

Birds seen in India (SW Uttar Pradesh, North Madhya Pradesh, Kolkata, Andaman Islands)
18 January – 1 February 2007 – Trip report

by Carlo Castellani¹

Itinerary

day **main locations**

18 Delhi (airport to centre to Southern bus station) to (bus) Agra, Uttar Pradesh

19 Agra (bus station) to (car) Fatehpur Sikri to Sikandra [*picture below left*] to Agra.



20 Agra (bus station, Taj Mahal [*picture above right*], Red Fort, railway) to (train) Jhansi.

21 Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) to (autorickshaw) Orchha (Madhya Pradesh) and back

22 Jhansi to (bus) Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh)

23 Khajuraho

24 Khajuraho

25 Khajuraho to (air) Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)

26 Varanasi (airport, Ganges bank [*picture below left*]) to (air) Delhi (airport) to (air) Kolkata (West Bengal, airport).



27 Kolkata (airport) to (air) Port Blair (airport and port) to (ferry) Havelock Island [*picture above right*] (Andamans and Nicobars)

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28 Havelock (Elephant Beach [picture below left], by feet).



29 Havelock (Jetty, Eastern road along the coast Southward and the to the interior valley and forest behind the elephant training centre, then to Beach No. 7 [picture above right], by bicycle and feet).

30 Havelock (Jetty to Beach No. 7 [picture below left] and back, bicycle) to (ferry) Port Blair.



31 Port Blair to (ferry) Bamboo Flats to (autorickshaw) Panighat to (feet) Mount Harriet National Park (Forest rest house, Mt. Carpenter, coastline) [picture above right], lighthouse, Panighat back to Port Blair

01 Port Blair to (air) Kolkata (airport, highway to city) to (air) Delhi (airport, centre and back)

02 Delhi (airport).

Species check-list

species *photographed	ref. to calendar above	details
<i>Accipiter badius</i> – shikra	19, 23, 25	Bold: out of range as per Kazmierczak's <i>Birds of the Indian Subcontinent</i> Sikandra
<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> – jungle myna	01	2, Kolkata airport
<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i> - bank myna	19, 23, 25	West of Agra.
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i> - common myna	19, 23, 27	
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> – common sandpiper	20, 25, 28, 30, 31	anywhere water (fresh and salty)
<i>Aegithina tiphia</i> – common iora	24	1
<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> – white-breasted waterhen	20	1, Jamuna river
<i>Anthus campestris</i> – tawny pipit	23	4

Anthus trivialis – tree pipit	21, 23	Orchha, Khajuraho, small flock
Aplonys payanensis – Asian glossy starling	28, 29, 30, 31	common
Apus affinis – house swift	20, 22, 23	common
Ardea cinera – grey heron	20	2, Jamuna river
Ardeola grayi – Indian pond-heron	19, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30	common, ad.and juv.
Artamus leucorhynchus – white-breasted woodswallow*	29, 30	common, paddyfields
Athene brama – spotted owlet*	21, 23	1, Orchha; 1, Khajuraho.



Artamus leucorhynchus






Athene brama






Charadrius alexandrinus

Bubulcus ibis - cattle egret	18, 19, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30	common
Casmerodius albus – great egret	20	2, Jamuna river
Centropus andamanensis – brown coucal	29	2, high forest inland of the elephant training centre
Centropus sinensis – greater coucal	25	1, Khajuraho
Cercomela fusca – brown rock-chat	19, 20, 25	Sikandra, Taj Mahal, Varanasi
Ceryle rudis – pied kingfisher	22, 23	1, along the road from Jhamsi to Khajuraho; 2, Khajuraho
Chalcophaps indica – emerald dove	29, 31	1, East coast; 2, slopes of Mt. Carpenter.
Charadrius alexandrinus – Kentish plover*	30	about 50, Beach No. 7
Chrysomma sinense – yellow-eyed babbler	23	common
Collocalia esculenta – glossy swiflet	27, 28, 29, 30, 31	very common anywhere
Columba livia (feral) - rock dove	18, 19, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30	common, settled areas
Copsychus malabaricus albiventris – white-rumped shama	29	1 female, high forest inland of the elephant training centre
Copsychus saularis – Oriental magpie robin	23, 28, 30, 31	very common
Coracias benghalensis – Indian roller	22, 23, 25	very common
Coracina macei andamana – large cuckooshrike*	28, 29, 31	1, 2, 1 (Mt. Harriet) respectively
Coracina striata – bar-bellied cuckooshrike	31	1, junction of path uphill from Panighat and metalled road
Corvus macrorhynchos – large-billed crow	19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30	
Corvus splendens - house	18, 19, 23, 25	common

crow		
Cypsiurus balasiensis – Asian palm swift	01	2, Kolkata airport
Dendrocitta bayleyi – Andaman treepie	31	1, East slope of Mt. Carpenter, in mixed flock
Dendrocitta vagabunda – rufous treepie	21, 23	1, Orchha; 1, Khajuraho.
Dendrocopos macei andamanensis – fulvous-breasted woodpecker	28, 29, 31	common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus flammeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus and Irena puella.
Dendronanthus indicus – forest wagtail	31	2 between Mt. Harriet and Mt. Carpenter, 2 creek close to coastline
Dicrurus andamanensis – Andaman drongo	28, 29, 30, 31	very common inside forest in association with Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus flammeus, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Dendrocopos macei and Irena puella.
Dicrurus macrocercus – black drongo	20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29	5 (3+2) at 2 locations in paddy fields on Havelock Is.
Dicrurus paradiseus – greater racket-tailed drongo*	28, 29, 30, 31	very common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus, Pericrocotus flammeus, Dendrocopos macei and Irena puella.
		
