I first visited Eaglenest WLS in West Kemang district of Arunachal Pradesh in 2008 as part of a bird survey organized by Ramana Athreya. The highlight of that trip was a Wedge bill wren babbler (now known as Sikkim wedge billed babbler or Blackish breasted babbler) who responded to playback and came out in the open for over five minutes. Birds response to playback was very different on this current trip.

This trip was done without any tour operator. We organized it all. We only hired local guides at sites. The only advance booking we did was for Eaglenest. We planed the trip by reading trip reports and by using our own experience. This report comes to help people organize a self-made trip and for those that book a tour, to know what to expect. Some visiting cards of important contacts are in the end of this report. This was a target birding trip so we focused only on birds we were looking for and recorded other species we saw while at it. We prepared a list of all birds we wanted and in which sites we could find them so birds that were seen earlier where not searched for later.

The team
Noam Shany, Oz Horin and myself were birding together as children in the late 1970’s. Later we went different ways. Myself, I live in Goa, south India, since over 30 years. Since 2010, I produce films about birds and birding in India. Please watch my work on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/user/mrdavidstanton. Oz lives in Israel and he wants to see and photograph at list one species of every family of birds in the world. Noam live in Peru. He co-wrote the first field guide to the birds of Peru together with James Clements and he is an advisor for the government of Peru on nature conservation. Noam is an expert in using playback recording and in Eaglenest he celebrated his 7000’s lifer.
Birds names
In our modern time of taxonomy, birds names are being changed annually. In this trip report, I decided to follow the names as are in the Grimmet & Inskipp field guide “Birds of the Indian subcontinent” 2011 as it is the most popular field guide and most people are familiar with these names. However, in some cases I put in brackets other names.

Using playback recording
If you object using this method you better not come to bird in this area. This is the only way you can get to see the special birds of this region. All the guides are using playback recording. It has its bad effects. Most birds did respond to playback but very few came out in the open like the Wedge billed wren babbler I saw 10 years ago. Mostly, birds did not come out of the bush and offered a very poor view for a brief of a second if any view at all. With many it took over an hour and with many others we gave up. Basically early morning has better success. Those who travel with an organized group should understand that not all the group members get to see all the birds.

Guides
There are many more guides that we did not meet and do not know. In this report I Mentioned names and numbers of local guides we used. There are a few very professional guides based in Kaziranga that cover the entire northeast. They all can organize full trip and probably permits. I can recommend Polas 8011588900, Rafikul 8133964461 and Papu 9508566179.
We met in several occasions groups led by Bac Voyagers who are based in Itanagar, 8729947167/8259846105.
Peter Lobo is the most experienced guide in the area. Many guides of the Northeast were trained by him 9800117403.

Permit to visit Arunachal Pradesh
Indian citizens can get this permit on the spot when entering the state. Foreigners need to apply in advance. We contact Indi Glow (9436426781) who is the man in charged of Eaglenest conservation community and he arranged it for us. It is a simple procedure that takes about a month and cost 4000rp each. It is valid for 28 days. Indi does not speak English well so you can contact his son Tenzing (8348993026/9064386541). It is also possible to organize this permit through a travel agent in Guwahati. It takes few days and cost less.

Car rental
While most people rent a car with a driver we decided for a self-drive. Zoomcar.com rents cars all over India via a phone app. They can call you but you can’t call them. We hired a Mahindra Scorpion, which is a 4x2 SUV. It came without speakers and two of the tires where in a dilapidated conditions. We had to buy a new tire, which the company promised by sms to refund. Other then this we had no problems. This car costs about 3000rp a day (120km free and above, 15rp per km). They refund the fuel against receipts. However, zoomcar refunded us less then half of the expenses they promised. They refused to pay for the tire and
imposed other costs like cleaning and hidden taxes, which mounted to 17000rp. Sadly I cannot recommend anybody to use them.

