

WESTERN GHATS ENDEMIC BIRDING TOUR

It is possible to sight all the Western Ghats endemics during this tour lasting 8 days. The tour covers Thattekkad, Munnar, Chinnar & Ooty. Thattekkad is one of the finest lowland birding enclaves in South India. While Munnar is home to high altitude endemics like Broad Tailed Grass Bird and the Nilgiri Pipit, Periyar Tiger Reserve is home to the endemic Wayanad Laughing Thrush. At Ooty we will sight the rare Nilgiri Laughing Thrush.



(Small Sunbird - Illustration: Satyan Mepayur)

Departure Dates ex-Kochi

05 Nov 2011

05 Feb 2012

19 Feb 2012

Tour Price: US\$ 1200 per person

(This tour can also be arranged as a private tour to suit your requirements)

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Day 1, 2, 3 : Thattekkad

Early morning arrival at Thattekkad, by far the best birding spot in South India. In an area of approximately 25 square kilometres over 270 species have been recorded. There will also be night birding for the Nightjars, Frogmouths & Owls. Specialties here include Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl, Ceylon Frogmouth, Red Spurfowl, Bay Owl, Rufous Babbler, Blue-faced Malkoha, Brown-breasted, White-bellied Blue-tailed & Rusty-tailed Flycatchers, Grey-headed Bulbul and Wynad Laughing Thrush. Moreover, Thattekkad is ideal for seeing a good number of the endemics of the Western Ghats. The more difficult birds are Wynad Laughing Thrush and Grey-headed Bulbul. Proceed to Urullathany, at the other end of the reserve, for the Bulbul and Laughing Thrush. Also visit Edamalayar and the South side of the river for the owls, Streak-throated Woodpecker and Yellow-billed Babbler. Other notable species likely to

be seen are Red Spurfowl, Ceylon Frogmouth, Blue-faced Malkoha, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Malabar Grey Hornbill, White-bellied and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, Rufous Babbler, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, White-bellied Treepie and Black-throated Munia.

Day 4: Periyar

Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the finest wildlife & birding destinations in South India. With over 320 bird species identified and a leading habitat for the Bengal Tiger, this sanctuary is an ideal destination of our tour. We will go treks, on jeeps and boats for wildlife and birding in the next 2 days. Asiatic elephants, Gaur, sambar, tigers and sloth bear sightings are possible on safaris into the forest. This is also an ideal place to sight the Wayanad Laughing Thrush and the Great Hornbill.

Day 5, 6 : Munnar.

Transfer to Munnar, a hill station situated at 1450m in the centre of a major tea-producing region. The birding areas are on either side of the plateau of the High Range (Nilgiri Hills), at Rajamalai (part of the Eravikulam National Park, 8 km from Munnar), or in the *sholas* - there are dense patches of natural evergreen forest in sheltered valleys. In these surviving forests & grasslands here one can see Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon, Grey-breasted Laughing Thrush, Nilgiri and Black-and-Rufous Flycatchers, White-bellied Shortwing, Nilgiri Pipit, Painted Bush Quail. The grassy plateau is also one of the last habitats of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr.

Day 7: Ooty.

Drive towards Ooty. En-route we will stop over at Chinnar - a unique thorny scrub forest in the rain shadow region of the Western Ghats, about 60 kms from Munnar. One can sight Large Grey Babbler, White-bellied Woodpecker, White-naped Woodpecker, Lesser Whitethroat and Jerdon's Baza, Rain Quail, Blue-breasted Quail, Speckled Piculet, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Sirkeer Malkoha, Oriental Scops Owl, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Black Baza, White-rumped Shama, Streak-throated Swallow and Grey-breasted Laughing Thrush. We will reach Ooty by evening.

Day 8: Ooty-Mudumalai-Kochi

We will bird at the Cairnhill *shola* as well as the Kallatti Ghats en-route to Masinagudi. By late afternoon, depart for Kochi. Tour ends

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Price: US \$ 1200.00 per person on TWIN share, based on 2 persons travelling.

Inclusions:

Price includes accommodation for 7 nights, most meals, transportation to & from Kochi, guide fees, entrance fees. This trip can also

be tailor-made. Extensions to other destinations in South India also possible.

Departures: This trip can be tailor-made to suit your interests of time and budget requirements as necessary.

