

SRI LANKA
Independent trip report
19/11 to 18/12/2012
[**hniacob@gmail.com**](mailto:hniacob@gmail.com)

Most of the tours do this trip in 2 weeks, on an independent way we find that 3 weeks are the best to be sure to find many interesting birds of this island. All is easy, the country is nice and rather clean, and the people are pleasant and never insistent.

Renting a car is possible, there are road signs on the main roads, but in the towns it seems difficult to find his way. We preferred to go from site to site by taxi, in all the hotels they know drivers and you just have to bargain a little bit, they are quite expensive by Sri Lankan standards, but the petrol is high. Of the total expense of 2000€ (without the international flight) for 2 during 1 month, 485€ were for the taxis; and we stayed in middle range hotels, if you want a cheap trip it is very feasible by bus and then go to the sites by tuc tuc.

Our total was of 239 species seen of which the 33 endemics. Our bigger dip was the *Sirkeer Malkoha* that we wanted very much to see, we tried hard for it in Yala, around Tissa and Bibile without success.

The most common birds like Egrets, Crows, Swifts, Mynas... are not always listed in our "birds seen" chapters.

SINHARAJA

We found this place much better than Kithulgala and we advise to stay here for a few days to have the best chances to see all the targets. We stayed 6 nights.

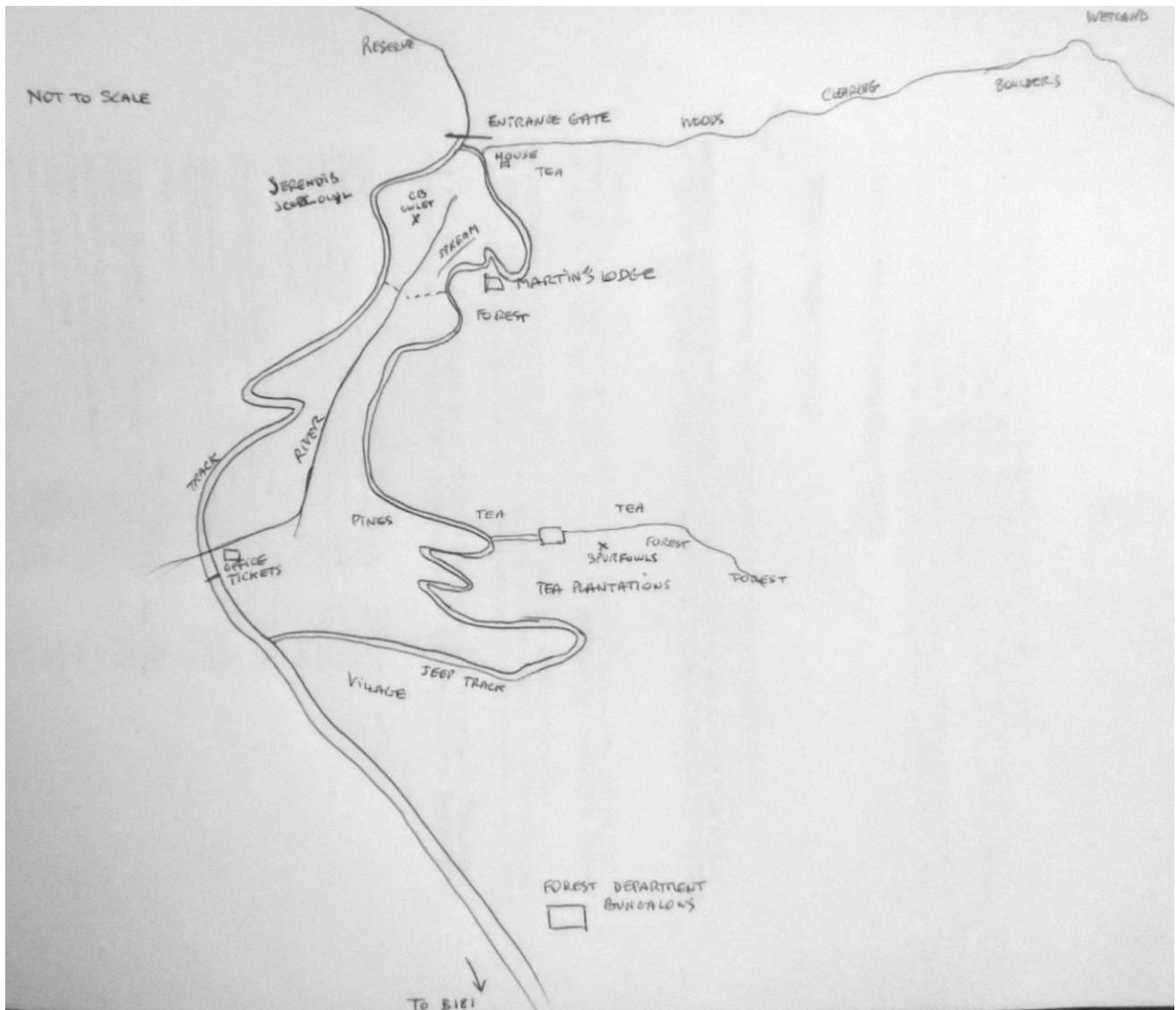
We had booked in advance a taxi from the airport to Sinharaja reserve for 97\$ and it took 4,30h until the village of Kudawa. You'll easily find emails of drivers on the web.