Entry fees for parks
In every state and every park there are different prices and different visiting hours. Charges are usually per entry so per day it would be double as most parks have morning entry and afternoon entry. The following photo is of the fees charged for Orang NP. Watch the different of prices between Indians and foreigners. Foreigners who are residents and hold an “Aadhar” card pay Indian prices. In Arunachal Pradesh entry fee for sanctuaries is neglected, even for foreigners. Most birding sites are not in protected areas and there is no fees.
## RATE FOR ENTRY & OTHERS IN ORANG NATIONAL PARK

Vide Govt. Notification No.FRS.31/2002/59 dated Dispur the 4th August 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a</td>
<td>View fee per person/day for entering the park</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>500.00 per person/per entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.b</td>
<td>Fee for visiting full day till sunset</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td>2000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Fee for elephant seat per trip/seat for adult</td>
<td>450.00</td>
<td>1000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Toll for river cruise/road per trip per day</td>
<td>300.00</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Camera Charge</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.a</td>
<td>Natural photography (non professional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Still Camera</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Movie/Video camera</td>
<td>500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Professional Photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Still camera</td>
<td>500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Movie/Video camera</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
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<td>4c</td>
<td>Filming Fee per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Feature film</td>
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<td>ii.</td>
<td>Documentary film</td>
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<td>iii.</td>
<td>Security money</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
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5. Fee for children within age group of 1-12 years & students sponsored by the institutions (Applicable for entry fee and elephant ride only)
For all types of visitors who make visit continuously for 3(three) or more days 25% rebate on all items.

[50% concession] [50% concession]
Itinerary
28th March - met in Guwahati airport late afternoon. Collected the car from zoomcar office and checked into a hotel in Guwahati.
30th March - morning rafting on Nameri river searching unsuccessfully for Ibisbill and Long billed plover. Ibisbill was seen there only two days earlier. Afternoon birded in Nameri NP.
31st April - morning in Nameri. Later drove towards Eaglenest. The road 15km after Palungpong, the border town between Arunachal and Assam, was under construction and was closed until 5pm. We birded along the road in a good bamboo forest. Night in a hotel 20km before Tenga.
1st April - drove to Tenga and met with Indi Glow. Later drove to Lama camp in Eaglenest community conservation reserve.
2nd April - Lama camp
3rd April - Lama camp
4th April - Lama camp
5th April - drove from Lama camp to Bomphu camp.
6th April - Bomphu camp
7th April - Bomphu camp
8th April - Bomphu camp
9th April - Bomphu camp
10th April - drove from Bomphu camp to Lama camp.
11th April - morning at Lama camp. Later drove to Dirang. Checked into a home-stay.
12th April - Sela pass
13th April - Oz left early morning back to Guwahati. Noam and myself went to Mandala pass
14th April - Sela pass
15th April - morning to Sela pass. Later drove to Tenga
16th April - drive from Tenga to Kaziranga stayed at Japuri Ghar lodge
17th April - Kaziranga
18th April - morning in Kaziranga tea gardens. Later drive to Tunsikia
20th April - Roing to Mayu dia pass. Night in drivers room in the Coffee house
21st April - morning in Mayu dia pass. Later drive to Roing
22nd April - landslide provided us from going up the road. All day rain
23rd April - Roing to Mayu dia pass all the way to 65km. and back to Roing
24th April - again landslide. Changed plans and went to Dibru-Saikhowa NP which was closed. Later drove to Kaziranga and checked into Wild grass resort
25th April - Kaziranga
26th April - morning in tea gardens. Later drive to Pakke tiger reserve and met with our guide Ohey, who took us to see Blyth's kingfisher. Night at inspection bungalow in Pakke.
27th April - morning in Pakke and then drive to Nameri NP. Night at Nameri jungle camp.
28th April - morning in Nameri, later drive to Orang NP. Night at government lodge in Orang.
29th April - morning in Orang. Later drive to Guwahati and fly home.
Nameri national park
This tropical lowland semi evergreen forest is situated near Tezpur city in central Assam near the border with Arunachal Pradesh. It is best in winter and famous for White winged wood duck that is found in pools inside the park and for Ibisbill that can be seen while rafting on the river. This is the one of the only parks in Assam where it is possible to walk inside and it is very rewarding. There are now several places to stay with basic accommodation at 2000 to 2500rp. Best place is Eco camp Nameri, but it is many times fully booked. We also stayed at Nameri jungle camp (8638250244). Nameri Oakum gest house (9435017824) is a community based G.H. and is probably the best value for money at 800rp.
The forest department office is next to Nameri eco camp and is where to book your entry. They open at 6am. Entry cost 50rp for Indians and 650 for foreigners and valid for full day. An armed guard is compulsory. He usually would know where to find the White winged wood duck. There is a walking trail of about 5km inside the park. The starting point is with a boat that takes you across the river about a km from the forest department office. Rafting can be organized by any of the camps and cost about 2500 p.p. your rafting operator should know the whereabouts of Ibisbills. You still have to pay entry fee with the forest department and you can use this permit for an afternoon visit in the park. Rafting starts few km up the river and ends at the bout jetty near the parks entrance point. Nameri is best in winter. By March it is getting hot and birds start to migrate from the forest to higher altitudes. Towards the end of March, Ibisbills and White winged wood duck disappear. We still had good birds when we visited at the end of march, but on our second visit a month later, by the time we managed to entre at 6:30am, bird activity was finished.

