roller	Stonechat - 1
Greenshank	Pied Kingfisher - 1
<u>Asian Barred Owlet</u> – 1	<u>Grey-headed Lapwing</u> – 16 + 3
<u>Pallas's Fish Eagle</u> – 2 ad. 1 imm.	<u>Purple Heron</u> – 1 imm.
<u>Mallard</u> – 1	Green Sandpiper
<u>Indian Darter</u> – 5	Cattle Egret - 1
<u>Intermediate Egret</u> – 1	<u>Greater Coucal</u> - 2
Spot-billed Duck – 11	White-browed Wagtail - 2
<u>Asian Openbill (Open-billed Stork)</u> – 2	Asian Pied Starling - 1
<u>Large-billed Crow</u>	<u>Long-tailed Shrike</u> - 1
Greylag Goose, eastern race – 14	<u>Rufous Treepie</u> - 1
<u>Alexandrine Parakeet</u> – 1	<u>Lineated Barbet</u> – 1
<u>Yellow-footed Green Pigeon</u> – 2	Indian Pond Heron – 2

The best bird of the morning was a stunning Great Pied Hornbill which was perched low in a tree only 50 yards away and posed beautifully for photographs. But it was followed at 12.00 by a Great Spotted Eagle perched high in a tree as we got out of the jeep in an open area by a large shallow lake. As we exited the park for lunch, Gokal pointed out a Dusky Eagle Owl on a nest above the track.



Great Pied Hornbill, *Buceros bicornis*. Photo by Robert Oates

After a cool start the day had hotted up, though it was always clear and not humid while we were in Assam. After a delicious lunch at the Wild Grass Resort we set off again at 3pm for a jeep safari on the Western Track of the reserve. There we soon photographed a female Greater One-horned Rhinoceros with a young one close by the track; and recorded.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater – 1
Pallas's Fish Eagle – 2 at a nest

Grey-backed Shrike
Spotted Owlet – 2

Arriving at the Donga Watchtower, we overlooked a vast lake surrounded by short floodplain grassland on which grazed herds of animals including thirty five Greater One-horned Rhinoceros, fifty six Asiatic Wild Buffalo, Hog Deer and Swamp Deer. A Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel close by was spotted by John. From the watchtower we noted:

Common Kingfisher – 1
Spot-billed Pelican – 18 + 4
Woolly-necked Stork – 1
Asian Barred Owlet – 2
Swamp Francolin – 2
Red-breasted Parakeet – 2, 2
Spotted Owlet
Red Jungle Fowl – 7
Great White Egret
White-breasted Waterhen
Rose-ringed Parakeet
Great Cormorant

Ruddy Shelduck
Black-necked Stork – 3, 3, 1
White-vented Mynah – 6 on a rhino
Asian Openbill (Open-billed Stork) – 1
Hoopoe
Oriental Honey Buzzard – 1
Rufous Treepie
Spotted Dove
Little Egret
Alexandrine Parakeet – 2
Little Cormorant
Oriental Darter - 1



The sighting of forty five Pied Avocet and one Common Shelduck were unusual for the area said Gokal. Plus a Striated Grassbird was one more 'Little brown job' for the connoisseurs. At dusk we left the park after an unforgettable day. A total of sixty seven Greater One-horned Rhinoceros and seventy two Asiatic Wild Buffalo had been seen and nowhere else in the world could better that.

The Wild Grass Resort, Kaziranga. Photo by Jim Lyons.
Wednesday 10 February

This was another warm morning developing into a hot, clear day with no humidity and the usual surprising lack of heat haze. We set off early for the Agaratoli village entrance at the east of the Kaziranga National Park. Asian elephant was on the agenda for today. So at the gate we were joined by an armed park ranger. While waiting for him, a Eurasian Tree Sparrow was seen in the village. We then crossed the river into the reserve, where with Gokal's excellent assistance we saw:

Swamp Deer – 9+ 51	Asiatic Wild Buffalo – 33 + 1 imm. + 5 calves
Rhesus Macaque – c. 30	Greater One-horned Rhinoceros – 2
Asian Elephant – 7 ad. 3 imm. 3 calves	

<u>Stork-billed Kingfisher</u> – 1	<u>Paddyfield Pipit</u> - 1
<u>Oriental Turtle Dove</u> – 1	Great Spotted Eagle - 1
Common Mynah	Asian Openbill (Open-billed Stork)
Indian Roller	Red-vented Bulbul
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<u>Ashy Drongo</u> - 2
Oriental Honey Buzzard – 1	Large-billed Crow
<u>Lesser Coucal</u> – 1	Spotted Owlet – 3
Red Collared Dove – 4	Rufous Treepie
Red Jungle Fowl – 2	Black-rumped Flameback – 1
Bar-headed Goose – 16	Greater Adjutant Stork – 1
Purple Heron – 1	<u>Great White Pelican</u> – 30
Spot-billed Pelican – 5	Griffon Vulture – 1
Pacific Golden Plover – 5	Northern Lapwing – 1
<u>Wigeon</u>	Greylag Geese

Overlooking an enormous shallow lake an eagle perched high in a tree was eventually identified as an adult Indian Spotted Eagle, *Aquila hastata** (split from Lesser Spotted Eagle); which looked exactly like the illustration in Grimmett and Inskipp, as compared with the perched illustration in Kazmierczak which looks nothing like it, although the flight illustration did as it flew away. A Pallas's Fish Eagle was on a nest. A pair of Changeable Hawk Eagles circled low over us for several minutes. Then a Crested Serpent Eagle landed on a tall dead tree nearby and a Grey-headed Fish Eagle landed a little further away. Five species of eagle within minutes of each other was phenomenal, and the Great Spotted earlier made it six species in one morning. At the far end of the lake was a tower hide, from where we saw:

<u>Falcated Duck</u> – 1 male and possible females very distant	
Gadwall	Shoveller
Mallard	Indian Pond Heron
<u>Lesser Whistling-duck</u> - 2	Grey Heron
Great White Egret	Little Egret
Intermediate Egret	Asian Barred Owlet – 2
Bronze-winged Jacana	Great Cormorant
Little Cormorant	Oriental Darter – 1