We had booked the Martin's Lodge for 6 nights (it is often full with groups) and the price is 3000Rs/room, or 4290Rs/BB, 5720Rs/HB, 7150Rs/FB for 2; as the lodge has no internet we booked through Red Dot and it was more expensive of course as they take a profit. The best is to try to call Martin at this n° : 045 7926701. Martin has another house down before the park office where there are jeeps taking you up, 3500Rs (return included). We recommend to stay at the Martin's which is so convenient for the birding. The *SL Thrush* can be seen lower down the lodge along the stream at dawn, but we only saw it inside the reserve.

When you arrive to Kudawa village, on the right side of the road is the Government Forest Bungalows which seem quite good and should be cheap, but which have to be booked in Colombo. Further on still on the right is the jeep track leading to the Martin's Lodge, then there is the Blue Magpie Lodge, and at the end of the road is the park office where the tickets are sold. There are 2 tracks going up to the gate entrance, one from the parc office, and the jeep track going to Martin's lodge, in fact it is a loop and all is good for birding.

The track from the park office is forested, the jeep track passes first through the village, then tea plantations, pine woods and then forest. From down to the gate entrance is about 20mn walk if non birding.

As we stayed a long time we birded alone the 2 first days on the tracks and around the Martin's lodge. The 3rd day we had to walk down to the office to buy our tickets (you can't buy them in advance) and have the compulsory guide, and you can't choose him, you must take the first on the file (they are 26). We were very lucky to have one of the best, Ranjith. Good eyes, good ears, he knows all the sounds and the places for the birds; so he quickly showed us a pair of *Serendib Scops-Owl* and the birds that we had not seen alone; we found that there are bigger flocks inside the reserve than outside. The following day Ranjith took us around the village and the tea plantations where we could see different birds of which *Slaty-legged Crake* close to his house (no entrance to pay, just fix a price with him). Our last day we followed this trail leaving from the right side of the track just on the right of the park gate, passing through forest, then clearing, then tea plantations and a nice wetland; several good birds (*Red-faced Malkoha*) seen there; the best is to take it before 7am because once the guard at the entrance gate wanted us to pay for being on the track and birding the beginning of this trail, we refused and said that we were outside the reserve, but the best is just to avoid him.



Best birds seen in all the area : Barred Buttonquail, SL Spurfowl, SL Junglefowl, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Crested Hawk-Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Slaty-legged Crake, White-breasted Waterhen, Spotted Dove, Emerald Dove, SL Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, SL Hanging-Parrot, Layard's Parakeet, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Red-faced Malkoha, Green-billed Coucal, SL Frogmouth, Serendib Scops-Owl, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Indian Swiftlet, Crested Treeswift, Blue-tailed Bee-Eater, Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater, White-throated Kingfisher, Malabar Trogon, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Crimson-throated Barbet, SL Grey Hornbill, Lesser Yellownappe, Crimson-backed Flameback, Indian Pitta, Black-backed Cuckoo-shrike, Small + Orange Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Srike, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, SL Blue Magpie, White-bellied Drongo, SL Crested Drongo, Black-capped + Red-vented + Yellow-browed + Square-tailed Black Bulbuls, Greenish Warbler, Green Leaf Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Black-naped Monarch, Asian Paradise-Flycatcher, Brown-capped Babbler, SL Scimitar Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler, Orange-billed Babbler, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, SL Hill Myna, Southern Hill Myna, White-faced Starling, Spot-winged Thrush, SL Thrush, Oriental Magpie Robin, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, White-rumped Munia.

For those in a budget or who want to bird with him, Ranjith told us that he has a room in his house (which is on the jeep track) for the birders and he can even arrange a pick up at Colombo airport; his phone n° is 071 2790265. He then arranged a car for us at 7500Rs to Uda Walawe NP.

UDA WALAWE NP

This is a very good park for birdwatching, with many elephants too. Several tracks, but the guides know where to go for the birdwatchers. The groups often stay in Embilipitiya but it is far from the park entrance; from the main A18 junction the entrance is at about 5km; along this road there are a few hotels and guesthouses and the best is to go by tuc tuc and see. We were coming from Sinharaja where our guide there, Ranjith, offered us a lift with his friend Rahu for 7500Rs; the drive took us 2h, so 6000Rs should have been the price. He left us at the Hotel Onara 4km from the park, we don't recommend it, it wasn't very clean and the restaurant was closed for diner; the room was 2500Rs, or 3500Rs with AC.

We booked the jeep with Raju for the following morning 4000Rs, the entree fee is 5900Rs for the jeep and they give you a guide. Our visit was from 6 to 11:30am. On the way to the park Raju stopped us at a house where a fantastic *Brown Fish-Owl* was standing on the roof.