Checklist for our birds in Nameri
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44140424
Eaglenest wildlife sanctuary
This sanctuary became the top hotspot for birding in India about 20 years ago when Ramana Athreya described a complete new species of bird. It was a Liocichla and he named it after the local community the Bugun. Later, Ramana put a lot of efforts to convince the Buguns to declare a part of their land as a community reserve, and to convert hunting into bird related tourism. The community reserve starts from a check post where a small entrance fee is charged about 8km after crossing the river at Tenga and ends little below Eaglenest pass where the official wildlife sanctuary begins. Three camps were established along the 70 km logging road from Tenga to Khellong where Eaglenest WLS is officially ends 10km from the border with Assam. This is one of the wildest parts of India. During our 10 days there we hardly saw any people except birdwatchers.
Eaglenest was the main focus of this trip where we hoped to find most of our target species. We spent 10 days in the sanctuary, five in Lama camp and five in Bomphu camp. These camps are popular so we booked them in advance with Indi Glow who is the represented of Bugun conservation society and is in charge on Lama camp and can book Bomphu camp although it is run by other people. April is maybe the most popular time to visit as many of the birds are singing, but by the time we arrived they were already nesting and activity was very slow.

Weather
The north side of the sanctuary with Lama camp is more cold then the south facing side at Bomphu. But it rains more on the south side, which is usually almost always covered by clouds at this time of year. Both camps are at about 2000mls. It rained everyday and a lot of the birding I did under an umbrella.
Coming from South India, I am very sensitive to cold and I needed most of the time, day or night, top winter gear. Noam and Oz were never too cold. Not even at night.
The logging road
Unfortunately I could not find a map with all the points along the rout so I will try and describe it in words.
From Tenga we cross the river and drive up the old logging road until after about 6km we reach a forest check post. Here is where the community reserve begins. Another about 2km and we arrive in a small village. This is the last settlement before Assam. Another 6km up the road is Lama camp. Eaglenest pass, at about 2800mls is 10km further and from here the road start to go down towards Assam. There is a watchtower about 4km after the pass and 6km further is Sundar-view, which is a two floor deserted building. Further down there is a watchtower named Chacku. Bomphu camp is few km below and about 23km from Eaglenest pass. Sessni is 500m below and 13km further. Khellong is another 7km and is where the park ends. However, the forest continues for about another 10km until the border with Assam. Missamari is the first village in Assam. The road ends in Balipara near Nameri NP.

