These alpine conifers and rhododendron shrubs mix with juniper shrubs at 12,000 ft; after that there are only juniper shrubs. Tree line mostly fade away beyond 13,500-14,000 ft. Northern slopes of high Himalayas makes it a cold desert then.

**Date:** 10th February to 14th February 2016

**Coordinates:** 27.195346, 88.783953

**Habitat:**

- Montane Forest.
- Temperate Coniferous.
- Broadleaf.
- Riverine.
- Alluvial.
- Alpine steppe.
- Sub Alpine Forest.
- High altitude marshes.
- Cultivation Land.
- Human Habitat.

**Temperature Range:** -5°C – 10°C

**Altitude Range:** 5000' to 13500' (from MSL)

*Bird Checklist (As per Birds of Indian Subcontinent field guide by Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, Tim Inskipp):*

1. Himalayan Monal
2. Oriental Honey Buzzard
3. Hen Harrier
4. Eurasian Sparrowhawk
5. Himalayan Buzzard
6. Himalayan Griffon
7. Rufous-bellied Eagle
8. Snow Pigeon
9. Oriental Turtle Dove
10. Golden-throated Barbet
11. Grey-headed Woodpecker
12. Little Owl
13. Long-tailed Minivet
14. Yellow-bellied Blue Magpie
15. Grey Treepie
16. Eastern Jungle Crow
17. House Crow
18. Green-backed Tit
19. Rufous-vented Tit
20. Himalayan Bulbul
21. Black-creasted Bulbul
22. Red-vented Bulbul
23. Ashy-throated Warbler
24. Mandelli’s Leaf Warbler
25. Whistler Warbler
26. Golden Babbler
27. Rufous-capped Babbler
28. Striated Laughingthrush
29. Black-faced Laughingthrush
30. Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush
31. Rusty-fronted Barwing
32. Rufous-winged Fulvetta
33. White-browed Fulvetta
34. Red-billed Leiothrix
35. Rufous Sibia
36. Whiskered Yuhina
37. Stripe-throated Yuhina
38. Rufous-vented Yuhina
39. Winter Wren
40. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch
41. Blue Whistling Thrush  
42. Rufous-breasted Bush Robin  
43. White-throated Redstart  
44. Plumbeous Water Redstart  
45. Blue-fronted Redstart  
46. Slaty-backed Forktail  
47. Grey Bushchat  
48. Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush  
49. Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher  
50. Large Niltava  
51. Orange-bellied Leafbird  
52. Fire-breasted Flowerpecker  
53. Green-tailed Sunbird  
54. Streaked Spiderhunter  
55. House Sparrow  
56. Eurasian Treesparrow  
57. Alpine Accentor  
58. Rufous-breasted Accentor  
59. Maroon-backed Accentor  
60. Grey Wagtail  
61. Olive-backed Pipit  
62. Yellow-breasted Greenfinch  
63. Plain Mountain Finch  
64. Dark-breasted Rosefinch  
65. White-browed Rosefinch  
66. Red-headed Bullfinch

**Mammal checklist (as per the Indian Mammals | A Field Guide by Vivek Menon):**

1. Himalayan Brown Goral  
2. Himalayan Serow  
3. Moupin’s Pika  
4. Siberian Weasel  
5. Yellow-throated Marten

**Participants:**

1. Dibyendu Ash(L)  
2. Mehul Patel  
3. Glay Namgyal Bhutia
How does it look when his majesty walks on snowy pasture? Golden lights of the evening makes it lovely and charismatic! Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*)

Our day-1 at Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary started with the sighting of Golden-throated Barbet. Later as the wildlife photography tour advanced, we saw some other birding rarities! Golden-throated Barbet (*Psilopogon franklinii*)
At first we saw a flock of 5-6 came and were perched over our head; spending few minutes they flew off! Then we ended up with record shots only. Later while we were about to start our breakfast an individual came and was perched at eye level. We couldn’t miss it this time! **Red-headed Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula erythrocephala*)

A female of **Himalayan Brown Goral** (*Naemorhedus goral*) on Snow. See how the coat color changes in winter months for them! You can experience this only in winter. As the summer arrives they would shade winter coat and coat color would become rich russet brown.
Have you ever seen a **Himalayan Serow** (*Capricornis thar*) in broad daylight? GoingWild's participant experienced so during the photography trip to east Sikkim. Another rocking surprise from Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary! This schedule is no less than a tiger according to WPA. Hope you will enjoy this beauty!

Photographing birds on snowy outfield is always challenging. In Feb we saw White-throated Redstart in East Sikkim at an altitude over 13,500 ft; whereas in West Sikkim we saw them at 7,500 ft. **White-throated Redstart** (*Phoenicurus schisticeps*)
Happiness is when you see a feathery puff ball basking in sun in coldest winter months. This Alpine Accentor we saw on 11th February resting on Alpine Steppe grassland. **Alpine Accentor (Prunella collaris nipalensis)**

How many of you have seen 'Siberian Weasel' in the wild? On 14th Feb, during our last day of birding in East Sikkim; we were having a cup of tea just before leaving our home stay. Meanwhile, a movement beneath the stones, drew my attention. Following its movement, we captured it in our frames. This is how, Pangolakha gives surprises! **Siberian Weasel (Mustela sibirica subhemachalana)**
A flock of Snow Pigeons flying over snowy pasture. I still remember we enjoyed momos that evening! **Snow Pigeon** *(Columba leuconota)*

White-browed Fulvetta munching on flower petals. Such pristine scenes can be captured in Pangolakha. **White-browed Fulvetta** *(Fulvetta vinpectus)*
A Rufous-breasted Bush Robin played with us for 2-3 minutes while we were descending downhill on 12th April. It was perched inside a bush thicket beside a small stream. **Rufous-breasted Bush Robin** (*Tarsiger hyperythrurus*).

A female of White-browed Rosefinch foraging on snowy pasture just beneath rhododendron shrubs above 12,000 ft. **White-browed Rosefinch** (*Carpodacus thura*).
A Plain Mountain Finch preening itself at Nathang. It was wonderful to see them in such a huge number, flying off from the ground in unison and roosting down on high altitude marsh land. **Plain Mountain Finch** (*Leucosticte nemoricola*)

Mostly this owl species has been recorded from Ladakh region in India. This time we got them from Sikkim at an altitude of 13,700 ft (or 4,175 mtrs) from an abandoned nomad house. The genus name 'Athene' comes from the Pegan goddess 'Athena'; is the goddess worshiped for wisdom, courage, art and skill. In sanatan culture 'Saraswati' is a derivative of that; though 'Laxmi' is seen mounted on Owl. Owls are long been symbols of wisdom and courage. That is an ethno-ornithology part. **Little Owl** (*Athene noctua*)
Another commoner and gorgeous representative from Eastern Himalayas - The Golden babbler! In a mixed flock of 8-10 different species, they came to feast on this tree. Brilliant yellow color and that of black lores significantly enhances their beauty. Though beautiful, these lovely bunnies; hardly give opportunity to photograph them properly. 

**Golden Babbler** (*Stachyridopsis chrysaea*)

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**Happy Birding!** [www.goingwild.in](http://www.goingwild.in)

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