Best birds seen : Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling-duck, Painted Stork, Wolly-necked Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Spot-billed Pelican, Little Grebe, Little + Indian Cormorants, Darter, Common Kestrel, Black-winged Kite, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied + Grey-headed Fish Eagles, Shikra, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Booted Eagle, Crested Hawk-Eagle, Yellow-wattled + Red-wattled Lapwings, Common Sandpiper, Whiskered Tern, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, SL Hanging-Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Plum-headed Parakeet, Jacobin Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Blue-faced Malkoha, Brown Fish-Owl, Indian Roller, Green Bee-eater, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Common Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Brown-headed Barbet, Coppersmith Barbet, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Small Minivet, Jerdon's Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, House Crow, Indian Jungle Crow, SL Swallow, White-bellied Drongo, forest + Yellow Wagtail, Paddyfield + Blyth's Pipits, Jerdon's Bushlark, Red-vented Bulbul, Grey-breasted + Jungle Prinias, Zitting Cisticola, Blyth's Reed Warbler, White-browed Fantail, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Tawny-bellied + Yellow-eyed + Yellow-billed Babblers, Oriental Magpie Robin, Indian Robin, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Purple Sunbird, Loten's Sunbird, Oriental White-Eye, black-headed Munia.

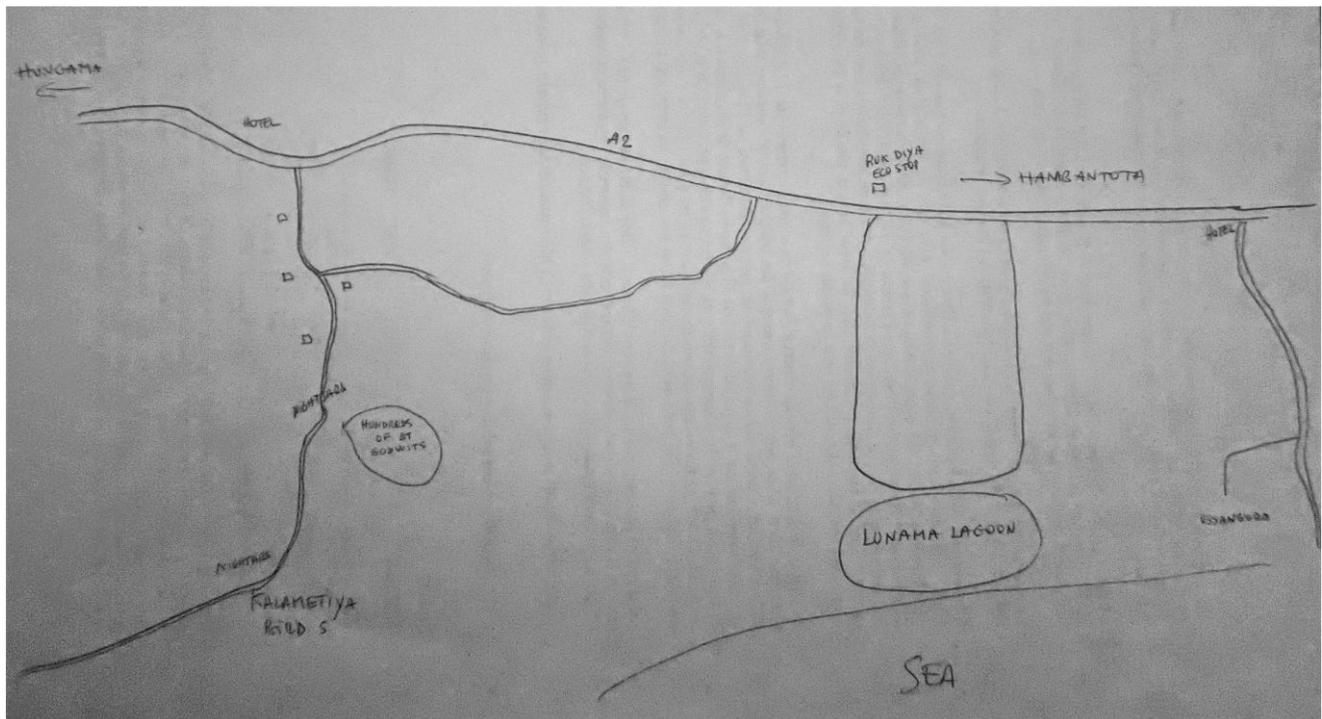
KALAMETIYA BIRD SANCTUARY

As we had time we spent 2 nights there and had the best birding of the trip with 96 species seen in this area (thanks to Thomas & Melissa Cullinan's report). From Uda Walawe we went to Kiula in the south, which is on the A2, 4km before Hungama. We stayed at the basic Ruk Diya Eco Stop, the double was 1000Rs and the food was great (400Rs the meal) but it is far from luxury. It is situated along the A2, but we saw another probably better hotel at the corner of the road to Ussangoda and another one about 1km after the Ruk Diya towards Hungama. There are several sites around : the Kalametiya Bird Sanctuary, Lunama Lagoon, and Ussangoda. All easy to reach by tuc tuc. The owner's wife of our hotel had a tuc tuc and gave us the lifts, sometimes we came back walking.