Costs
Price includes accommodation in a tent with very little facilities and three meals with tea and coffee.
Lama camp – double occupancy 5600, single occupancy 3000, driver 1300, community fee 250.
Bomphu camp – double occupancy 6000, single occupancy 4500, driver 1300, community fee 250.
Forest department fee (one time, for all the days) 200, vehicle 500, camera 500.
The camps
Currently only Lama and Bomphu camps are active. Both camps offer very basic facilities. They have 10-15 tents with two beds in each. Bedding is provided but it is most advisable to bring a good sleeping bag. There is a common dining room, which in Lama is heated, but not in Bomphu and a kitchen. No electricity and no running water but the toilets were always clean and well kept. Hot water for shower is provided with a bucket. There is a generator but it only provides light to the dining rooms. There is one socket for charging phones computers and batteries so it is very important to bring your own extension. In Lama the generator only works in the evening for few hours and there is always tension about charging. In Bomphu they are more generous. Food is vegetarian and basic. In Lama the menu repeated itself on the third day. Bomphu camp is very remote and delivering supply takes long time. Even water has to be delivered by a lorry. Yet, it is much better run then Lama. The stuff is much more motivated and does their best to help. Lama camp is only 14km from Tenga. It is very easy to deliver better service like having beer available but the will is not there. There are power lines going up to Lama but there is no electricity going through them. There can be many hours of non-birding because of weather or any other reason, but these camps do not offer any bit of comfort to pass this time, not even a comfortable chair.

The nature around the camps is superb. Lama is situated on a hillside with great view over Tenga valley and up towards Eaglenest pass. Beautiful sibia, Grey-headed bullfinch, Plain backed thrush and Golden-naped finch are posing for photos and the small nalla (stream) behind the camp has Rufous-breasted, Long-billed, Pygmy and Spotted wren babblers but you will need very long time to lore them out. During our five days in Bomphu I did not see the sky due to clouds and fog, so I cannot describe the landscape. As for birds we saw Sikkim wedge billed babbler and heard Long-billed wren babbler and Blue-napped pitta. In my previous visit 10 years ago, I was fortunate to stay in Sessni camp. It is about 13km away and 500m below Bomphu on the way to Khellong. Temperatures are much more pleasant, less rain, beautiful forest and a good chance for Rufous-necked hornbill and Beautiful nuthatch from the camp. Unfortunately some years ago, a forest officer was kidnapped from the camp and since it is closed. Sessni can now be visited on a day trip from Bomphu. Angu, the manager of Bomphu camp can be contact at 8729903110

Alternatives
Birding around Lama camp can easily be done from Tenga. Currently, there is a road being constructed over the old logging road up to below Eaglenest pass and Lama camp should be reached within half an hour from Tenga. There are three hotels in Tenga. Eaglenest hotel is considered as the best, but we stayed next door in hotel Diyngkho for half the price. Bomphu camp is very remote and there is no alternative to stay anywhere near.
Birding
Our strategy was to hire a local guide at any possible site that will show us the sites of each target bird. Via Indi Glow we found Phurpa 9774736950 who works freelance and charge 2500rp per day. Phurpa new the calls of all the birds and like all other guides we met he uses playback recording to call out birds. He found many birds for us and showed us sites for birds we later looked ourselves.
In Bomphu we hired Arun who did not speak English but new the birdcalls and new how to use playback recording. Arun works in Bomphu camp and was hired for 1500rp per day. Both guides did their best to show us our target birds and I can strongly recommend them.

