

Bhutan

Mammal-Watching

A Greentours Trip Report

9th – 24th October 2023

Led by Ian Green and Guided by Sangay Penjor

Day 1 October 9th

We departed from various points around the World!

Day 2 October 10th To Bhutan and Lamperi

Our flight from Delhi took us right past the giant peak of Kanchenjunga, though it was almost entirely hidden in cloud. We landed at Paro Airport at around 3pm. The flight path into the airport is really something, the plane twisting and turning down mountain valleys before coming to rest at the end of the runway by paddyfields. The arrivals hall is also completely unique being built in the Bhutanese style. Lovely. Formalities were soon done and we met up with Sangay our guide and Kaka the driver.



Grey-headed Giant Flying Squirrel
Roger Smith

We drove to Thimphu stopping briefly to admire one of the many monasteries and then through the bustling town/city. Then it was up over the Dochu La 3100m pass before dropping to Lamperi, passing through Mossy forest dominated by Rhododendrons and *Quercus griffithii*. It was already night so en route we did some impromptu spotlighting which soon yielded a rather special species – Grey-headed Giant Flying Squirrel. This elegant beast was peering out of its hole ready to get going for the night and so we didn't see much of the rich

reddish-brown body fur, but we could clearly see the very soft grey head fur. When we met some mammal researchers the following morning they told us it was a new record for the park! We continued, arriving at Lamperi without further eyeshine. Lamperi is a botanical garden and protected forest. We'd been granted permission to camp there after the place closed at 5pm.

We settled in to our tents and met for dinner soon enough. Then it was out on our first night walk which was in truth rather quiet. We found a large frog, heard another Giant Flying Squirrel and saw a Sambar leap across the path in front of us.

Day 3 October 11th Lamperi Botanical Garden and to Trashithang

Just after dawn we took a walk round the circuit at Lamperi. Mammals again proved elusive. We did see some Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrels chasing each other energetically through the canopy and also I saw briefly the diminutive Himalayan Striped Squirrel. These are in fact a chipmunk related to the many North American species. There were abundant Laughingthrushes such as White-throated and Streaked, and other nice birds included Northern Goshawk, White-tailed Nuthatch, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie and Ultramarine Flycatcher.

We left Lamperi not long after breakfast and headed east to Punakha and the famous Zhong there which we duly admired and photographed. Lunch was by the river with some nice butterflies such as Blue Peacock, Paris Peacock, Yellow Pansy and the pretty Hill Jezebel.

Then it was on to Trashitang. We spent an hour or so exploring the valley above the campsite where we saw our first Hoary-bellied Squirrel and plenty of good birds such as Hair-crested Drongo, Blue Whistling Thrush and Grey Treepie. The fabulous *Thunbergia mysorensis* (naturalised?) creeper cascaded down the banks with hanging tresses of orange and yellow flowers and we also noted Gentianaceae. Then it was time to get acquainted with our camp for the next two nights. This is a beautiful spot. On one side the rushing tumultuous waters of the Mo Chhu and on the other a lovely waterfall surrounded by forest giants. We took some tea and a rest.



Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel by Roger Smith

After dinner we headed out for the night time foray. The weather was not ideal with occasional spells of rain. So things were perhaps quieter than we hoped but there were a couple of special sightings. The first Riger picked out soon after we left, a fine Hodgson's Flying Squirrel which we all got a decent look at. Next up was an oddity – a Golden-throated Barbet staring back at us from its hole home. Soon after we had great views of the 'king' of flying squirrels the Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel. This was a handsome beast with a tangerine and brown badger head and a wonderful deep

orange-brown tail tipped with black that seemed to go on for ever. Later we also saw the smaller Parti-coloured Flying Squirrel and this one was actually flying. Three flying squirrel species in one night. Not bad! And then the rain became heavy and we decided to call it a night.

Day 4 October 12th Trashitang

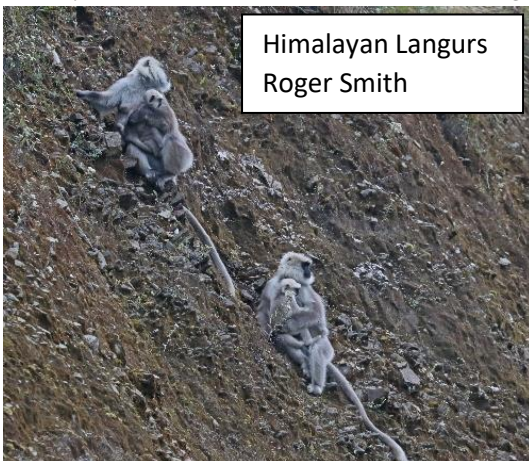
We took a leisurely breakfast this morning and watched a group of Assamese Macaques grooming and feeding in the trees by the camp. Then we went along the main valley to look at Goral Rocks. No Goral but Roger saw a Mountain Weasel scoot across the road – there were a pair of Blue-bearded Bee-eaters on the opposite side which was the reason some of us missed the Weasel.

