

# Essential South India + Andaman Islands Biding Expeditions 2018



February 18 - 28 , 2018

## (10 days 9 nights) Birding + Photography Tour

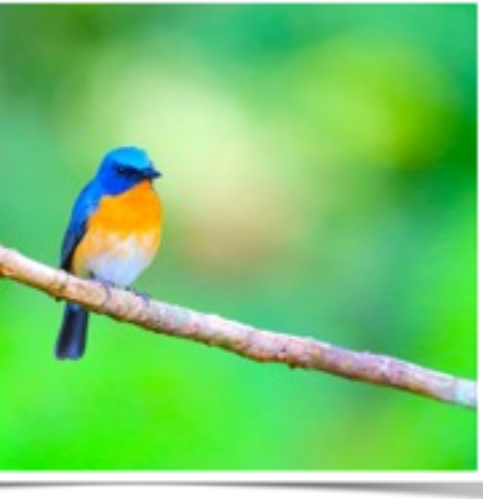
### Best of South India and Andaman Birding

India's premier endemic birding area, the Western Ghats Mountains, a land of endless valleys, pristine tea estates and breathtaking highland vistas, is well-known for harbouring a superb range of highly localised endemic birds and a host of rare mammals. This custom made and comprehensive tour showcases many of these special creatures: the gorgeous Indian Pitta, scarce White-bellied Minivet, Black-chinned Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, rare Sri Lanka Frogmouth, exquisite Malabar Trogon, Malabar Whistling Thrush and Heart-spotted Woodpecker are just some of the incredible birds we will search for, while Slender Lorries, Indian Elephant, Gaur (Indian Bison), Wild Boar and Smooth-coated Otter are potential mammalian highlights.



Our Andaman Islands leg of the tour will see us flying across the Bay of Bengal to Port Blair, Andaman Islands. Located some 1,100 kilometres to the east of peninsula India, this archipelago is far closer to southern Myanmar and Sumatra. This Archipelago is home more many endemic avian wonders and also blessed with beautiful beaches and marine life.

## Itinerary



### Day 1 ( Feb 18, 2018 )

Arrive at Cochin international Airport ( COK ) before noon . We will meet you at the airport and transfer straight to Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Thattekad ( 45 km , 2 hours Drive ) . Check in at the lodge / home stay situated very close to the Bird Sanctuary. By 4 .00 PM we will visit an exclusive bird-bath for a quick introduction to the birds of South India.

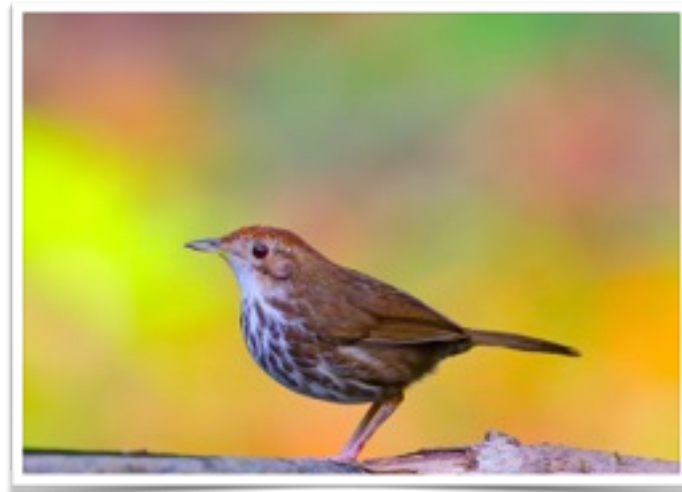
Species expected to see and photograph at the birdbath are : Yellow-browed Bulbul, Flame-throated Bulbul, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Brown Cheeked Fulveta, Dark-fronted Babbler, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, Blue-throated blue flycatcher , Orange Headed Thrush , Blyths Starling, Whistling Thrush etc

Meal Plan : Lunch / Dinner

### Day 2 ( Feb 19 , 2018 )

We will set off to a nearby forest area before dawn with packed breakfast to search forest birds of Thattekad. We will explore various trails at *Ourulanthanni* and nearby settlements before returning to our accommodation for lunch and short break. We will visit another village typical Kerala village “ *Cherupara* ” in the afternoon and bird till dusk before we start our quest for Owls and Nightjars.

Species expected to see are: Malabar Grey Hornbill, Malabar Parakeet , Malabar Trogon , Cylon Frogmouth,



Green and Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Wood Shrike, Nilgiri Sunbird, Orange Headed Thrush, and many more forest species . Our night birding can bag few highly sought after nocturnal species such as Jungle Nightjar, Savanna Nightjar, two species of Scops Owls, Hawk Owls , Fish Owl etc

Meal Plan : Break Fast / Lunch / Dinner



### Day 3 ( Feb 20, 2018 )

Today is a busy day for us. We will travel to “ *Edamalar* ” at dawn with packed breakfast - another endemics rich forest zone situated few kilometres away from our resort.

We will visit the birdbath again in the afternoon to have a fresh look at the feathered visitors. It is natural to see few new guests, which we had missed in our previous visit.