Purple Heron
Blue-breasted Bee-eater

Black-necked Stork – 2
Lesser Adjutant Stork

Driving on from the lake through light woodland, we spotted a pair of beautiful Kalij Pheasant of the race *Lathamii*. The woodland then came alive with:

Spangled Drongo – 1

Greater Yellow Nape woodpecker – 1

Himalayan Black Bulbul – 1

Scarlet Minivet - 8

Oriental Pied Hornbill – 1 was called by Gokal but seen only by Jim

Imperial Green Pigeon – 1

A little further on the track ran alongside a river where we were delighted to see a group of eight Smooth-coated Otter, *Lutrogale perspicillata*, interacting on a small island. As they slid away into the water an Osprey flew down the river. On the riverbank were the remains of a Rhinoceros killed a month ago by poachers. At 12.00 we turned back towards the entrance and just as we thought we would not see them an Asian Elephant female and two youngsters appeared on the edge of the twelve foot high elephant grass. This broke the spell as ten minutes later we saw a group of six adult elephants with one immature and three babies on the far side of a large lake. As we exited the reserve at 12.30 a Black-shouldered Kite finished our spectacular morning by hovering over a rice field close to the track and giving good views as it perched in a bare tree.

We returned to the comfort of the Wild Grass Resort for lunch and a rare afternoon rest. At 4.30 pm we had just finished writing up our notes when an Asian Barred Owlet appeared and caught a small bird. A search of the gardens of the resort produced:

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher – 1
Large-billed Crow

Asian Pied Starling – 4
House Sparrow

As dark fell we went torching around the grounds and were entertained by numerous Fireflies twinkling in the darker corners.



Smooth-coated Otter, *Lutrogale perspicillata*.
Photo: Robert Oates

Thursday 11 February

We rose early on another warm morning and entered the park by the central gate for our last ride on elephant back from 6.30 to 7.30 am; where we saw:

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros – 6
Swamp Deer – 50 females and 1 imm. Male
Rhesus Macaque – 5 Hog Deer – c. 50

Woolly-necked Stork – 2 en route
Dusky Eagle Owl – two well grown chicks could be seen on the nest
Indian Robin Stonechat
Yellow Wagtail – 1 Rufous Treepie
Intermediate Egret Great Cormorant – 70
Pied Wagtail Common Sandpiper – 1

A Rosy Pipit was seen by Stephen and John from their elephant. Rob and Jim had a distant view of two harriers, but could not determine their species.

From 8.30 to 10.30 we went birding in the Direeing Tea Estate near the Wild Grass Resort. In this habitat of tea bushes shaded with White Sirish trees we noted several new species among the following seen:

<u>Large Cuckoo Shrike</u> – 1	<u>Black-headed Oriole</u> - 2
<u>Bronzed Drongo</u> – 1	Scarlet Minivet – 1 female
<u>Greater Necklaced Laughing Thrush</u> – 3	<u>White-rumped Munia</u> - 2
Brown Shrike – 1	Grey-backed Shrike – 1
Olive-backed Pipit - 6	

Down by a small stream we saw:

Oriental Turtle Dove – 2	White Wagtail – 3
Common Kingfisher – 1	Asian Pied Starling – 3
<u>Black-backed Forktail</u> – one nervous bird was finally located	

At 11.40 we returned to the Wild Grass Resort hot and tired but the excitement continued as a tree at the entrance held a pair of Scarlet-backed Flower Peckers and in the next one was a stunning Blue-throated Barbet calling.

After another delicious lunch and short rest we headed out again at 2.30 pm for our last jeep safari, a return to the Kaziranga western range. As we waited at the entrance for our armed guard, we spotted a Coppersmith Barbet at the top of a large tree. The barbet was calling interminably with great power without even opening its beak. In the reserve we soon saw:

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros - 2

Spotted Dove	Red-vented Bulbul
Red Jungle Fowl	Pallas's Fish Eagle

Friday 12 February

We departed the Wild Grass Resort at 6.30 to travel north over the Brahmaputra river to the higher ground of the Bhorelli Eco Camp on the banks of the Giaborolli River; on the other side of which is the Nameri National Park. We crossed over the Brahmaputra River on the Kalia Bhomora bridge, where a lightly wooded embankment held:

Great Tit – 3	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher – 1
Lineated Barbet – 3	Grey-headed Starling – 1
Blue-throated Barbet – 1	Chiffchaff
Red-throated Flycatcher – 1	<u>Common Tailorbird</u> - 1

Before that we had seen a Rhinoceros behind some houses, on the edge of the Kaziranga Park, as well as five Rhesus Macaque and five Black Kites.

After crossing the Brahmaputra the road began to climb through a patch of forest where three Assamese Macaques were seen on the roadside. On arrival at the Eco Camp around 11.00 we immediately saw a troop of seven Capped Langur monkeys feeding in the trees. All had grey backs and cream undersides so were probably females. We quickly put our stuff into our tents and noted around them:

Blue-throated Barbet	Common Mynah
Oriental Magpie-Robin	Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel



Capped Langur, *Trachypithecus pileatus*.
Photo: Robert Oates

We immediately set off with a new guide and driver down to the Giaborolli River, which we crossed in a small boat. On the far bank was a large sandy area strewn with grey boulders among which were around two hundred Small Pratincoles, and at the back twenty five Asiatic Wild Buffalo. On the river we saw two Ruddy Shelduck, four River Terns and a River Lapwing. A ranger station stood on the bank above the beach and in a tall tree above it a Peregrine Falcon was perched giving excellent views.



Small Pratincole, *Glareola lactea*. Photo: Robert Oates

We collected an armed guard and walked into the trees of the Nameri National Park. Where a different type of woodland from what we had seen elsewhere produced:

Black-crested Bulbul – 2
Blue-throated Barbet – 1
Streaked Spider-hunter – 1

Crimson Sunbird – 1
Orange-bellied Leafbird – 1
Rufous Woodpecker - 2

Two Great Pied Hornbills flew very close by and were startled to see us. They turned and flapped away with honking alarm calls. This was soon followed by the alarmed trumpeting of elephants not far ahead of us, which was a bit unnerving as we were on foot. But our armed guard went ahead and shooed them away. Rob and Stephen then saw a Capped Langur which was red all over its body so probably a male. We emerged into a clearing where the elephants had been to find evidence that they were eating salty mud from a small spring. As we crossed the clearing there was a crashing noise from the long grass which our guide said was caused by Asiatic Wild Buffalos. However, fortunately for our nerves we were then distracted by sighting a Crested Serpent Eagle, a Common Iora and Himalayan Swiftlets circling overhead. After crossing an area of grassland at midday we entered the trees again and in a clearing was a tall concrete watchtower. We climbed to the top to eat a packed lunch and succumbed to the heat.

