

Essential South India + Andaman Islands



(11 days 10 nights) Birding Tour

Best of South India and Andman Birding

India's premier endemic birding area , the Western Ghats Mountains, a land of endless valleys, pristine tea estates and breathtaking highland vistas, 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

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 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

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



Today is a busy day for us. We will travel to “ *Edamalayar* ” 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,

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

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) . Night at Masanagudi.



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 & 7

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. On day 7, 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 night stay .

Avian life 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 8

As we have concluded our search for western Ghats species , 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 2 PM . On arrival, we will transfer straight to our

lodge near Portblair before heading to the nearby birding areas for the first round of birding. We will also do a round of owling 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 9

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 10

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-caped and Rudy Kingfishers , Asian Glossy starling, Chinese Egret (50% chance) , Grey headed Lapwing ,

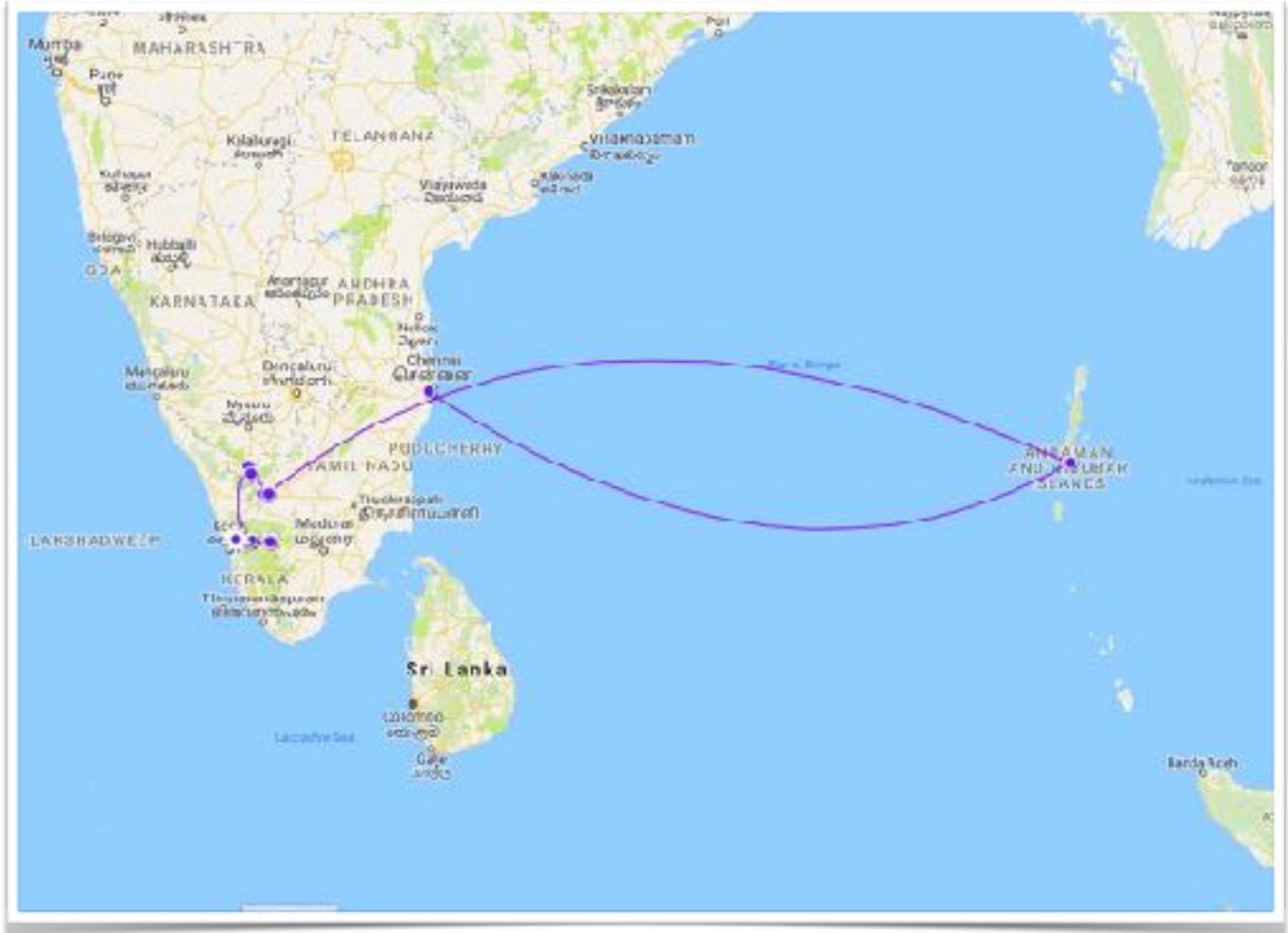
Meal Plan : Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner



Day 11

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 15 , 2018
- Tour ending date : Feb 25, 2018
- Tour Starting Point : Cochin International Airport (COK)
- Tour Ending Point : Chennai International Airport (MAA)
- Tour Type : Bird watching / PRIVATE
- 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 1050 per participant on 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