Main target birds
Bugun liocichla - should be search anywhere below lama camp down the road for three km until a sharp curve in the road with a big electricity poll next to it. From there, there is a side path going into a very degraded forest for about another kilometer. This is the core area of this bird and where we spent most of our time in Lama camp. This is the only target bird in this trip that we did not see and did not hear.
Rufous throated wren babbler – heard calling everywhere below Lama camp. Responding to tape, but not coming out. Spent much time around it until it did come out and displayed two km below Lama.
Long billed wren babbler – heard calling everywhere around Lama Bomphu and Sessni. Responding to tape but did not show at all.
Spotted elachura (wren babbler) – heard calling in different locations all over the sanctuary. Saw it in the nalla behind Lama camp. It is now considered as a separate family.
Bar winged wren babbler – near Eaglenest pass. Responded to tape and showed well.
Himalayan (Sikkim) wedge billed babbler – heard calling in different places around Bomphu. Finally one morning just outside the camp we managed to see it briefly.
Pygmy wren babbler – probably the most common wren babbler in Eaglenest.
Coral billed scimitar babbler – common below Bomphu
Slender billed scimitar babbler – one bird near Sundar view.
Spotted laughingthrush – respond to tape and show briefly. Seen few times. Eaglenest pass.
Scaly and Blue winged laughingthrush – common and heard a lot below Lama camp. Difficult
to see. Saw Scaly briefly few times and Blue winged well only once.
Bhutan laughingthrush – common and easy to see.
Red faced liocichla – heard below Bomphu. Seen crossing the road but not well enough for a record.
Himalayan cutia – seen below Lama and below Bomphu.
Golden breasted fulvetta – seen briefly near Sundar view.
Fire tailed myzornis – missed. Eaglenest pass.
Beautiful nuthatch – near Sessni and below Bomphu.
Blue fronted robin – heard below Sundar view. Worked over an hour to try and get it out.
Only Noam managed a brief view.
Broad billed warbler – heard above Bomphu. Seen very briefly.
Yellow rumped honeyguide – on a cliff with beehives near a village about 6km below Lama
camp on the way to Tenga. If you take a guide you better tell him you are looking for this bird.
Hodgson’s frogmouth – little below the site of the honeyguide. Heard call at night and on
second attempt seen perching on a tree.
Rufous necked hornbill – seen twice near Sessni.
Blyth’s kingfisher – missed. Can be seen from the bridge below Khellong.
Wards trogon – saw a pair in the usual site above Lama and one bird above Bomphu.
Blyth’s tragopan – saw one below Lama and one while driving above Bomphu.
Temminick’s tragopan – heard twice but did not see.
Partridges – heard all the resident partridges but did not have the time to tape them out.

Checklist for Lama camp https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44240944
Checklist for Bomphu camp https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44490911
Checklist for Sessni https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44455437
Checklist for Khellong https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44490926
Checklist for Eaglenest pass https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44490257

Dirang
Dirang is a district headquarter town about 2 hours drive from Tenga towards Tawang. It lay
on a parallel valley to Tenga valley. Tibetan Buddhism is practiced here and everywhere
there are preying flags and small shrines.
There is not much for birding in Dirang itself, but it is a base to visit Sela and Mandala passes
and in winter Sengai valley for Black necked cranes.
Pemaling hotel is where birders usually base themselves in Dirang. It has great view over Dirang valley. Unfortunately it was fully booked and we stayed in a homestay few hundred meters up the road. There is plenty of accommodation in Dirang and it is a pleasant place. During the four days we were there, there was never electricity during the day, which influenced badly the possibility for a hot shower.

The birding sites around Dirang are not protected areas and no fees or timing is imposed. Oz left us after the first day in Dirang. He went by taxi to Guwahati for 9000rp. The only interesting bird we saw in Dirang is Black tailed crake. A local guide pointed for us a spot 5-6km from town center just before Rama camp in a small wetland near the river.

Mandala pass
This area about 30km from Dirang has good Rhododendron and broad leaf forest with similar birds to Eaglenest. Here we found our first Fire tailed myzornis and only Brown parrotbill.
We missed Temminick’s tragopan that was seen by a group led by Peter Lobo. Peter gave us very useful information about strategy for Sela pass and Mishmi hills. This was a difficult site to reach on Google maps. You need to drive back from Dirang towards Bondila for about 5km. when the road cross a river turn right to Mandala. The road climb through agriculture land and forest start to appear only just before Mandala, which is a timber village. When reach Mandala turn left towards Phudung. Good birding area starts here and goes for a few km down the road.