For an hour we dozed until Rob and John saw a Small-Clawed Otter in a stream below for a few minutes. We then woke the others just in time to see a splendid male White-winged Duck drift into view for thirty seconds and then away into the vegetation. As the heat subsided, we saw in the trees around:

Rhesus Macaque – a large male

Lesser Yellownape – 1

Yellow-browed Warbler – 1

Raven – 1

Lesser Adjutant – three flew over

Streaked Spider-hunter

Spangled Drongo

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo – 1

Scarlet Minivet – pair

Large-billed Crow

Imperial Green Pigeon – 4

Common Iora

Red-whiskered Bulbul

At 3pm we started to walk back to the river via a different track through thicker forest, where our guide pointed out an elephant looking at us from no more than fifty yards away. After a few minutes he pointed to another one flapping its ears in our direction. Once again we felt the vulnerability of humans on foot, and we walked on along the river bank to the guard camp, seeing:

Goosander – 3

River Tern – 5

Asiatic Wild Buffalo – nine young ones and calves

Ruddy Shelduck – 2

Black Stork - 2



After a rest in the shade at the ranger station we arrived back at the ferry boat around 4.30 to the spectacle of around 500 Small Pratincoles hawking over the water. As we landed on the far side there was a Crested Kingfisher perched and a male Blue Rock Thrush on the bank. Four large birds flew out of the forest in the dusk light and were identified as Wreathed Hornbills. They were soon followed by two Great Pied Hornbills and then two more Wreathed Hornbills closer to us which were clearly a male and female. About fifty Great Cormorants flew up river and we returned to the Eco Camp after a long, hot afternoon of excitement. The Eco Camp was more basic than the Wild Grass Resort but the tents were comfortable enough and the food was good.

In the Nameri forest. Photo: Robert Oates

Saturday 13 February

We left camp at 6am for the Giaborolli River again, where we boarded two inflatable boats and set off downstream. We mostly glided along the pristine river, which was crystal clear and not very deep. In places there were shallow rapids and great bars of large grey cobbles. We soon saw our target bird for the day, the Ibisbill, on one of these bars. We landed for a closer look through telescopes and noticed another four in the area. Seen in its natural setting, this apparently bizarrely built bird is perfectly adapted to its riverine habitat. As we looked around further, on the banks were a White-capped Water-redstart and a Plumbeous Water-redstart. Also seen as we continued down river were:

Little Ringed Plover	White Wagtail
Ruddy Shelduck	Goosander
Small Pratincole	Barn Swallow
River Tern	Crested Kingfisher – 3
Grey-throated Martin	
Great Cormorant	Little Cormorant – 2
Common Sandpiper	Green Sandpiper
Greenshank	Lesser Adjutant
Blue Rock Thrush	Osprey – 2

After two hours on the water we landed on the bank for a short rest and saw:

Raven – 1	Imperial Green Pigeon
Grey-headed Starling	Orange-fronted Leafbird
Himalayan Swiftlet	Crested Kingfisher – 3

We returned to the boats and continued slowly downstream for another two hours, seeing:

Plumbeous Water-redstart	White-breasted Kingfisher
River Lapwing – 3	Pied Kingfisher



Two Ospreys circled low over the river as we saw the only gull of the trip, a Pallas's Gull on a cobble bar. As we shot some faster rapids past a larger island our guide shouted Great Thick Knee, but only Rob was able to twist around for a five second view. Arriving at the landing point we drove back to the Eco Camp at 11.00 where there was a pair of Oriental Hobby on a tall tree.

After a break, the team split into two for the afternoon. John, Stephen and Jim birded around the Eco Camp and saw:

Capped Langur - 6

Black-headed Oriole	Red-breasted Parakeet
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<u>Barred Cuckoo Dove</u> – 20
Lineated Barbet	Coppersmith Barbet
Asian Barred Owllet – 2	Spangled Drongo
Himalayan Black Bulbul – 20	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Red-vented Bulbul	Hill Mynah – 2
Imperial Green pigeon	Oriental Turtle Dove
Oriental Hobby – 1	Indian Roller

Rob returned to the forest across the river with our guide. They collected an armed guard from the ranger station and passed the area where the elephants were the day before. They then followed a track with fresh prints of Common Leopard along it (confirmed by the guide and the armed guard) until they came to a series of mud wallows overhung by bushes and trees. There they sat for 30 minutes and saw:

<u>Emerald Dove</u> – 4	<u>Black-breasted Thrush</u> – 2m. 1f.
<u>Blue-fronted Redstart</u> – 1m.	Olive-backed Pipit – 4
<u>Small Niltava</u> – 1m.	<u>White-fronted Fantail</u> – 1

Then an elephant rumbled loudly nearby so they returned to the riverbank where there were eight Crowned River Turtle, *Hardella thurjii*, basking on bare branches. As Rob and the guide crossed back over the river, six Wreathed Hornbills flew out of the forest towards their roosting site.

Sunday 14 February

We left the Eco Camp early for the drive back to Gauhati (Guwahati), where we took a direct flight to New Delhi. En route we saw another Assamese Macaque between the Eco Camp and the Brahmaputra River.

ADDENDUM

Monday 15 February

John, Jim and Stephen for London on the morning flight from New Delhi. Rob went out with Mr Harsh Vardhan and Mr Anand Aryan a local businessman and conservationist. They examined the polluted condition of the River Yamuna for 20km through New Delhi and on the outskirts of the city, at a small floodplain pool were:

Black-necked Ibis – 1
Marsh Harrier – 1 f.
Purple Heron - 1

Animal species recorded– Rajasthan and Assam, 1st – 14th February 2010

Mammals

This list follows the order, taxonomy and nomenclature in 'Field guide to Indian Mammals' (V Menon 2009).