Birds expected to see are: White-bellied Tree pie, Hawk Eagle, Waynad Laughing Thrush, Indian Pitta, Rose ringed Parakeets , Jungle Fowl, Barbets , Bee-eaters and many other forest species .

We will also search for *Slender Lorries* in their natural habitat.

### Day 4 ( Feb 21, 2018 )

Today we will set off to Munnar (70 Km, 2 Hours drive) by 5.00 AM for a day trip with packed breakfast. Munnar is a well known mountain tourist spot, famous for its tea gardens and various picnic spots. We will spend the day soaking in the post card perfect surroundings, and looking for range restricted regional avian specialities till we start our return trip to Thattekad by 5 PM.





Birds expected to see in Munnar are: White – bellied blue Robin, Kerala Laughing Thrush, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Nilgiri Pipit , Nilgiri flycatcher , Emerald Dove , Black-and-Orange flycatcher, broad-tailed Grass-bird ( difficult ) , Rufous Babbler, Canary flycatcher, Square tailed Bulbul and many other Montana specialities.

Meal Plan: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

### Day 5 ( Feb 22 , 2018 )

This morning we will transfer towards , Ooty in the Nilgiris ( Blue Mountains ) , which was once a British Colonial stronghold . The higher elevations of the Western Ghats are dotted with patches of moist evergreen forest, locally known as sholas, and it is these forests that hold many of the region’s most desirable endemics. We will reach at Masanagudi ( 190 km, 6-7, Hours Drive - with birding breaks in between ) . by 7 PM



Birds and mammals expected to see during this long but beautiful drive are : Great Indian Hornbill, collection of raptors, thrushes etc .

We can also expect to see mammals such as Lion tailed Macaque ( 50% chance ) , Nilgiri Languor, Indian Elephants , Spotted deer, Indian guar on our way to Masanagudi.

Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

### Day 6 ( Feb 23 , 2018 )

Our lodge here is conveniently located within striking distance of prime birding habitats, and we will spend the entire day exploring the rich forested areas around Masanagudi in the foothills of the Western Ghats. We will slowly drive up to Ooty town ( 30 KM ) by noon and spend the afternoon at Dodabetta and nearby area for high elevation

species . By 4 PM we will say good by to the mountain town of Ooty and start our decent to Coimbatore ( 85 Kms . 3 hours drive ) for the night stay .

Species expected to see are : Spotted Owlet, White-naped Woodpecker, Indian pitta, Crested Hawk Eagle, Fish Owl, Brown Wood Owl , Indian Serpent Eagle, Bush Quails, Jerdons Leaf bird, collection of Warblers and Babblers . ( Ooty ) Nilgiri Blue Robin, Nilgiri Laughing Thrush, Black and Orange Flycatcher, Blue bearded bee Eater, Indian Black bird, Pied Bush Chat etc



Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

### Day 7 ( Feb 24 , 2018 )

As we have concluded our search for western Ghats species by now , it is time for us to explore another important endemic bird area in

India – **The Andaman Islands** . We will take a morning flight to Port Blair , the administrative capital of Andaman Islands via Chennai , to reach the destination by noon . On arrival, we will transfer straight to our lodge / homestay near Portblair before heading to the nearby birding areas for the first round of birding. We will also do a round of owling in the night to witness nocturnal avian life of the Andamans.

Andaman birds expected to see here are : Andaman Shama, Andaman Crake, Andaman Wood Pecker , Andaman Serpent Eagle, Andaman Scops Owl, Humes Hawk Owl, Andaman Hawk Owl , Oriental Hawk Owl etc

Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner



### Day 8 ( Feb 25, 2018 )

After an early breakfast, we will explore Chidiya Tapu , an important birding area in the Island for range restricted species. Andaman Islands are located 1,100 kilometres to the east of peninsula India, this archipelago is far closer to southern Myanmar and Sumatra. Hence , the many endemic species present have more in common with the Malaysian sub-region than with the Indian sub-continent.

Our Prime Targets here are : Black Baza, Andaman Cuckoo-shrike, Andaman Wood Pigeon, Andaman Flowerpecker, Andaman Cuckoo Dove, collection of Parakeets , Andaman Night Jar , Andaman Teal, Lesser Whistling Duck etc

Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

### Day 9 ( Feb 26 , 2018 )

Today Morning we will travel to Mt Harriet National Park , a well known birding location in Andamans. It is an easy place for birding and rich in birdlife. We will spend the whole day birding at Mt Harriet and nearby locations, and also will try to find time to have a second attempt to locate any important species we might have missed out.