Checklist for Mandala https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44522378

Sela pass
We did not have good information about this site before we met Peter Lobo so we ended up visiting there three times. Weather condition had a lot to do with it too. At this time of year, clouds with rain and snow usually cover the pass. Arriving very early morning may give a few hours of good weather.
Sela pass at 4200m is on the main road from Dirang to Tawang and takes two hours to reach. It is advisable if coming early morning to visit first the forested area below as the road further up can be covered with ice and be very dangerous. The birding area starts with the road sign 9km to Sela pass. Just after the sign there is a big garbage dump that attracts birds. This is the sight for Blood pheasant that usually respond well to playback. We spent very long time there trying, but only managed with this bird about three km up the road. While waiting for it we had great view of Fire tailed myzornis, Himalayan white browed rosefinch and two male Rufous breasted bush robin. A family of Yellow throated marten came to feast on the garbage completely ignoring me.

Further up, where the forest ends, we scanned carefully the open slopes for Monal and Snow partridge. These birds feed on open slopes with little grass and bush above the tree line and should be searched for on both sides of the pass. We were lucky with a male Monal. A telescope would be very handy as it was very far. After the gate that marks the pass there is a big lake that is still frozen in the morning. This area is good for Grandala. Snow pigeons, Plain mountain finch and Alpine accentor were around the food stalls near the pass and below it.

The marshy area near the military camp 3km down the road is good for Solitary snipe but we could not find it. Beware of stray dogs. They bite.

Checklist for Sela pass https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44921662

Kaziranga national park
This very famous national park in Assam is a good stop over while travelling from west Arunachal to its east. Kaziranga has three ranges that can be visited by forest department jeeps. At this time of year, Kaziranga has very little to offer as you can only enter in the morning after 7:30, three hours after first light. By this time, even the rhinos are already sleeping. Afternoon safari however, produced swamp francolin and chestnut headed babbler.
On returning from Dibang valley a week later, we stopped again in Kaziranga in search for slender billed babbler. We failed, but saw three Finn weavers in breeding plumage. We needed a rest day and Kaziranga could offer this. We checked into Jupuri ghar lodge that has excellent AC rooms for 4200rp for two nights. This lodge is popular with birders and has a resident Oriental scopes owl on its ground. On our return from Dibang valley about a week later, we stayed at Wild grass resort at 2500rp. Most birding in Kaziranga was done in the tea gardens and degraded forest behind the lodges. We were mainly searching for Blue napped pitta, which we heard once, but did not respond. While at it we saw Chestnut winged cuckoo and Bengal bushlark. Panbari reserve forest is the best birding site outside the national park. It has many birds as well as Hoolock gibbons. Unfortunately few years ago, an elephant killed a British birder there and since access is prohibited.


Digboi oilfields
It takes 7 hours to drive the 300km from Kaziranga to Tinsukia in east Assam. Tinsukia has plenty of hotels and a good place to base oneself to visit Digboi, which is 35km and an hour away. Digboi itself also have accommodation and it is worth considering if you want to visit in the afternoon and then again in the morning. Digboi is where oil was discovered first time in India and here is the oldest oil refinery in the world. There are some good patches of forest near and inside the refinery area and it is the site to look for Collared treepie and Chestnut backed laughingthrush. Both birds responded well to playback and took few minutes to find. These lowland semi degraded forests are very good for birds and it is worth spending more time here. Other birds were Black backed forktail, Greater necklaced laughingthrush, White hooded babbler and Black baza. Perhaps the best sighting was a mother Hoolock gibbon with a baby.

