

ROBERTS (1997)

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Dear Carol

I have enclosed notes on my trip to Nepal in February / March 1997. The notes have been somewhat thrown together so I apologise for the lack of order. Enclosed are also a few rough photographs taken from slides of some of the birds seen on the trip. I have made notes on the back of the photographs. Of particular interest to me is the photograph of the "Upland Buzzard". It is a poor photograph but you may be able to give some advise as to it's identification. I have several other slides and should you so wish I can make copies available to you.

In 1993 you mentioned you were working on producing an article updating the second edition of your guide to the Birds of Nepal. Did you ever produce this, if so where could I obtain a copy as I would find it extremely useful.

I hope to attend the next OBC annual meeting. Do you know if it is at Blakeney Village Hall and if so is it on the Bank Holiday Sunday or Monday?

It is my hope to return to Nepal again soon and I am particularly interested in doing the full Andapurna Circuit and I would be grateful for any information you may have on bird species in addition to your other published works which I have. Of particular interest to me are the Tibetan and Himalayan Snowcocks, which have become somewhat of a "bogey" bird for me.

I hope these notes prove to be of use and I look forward to meeting yourself and Tim should you be at the OBC meeting this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Roberts

NEPAL BIRD LIST SELECTION

16th FEBRUARY TO 10th MARCH 1997

The following is not a fully comprehensive list of the bird species seen on this trip. For some sites and areas I have just mentioned key species of interest. I have, however, tried to detail the species seen on the Langtang trek and at Bardia as comprehensively as possible. The total number of species seen on this trip was 280.

18th February 1997 - Nargajung

White crowned laughing thrushes	-	(common)
Mrs goulds sunbird	-	(one male)
Lesser yellow naped woodpecker	-	(one female)
Orange gorgetted flycatchers	-	(two males halfway up the ridge path)
Dark cuckoo shrike		
Red headed tits	-	(near the summit)
Steppe eagle	-	(one bird flying north in the direction of the Trisuli Valley)
Red winged shrike babblers	-	(six birds west of the summit)
Kalij pheasants	-	(two males on the ridge path near dusk)
Hill barbet	-	(two calling)
Blue throated barbet	-	(one bird on the lower slopes)
Booted eagle	-	(one bird near the summit)
Long tailed nightjars	-	(calling early evening on lower slopes)
Streak breasted scimitar babblers	-	(two birds mid-way on the ridge path)

Although I visited the area where the Blue napped pittas were seen in 1989 for the second time I was unable to locate them.

20th February to 2nd March 1997 - Langtang Trek

Dunche to Lama Hotel

Tree sparrows		
Yellow naped (whiskered) yuhinas		
Pallas's warblers		
Orange barred leaf warblers		
Yellow barred leaf warblers		
Jungle crows		
Honey buzzards		
Little buntings	-	(fields below Dunche, Syabru and Barku)
Kestrel		
Red headed (Chesnut headed) laughing thrushes		