Coracina macei andamana	Dicrurus paradiseus	Halcyon capensis intermedia
Dinopium benghalense – black-rumped flameback	25	2, Khajuraho
Dryocopus hodgעי – Andaman woodpecker	29, 31	1, high forest inland of the elephant training centre; common on Mt. Harriet; all males.
Ducula aenea – green imperial pigeon	28, 29, 30, 31	very common
Egretta garzetta – little egret	20	1, around Gwalior (along the railway)
Elanus caeruleus - black-shouldered kite	18	2, airport
Eudynamys scolopacea – Asian koel	31	a pair, path uphill from Panighat
Eurystomus orientalis – dollarbird	30	2, beach No. 7
Falco tinnunculus – common kestrel	21, 23	1, Orchha; 1, Khajuraho.
Ficedula subrubra ² - Kashmir flycatcher	23	2 females or 1 st winter

² It is very unlikely that this rare flycatcher would be present in the dry countryside around Khajurajo in January, considering the probable presence of the much commoner and very similar red-throated flycatcher (*F. parva*). I spent some time carefully observing one specimen busy in feeding. Referring to the plates of Kazmierczak's *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, it corresponded precisely to *F. subrubra*, in particular for the throat and breast colour; further the white patches at the base of tail were less evident than in *F. parva* either when perched and when in flight. I have previously observed *F. parva* only twice and not heard or memorized its call. The bird uttered frequently its call matching the "chack" reported by Kazmierczak and by

Gallinago stenura – pintail snipe	30	1, beach No. 7
Gallinula chloropus – common moorhen	30	1, pond along the road jetty-beach No. 7
Gracula religiosa – common hill myna	28, 29, 30	common (not far out of high forest)
Gyps bengalensis – white-rumped vulture	01	at least 30, along the highway to Kolkata, ad. and imm.
Gyps indicus – Indian vulture	21	at least 4 in Orchha, 1 on nest
Halcyon capensis intermedia – stork-billed kingfisher*	28	1, Elephant Beach
Halcyon smyrnensis – white-throated kingfisher*	19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31	very common
Haliaeetus leucogaster – white-bellied sea eagle*	28, 29, 30, 31	very common along the coast, ad. + imm.
		
Halcyon smyrnensis	Haliaeetus leucogaster	Lanius cristatus
Himantopus himantopus – black-winged stilt	19, 20, 22, 23	most common wader, esp. at very polluted pools
Hippolais caligata – booted warbler	24	1
Hirundinapus giganteus – brown-backed needletail	29	4, East coast
Hirundo concolor – dusky crag martin	21	2, Orchha
Hirundo daurica japonica – red-rumped swallow	30	1, beach No. 7
Hirundo rustica – barn swallow	20, 29, 30, 31	1, Agra; lonely individuals, Andamanes.
Hirundo smithii – wire-tailed swallow	23	1
Hypothymis azurea – black-naped monarch	28, 29, 31	common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Pericrocotus flammeus, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Dendrocopos macei and Irena puella.
Irena puella – Asian fairy bluebird	28, 29, 30, 31	very common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus flammeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus and Dendrocopos macei.
Lanius cristatus – brown shrike*	28, 29, 30, 31	very common, fields and opening in vegetation
Lanius schach erythronotus – long-tailed shrike	21, 22, 23	common
Larus ridibundus – black-headed gull	26	100s, Ganges river
Lonchura striata fumigata – white-rumped munia*	29	5, paddyfields South of the elephant training centre
Loriculus vernalis – vernal hanging parrot	28, 29, 30, 31	very common

the Birdlife Species Factsheet (www.birdlife.org) and not those reported for F. parva by Kazmierczak or those either on text or recorded of the CD-ROM of *Birds of Western Palearctic*.