We easily saw the *Jerdon's* and *Indian Nightjars* which responded well to tape on the main track in Kalametiya once passed the last houses after the tarred road.

Birds seen : Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling-duck, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-crowned Night Heron, Indian Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Eastern Cattle Egret, Great + Intermediate + Little Egret, Spot-billed Pelican, Little Grebe, Little Cormorant, Darter, Common Kestrel, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Shikra, Crested Serpent Eagle, Booted Eagle, Crested Hawk Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Watercock, Grey-headed Swamphen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Indian + Great Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled + Red-wattled Lapwing, Pacific Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Common Ringed + Little Ringed Plovers, Pin-tailed Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Green + Wood + Common Sandpiper, Gull-billed + Whiskered + White-winged Terns, Spotted Dove, Sri Lanka Green Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Jacobin Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Jerdon's Nightjar, Indian Nightjar, Indian Swiftlet, House Swift, Green Bee-eater, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Stork-billed + White-throated + Pied Kingfisher, Brown-headed Barbet, Black-rumped Flameback, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Jerdon's Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, House Crow, Sri Lanka Swallow, White-bellied Drongo, Paddyfield Pipit, Oriental Skylark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, Red-vented Bulbul, White-browed Bulbul, Grey-breasted Prinia, Plain Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Asian Paradise-flycatcher, Yellow-eyed

Babbler, Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie Robin, Indian Robin, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, House Sparrow, Scaly-breasted Munia, Black-headed Munia.