Bonellis eagle	
Plumbeous redstart	- (only one pair seen on the river below Dunche)
Little forktail	- (surprisingly only one bird seen on river below Dunche)
Bar throated minlas	- (common often in small groups and mixed flocks)
Brown dippers	
Black capped sibilias	- (very common)
Hill barbet	- (only one bird feeding on Rhododendron flowers)
Yellow cheeked tits	
Crossbills	- (a flock of 30 birds swirling around the tree canopy)
Chesnut headed tesia	- (in a bamboo and "mossy" rockfall area near Sybaru)
Striated laughing thrushes	- (small groups particularly in Oak forests)
Red headed tits	- (very common usually in mixed flocks of other tits)
Coal tits	
Blue fronted redstarts	- (in fields around Sybaru, Barku and Dunche)
Jungle crows	
Lammergiars	
Hodgsons hawk eagle	- (circling over the valley near Sybaru)
Black faced laughing thrushes	
Goshawk	- (One male near Sybaru)
Maroon backed accentors	- (damp area and rubbish piles near Sybaru village)
Nutcrackers	- (only two birds seen)
Red headed bullfinches	- (two flocks seen near Sybaru village)
Striated prinias	- (fields below Sybaru)
Grey hooded warblers	
Black headed shrikes	- (fields below Sybaru)
Grey bush chats	- (fields below Sybaru)
Green backed tits	
Beautiful rosefinches	
Blue whistling thrushes	
Orange flanked bush robins	- (very common)
White bellied yuhinas	
Yellow browed tit	- (in a mixed flock which included Red headed tits)
Chesnut bellied nuthatches	- (in mixed tit and warbler flocks)
Common jays	- (four birds in a mixed tit and warbler flock)
White throated laughing thrushes	
Golden spectacled warblers	
Black chinned babblers	
Lesser scaly breasted wren babbler	- (calling and seen on the "landslide")
Fire breasted flowerpeckers	
Nepal rosefinches	- (a flock of 30 birds)
Grey faced warblers	
Yellow bellied fantails	
Snow pigeons	- (approx 80 birds driven down to Lama Hotel by heavy snow)
White browed fulvetta	- (near Lama Hotel)
White capped redstarts	
Wren	- (in Lama Hotel village)
White browed rosefinches	
Fire tailed sunbird	

Wallcreeper	-	(one bird seen on river boulders near the suspension bridge)
Himalayan swiftlets		
Black faced warblers		
White tailed nuthatch	-	(one bird in the gorge in a mixed tit flock)
Nepal sunbirds		
Bar throated sivia		
Little swifts	-	(6 birds only seen on the return journey above the cliffs where the bees nests are)
Rock pigeons	-	(only 4 birds seen below Sybaru)
White throated fantails	-	(near bamboo bridge)
Black browed tits	-	(two birds near Riverside Lodge in the gorge in a mixed tit flock)
Alpine swift	-	(one bird with the Little swifts)
Yellow billed blue magpies		
Kalij pheasants	-	(two males near Sybaru)
Oriental turtle doves	-	(three birds on return journey near Sybaru)
Stonechats	-	(only seen on return journey near Sybaru and Barku)
Hill partridge	-	(one bird above Sybaru)
Spotted forktail	-	(on a stream crossing the path near Sybaru)
Allied grosbeaks	-	(twelve birds below Sybaru)
Spot winged rosefinches	-	(forests near Sybaru)
Darjeeling woodpecker	-	(one male again in forest between Sybaru and Barku)
Brown bullfinch	-	(one male again in forest near Sybaru)
Streak bellied scimitar babblers	-	(two birds near Sybaru)
Plain backed mountain thrush	-	(one bird in forests above Barku)
Hodgsons redstart	-	(one male in field by school in Barku)
White collared blackbird	-	(one make in scrub near Dunche)
Sparrowhawk	-	(one bird near Barku)

No Orange rumped honeyguides were seen (bees nests smaller and less mature then on previous summer trip). The Nepal (Immaculate) wren babbler was neither seen or heard, nut it is so long since I heard the tape I could not guarantee identifying it. Trekking friends also disturbed two male Monal pheasants on a track from Lama Hotel to Syabrubensi).

Lama Hotel - Kyangin

Spot winged rosefinches		
Spotted forktails	-	(two birds on a stream near Lama Hotel and on trail to Langtang)
Wrens		
White capped redstarts		
Plumbeous redstart	-	(in Lama Hotel village)
Orange flanked bush robins		
Black faced laughing thrushes		
Jungle crows		
Chesnut bellied nuthatches		
Grey faced leafwarblers		
Red headed laughing thrushes		

Coal tits	
Nepal tree creepers	
Brown dipper	
Rufous vented black tits	- (forest near Ghore Tabala)
Blue whistling thrushes	
Crested brown tits	
Northern tree creepers	
Green backed tits	
Rufous fronted tits	
Red tailed minla	
Pink browed rosefinches	
Grey backed shrikes	
Streak headed laughing thrushes	
Himalayan griffon vultures	- (up to 7 birds often high on the ridges)
Yellow billed choughs *	- (up to 100 birds Langtang to Kyangin)
Peregrine	
Grandalas	- (a flock of 30 birds seen twice below Langtang)
Goshawks	- (one male near Langtang, one female near Kyangin)
Lammergiers	- (up to 2 birds seen usually high on the ridges)

* surprisingly no Red billed choughs seen anywhere on the Langtang Trek.

