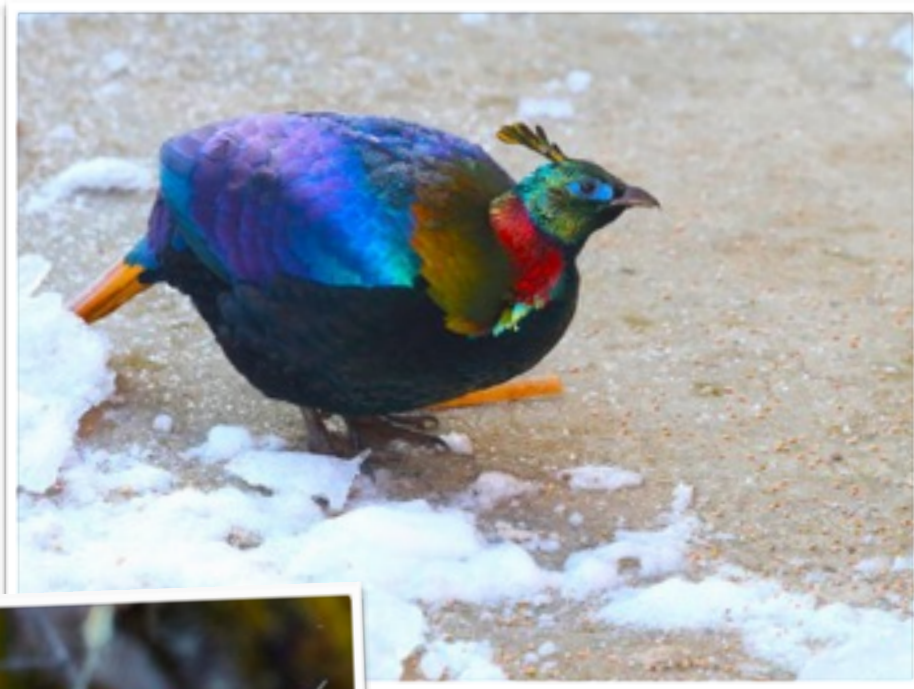


# Bhutan

## Best of Himalayas 2019



**Birding Tour March 17 - 28 , 2019**

## 11 NIGHTS and 12 DAYS

### Day 1. ( March 17) Arrive Paro – transfer Thimphu (2hr. drive)

The flight into the Himalayas is one of the most scenic and breathtaking ones with the views of some of the tallest mountain ranges in the world. On your arrival at the Paro international airport, our representative will receive you.



Drive to Thimphu the capital city of Bhutan (2hrs) drive. On the way to Thimphu take a brief stop at the famous Ta- Chhogagang temple and hike down to the 14-century suspension bridge made out of iron chains. It was built by the greatest engineer and Buddhist poet called Thangtong Gyalpo or Lama Chazampa

Evening birding around sewage pond in Thimphu searching for one of the biggest target birds, Ibisbill, other species we'll be looking for include Black-tailed Crake, Brown Dipper, River

Lapwing, White-capped and Plumbeous Water Redstart, White Wagtail, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Olive-backed Pipit, Russet and Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Hodgson's Redstart, Ruddy Shelduck, Common and Green Sandpiper just to name few..

**Overnight: Hotel Namgay Heritage or Tara Phendenling (Thimphu)**

### Day 2 ( March 18 ) : Thimphu – Dochula – Punakha (3hrs drive)

Early morning we will drive to Punakha over the Dochula Pass (3150) and enjoy the panoramic view of breathtaking Bhutan Himalayas. Here, you will spend some time walking around and photographing the 108 Druk Wangyel Chortens. Built in 2004 to “celebrate the stability and progress that His Majesty has brought to the nation,” this hill of 108 religious monuments (stupas) in the middle of the pass reflects Bhutan's spiritual and artistic traditions

Our day starts from this pass with the magnificent views of eastern Himalayas ranges. The mixed forests of hemlock, fir, oaks, and rhododendron here are good habitat for many good species including, Spotted and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, White-browed Fullvetta, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, just to name few...

After breakfast at the pass, we descend down to the Lamperi Botanical Garden and take the nature walk for about two hours, bird species that we will be looking for include Brown Parrotbil, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Eurasian Jay, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Darjeeling and Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Blue-fronted and Hodgson's Redstart, Straited and White-throated Laughingthrush.