Key Species expected to see in Mt Harriet are : Violet Cuckoo, Andaman Wood Pigeon, Large Cuckoo-shrike, Minivets, Oriental , Spot-breasted Woodpecker, White-breasted Wood swallow, Andaman Drongo, Andaman Bulbul, Black-capped and Rudy Kingfishers , Asian Glossy starling, Chinese Egret ( 50% chance ) , Grey headed Lapwing ,

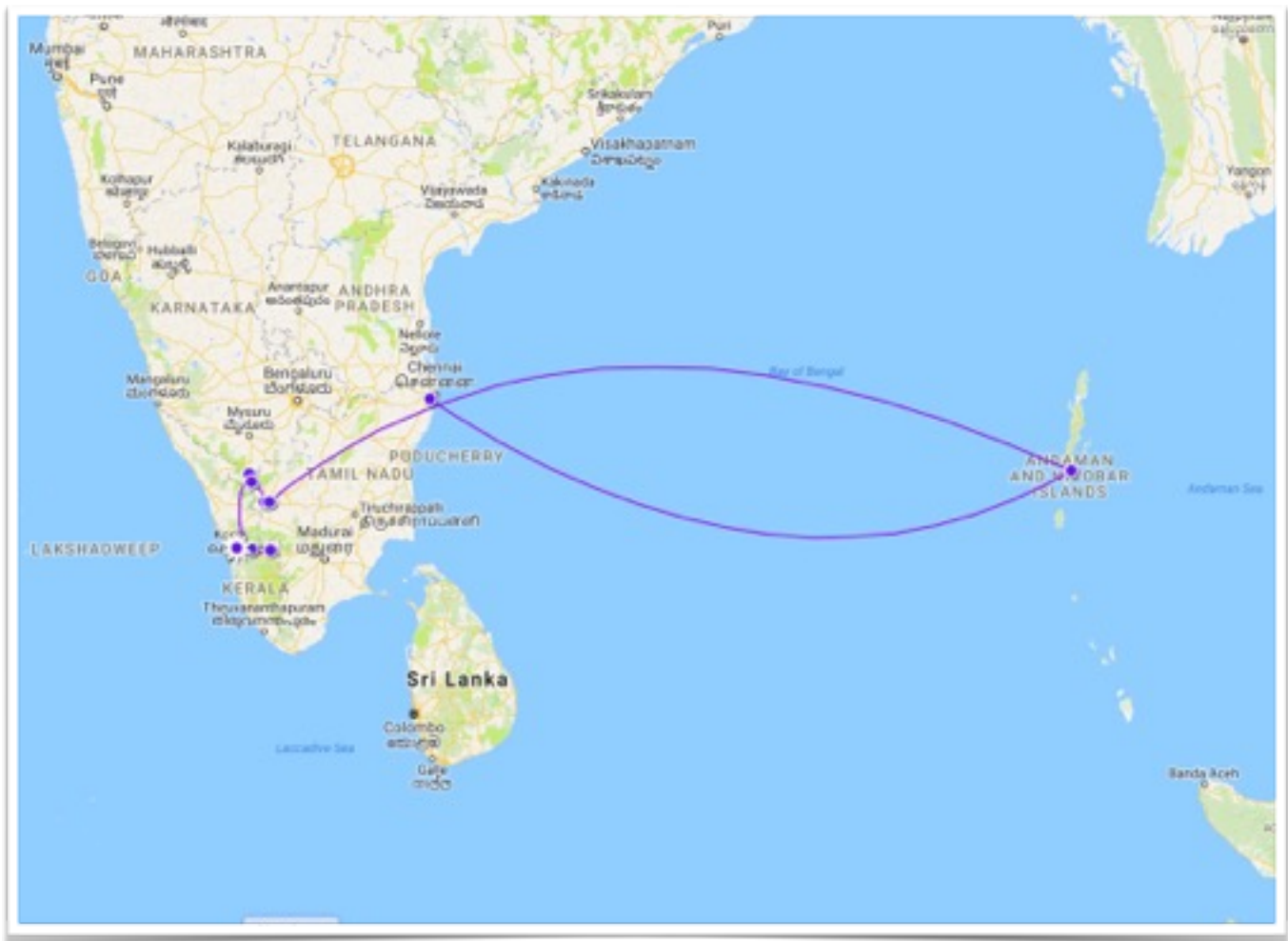
Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner



## Day 10 ( Feb 27, 2018 )

We have a final morning to bird the surrounds of Port Blair before catching our flights back to Chennai. Tour ends

### Tour Map





## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Tour Starting date	: Feb 18, 2018
Tour ending date	: Feb 27, 2018
Tour Starting Point	: Cochin International Airport ( COK )
Tour Ending Point	: Chennai International Airport ( MAA )
Tour Type	: Bird watching / Photography
Group Size	: 6
Accommodation type	: Modern and Comfortable
Food Style	: Indian , Continental , local ( Non vegetarian )
Difficulty level	: Easy ( except few long drives and forest walks )
Weather	: Hot and Humid in most locations except in Mountains
Photography	: Excellent Opportunities

**COST : USD 980 per participant ( twin-share basis )**

**Advance : 50 % at the time of booking and balance on the day of arrival .**

### **INCLUSIONS**

1. All meals and Accommodation as per the plan
2. All ground transportation
3. Guide cost and entrance fees
4. Taxes

### **EXCLUSIONS**

1. Both International and domestic ( coimbatore - Port Blair - Chennai ) airfare
2. VISA and other charges
3. Additional food and beverages
4. Travel insurance and Medical Charges
5. laundry charges , additional sight seeing trips , TIPS etc