Snow pigeons	- (several flocks up to 300 birds)
White fronted redstarts	- (fairly common around Langtang and up to Kyangin)
Pink browed rosefinches	
White winged grosbeaks	- (1 pair in scrub above Langtang flew to forest on the south side of the valley)
Ravens	- (2 birds around Langtang)
Upland buzzard	- (1 bird seen on four separate occasions half an hours walk before Kyangin. This was a large bird often hovering and on one occasion was mobbed by a Raven? It has pale white patches at the base of its upper primaries. Darker than one previously seen at Kagbeni in 1989. This bird was seen at an altitude of 3750m. (Not 100% about the ID on this one but a distant photograph may be of use)).
Altai accentors	- (in moraine near Kyangin)
Plain backed mountain finches	- (1 bird on moraine near Kyangin)
Rufous breasted accentors	- (4 birds below Langtang)
Robin accentors	- (6 birds between Kyangin and Langtang)

Kyangin and Yala Peak (Temperatures were 20°C at night)

- Plain backed mountain finches - (6 birds on lower slope of Yala Peak)
- Red breasted rosefinches - (2 birds very tame detailed photographs taken - mid-slope Yala Peak in valley)
- Brandts mountain finches - (180 birds in a valley area on the mid-slopes Yala Peak. Very tame swirling around us regularly feeding, photographs taken)
- Ravens - (2 birds on Yala Peak often flew into the village)
- Tibetan snow partridges - (3 birds on the mid-slopes of Yala Peak)

We were caught in blizzards so birding was difficult, therefore Snowcock elluded us again.

4th March to 8th March - Bardia

Karnali Lodge Area

- Lesser golden backed woodpeckers - (relatively common)
- Brooks flycatchers
- Hair crested drongos
- Jungle fowl
- Pied hornbills - (several birds seen daily)
- Grey hornbills - (relatively common)
- Great racket tailed drongos
- Little green bee eaters - (common)
- Honey buzzards
- Indian rollers
- White crested kingfishers
- River kingfishers
- White necked storks - (several groups were seen)
- Lineated barbets
- Common hawk cuckoos
- Common ioras
- King vultures
- Bengal florican - (1 male briefly seen in grassland tower near the tower hide. Head only seen for a few seconds. Other birders saw a female in this area)
- Common buzzards
- Black headed munias
- Pied chats
- Crested serpent eagles
- Pea fowl
- Black partridges
- Indian pitta - (guide identified one calling but none seen during the trip and would be an early record?)
- Barn swallows
- Little skylarks
- Indian griffon vultures
- Common mynas

Alexandrine parakeets		
Yellow throated sparrows	-	(1 male in the lodge compound and 1 in the nearby forest)
Black drongos		
Cattle egrets		
Goosanders		
Bengal green (yellow footed) pigeons		
Jungle mynas		
Jungle crows		
Ashy drongos		
Spotted doves		
Ring necked doves		
Crested tree swifts		
White browed fantail flycatchers		
Grey wagtails		
Black headed orioles		
Red wattled lapwings		
Brown headed (large green) barbets	-	(several birds seen especially along forest edge near the lodge)
Scarlet miniverts		
Indian tree pies		
Red vented bulbuls		
Verditer flycatchers		
White bellied drongos		
Baya weavers		
Jungle babblers		
Red crested flycatchers		
Jungle owlets		
Pond herons		
Blossom headed parakeets		
Large crowned leafwarblers		
Purple sunbirds		
Thick billed flowerpecker	-	(1 bird seen in a forest walk near the lodge)
Rosy miniverts		
Magpie robins		
Shikkras	-	(in forest and lodge compound)
Rufous turtle doves		
Stonechats		
Black kites		
Black shouldered kite	-	(on drive from Nepalganj)
Blyths reed warblers		
Large woodshrikes		
Kestrel		
Rock pigeons		
White backed vultures		
Stork billed kingfisher		
Little egrets		
Greater black headed gulls	-	(adult and immature)
Ruddy shelducks		