Later we'll drive to Punakha valley and remaining hours of the afternoon we'll bird along the Pho Chu valley looking for one of the main target bird, White-bellied Heron. One of the rarest birds in the world, with a population of less than 60 Worldwide. Other birds we might see Common and Crested Kingfisher, Ibisbill, River and Red-wattled Lapwing, Great Cormorant, Ruddy Shelduck, White and White-browed Wagtail and few species ducks.

**Overnight: Zhingkhram Resort or Damchen Resort (Punakha)**

**Day 3 ( March 19 ) : Full Day inside Jigme Dorji National Park (2hrs. drive)**

We will spend the whole day birding inside the Jigme Dorji National park and along Mo Chu River. We will have good possibilities of seeing Red-headed Trogon, Wallcreeper, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Small and Large Niltava, Black-chinned Yuhinas, a trio of forketails, Pygmy and Spotted Wren-babblers, Woodpeckers, Laughing thrushes, and with luck Pallas's Fish Eagle. We also have a good chance of finding the species like Oriental Turtle Dove, Great Cormorant, Blue Whistling Thrush, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Rufous Sibia, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Green-backed Tit, Brown Dipper, White-capped Water Redstart, White-throated Laughingthrush, Golden-throated Barbet, Great Barbet, Crested Kingfisher, Grey Treepie, Ashy Drongo, Verditer Flycatcher, Brown-throated Treecreeper, Black-throated Tit, Black Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, River Lapwing, Grey Wagtail, Gadwall, and Large-billed Crow etc .



**Overnight: Zhingkhram Resort or Damchen Resort (Punakha)**

**Day 4: ( March 20 ) Punakha – Nobding – Phobjekha (4hrs Drive)**

Early morning you'll set off to the Phobjekha valley (4hrs) stopping along the way to look for Brown Dipper, Ward's Trogon, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Himalayan Cutia, Grey-bellied Tesia, Grey-hooded, Blyth's and Black-faced Warblers, Green-tailed and Mrs. Gloud's Sunbird, Striated Prinia, Blue-capped and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Pale-Blue Flycatcher, White-capped River Chat, White-tailed Nuthatch, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Yellow-browed Tits and few different species of Cuckoos etc .

Before reaching Pelela pass we'll take the road to Phobjekha valley, crossing Lawala pass where the vegetation changes into dwarf bamboo forests, and you'll searching here for the species such as Spotted, Chestnut-crowned and Black-faced Laughingthrushes, Spotted Nutcracker, Great and Brown Parrotbills, Oriental Skylark, White-browed Shortwing Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, chestnut-headed Tesia, Red-billed Chough, Large-billed and Whistler's Warbler, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler and Oriental Skylark and many more .



**Overnight: Hotel Gakeling or Dewachen (Phobjekha)**

**Day 5: ( March 21 ) Phobjekha – Pelela – Trongsa – Bumthang (5hrs. drive)**

After an early breakfast, we'll drive to the Pelela pass (4000) and spend the morning hours birding along the old road at Pelela for high altitude species such as Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant, Satyr Tragopan, Spotted and Scaly Laughingthrush, Himalayan Griffon, Rufous-breasted and Alpine Accentor, White-browed and Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Collared and White-winged Grosbeak, Darjeeling and Rufous-bellied Woodpecker etc . Later we will continue our drive to Trongsa stopping on the way looking for species like Black-throated Tits, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Golden-breasted and White-browed Fulvetta, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler etc .

After crossing the Yotongla pass (3400m) we will start our search for Red-headed Bullfinch, Grey-crested, Coal, Rufous-vented and Yellow-browed Tits, Bar-throated Minla, Green-tailed and Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, Yellow-bellied and White-throated Fantail, Chestnut-crowned, Black-faced and Spotted Laughingthrush, Spotted Nutcracker, Rufous-breasted Accentor,

we'll also make our effort to search for Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler and Great Parrotbill that occur here sometime. Later in the afternoon we continue our drive to the hotel in Chummey valley.