Checklist for Digboi https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44720260

Mishmi hills (Dibang valley)
This is a new popular birding hotspot that emerges in the last few years. A new bridge on the Brahmaputtra river that connect east Arunachal Pradesh with Assam makes access much easier. The Indian government invests now in infrastructures and there is now a new road from Tinsukia to Roing – the getaway town to Dibang valley. The new road is going to continue for another 12km towards Mayudia pass, but it is under construction and had many landslides while we were there.
Dibang valley is more popular with Indian birders than Eaglenest. Access is easier as there is an airport in Dibrugarh four hour away from Roing.

Rusty throated wren babbler is an endemic bird to this area. This bird was only described by Dillon Ripley in 1947 but was never seen again until 2004. After its calls were recorded, it was found that it is not that rare. It was the easiest bird for us to find in Dibang valley.

Don’t expect that using playback here is easy. The site is already “burnt out” and it is just as hard as in Eaglenest.

The people in Mishmi hills are very different to those of West Kameng district. Here you can see many churches but the local people somehow do not look Christians. All the tribal people we met were armed with machete and a catapult. Hunting is very widespread here and with the development of roads, the future of birds and animals looks blinked.

While driving up towards Mayudia pass you will encounter Mithuns. This local cattle is a domesticated form of Gaur (Indian bison). This area is protected as Mehao wildlife sanctuary and we encounter a few groups of Hoolock gibbons here.

Places to stay
Bear in mind that it is difficult to contact anybody by phone or Internet in this area.
Roing, being the only town has a few places to stay. We stayed at Mishmi hills resort, which is very pleasant place on the river and has rooms for 1500rp. Jibi Pulu (9862856981) is the owner and he can arrange for a local guide.
The coffee house before Mayudia pass is very popular and can be booked by Ravi Mekhola (+919774748828). It is a government built building and it has great view over the surrounding. We found it very run down and overpriced.
Few km after the pass at km65, there is a small settlement that has a restaurant run by Nepalese with cheep and nice food and beds in a dormitory for 200rp (9402454457).
We found Roing to be the best place to stay for birding the lower area. For higher areas we still found Roing to be better, specially when the road construction will be finished, only you will have to leave earlier before first light.

Guides
Ravi Mekhola (+919774748828) is the most popular local guide. He is also the operator of the Coffee house, which is a government built accommodation place few km before Mayudia pass. Ravi is very popular so book in advance. He usually operate on a deal base, depends on how many people and how long time. A group of seven for five days paid 4500rp per day each. This includes accommodation food and guiding. Since Ravi was busy, he arranged for us another guide that charged 1500rp but was total useless and we fired him after a day. However, he did show us the sites of some of the important target birds.

Birding sites
Birding in Dibang valley is mainly done on the main road to Anini, which is 220km away from Roing and takes 12 hours to drive with local taxi. I do not know how far along the road it is permitted to travel. Most of the birding sites are on the first 65km of this road, which has very little traffic and very few settlements or people along it. We had previous information to the whereabouts of the birds, but most information we gathered along the way from bird groups we met.

Tiwarigaon is a little hamlet about 25km from Roing. Manipur wedge billed babbler and Long billed wren babbler are common here and can be heard in any nalla for a few km above and below the village. Since birders come here every day with playback recording, it is very
difficult to actually see the birds. Early morning proved to be with better success. Other good birds around are Green cochoa, Rufous necked hornbill and Blyth’s tragopan. Further up the road around km40 is the site for Rusty throated wren babbler. We were very lucky that a bird responded well to our playback and gave a reasonable view. We only spent few minutes on this site compere with hours and days we spent on other wren babblers.