- Spur winged plovers
- Common sandpipers
- Greenshanks
- Bonellies eagles
- Indian river terns
- Black backed woodpecker - (1 male flew from a river island past our elephant and into a nearby forest)
- Sirkeer malkoha - (in scrub area near a river channel)
- Brown throated sandmartins
- Green billed malkoha - (also seen near the scrub are where the Sirkeer malkoha was seen minutes earlier)
- Emerald doves
- Spotted munias
- Yellow bellied prinias
- Scops owl - (1 bird in the lodge compound)
- Large cuckoo shrikes
- Fantail warblers
- Smalled scaly bellied woodpecker - (1 male)
- Franklins nightjar - (disturbed by the elephant close to the main river channel)
- Red capped babblers - (tall grasses by the river)
- Ashy prinias
- Pied wagtails
- Bay backed shrikes
- Striated babblers - (in tall grass area by the river)
- Brown capped pygmy woodpecker - (in scrub at edge of Sal forest area close to the river)

Tented Camp Area

- Greater black headed gulls - (at least 1 adult seen regularly)
- Goosanders
- Ruddy shelducks
- Greenshanks
- Honey buzzards
- Rose ringed parakeets
- Jungle crows
- Pied kingfishers
- Peafowl
- Indian griffon vultures
- Cormorants
- Indian river terns
- Greylag goose - (this bird had been around for several weeks and we saw it from the tented camp on shingle beds in the main river)
- Great white egrets
- White necked storks
- Grey wagtails
- Jungle owlets
- Black storks

- Large coucal
 Red capped babblers - (common in riverside grass areas)
 Rufous bellied babblers - (a group of 6 babblers in a tall grass scrub area by a dried up river channel. I only had a brief view but the guide informed me they were this species that he had seen here on a number of occasions. I could not positively ID these but I thought this information was worth recording)
- Long billed vultures
 White backed vultures
 King vultures
 Spur winged plovers
 Red wattled plovers
 Lesser cuckoo shrikes
 Rosy miniverts
 Pied wagtails
 Little ringed plovers
 Large grass warbler - (excellent views as we sat waiting for a tiger - which didn't appear! It was in a grass, reed area in a little tributary of the main river channel)
- Orange breasted pigeons
 Common sandpiper
 Alexandrine parakeets
 Jungle fowl
 Slaty backed woodpeckers - (2 birds seen in mature Sal forest to the north east of the tented camp. They were high in the canopy and would fly 300 metres to the next tree making a loud 'yallering' call as they flew)
- Barheaded geese
 Black partridges
 Lesser golden backed woodpeckers
 Large crested kingfishers - (2 birds seen along the river below the camp)
 Ospreys - (1 or 2 birds seen along the Karnali)
 Grey crowned pygmy woodpecker - (in Sal forest near the tented camp in a mixed tit flock)
- Rufous bellied niltava - (1 bird in forest south of tented camp)
 Blyths leaf warblers
 Brown hawk owl - (1 birds at the edge of the tented camp)
 White browed fantail flycatchers
 Indian rollers
 Jungle babblers
 Large crowned leaf warblers
 Yellow browed warblers
 Pied woodshrikes
 Hodgsons prinia - (at the forest edge in a gully near the camp)
 Ioras
 Indian tree pies