In the evening , we will drive to the temple , located up the mountain to have the very close view of the Himalayan Monal,

**Overnight: Nature Resort | Hotel Ugyenling (Bumthang)**

**Day 6 ( March 22 ) : Bumthang - Thrumshingla - Sengor - Yongkala (5hrs drive)**

We drive from Bumthang to Sengor going over Thrumshingla (3800m). Thrumshingla is the prime habitat for Blood Pheasants and also hold other high-altitude species such as , Snow Pigeons, Orange-flanked, Golden and White-browed Bush Robin, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Spotted Nutcracker, Red-billed Chough, Fire-tailed Sunbirds, Greats and Fulvous Parrotbills, Stripe-throated and Rufous-vented Yuhinas, Grey-crested, coals, Rufous-vented Tits, White-browed Fulvetta, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Plain-backed Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper Buff-barred, Ashy-throated, Blyth's and Large-billed Leaf Warbler etc .

After crossing picturesque Sengor we will hit the Bhutan's wet subtropical forest and one of the finest birding areas in the Himalayas. The species we'll be searching for include Ward's Trogon, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Great and Golden-throated Barbets, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Scarlet and Grey-chinned Minivets, Little Forktail, Black-headed Shrike Babbler, Hoary-throated Barwing and many.

**Overnight: Trogon Villa (Yongkala)**

**Day 7 & 8: ( March 23-24) Yongkala - Namling - Limithang Road**

We will spend two full days birding the upper and lower Limithang road. This Yongkala-Limithang road has been considered as one of the best birding sites in Asia . It offers the birder an opportunity to access wide varieties of Habitats from the pristine broad-leaved to the coniferous forest that spans across a vast altitudinal range. All this are protected within the Thrumshing La National Park.



Some of the species you'll be searching for here are flocks of busy White-breasted and Black-throated Parrotbills, Golden-breasted, Yellow-throated, Rufous-winged and Nepal Fulvettas, Rufous-throated, Long-billed, Pygmy and Sikkim Wedge-billed Wren Babbler, Spotted Elachura, Grey-bellied and Slaty-bellied Tesia, Red-headed and Ward's Trogon, Hoary-throated and Rusty-fronted Barwing, Great and Golden-throated and Blue-throated Barbet, Cutia, Black-faced, Whistler's and Grey-cheeked Warblers, White-tailed Nuthatch, Grey-chinned and Scarlet Minivet, Sultan and Black-spotted Yellow Tit, Coral-billed and Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Black-chinned, Whiskered, Black-chinned and White-naped Yuhinas, and Black Eagle, during these two days we'll also make all our effort to search for one of the highly sought species like Beautiful Nuthatch , Rufous-necked Hornbill etc.

**Overnight: Trogon Villa (Yongkala)**

**Day 9: ( March 25 ) Yongkala - Sengor - Bumthang - Trongsa (7hrs. drive)**



After the final morning of birding in this wonderful habitat, you'll be retracing our way back to Trongsa passing through the Sengor valley, after crossing one of the high passes, the Thrumshing La (3800m). Along the drive, we'll look for the missing high altitude species such as Snow Pigeon, Orange-flanked Bush-Robin, Spotted Nutcracker, Red-billed Chough, Great Parrotbill, and Stripe-throated Yuhina. We continue through the valley of Bumthang, after crossing the Bumthang valley it is another 3hrs drive to Trongsa crossing the

Yotongla pass (3400 )

**Overnight: Yangkhil Resort / similar**

**Day 10: ( March 26 ) Trongsa - Paro (8hrs. drive)**

We leave our hotel in the morning and we commence our trip back to Paro. We do so with an eight hours journey that will bring us back to Paro. We bird along the way for any missed species as we retrace our footsteps by following the same road as we came. In the evening we arrive in Paro where a fine meal awaits us.

**Overnight: Gangtey Palace or Hotel Olathang (Paro)**

**Day 11: ( March 27 ) Paro – Chelila Birding (3hrs. drive)**

Today , we will set off early in the morning to the cool alpine meadow of Chelila pass (3890m). This is the highest pass in Bhutan accessible by car. Here we should be reward with the three different species of Pheasants, Colorful Himalayan Monals, Blood Pheasants and Kalij Pheasants. We will also see other birds such as Rufous-bellied and Darjeeling Woodpecker, Large Hawk and Eurasian Cuckoo, Black Eagle, Eurasian Jay, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Spotted Nutcracker, Long-tailed Minivet, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Rufous-gorgeted and Ultramarine Flycatcher, Indian Blue Robin, White-browed Bush Robin, Orange-flanked Bush Robin, Blue-fronted Redstart, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Rufous-vented, Coal, Green-backed and Grey-crested Tits, Buff-barred Warbler, Tickell's Leaf, Blyth's Leaf and Large-billed leaf Warblers, White-throated, Black-faced, Chestnut-crowned and Spotted Laughingthrushes, Dark-rumped and White-browed Rosefinches etc .