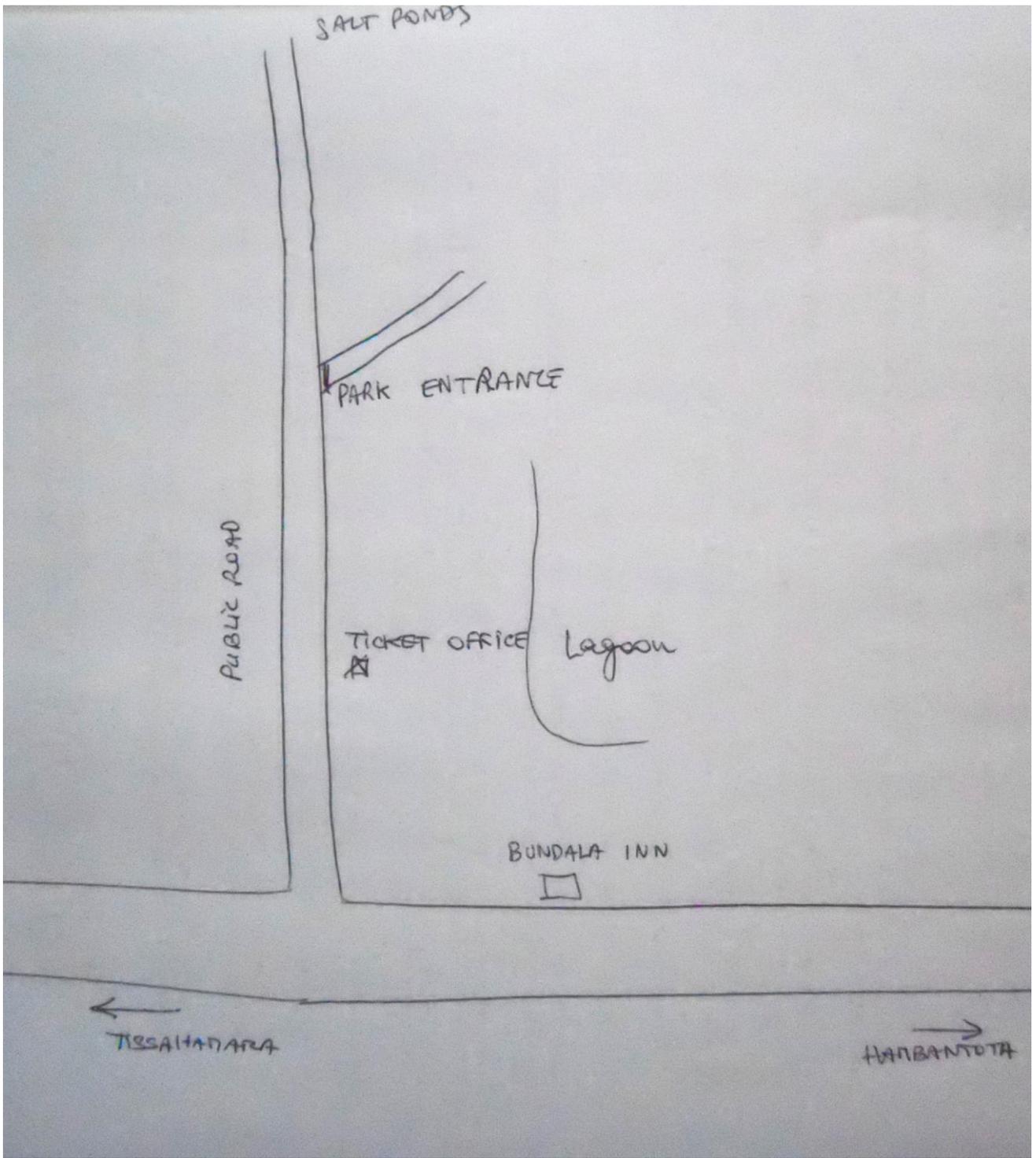


BUNDALA NATIONAL PARK

The owner of the Ruk Diya Eco Stop (near Kalametiya) drove us during 45mn for 1500Rs with his own car to the Bundala Inn situated about 1,6km before the ticket office. The room was 2600Rs, a very good bet, and good meals. The owners Sunetra and Hamal are nice, Hamal proposed us a jeep ride at 6500Rs, too expensive and we bargained a bit; the entrance was 4400Rs/2 pers; anyway compared to the other parks it was too much because at 9am it was finished!

Our guide was Upul, good birdwatcher, and after a discussion with him it appeared that it is possible to bird the area from the main public road outside the park. The best is to call him or send him a SMS : 071 2049035, and to organise to go with him by tuctuc. If you missed too many birds you'll still have the jeep option, but he seemed to be sure to show many birds, and the salt ponds are visible outside the park. As time was short inside the park we didn't spend too long for the waders and probably missed some, we preferred to look for targets like the *Ruddy-breasted Crake*.

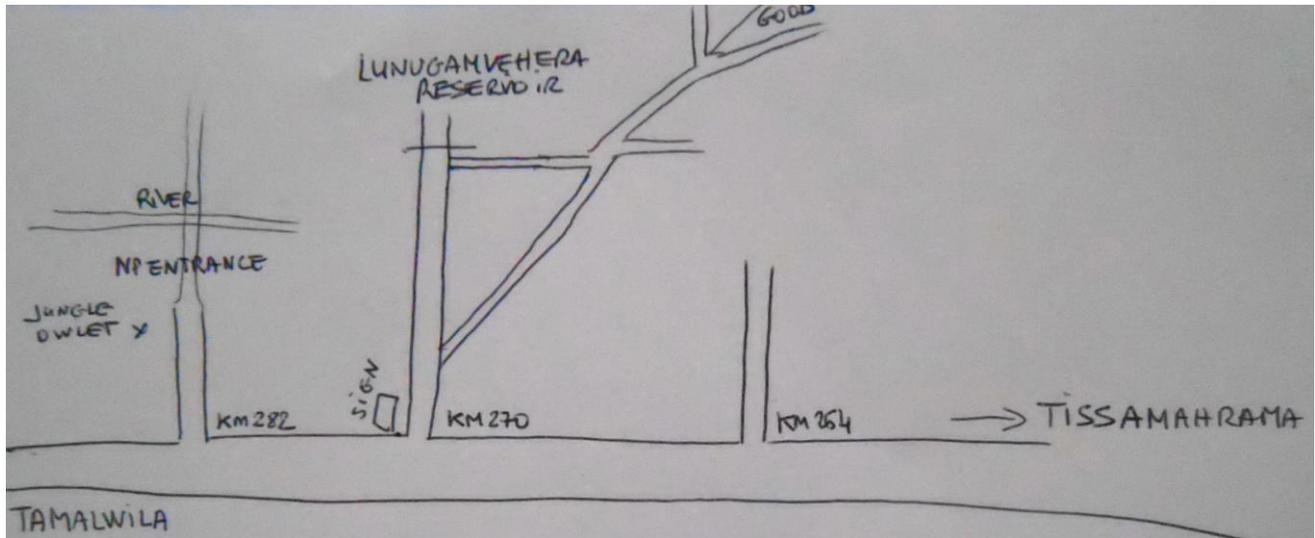
Birds seen : Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling-duck, Garganey, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Yellow + Black Bittern, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Western Reef Egret, Spot-billed Pelican, Indian Cormorant, Darter, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Ruddy-breasted Crake, Grey-headed Swamphen, common Moorhen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Indian Thick-knee, Great Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Yellow-wattled + Red-wattled Lapwings, Pacific Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Kentish Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Pin-tailed Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Stint, Red-necked Phalarope, Small Pratincole, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Lesser Crested Tern, Little Tern, Whiskered Tern, Spotted Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Crested Swift, Indian Roller, Green + Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, White-throated + Pied Kingfisher, Common Hoopoe, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Black-hooded Oriole, House Crow, Barn Swallow, Paddyfield Pipit, Oriental Skylark, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, Common Tailorbird, Yellow-billed Babbler, Rosy Starling, Purple Sunbird, Black-headed Munia.