Locations

DNP = Desert National Park

BCD = Bikaner Carcass Dump

GPH = Gajner Palace Hotel

TCS = Tal Chapar Sanctuary

KNP = Kaziranga National Park

WGR = Wild Grass Resort, Kaziranga

DTE = Direeing Tea Estate, Kaziranga

NEC = Nameri Eco Camp and National Park

1. **Rhesus Macaque**, *Maccaca mulatta*, c50, between Delhi and Jaipur, 1st; c30, KNP, 10th; 5, KNP, 11th; 5, between Brahmaputra River and NEC, 12th.
2. **Assamese Macaque**, *Maccaca assamensis*, 3 Between Brahmaputra River and NEC, 12th; 1 between NEC and Brahmaputra River, 14th.
3. **Capped Langur**, *Trachypithecus pileatus*, 7, NEC, 12th; 6, NEC, 13th
4. **Hanuman Langur**, *Semnopithecus entellus*, c10, between Delhi and Jaipur, 1st; 1, Man Sagar, 2nd.
5. **Swamp Deer**, *Cervus duvaucelii*, 2 initially and then up to 100, KNP, 9th; 9 + 51, KNP, 10th; 51, KNP, 11th.
6. **Hog Deer**, *Axis porcinus*, 100+ KNP, 9th; 200+ KNP, 11th.
7. **Nilgai**, *Boselaphus tragocamelus*, 1, on the outskirts of Delhi, 1st; 4, GPH, 7th; 13, TCS, 7th.
8. **Blackbuck**, *Antilope cervicapra*, 8, GPH, 7th; 100+, TCS, 7th.
9. **Indian gazelle**, *Gazella benettii*, 13, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 10 and then many others, DNP, 4th; 30+, DNP and 3 between Pokaran and Phalodi on 5th; 1, en route to BCD, 6th.
10. **Asiatic Wild Buffalo**, *Bubulus arnee*, 72, KNP, 9th; 34 + 5 young, KNP, 10th; 40 + 7 young, KNP, 11th; 25 seen and others heard + 9 NEC, 12th.
11. **Wild Pig** (Wild Boar), *Sus scrofa*, 9 + 14, GPH, 7th; 9, KNP, 9th; 4, KNP, 11th.

12. **Asian Elephant**, *Elephas maximus*, 1 female with two young + 6 adults, 1 immature and 4 young, KNP, 10th; 21 including a large tusker, females and four calves KNP, 11th; a group heard but not seen, NEC, 12th and later 2 were seen. 1 heard, NEC, 13th.
13. **Greater One-horned Rhinoceros**, *Rhinoceros unicornis*, 67, KNP, 9th, included a female with a three-week-old calf; 2 + 1 dead KNP, 10th; 6 + 46 + 7 young + 3, KNP, 11th, included a male using his midden and another with an Eastern Cattle Egret on its back; 1 seen en route from KNP to NEC, 12th.
14. **Indian Fox**, *Vulpes bengalensis*, 3, DNP, 4th; 1, DNP, 5th.
15. **Desert (Red) Fox**, *Vulpes vulpes pusilla*, 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, DNP, 5th.
16. **Common Leopard**, *Panthera pardus*, tracks of one in Nameri Forest, 13th.
17. **Smooth Coated Otter**, *Lutrogale perspicillata*, 7, out in the open, grooming and then swimming, KNP, 10th; 4 out in the open and then swimming, KNP, 11th.
18. **Small-clawed Otter**, *Amblonyx cinereus*, 1, Nameri Forest, 12th.
19. **Grey Mongoose**, *Herpestes edwardsii*, 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd.
20. **Five Striped (Northern) Palm Squirrel**, *Funambulus pennanti*, 3+, General's Retreat, Jaipur, 2nd; 2, Pokaran, 3rd; 1, Pokaran, 5th; 2+, mobbing Spotted Owlets, Khichan, 6th; several, GPH, 7th.
21. **Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel**, *Callosciurus pygerythrus*, 1, KNP, 9th; 3-4, KNP, 10th; 1, NEC, 12th.
22. **Indian Desert Jird**, *Meriones hurrianae*, 1, DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th.

Reptiles

This list follows the order, taxonomy and nomenclature in 'Amphibians and reptiles of northeast India' (Firoz Ahmed, Das and Dutta 2009).

1. **Asian House Gecko**, *Hemidactylus frenatus*, 5, KNP, 11th.
2. **Crowned River Turtle**, *Hardella thurjii*, 8, Giaborolli River, Nameri Forest, 13th.

Fish

1. **Citola**, *Naptololoyia citola*, several rising to surface of lake to feed, KNP, 11th.

Bird species recorded – Rajasthan and Assam, 1st – 14th February 2010

This list follows the order, taxonomy and nomenclature in the Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent (Grimmett and Inskipp, 1999) with reference, where appropriate, to the Birds of South Asia (Rasmussen and Anderton, 2005), denoted *. Where other, more familiar, English names are in common usage they are indicated in brackets.

This list includes all the birds that were positively identified; it does not include those that were not, such as unidentified eagles and accipiters.

DNP = Desert National Park
BCD = Bikaner Carcass Dump
GPH = Gajner Palace Hotel
TCS = Tal Chapar Sanctuary
KNP = Kaziranga National Park
WGR = Wild Grass Resort, Kaziranga
DTE = Direeing Tea Estate, Kaziranga
NEC = Nameri Eco Camp

- 1 Grey Francolin: 1, between Pokoran and Phalodi, 5th; 1, Khichan, 6th; pair, GPH, 7th; 3, TCS, 7th.
- 2 Swamp Francolin: 2, KNP, 9th.
- 3 Red Junglefowl: 12, KNP, 9th; male and female, KNP, 10th; 7, KNP, 11th.
- 4 Kalij Pheasant: Pair (of the race *lathamii*), KNP, 10th.
- 5 Indian Peafowl: 3+, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; 1, Jaipur, 2nd; 4, between Pokoran and Phalodi, 5th; 1, Khichan, 6th; 10, including two displaying males + 19, GPH, 7th; 6, TCS, 7th; 13, all females, between TCS and Jaipur, 7th.
- 6 Greylag Goose: KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 7 Bar-headed Goose: 7, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 4, GPH, 7th; 7 and then 20+, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; WGR – NEC, 12th.
- 8 Lesser Whistling-Duck: 2, KNP, 10th.
- 9 Ruddy Shelduck: KNP, 9th; 5, NEC, 12th; 22, NEC, 13th.
- 10 Common Shelduck: 1, KNP, 9th.
- 11 White-winged Duck: 1, NEC, 12th.
- 12 Gadwall: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th; KNP, 10th.
- 13 Falcated Duck: Male, KNP, 10th.