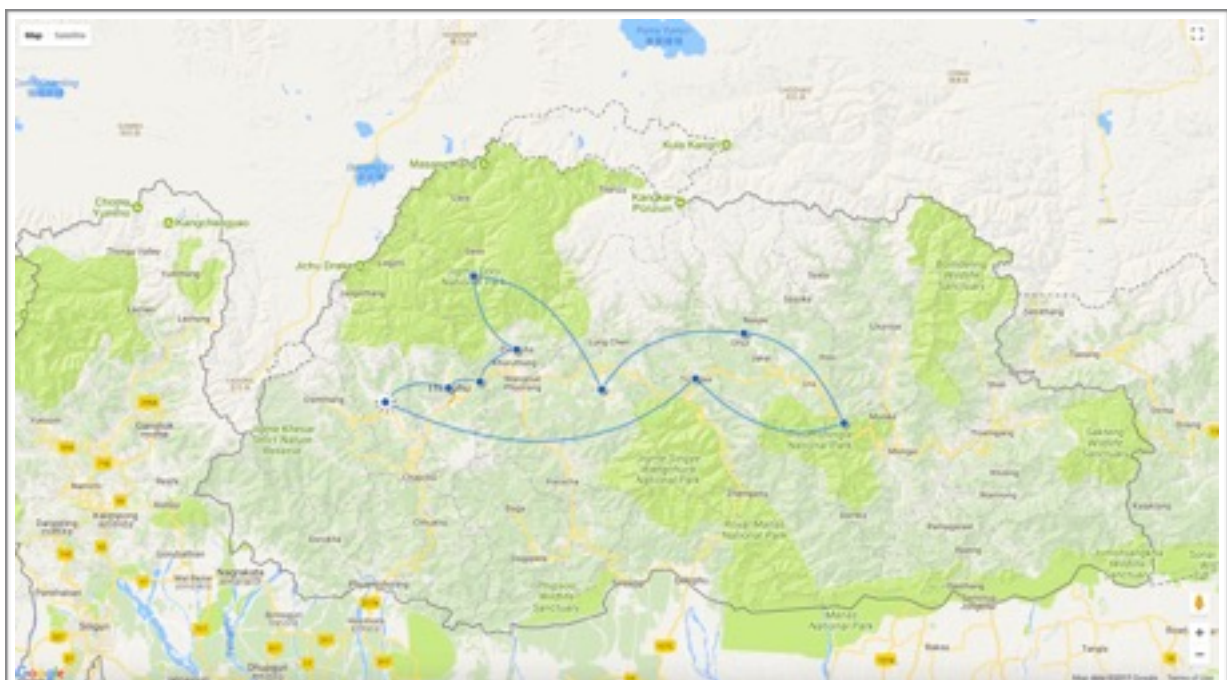
**Afternoon: free time to stroll around Paro town**

**Overnight: Gangtey Palace or Hotel Olathang (Paro).**

**Day 12: ( March 28 ) Departure**

**After breakfast at hotel our representative or your tour guide will drive you to the airport and bid you good-bye.**

### Tour MAP



**COST : USD 2750** per participant in Twin share

**Single Supplement : TBA**

**VISA fee : US 40** per person

### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Tour Starting Point</b>	<b>: Paro International Airport , Bhutan</b>
<b>Tour Ending Point</b>	<b>: Paro International Airport , Bhutan</b>
<b>Group Size</b>	<b>: 6</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>: 3 Star / Best available in each locations</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>: Bhutanese , Continental</b>
<b>Difficulty Level</b>	<b>: Moderate , few long drives</b>
<b>Photography</b>	<b>: Excellent</b>

#### *Inclusions*

- 1. All Ground Transport , Accommodation , Meals , Guide fees .**

#### *Exclusions*

- 1. Flight Tickets , Additional Menu , Beverages, Travel Insurance , Medical expenses , Camera fees , Tips etc**

*Photo Credit : Sabu Kinattukara*