BUNDALA

TISSAMAHARAMA

There are several birding sites from Tissa, and we visited Yala NP from here; but once you know the place you realise that Kirinda is closer to the park entrance so it could be wise to stay there the night before the visit. Anyway in Tissa we stayed at the Traveller's Home (2600Rs/15€ but there are cheaper and more expensive rooms) and visited all the sites from here; the owner wants to organise everything for you but takes his fee so just say that all is already arranged and go outside to negotiate your tuc tuc. For Yala we arranged a jeep with a guide that we met at Lunugamwheera, Pujitha, and it was cheaper, but the hotel's owner was a little bit upset. You can see the sites on Google Map and have an idea.



1-YALA NP

The entrance was 5900Rs and the jeep 5000Rs only for us. Arranged with Pujitha who can arrange all you want, he is trying to create his own company (pujithahimal@yahoo.com). The jeep was waiting for us at 5am at the hotel gate, there is a 45mn drive until the park entrance. We could stay until 10h30 and gave a good tip to the driver and the guide (Kulum, very good). The birdwatching was good and we saw a leopard.

Birds seen : Yala Buttonquail, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Lesser Whistling-duck, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black-necked Stork, Lesser Adjutant, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Indian Pond Heron, Grey + Purple Heron, Great + Intermediate Egret, Little Cormorant, Darter, Brahminy Kite, Besra, Crested Hawk-eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Indian Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, Common Redshank, Spotted Dove, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Jacobin Cuckoo, Indian Cuckoo, Grey-bellied Cuckoo, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Indian Nightjar, Indian Swiftlet, Crested Treeswift, Indian Roller, Green Bee-eater, Blue-tailed + Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-eared + Common + Pied Kingfisher, Common Hoopoe, Brown-headed Barbet, Coppersmith Barbet, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Brown-capped Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Indian Pitta, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Small Minivet, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Jerdon's Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, House Crow, Indian Jungle Crow, Barn Swallow, Sri Lanka Swallow, Ashy Drongo, White-bellied Drongo, Forest Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Jerdon's Bushlark, Red-vented Bulbul, Grey-breasted Prinia, common Tailorbird, White-browed Fantail, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Dark-fronted Babbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Yellow-eyed + Yellow-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie Robin, Indian Robin, Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Loten's Sunbird, Oriental White-eye, Baya Weaver, Scaly-breasted Munia.

2-TISSA WEWA

This big lake is situated 500m from the Traveller's Home via a short cut; facing the lake on the left side there are some huge trees full of bats where birds come to roost in late afternoon.

3-LUNUGAMWEHERA RESERVOIR

Another good birding here, but we missed the *Sirkeer Malkoha* that was seen here by others. This reservoir is well signposted 13km from Tissa on the A2 (marker 270), the tuc tuc drivers know where it is; we stopped before the dike and took the trail on the right side before the barrier. We followed the track birding the bushes, there is a river on the right side, at a fork we followed an interesting straight path in the middle the fork as far as time permitted.

4-ENTRANCE RD OF LUNUGAMWEHERA NP

We paid 2000Rs (too much) for a tuc tuc until Tanamalwila at 25km from Tissa on road A2 (at marker 282). We stopped at the entrance track on the right of the Lunugamwehera National Park. We birded this short track (about 100m) until the park, especially looking for *Sirkeer Malkoha*, *Yellow-rumped Flycatcher* and *Marshall Iora* that have been seen here, but we failed. Anyway we saw a few good birds like a pair of *Jungle Owlet* very responsive to tape. The open area around the park office is good too and you can walk until the bridge over the river.

5- DEBERAWEWA

This is another reservoir not far from Tissa wewa, a long track bordering the water and it was good; here we had *Yellow* and *Black Bitterns* and on the left side a boy named Randy came to talk to us and said that he had an *Indian Scops-Owl* roosting very close; we followed him in the streets and we saw a pair of Scops-Owl. Randy and his friends were very happy to watch them through the telescope; he asked nothing for this. On the right side of the reservoir there is an hotel and coconut trees but we didn't find the *Streak-throated Woodpecker* (there is a stake out somewhere but we don't know if it is there).

NUWARA ELIYA & HORTON PLAINS

From Tissamaharama in the south to Nuwara Eliya (160km) we paid 10000Rs to the owner of our hotel who has a car with driver; it took 4h30. There are many hotels in Nuwara Eliya and we chose the Single Tree Hotel on Haddon Hill Road (same road than Alpine Hotel) where we had a room at 2500Rs (there are other prices). From there we could have a short walk to the horse-race grounds down the road, and the small Victoria Park. With a tuc tuc we went to the Hakgala Botanic Gardens, and from the hotel we went to Horton Plains NP. We had a cold and rainy weather during our stay except the Horton Plains day.

All the sites are visible on google map.

1- VICTORIA PARK

Just ask where the park is; from the Single Tree Hotel it is a 700m walk, the park is near a roundabout and between 2 busy streets, it is small; the main entrance is on Uda Pussellawa road; our targets were the *Pied Thrush* and the *Kashmir Flycatcher*, we only found the thrush, on the right side of the park under shady trees, along Park road. We had a good flock and saw a *Sykes's Warbler*.