- 14 Eurasian Wigeon: KNP, 10th.
- 15 Mallard: GPH, 7th; KNP, 10th; 39, NEC, 13th.
- 16 Spot-billed Duck: 2, Man Sagar, 2nd; 11, KNP, 9th; 2, KNP, 11th.
- 17 Common Teal: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; GPH, 7th; KNP, 9th.
- 18 Northern Pintail: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; KNP, 10th.
- 19 Northern Shoveler: Man Sagar, 2nd; GPH, 7th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 20 Common Pochard: Man Sagar, 2nd; GPH, 7th.
- 21 Tufted Duck: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th.
- 22 Common Merganser (Goosander): 3, NEC, 12th; 4, NEC, 13th.
- 23 Rufous Woodpecker: 2, NEC, 12th.
- 24 Greater Yellownape: 1, KNP, 10th; 1, NEC, 12th.
- 25 Black-rumped Flameback: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, KNP, 10th.
- 26 Greater Flameback: 1, KNP, 9th.
- 27 Lineated Barbet: 1, KNP, 9th; 3, Brahmaputra River, 12th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 28 Blue-throated Barbet: 1, WGR, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th; male, seen singing, WGR, 11th; 1, Brahmaputra River, 12th; 2 heard, NEC, 12th; 1, NEC, 13th; heard, NEC, 13th.
- 29 Coppersmith Barbet: Male seen singing, Donga, KNP, 11th; male, NEC, 13th.
- 30 Great Hornbill: 1, KNP, 9th; 3 seen fleetingly and then another 2, seen well, in flight, over the river, NEC, 12th.
- 31 Wreathed Hornbill: 4 + 2, seen well, in flight, over the river, NEC, 12th.
- 32 Common Hoopoe: 3, Man Sagar, 2nd; 1, BCD (apparently feeding on a carcass), 6th; 1, KNP, 9th.
- 33 Indian Roller: 2, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; between GPH and TCS, 7th; TCS, 7th; 3, KNP, 9th; several, KNP, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th; 2, NEC, 12th; 3, NEC, 13th.
- 34 Common Kingfisher: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, DTE – WGR, 11th; 1, KNP, 11th.

- 35 Stork-billed Kingfisher: 1, KNP, 10th.
- 36 White-throated Kingfisher: Between Delhi and Jaipur, 1st; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, Jaisalmer, 3rd; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; 1, GPH, 7th; Guwahati, 8th; 2, KNP, 9th; 1, NEC, 13th.
- 37 Himalayan Pied Kingfisher* (Crested Kingfisher): 1, NEC, 12th; 3, NEC, 13th.
- 38 Lesser Pied Kingfisher*: 2, KNP, 9th; 4, KNP, 11th.
- 39 Blue-bearded Bee-eater: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 10th.
- 40 Green Bee-eater: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; DNP, 4th; 3, Khichan, 6th; Brahmaputra River, 12th; NEC, 12th.
- 41 Indian Cuckoo: 1, KNP, 9th.
- 42 Southern Coucal* (Rajasthan): 1, GPH, 7th.
- 43 Greater Coucal* (Assam): 4, KNP, 9th.
- 44 Lesser Coucal: 1, KNP, 10th.
- 45 Alexandrine Parakeet: 2, KNP, 9th; c15, KNP, 11th.
- 46 Rose-ringed Parakeet: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jaipur, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; GPH, 7th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th.
- 47 Blossom-headed Parakeet: 3, KNP, 11th.
- 48 Red-breasted Parakeet: 2 + 2, KNP, 9th; KNP, 11th; 2 seen (others heard), KNP, 11th; NEC, 12th; 4, NEC, 13th.
- 49 Himalayan Swiftlet: NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th.
- 50 Asian Palm Swift: KNP, 11th.
- 51 House Swift: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jaipur, 2nd; Jaisalmer, 3rd; Khichan, 6th; between GPH and TCS, 7th.
- 52 Dusky Eagle Owl: 1 on the nest, KNP, 9th; 2 chicks in the nest but no adults nearby, KNP, 11th.
- 53 Asian Barred Owlet: 1 + 2, KNP, 9th; 2 + 1, KNP, 10th; 1, WGR, 10th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 54 Spotted Owlet: 3, being mobbed by Northern Palm Squirrel, Khichan, 6th; 2, KNP, 9th; 3, KNP, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th.
- 55 Rock Pigeon and Feral Pigeon

Feral Pigeon: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jaipur, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; Pokoran, 3rd; Pokoran, 5th; Agaratoli, KNP, 10th; Mihimukh, KNP, 11th; NEC, 13th; between NEC and Guwahati, 14th; Delhi, 14th.

Rock Pigeon: DNP, 4th; DNP, 5th; Khichan, 6th; GPH, 7th.

56 Green Imperial-Pigeon: 1, KNP, 10th; 5, NEC, 12th; 4 + 2, NEC, 13th.

57 Oriental Turtle Dove: KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 10th; 2, DTE – WGR, 11th; 1, NEC, 13th.

58 Laughing Dove: Jaipur, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; DNP, 4th; 2, Khichan, 6th.

59 Spotted Dove: 8, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; Brahmaputra River, 12th.

60 Red Collared Dove: 1, General's Retreat, Jaipur, 2nd; 1, KNP, 10th.

61 Eurasian Collared Dove: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jaipur, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; DNP, 4th; DNP, 5th; Khichan, 6th; GPH, 7th; 1, KNP, 11th (unusual record for KNP).

62 Barred Cuckoo Dove: 10+, NEC, 13th.

63 Emerald Dove: 4, NEC, 13th

64 Yellow-footed Green Pigeon: 4, KNP, 9th.

65 Indian Bustard: 2 males and a female seen on the ground and in flight, male and female seen on the ground and then three males seen very well on the ground, DNP, 4th; male, DNP, 5th.