Megalaima haemacephala – coppersmith barbet	21	1, Orchha
Megalaima zeylanica – brown-headed barbet	20, 22	1, Taj Mahal; 1, Khajuraho
Merops leschenaulti – chestnut-headed bee-eater*	29, 30, 31	common
		
Lonchura striata fumigata		Merops leschenaulti Oriolus chinensis
Merops orientalis – green bee-eater	23	4
Mesophoyix intermedia – intermediate egret	23	1
Metopidius indicus – bronze-winged jacana	23	1
Milvus migrans - black kite	18, 19, 23, 25	very common; concentrations up to 100s
Motacilla alba – white wagtail	19, 20, 22, 23, 25	
Motacilla cinerea – grey wagtail	21, 29, 31	1(Orchha), 1 and 1 respectively.
Motacilla flava – yellow wagtail	23, 28, 29, 30	Khajuraho: near water; Andamanes: paddyfields
Motacilla maderaspatensis – white-browed wagtail	24	2
Muscicapa dauurica – Asian brown flycatcher	28, 29	1 and 1 respectively, forest
Nectarinia asiatica – purple sunbird	19, 23	common
Nectarinia jugularis – olive-backed sunbird	28, 29, 30	very common
Neophron percnopterus – Egyptian vulture	19, 21, 22, 23	common, esp. in Orchha, ad. and subad. at any stage
Ocyrceros birostris – Indian gray hornbill	20, 23	Taj Mahal
Oriolus chinensis – black-naped oriole*	29, 30, 31	very common on Havelock; common Mt. Harriet NP
Oriolus oriolus – golden oriole	23	4
Orthotomus sutorius – common tailorbird	19, 23	West of Agra
Passer domesticus - house sparrow	18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30	common, settlements. 1 male in Khajuraho constantly fighting against a mirror.
Pavo cristatus – Indian peafowl	19	sub-urban areas; 1, along railway around Gwalior in open countryside
Pericrocotus cinnamomeus – small minivet	28, 29, 31	common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus flammeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Dendrocopos macei and Irena puella.
Pericrocotus flammeus – scarlet minivet	28, 29, 31	common, in mixed flocks with Dicrurus andamanensis, Hypothymis azurea, Pericrocotus cinnamomeus, Dicrurus paradiseus, Dendrocopos macei and Irena puella.
Petronia xanthocollis – chestnut-shouldered petronia	23	a flock of about 20
Phalacrocorax niger – little	21, 23	3, Orchha; 1 Khajuraho

cormorant		
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	20	about 5, Jamuna river
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> <i>phoenicuroides</i> – black redstart	21, 23	common
<i>Phylloscopus fuligiventer</i> – smoky warbler	21	1, Orchha
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i> – Eurasian spoonbill	20	2, Jamuna river
<i>Prinia inornata</i> – plain prinia	21	1, Orchha
<i>Psittacula alexandri</i> – red- breasted parakeet	28, 29, 30	very common
<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i> – plum-headed parakeet	23	a flock of about 6
<i>Psittacula eupatria</i> – alexandrine parakeet	30	about 10, plantation at highest point of road jetty-beach No. 7
<i>Psittacula krameri</i> - ring- necked parakeet	19, 23, 25	Agra. Common. Exploring nests: Sikandra, Khajuraho
<i>Psittacula longicauda</i> – long- tailed parakeet	29, 30, 31	small flocks
<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> – red- vented bulbul	20, 21, 22, 23, 01	Orchha and Khajuraho, P.c. cafer; Kolkata airport, P.c. <i>bengalensis</i>
<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i> – red- whiskered bulbul	28, 29, 30, 31	very common even deep into primary forest
<i>Riparia paludicola</i> – plain martin	23	1
<i>Saxicola caprata</i> – pied bushchat	23	1 male
<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i> – Indian robin	23	very common
<i>Spilornis elgini</i> – Andaman serpent eagle*	28, 31	1, Elephant Beach; 2, East coast of South Andaman
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> – Eurasian collared dove	20	Taj Mahal
<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> – laughing dove	20, 23, 25	
<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i> – red collared dove	20, 28, 29, 30, 31	Taj Mahal. Very common in paddy fields in Havelock Is.
<i>Sturnus contra</i> – Asian pied starling	19, 23	West of Agra
<i>Sturnus erythropygius</i> <i>andamanensis</i> – white- headed starling	28, 29, 30, 31	common
<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i> – brahminy starling	23	common
<i>Sylvia althaea</i> – Hume’s lesser withethroat	25	2, Khajuraho
<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> – ruddy shelduck	20	20, Jamuna river
<i>Todiramphus chloris</i> – collared kingfisher*	30, 31	3, beach No. 7; 3, East Coast.



Spilornis elgini



Todyramphus chloris

Treron phoenicoptera – yellow-footed green pigeon	01	2, Kolkata airport
Tringa glareola – wood sandpiper	23	at least 4
Tringa nebularia – common greenshank	20	at least 2, Jamuna river
Tringa totanus – common redshank	20, 23	about 10, Jamuna river
Turdoides malcolmi – large grey babbler	23	a flock of about 10
Turdoides striatus – jungle babbler	19, 23, 25	Sikandra
Upupa epops – common hoopoe	20, 23	common. Taj Mahal
Vanellus duvaucelii – river lapwing	20	2, Jamuna river
Vanellus indicus – red-wattled lapwing	19, 22, 23	common
Vanellus malabaricus – yellow-wattled lapwing	23	2
Zoothera citrina – orange-headed thrush	29	1, East coast (creek)
Zosterops palpebrosus – Oriental white-eye	23	2