Checklist for Tiwarigaon https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44897591

Mayudia pass, at 2655 mls, has a little army camp with a garbage disposal place next to it, which attract birds. Manipur (Streak throated) fulvetta and black-throated parrotbill can be found near the pass. Gould’s shortwing is found few kilometers further down after the pass and Rusty bellied shortwing little before km65. Unless somebody tells you an exact location, you should walk along the road and play the calls in suitable places. We were lucky with Gould’s, but only heard Rusty bellied shortwing that refused to show up. This area is also good for Purple cochoa but we did not find any. Sclater’s monal has been seen around the pass but not since long time.

Checklist for Mayudia pass https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44897422

Jia grassland is about 15km from Roing in direction of Tinsukia. The site is far off the road and unless you can locate it through one of the Internet bird sites, you will need a guide to take you there. Black breasted parrotbill and Jerdon’s babbler responded well to playback and showed quickly. Marsh babbler was more difficult and took a long time for a brief view. Rufous-vented prinia is said to be there, but we did not have enough time to search for it.

Checklist for Jia grassland https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44897560

Heavy rain and landslides forced us to change our plans and to leave Mishmi hills earlier. We decided to go to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park. This park is situated on an island in the Brahmaputra river near Tinsukia. When we reached the place through Google maps, we found that there is no boat available to cross the river. We decided to skip the birding sites near Maguri beel as it is good for wintering waterfowl and we already saw the grassland birds. We continued to Kaziranga and checked into the very pleasant Wild grass resort where we stayed for two nights.

Pakke tiger reserve
Pakke tiger reserve in Arunachal Pradesh borders Nameri NP in Assam. It has a similar avifauna and it is famous for Blyth’s kingfisher. It is little known by foreigners but popular with Indians. You need the Arunachal permit to visit Pakke and to reach there, you will have to drive to the other side of Nameri NP, about 60km away, which makes it difficult to combine as a part of a tour to Eaglenest.
After a morning birding in Kaziranga tea gardens, we drove via Tezpur to Seijosa on the border of Assam with Arunachal Pradesh where we met our guide Ohey (+919436888682). Pass the border, we drove for about 15km on a rout that in someday will be a road to Itanagar, the capital of the state. At one place we stopped and Ohey took us into a small nalla where strait away we saw two Blyth’s kingfisher that flew away and disappeared. It took
over an hour to relocate them and even longer until we had a good view. By the time we got back to Assam border it was getting late and Ohey arranged for us to stay in the Inspection Bungalow of Pakke tiger reserve for 1500rp. The place is run by Tagi (8134864034). Tagi is easier to reach by phone then Ohey and will probably know his whereabouts. There are few other places to stay in Pakke and it is a place worth exploring.

Next morning after a short visit to the nearby forest, we drove to Nameri NP. We stayed at Nameri jungle camp in a tent that after negotiation we booked for 1000rp. Next morning we birded again, one month after our first visit, the same area in the forest. Only this time the forest was empty. Later we drove to Orang NP.

Checklist for Pakke https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45014003

Orang national park
This is a good stop between Guwahati and Nameri NP. This park is vast grassland with patches of lowland forest on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river and a known site for Slender billed babbler which is difficult in other places.

On my previous visit in Assam in 2008, I was fortunate to stay for two nights in a forest rest house inside the park. In the morning we had a Rhino and Swamp francolins while having coffee from the balcony of this British era establishment. Things are very different now. Orang is a tiger reserve and access is only with forest department jeeps for morning and afternoon safari. There is a government accommodation facility near the parks entrance with rooms at 1500rp.

We arrived early afternoon and when we explained the forest guards in the entrance that we were after birds, they called a local guide Nejib Ahmed (9706632299) who came shortly after but could not accommodate us as he was with a client. We made arrangements for the next morning and Nejib convinced the forest stuff to let us in at 6am, an hour before the official time. We quickly located slender billed babblers that responded to playback but took time to show. Later, Nejib took us to a location of a Hooded pitta that showed very well. This was a great way to end this one-month of birding trip to North East India.

Later we drove back to Guwahati, dropped the car in the airport from where Noam flew to Delhi and I flew back home to Goa.

Checklist for Orang https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45055091
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