66 Macqueen's Bustard: 2, DNP, 5th.

67 Bengal Florican: 1, seen in flight, KNP, 9th.

68 Demoiselle Crane: Thousands seen in the central square and surrounding dunes, Khichan, 6th. A truly spectacular sight and sound. 116, TCS, 7th.

69 Common Crane: 2, Khichan, 6th.

70 White-breasted Waterhen: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 2, GPH, 7th; 1, KNP, 9th.

71 Common Moorhen: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; GPH, 7th; 2, NEC, 12th.

72 Common Coot: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th.

73 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse: 200+, DNP, 4th; hundreds congregating in vicinity of waterholes, DNP, 5th.

- 74 Common Snipe: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; 1, KNP, 11th.
- 75 Black-tailed Godwit: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd.
- 75 Eurasian Curlew: 2, Jaipur Airfield, 8th.
- 77 Spotted Redshank: 3, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th.
- 78 Common Redshank: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 6, KNP, 9th.
- 79 Marsh Sandpiper: 2, Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; KNP, 11th.
- 80 Common Greenshank: 4, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; 2, KNP, 9th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 81 Green Sandpiper: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; 1, GPH, 7th; KNP, 9th; 1, NEC, 13th.
- 82 Wood Sandpiper: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd.
- 83 Common Sandpiper: Man Sagar, 2nd; NEC, 13th.
- 84 Temminck's Stint: 30+, KNP, 11th.
- 85 Ruff: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th.
- 86 Cream-coloured Courser: 3, DNP, 5th.
- 87 Ibisbill: 6, NEC, 13th.
- 88 Black-winged Stilt: c6, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; GPH, 7th.
- 89 Pied Avocet: 45, KNP, 9th; 28, KNP, 11th.
- 90 Bronze-winged Jacana: 1, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 91 Small Pratincole: c200, NEC, 12th; c500, NEC, 13th.
- 92 Pacific Golden Plover: 2, KNP, 10th.
- 93 Little Ringed Plover: 1, KNP, 11th; 1, NEC, 13th.
- 94 Northern Lapwing: 1, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 95 River Lapwing: 1, NEC, 12th; 9, NEC, 13th.
- 96 Grey-headed Lapwing: 16 + another 3, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 10th.

- 97 Red-wattled Lapwing: 6+, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Man Sagar, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; 4, Pokoran, 5th; 1 between Pokoran and Phalodi, 5th; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; GPH, 7th; 2, TCS, 7th; KNP, 9th; 2, KNP, 11th.
- 98 White-tailed Lapwing: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd.
- 99 Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed Gull): 1, 2nd winter, NEC, 13th.
- 100 River Tern: 2, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 2+, NEC, 12th; 5, NEC, 13th.
- 101 Osprey: 1, KNP, 10th; 3, NEC, 13th.
- 102 Black-shouldered Kite: 1, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; between GPH and TCS, 7th; 2, KNP, 10th.
- 103 Black Kite: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Man Sagar, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; 1, showing characters of "Black-eared Kite" *Milvus migrans lineatus*, Pokoran, 3rd; surprisingly few at BCD, 6th; 1, GPH, 7th; TCS, 7th; hundreds at Guwahati, 8th, which was the largest concentration we saw anywhere; a few between the Brahmaputra River and NEC, 12th; a few between NEC and Guwahati, 14th.
- 104 Pallas's Fish Eagle: 2 adults and 1 immature, KNP, 9th; adult at the nest with 1 immature, KNP, 9th; 1, at nest, KNP, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th; adult perched near an immature in the nest, KNP, 11th.
- 105 Grey-headed Fish Eagle: 4, KNP, 9th; 2, KNP, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th.
- 106 Egyptian Vulture: 2 and then c20, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1 and then another 2 (with 2 Cinereous and 2 Eurasian Griffon), DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th; 1 en route to BCD, 6th and then hundreds at BCD itself; 2, between GPH and TCS, 7th; TCS, 7th.
- 107 White-rumped Vulture: Pair at a nest, in a tree, with at least one chick plus one immature bird, DNP, 4th. Later, one of the adults and the immature seen at a sheep carcass with Eurasian Griffons, one Cinereous Vulture, one Red-headed Vulture, 1 Steppe Eagle, 1 Tawny (or possibly Eastern Imperial) Eagle and one Punjab Raven.
- 108 Eurasian Griffon: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 2 with 2 Cinereous and 2 Egyptian (RO and JL saw 4 Eurasian Griffon). Later, several seen with one Cinereous Vulture, two White-rumped Vulture, one Red-headed Vulture, 1 Steppe Eagle, 1 Tawny (or possibly Eastern Imperial) Eagle and one Punjab Raven at a sheep carcass; 8, DNP, 5th; 1 en route to BCD and then large numbers there (although fewer than the Egyptians); 1, KNP, 10th.
- 109 Cinereous Vulture (Black Vulture): 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 2 with 2 Eurasian Griffon and 2 Egyptian (RO and JL saw 4 Cinereous), DNP, 4th; later, one with Eurasian Griffons, one Red-headed Vulture, two White-rumped Vulture, 1 Steppe Eagle, 1 Tawny (or possible Eastern Imperial) Eagle

and a Punjab Raven at a sheep carcass, which the Cinereous Vulture picked up and dragged away from the other birds; 3, DNP, 5th.

110 Red-headed Vulture: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1 at a sheep carcass with Eurasian Griffons, one Cinereous Vulture, 1 Steppe Eagle, 1 Tawny (or possibly Eastern Imperial) Eagle and one Punjab Raven, DNP, 4th; 1, TCS, 7th.

111 Crested Serpent Eagle: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; 2, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 10th; 1, NEC, 12th.

112 Pallid Harrier: Male, DNP, 5th.

113 Shikra: 1, Jaipur, 2nd, being mobbed by House Crow; 1, female, Pokaran, 3rd; 2, Jaisalmer, 3rd.

114 Oriental Honey-Buzzard: 1, GPH, 7th, seen in flight and then perched; 1, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 10th.

115 Common Buzzard: Curiously, *Buteo buteo* does not feature in Rasmussen and Anderton, so we have relied on Grimmett and Inskipp (which describes it as widespread in winter), as follows: 1, probably *B b japonicus*, Man Sagar, 2nd; 1, probably *B b refectus*, Jaisalmer, 3rd.