Ultra marine flycatcher	-	(1 male in the lower canopy next to our tent viewed for two minutes - disappeared as I got my camera ready to shoot!)
Grey headed flycatchers		
Blue whistling thrushes		
Grey herons	-	(1 bird near tented camp, another on the raft trip along the Karnali)
Grey headed mynas	-	(forest edge near Chisopani bridge)
Brahminy mynas	-	(forest edge near Chisopani bridge)
Black bulbuls	-	(forest edge near Chisopani bridge)
Himalayan (three toed) golden backed woodpecker	-	(in a tree above our tent - again camera shy!)
Black ibis	-	(3 on the raft trip)
Little cormorants	-	(common along the Karnali)
Darters	-	(2 birds seen on the raft trip)
Crested serpent eagles		
Large pied wagtails	-	(2 birds along the Karnali)
Intermediate egrets		
Oriental skylarks	-	(along the river bank in the Karnali)
Pintail		
Stonechats		
Sandlarks	-	(3 birds on sandbank in the Karnali)
Black billed terns	-	(6 birds on shingle banks in the Karnali)
Little egrets		
Himalayan swiflets		
Bengal green pigeons		
Peregrine	-	(1 had flew above us on the raft trip down the Karnali)
Greater thicknees	-	(2 groups seen on the raft trip along the Karnali, one group of 2, the other of 6 on large shingle banks)
Small miniverts	-	(15 birds in riverside scrub)
Little Pratincoles	-	(2 birds on a sandbank in the Karnali)
Little terns	-	(40 birds on shingle banks on the Karnali)
Bonellies eagle	-	(1 bird stayed perched even when approached within 10 metres on elephant back)
Jungle prinias	-	(1 bird in grass area)
Yellow bellied prinias	-	(in tall grass area by a small tributary of the Karnali)
Crested larks	-	(in dry grass area)
White checked bulbuls		
Red whiskered bulbuls	-	(2 birds in scrub area flushed by a wild elephant?)
Scops owl		
Bay backed shrike		

9th March - Phulchowki

Black throated thrush	-	(1 male near the halfway house)
Kalij pheasants	-	(5 males)
Maroon orioles	-	(common)
Mrs Goulds sunbirds	-	(mid-slope)

Fire breasted flowerpeckers	-	(mid-slope)
Chestnut bellied nuthatches	-	(mid-slopes)
Streak headed nuthatches	-	(mid-slopes)
Red headed tits	-	(mid-slopes)
Verditer flycatcher	-	(mid-slopes)
White throated laughing thrush	-	(mid-slopes)
Grey headed warblers	-	(mid-slopes)
Black capped sibilias	-	(mid-slopes)
Yellow crowned warblers	-	(mid-slopes)
Blue headed redstart	-	(1 male in scrub very close to the summit on the road)
Long tailed miniverts	-	(upper slopes)
White browed fulvetta	-	(upper slopes)
Bar throated minlas	-	(upper slopes)
Hoary barwings	-	(upper slopes)
Chestnut headed tit babblers	-	(upper slopes)
Stripe throated yuhinas	-	(upper slopes)
Yellow bellied fantails	-	(upper slopes)
White checked bulbuls	-	(upper slopes)
Jungle crows		
White collared blackbirds	-	(mid-slopes)
Black headed shrike babblers	-	(mid-slopes)
Lanceolated jays	-	(3 birds seen 3 - 4 bends above halfway house and again at halfway house)
Grey sided laughing thrushes	-	(2 birds near halfway house)
Black eagle		
Common hawk cuckoo	-	(mid-slopes)
Ashy woodpigeon	-	(mid-slopes)
Blue throated barbet	-	(mid-slopes)
Orange flanked bush robins	-	(mid-slopes)
Grey headed flycatchers	-	(mid-slopes)
Large cuckoo shrike	-	(mid-slopes)
Rufous capped bush warbler	-	(mid-slopes)
Pallas's warblers	-	(mid-slopes)
Red billed leiothrix	-	(mid-slopes)
Red capped laughing thrushes	-	(mid-slopes)
Streak headed laughing thrushes	-	(mid-slopes)
Green backed tits	-	(mid-slopes)
White tailed nuthatches	-	(mid-slopes)
Green tailed sunbirds	-	(mid-slopes)

Two hours spent looking for Cutia but they did not show (at least 2 birds seen the week before).