2- HORSE RACE GROUNDS

Down the Haddon Hill road are these grounds that anyone can cross; we saw several *Pin-tailed Snipes* and others but our target was the *Black-throated Munia*. We failed to find any, even between the grounds and the Victoria Park where it has been seen near the toilets. The rain was a problem.

3- HAKGALA BOTANIC GARDENS

This place is at 9km from town and opens at 8am. You can get there by tuc tuc, or by bus if you wait for the bus n°311 going to Welimada, and they will tell you when to get down. They give a map at the entrance (entry 1100Rs/pers). It was raining and first the birding was spoilt, but a little bit better on the trail at the upper right side of the park (n°15), bordering the Hakgala Nature Reserve (permit needed to get inside). *Sri Lanka Wood-Pigeons* and *Sri Lanka Scimitar-Babbler* were seen here. The *Dull-Blue Flycatcher* came discretely to the tape on the path going from Curator's Bungalow to the Japanese Garden.

4- HORTONS PLAINS NP

This park is 28km from Nuwara Eliya and there is no hotel closer. It was a really beautiful place. You can visit the park by yourself, you just have to find a car taking you to the office where you buy your tickets, then about 1,5km more until the entrance of the track. Our hotel Single Tree has a jeep and a guide called Nimal who is of great company and knows where to find the birds. We forgot the price (5000 or 6000Rs). There is about 1 hour of driving so we left at 5am. En route there is a spot for the *Black-throated Munia* just after the village of Pattipola, about 100m after the railway crossing and a hairpin bend, we checked both sides of the road covered of wetland grasses on the way back but didn't find any. A little bit further, the road enters in some forest, there is a little bridge and a house or shelter on the left, sometimes Nimal said that the *Brown Wood-Owl* on the right side but we failed again. We birded at dawn at the gate waiting for the opening of the ticket office. The *SL Whistling Thrush* can be seen around there; Nimal wanted to be the first to buy the tickets and get in the park as the *SL Wood-Pigeons* can be seen on the road very close, and it was true.

After a while on the right side of the road there is a small pond where we stopped, and we have been waiting for the *Whistling Thrush*, Nimal said that they come from 6:15am, and we had a female at 6:30. Good birding around here. Then we drove until the car park at the entrance of the track which is a loop with great birding and views. We were lucky to have a nice weather and the clouds arrived around 11am.

Birds seen : Common Kestrel, Himalayan Buzzard, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Sri Lanka Wood Pigeon, Spotted Dove, Common Hawk-cuckoo (heard), Crimson-backed Flameback, Orange Minivet, Large-billed Crow, Hill Swallow, Grey Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit, Red-vented Bulbul, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Common Tailorbird, Zitting Cisticola, Sri Lanka Bush-warbler, Green Leaf-warbler, Sri Lanka Scimitar-babbler, Orange-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Sri Lanka Whistling-thrush, Indian Blackbird, Indian Blue Robin, Pied Bushchat, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Sri Lanka White-eye.

Nimal Herath can be joined at 077 6189842, hrthnimal@gmail.com

BIBILE – NILGALA ROAD

From Nuwara Eliya we took east on the A5 during 3h30. We paid 10000Rs arranged by the owner of the Single Tree Hotel. Bibile is on the A5/B57 crossing, we checked at the entrance in Hotel Kinkini which has different rooms from 1500 to 3000Rs. Only one of the staff spoke a little bit of english and it was difficult to ask for a driver taking us until the birding road which is at km22 on the Nilgala and Gal Oya NP road. Anyway when they understood they called Rajita, a young guy who asked 4500Rs for taking us until the road, and coming back in the afternoon. The site is a track at KM22 (about 40-45mn drive) on the Inginiyagala Road east of Bibile, after a police station, on the right side; we went there 2 times before dawn, the 1st time we walked from the beginning but didn't go far because it was very birdy, the 2nd time we asked him to leave 2kms further.

The track passes some houses the 1st kilometer, the gardens are birdy, then it is good all along; after 4,4km there is a river and there it is more forested after it. There can be some elephants from here so it is better to be careful. We tried the *Jungle Nightjar* in early morning on the first kilometers but had no response, only some *Jungle Owlets*; After the river we put the call of the *Painted Francolin*, who answered from the grasses, we walked towards him but we failed; back on the track we put the call again, and we have been waiting until the bird came on view on the track and flew away when he saw us. *Jungle Bush-quails* flushed around 9am. We also were very happy to find a pair of *Marshall's Iora*, but missed our last chance to see the *Sirkeer Malkoha*.

There are other hotels in Bibile, we saw something like Hotel Cambo which seemed good on the way out of town on the road B57 to Kandy (on the right), and if you are in a budget our driver Rajita runs the small hotel Embula on the left before Hotel Cambo, in fact a room in his house and a small restaurant where he offered us a curry. His n° 072 3041177, he only speaks a few english words.