116 Long-legged Buzzard: 2, DNP, 4th.

117 Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastata** (split from Lesser Spotted Eagle): Adult, KNP, 10th.

118 Greater Spotted Eagle: 1 adult + 1, KNP, 9th; 2, KNP, 10th.

119 Tawny Eagle: 2, DNP, 4th; 1, DNP, 5th.

120 Steppe Eagle: 4, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, DNP, 4th; several, BCD, 6th; 4, TCS, 7th.

121 Eastern Imperial Eagle: 1 immature, which Rob's photos suggest may have been this species, DNP, 4th. It is not possible from the photos to rule out immature Tawny, but it does look good for Eastern Imperial.

122 Changeable Hawk Eagle: Pair, displaying, KNP, 10th.

123 Common Kestrel: 2, DNP, 5th; 1, TCS, 7th.

124 Merlin: Male, *Falco columbarius pallidus* (the scarcer race), DNP, 5th.

125 Oriental Hobby: Pair, NEC, 13th; 1, NEC, 14th.

126 Lagger Falcon: 1, BCD, 6th.

- 127 Peregrine Falcon: 1, probably "Barbary Falcon" *Falco peregrinus babylonicus*, Jaisalmer, 3rd; 1, DNP, 4th; 1, DNP, 5th; 1, Khichan, 6th; 1, NEC, 12th.
- 128 Little Grebe: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; GPH, 7th.
- 129 Oriental Darter*: 1 KNP, 9th; 1 KNP, 10th.
- 130 Little Cormorant: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th; Guwahati, 8th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 1, NEC, 13th.
- 131 Great Cormorant: Man Sagar, 2nd; GPH, 7th; 3, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 10 + 35, NEC, 12th; 4 + 8, NEC, 13th.
- 132 Little Egret: Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 133 Great Egret: Between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 134 Intermediate Egret: KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 135 Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus**: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; BCD, 6th; c20, Guwahati, 8th; KNP, 11th; WGR – NEC, 12th; NEC – Guwahati, 14th.
- 136 Indian Pond Heron: 2+, Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 6, KNP, 11th; NEC – Guwahati, 14th.
- 137 Grey Heron: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; GPH, 7th; KNP, 10th.
- 138 Purple Heron: Immature, KNP, 9th; adult, KNP, 10th.
- 139 Black-crowned Night Heron: 1, between NEC and Guwahati, 14th.
- 140 Black Ibis: 2, between GPH and TCS, 7th.
- 141 Eurasian Spoonbill: Man Sagar, 2nd; 4, GPH, 7th.
- 141 Great White Pelican: c50, KNP, 10th.
- 141 Spot-billed Pelican: 3 + 9, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 144 Asian Openbill: 13, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 2, KNP, 11th; 1, between NEC and Guwahati, 14th.
- 145 Woolly-necked Stork: 1, KNP, 9th; 2, KNP, 11th.
- 146 Black Stork: 2, NEC, 12th.
- 147 Black-necked Stork: 4, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 2, KNP, 11th.

- 148 Lesser Adjutant: Several, Guwahati, 8th, where considerably outnumbered by Greater Adjutant; 6, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; 2, KNP, 11th; 4, NEC, 12th.
- 149 Greater Adjutant: c100, Guwahati, 8th; 2, KNP, 10th.
- 150 Orange-bellied Leafbird: 1, NEC, 12th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 151 Brown Shrike: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 11th.
- 152 Black-headed Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach tricolor**: 1, KNP, 9th.
- 153 Grey-backed Shrike: 3, KNP, 9th; 2, DTE - WGR, 11th; 1, NEC, 14th.
- 154 Southern Grey Shrike: 1, Man Sagar, 2nd; 2, DNP, 4th; 3, DNP, 5th including one carrying nest material; 2, TCS, 7th.
- 155 Rufous Treepie: 3, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th.
- 156 House Crow: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jodhpur, 3rd; Pokoran, 3rd; Rawla, 4th; DNP, 5th; Pokoran, 5th; GPH, 7th; between GPH and TCS, 7th; Guwahati, 8th; between NEC and Guwahati, 14th; Delhi, 15th.
- 157 Large-billed Crow: Birds south of the Brahmaputra River are likely to have been Eastern Jungle Crow* *Corvus [macrorhynchos] levaillantii*: KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; WGR, 10th; KNP, 11th; WGR – NEC, 12th; birds north of the Brahmaputra River might possibly have been Large-billed Crow* *Corvus [macrorhynchos] japonensis*: 1, NEC, 12th; 2, NEC, 13th; NEC – Guwahati, 14th.
- 158 Punjab Raven*: Birds at DNP and TCS will have been *Corvus corax subcorax*. DNP, 4th; 1, TCS, 7th.
- 159 Black-hooded Oriole: 1, KNP, 11th; 1+, DTE, 11th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 160 Large Cuckooshrike: 2, DTE, 11th.
- 161 Scarlet Minivet*: Female and male, NEC, 12th.
- 162 White-throated Fantail*: 1, NEC, 13th.
- 163 Black Drongo: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; 2, Man Sagar, 2nd; Jodhpur – Jaiselmer, 3rd; BCD, 6th; Guwahati, 8th; KNP, 10th.
- 164 Ashy Drongo: 2, KNP, 10th.
- 165 Bronzed Drongo: 1, DTE, 11th.
- 166 Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo: 1, NEC, 12th.
- 167 Spangled Drongo: 1, KNP, 10th; 3, NEC, 12th; 2, NEC, 13th.

- 168 Common Iora: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, NEC, 12th.
- 169 Blue Rock Thrush: Male, NEC, 12th; 1, NEC, 13th.
- 170 Blue Whistling Thrush: 1, KNP, 11th.
- 171 Black-breasted Thrush: 1, NEC, 13th.
- 172 Red-throated Flycatcher (Taiga Flycatcher): 1, KNP, 9th.
- 173 Small Niltava: 1, NEC, 13th.
- 174 White-throated Fantail: 1, NEC, 13th.
- 175 Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, WGR, 10th; 1, Brahmaputra River, 12th.
- 176 Bluethroat: 1, at roadside wetland area between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th.
- 177 Oriental Magpie Robin: 3, between Guwahati and Kaziranga, 8th; KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 11th; 1, DTE – WGR, 11th.
- 178 Indian Robin: 1, General's Retreat and 1, Man Sagar, 2nd.
- 179 Black Redstart: Male, *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides*, Pokaran, 5th.
- 180 Blue-fronted Redstart: 1 male, NEC, 13th.
- 181 White-capped River-chat*: 1, NEC, 13th.
- 182 Plumbeous Water-redstart*: 2 females and a male, NEC, 13th.
- 183 Black-backed Forktail: 1, DTE – WGR, 11th.
- 184 Common Stonechat: 3, KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; KNP, 11th.
- 185 Pied Bushchat: 2, DNP, 4th.
- 186 Brown Rock-Chat: 4, Jaisalmer, 3rd; Khichan, 6th; between GPH and TCS, 7th.
- 187 Variable Wheatear: 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; 4, DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th.
- 188 Desert Wheatear: 4, DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th; between GPH and TCS, 7th; TCS, 7th.
- 189 Isabelline Wheatear: 1, DNP, 5th.
- 190 Grey-headed Starling* (Chestnut-tailed Starling): KNP, 9th; NEC, 13th.

- 191 Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured Starling): 1, between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd.
- 192 Common Starling: 1, BCD, 6th.
- 193 Asian Pied Starling: 20+, Guwahati, 8th; KNP, 9th; WGR, 10th; KNP, 11th.
- 194 Common Myna: 4+, GPH, 7th; Guwahati, 8th; between Guwahati and Kaziranga, 8th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 11th; WGR – NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th; NEC - Guwahati, 14th.
- 195 Bank Myna: Delhi-Jaipur, 1st; Jaipur, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; Khichan, 6th; TCS, 7th.
- 196 Jungle Myna: KNP, 9th.
- 197 White-vented Myna: 6, on the back of a Rhinoceros, KNP, 9th.
- 198 Hill Myna: 2, KNP, 11th; 2, NEC, 13th.
- 199 Wallcreeper: 1, GPH, 7th.
- 200 Great Tit: 2, KNP, 9th; KNP, 11th; 3, Brahmaputra River, 12th.
- 201 Grey-throated Martin* (Plain Martin): Man Sagar, 2nd; between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 3rd; in flight over the river and perched near nest burrows, NEC, 13th.
- 202 Dusky Crag Martin: 2+, Jaipur, 2nd; GPH, 7th.
- 203 Barn Swallow: 1, between Pokoran and Phalodi, 5th; between GPH and TCS, 7th; several, Guwahati, 8th; good numbers, KNP, 9th; good numbers, KNP, 11th; between Brahmaputra River and NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th.
- 204 Black-crested Bulbul*: 2, NEC, 12th.
- 205 Red-whiskered Bulbul: KNP, 9th; NEC, 13th; 4, NEC, 13th.
- 206 White-eared Bulbul: DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th.
- 207 Red-vented Bulbul: Jaipur, 2nd; DNP, 4th; 2, DNP, 5th; Pokoran, 5th; KNP, 9th; KNP, 10th; WGR, 10th; KNP, 11th; NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th.
- 208 Himalayan Black Bulbul*: 1, KNP, 10th; 20+, NEC, 13th.
- 209 Striated Grassbird: 1, KNP, 9th.
- 210 Lesser Whitethroat: 1, DNP, 4th either *Sylvia curruca halimondendri* or *minula*; 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th probably *halimondendri*.
- 211 Common Tailorbird: 1, Brahmaputra River, 12th.

- 212 Common Chiffchaff: 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; 3, GPH, 7th; KNP, 11th.
- 213 Yellow-browed Warbler: 1, NEC, 12th.
- 214 Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush: 3, DTE, 11th.
- 215 Common Babbler: DNP, 4th; DNP, 5th; Pokoran, 5th.
- 216 Striated Babbler: 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th.
- 217 Large Grey Babbler: Small group, TCS, 7th.
- 218 Jungle Babbler: Man Sagar, 2nd; 5, GPH, 7th.
- 219 Black-crowned Sparrow Lark: Small group of males and females, DNP, 4th.
- 220 Desert Lark: 1, DNP, 4th; DNP, 5th.
- 221 Greater Short-toed Lark: c20 + 4, DNP, 4th; c20, TCS, 7th.
- 222 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker: Pair, WGR, 11th.
- 223 Purple Sunbird: 1+, between Jodhpur and Jaiselmer, 3rd; female, Pokoran, 5th.
- 224 Crimson Sunbird: Male, NEC, 12th.
- 225 Streaked Spiderhunter: 4, NEC, 12th.
- 226 House Sparrow: Jaipur, 2nd; Jodhpur, 3rd; Pokoran, 3rd; c200, DNP, 4th; DNP, 5th; Khichan, 6th; between GPH and TCS, 7th; between Guwahati and Kaziranga, 8th; KNP, 10th; WGR, 10th.
- 227 Eurasian Tree Sparrow: 1, Agaratoli, KNP, 10th.
- 228 White Wagtail: Rasmussen and Anderton list five races of White Wagtail for India and it was interesting that some that we saw (and were definitely White Wagtail) and heard calling sounded very much like Grey Wagtail. Recorded, as follows: Man Sagar, 2nd; 1, Guwahati, 8th; 2, KNP, 11th; 3, DTE - WGR, 11th; 3, NEC, 12th; NEC, 13th.
- 229 White-browed Wagtail: Pair (male singing), between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; pair, GPH, 7th; 2, KNP, 9th.
- 230 Citrine Wagtail: 1, Guwahati, 8th, was seen well and heard calling in flight.
- 231 Yellow Wagtail: 1, between Khichan and Bikaner, 6th; 1, KNP, 11th.
- 232 Richard's Pipit: 1, Guwahati, 8th.

233 Paddyfield Pipit: 2, KNP, 10th; 1, KNP, 11th.

234 Long-billed Pipit: 1, DNP, 5th.

235 Olive-backed Pipit: 6, DTE – WGR, 11th.

236 Rosy Pipit: 1, KNP, 9th; 1, KNP, 11th.

237 White-rumped Munia: 2, DTE, 11th. Initially, we thought this bird was Black-headed but Black-headed has now been split into Tricoloured (which does not occur in Assam) and Chestnut (which differs on plumage).

238 Trumpeter Finch: 3, DNP, 4th.