Birds seen : Painted Francolin, Jungle Bush-quail, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Woolly-necked Stork, Shikra, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent-eagle, Red-wattled Lapwing, Spotted + Emerald Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Plum-headed

Parakeet, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Asian Koel, Blue-faced Malkoha, Greater Coucal, Jungle Owlet, Indian Swiftlet, Asian Palm Swift, Crested Swift, Green Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher, Common Hoopoe, Brown-headed + Yellow-fronted + Crimson-throated Barbet + Copper-smith Barbet, Brown-capped Woodpecker, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Dark-rumped Flameback, Indian Pitta, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Orange Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Brown Shrike, Common + Marshall's Iora, Jerdon's + Golden-fronted Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, Barn Swallow, Sri Lanka Swallow, Ashy Drongo, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Black-capped + Red-vented + White-browed Bulbul, Grey-breasted + Ashy + Plain Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Greenish Warbler, Large-billed Leaf-warbler, White-browed Fantail, Black-naped Monarch, Asian Paradise-flycatcher, Brown-capped Babbler, Dark-fronted Babbler, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Southern Hill Myna, Common Myna, Indian Blue Robin, Oriental Magpie Robin, White-rumped Shama, Indian Robin, Tickell's Blue-flycatcher, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Oriental White-eye, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, White-rumped Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia.

UTTAWATAKELLE FOREST (KANDY)

From Bibile we didn't know how to go to Kandy, so we called Malik of the Lakshmi Guest House who has cars and a driver called Mendis. He asked 8000Rs for 3h30-4h of drive, the driver arrived on time to pick us up. So we stayed 1 night in the Lakshmi Guest House (2000Rs) but in our 2nd visit after Kithulgala we preferred to change and be closer to the Uttawatakelle Forest. The Forest Glen Hotel is more expensive (3500Rs) but THE place to stay, bordering the forest. Sadly we had a pouring rain our 2 last days and we missed the *Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl* seen sometimes, even the owner of the Glen Forest can see it sometimes from the hotel. The reserve is small but beautiful. Our great surprise was the sighting of a *Black-throated Munia* that we thought missed for the trip, but we saw an adult feeding on a stump in the forest. The driver Mendis can be contacted directly (and will be probably cheaper) at 077 4291284, tilakasirimendis@yahoo.com

Birds seen : White-bellied Sea-eagle, Alexandrine Parakeet, Brown Fish-Owl, Asian Palm Swift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Dark-rumped Flameback, Crimson-backed Flameback, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Square-tailed Black Bulbul, Common Tailorbird; Large-billed Leaf-warbler, Asian Paradise-flycatcher, Yellow-billed Babbler, Southern Hill Myna, Common Myna, Oriental Magpie Robin, White-rumped Shama, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Loten's Sunbird, Oriental White-eye, Great Tit, White-rumped Munia, Black-throated Munia.

KITHULGALA

At 2h30 from Kandy, we paid the taxi 7500Rs to get there. There are several hotels in the village, most of the birders go to Kithulgala Rest House but we preferred the Sisira's River Lounge which has a *Chestnut-backed Owlet* in its garden. We took the beautiful room n°4 at 42€, the meals are around 5€ and are tasty. Any tuc tuc will show you a cheaper hotel if you want. To join Sisira : riverlounge@sitnet.lk, 077 3500697, or 036 2287793.

As we were at the end of our trip we saw few new species, and we were glad that we had spent several days in Sinharaja as the birding is much more easier than here, but our 3 last days here were relaxing and pleasant. As shown on the map there are 2 ways to join the **Makandawa Rainforest Reserve** and it is interesting to take the bridge as the birding is good until the reserve entrance. The ticket office opens at 8am but it is possible to get in and pay on the way out; the birding was really slow inside, and if you don't go to Sinharaja it is advised to take a guide who knows where to see the *Serendib Scops-Owl*.

Birds seen : Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Indian Pond Heron, Little Cormorant, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Crested Serpent-eagle, Indian Black Eagle, White-breasted Waterhen, Spotted Dove, Emerald Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Alexandrine Parakeet, Layard's Parakeet, Greater Coucal, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Indian Swiftlet, Brown-backed Needletail, Asian Palm Swift, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-throated Kingfisher, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-fronted Barbet, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill,

Brown-capped Woddpecker, Lesser Yellownape, Crimson-backed Flameback, Indian Pitta, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Orange Minivet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, Brown Shrike, Common Iora, Jerdon's Leafbird, Black-hooded Oriole, Indian Jungle Crow, Sri Lanka Swallow, White-bellied Drongo, Sri Lanka Crested Drongo, Grey Wagtail, Black-capped Bulbul, Red-vented + White-browed Bulbul, Common Tailorbird, Dark-fronted Babbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Orange-billed Babbler, Common Myna, Spot-winged Thrush, Oriental Magpie Robin, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Brown-breasted Flycatcher, Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Loten's Sunbird, Oriental White-eye, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, House Sparrow, White-rumped Munia.