Uphill we found a nice track to walk and after that walked back down the main road. The views to the west were stunning! Mammals were restricted to signs or squirrels. The latter included what was probably Hoary-bellied but also certainly a nice Himalayan Striped Squirrel. Otherwise there was some small carnivore dung about. Butterflies were nice – we saw a good number of species as the day warmed up including White Helen, Map Butterfly, Yellowjack Sailor, Colour Sergeant, and perhaps surprisingly Silver-washed Fritillary! Ferns were fabulous and there was a striking bright yellow orchid. Black Eagle and Mountain Hawk Eagle didn't offer help in the mammal finding department. Bird highlights were White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Chestnut-headed Tesia and Scarlet Minivet.

We returned to the campsite for lunch. We vowed we wouldn't eat so much in future! Then it was the afternoon rest before a lengthy spotlighting session in the evening. This started with a nice pair of Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrels which allowed us to get a good look at them. Then soon after a Muntjac was on the road. We took a walk which proved mostly unproductive though Heinrich and Ray had the interesting experience of a shrew running around their feet! That was about it though (apart from a couple of unidentifieds...) until near the end we spotted two Sambar on the road. No Gorals at Goral Rocks again....

Day 5 October 13th Trashithang and to Pele La

As dawn broke we were up on the side road. A Muntjac was seen briefly and a few squirrels too but mainly we saw birds – quite a variety. I picked up the trap cameras and found they also had seen a Muntjac, as well as a rather odd-looking Wild Boar.



We had a pleasant breakfast back at the camp and then took to the road heading first down towards Punakha, stopping to buy Roger some wellies and some batteries too. It took us only about three hours to reach the high ground of the Pele La. We stopped and had lunch at a roadside café and then headed uphill to the 3280m pass taking a side track to our camp hardly lower than that. As we reached the pass itself we saw a large troupe of Himalayan Grey (Nepal Sacred) Langurs close by the chorten. These were happy to pose for photos! The camp

was beautifully sited, looking over the valleys to the west and to the high already snowy mountains beyond.

After dinner we took a slow but lengthy walk along the track towards the north. It took a while for things to start happening but eventually we found our first animal. This was a rather unusually patterned Grey-headed Flying Squirrel. We had nice views of this one. Later a much higher Flying Squirrel was out of ID range. Next we spotted something at the top of the quarry. A fine Stone Marten! Eventually it clambered up a tree so we had a good look at it, though distant. Next up were deer. Several of them. A couple of Sambar, followed by a single male Central Asian Red Deer and then again three Sambar. There was a lengthy quiet spell but as we returned past the quarry we saw two lots of eyeshine. One disappeared but the other was a Serow which stood staring down at us! Last up was another flying squirrel, probably another Grey-headed Flying Squirrel.

Day 6

October 14th

Pele La

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| Pele La Ian Green |
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We started the morning at 5.30 with tea and biscuits and then took a walk along the track again. Mammals were absent this morning though we did eventually find a large colony of Mowpin Pikas in the yak meadows. Birdlife included two Himalayan Monals, Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, Grey-sided Bush-Warbler, Black-faced Laughingthrush and two lovely Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers.



During breakfast Yellow-billed Blue Magpies paid the camp a raucous visit. Then we went to get batteries charged at the stall holders on the ass and did a little exploration of the areas either side of the pass. We drove to a little village with a nice new temple picking up a local on the way. We discussed animals with him and he told us they lose 60 animals a year to Tigers and Leopards. We were interested in bears but he hadn't seen one for two weeks. There was the most happy of archery tournaments happening in the village so we left Sangay and Kaka to join in whilst we walked down a little. A few birds were in the berberis

bushes including Hoopoe and Blue-headed Redstart. Returning to camp Sangay spotted three Yellow-throated Martens by the track and after tea and noodles I watched a Red Fox walk along the track too.

The afternoon turned murky with a little rain and we thought our evening might be curtailed but in the end the weather turned out nice! We explored areas either side of the pass first and there was quite a bit of fog and we didn't find anything. We returned to camp and walked the track again. This time it was quiet. We did find a Grey-headed Flying Squirrel and a couple more flying squirrels that evaded ID. And there were a few Sambar. But that was about it until just before Kaka picked us up in the bus we found a weasel by the road. This we eventually had wonderful views of. The dark chocolate body (both above and below) and short but slightly bushy tail was slightly puzzling. It seemed that it must be a Siberian Weasel though of an unusual dark colour.

Day 7 October 15th Pele La

The morning started a bit damp and foggy but we still went for the 5.30 walk. The only animal glimpsed was a Moupin's Pika. Birds were good though with Orange-headed Bullfinch, female Dark-breasted Rosefinch and a pair of Dark-rumped Rosefinches.

During breakfast it became quite wet and we waited a while for a walk. Around ten we walked the track but it was damp and sometimes foggy. We again had the briefest views of Moupin's Pika and found a fine Muntjac too.

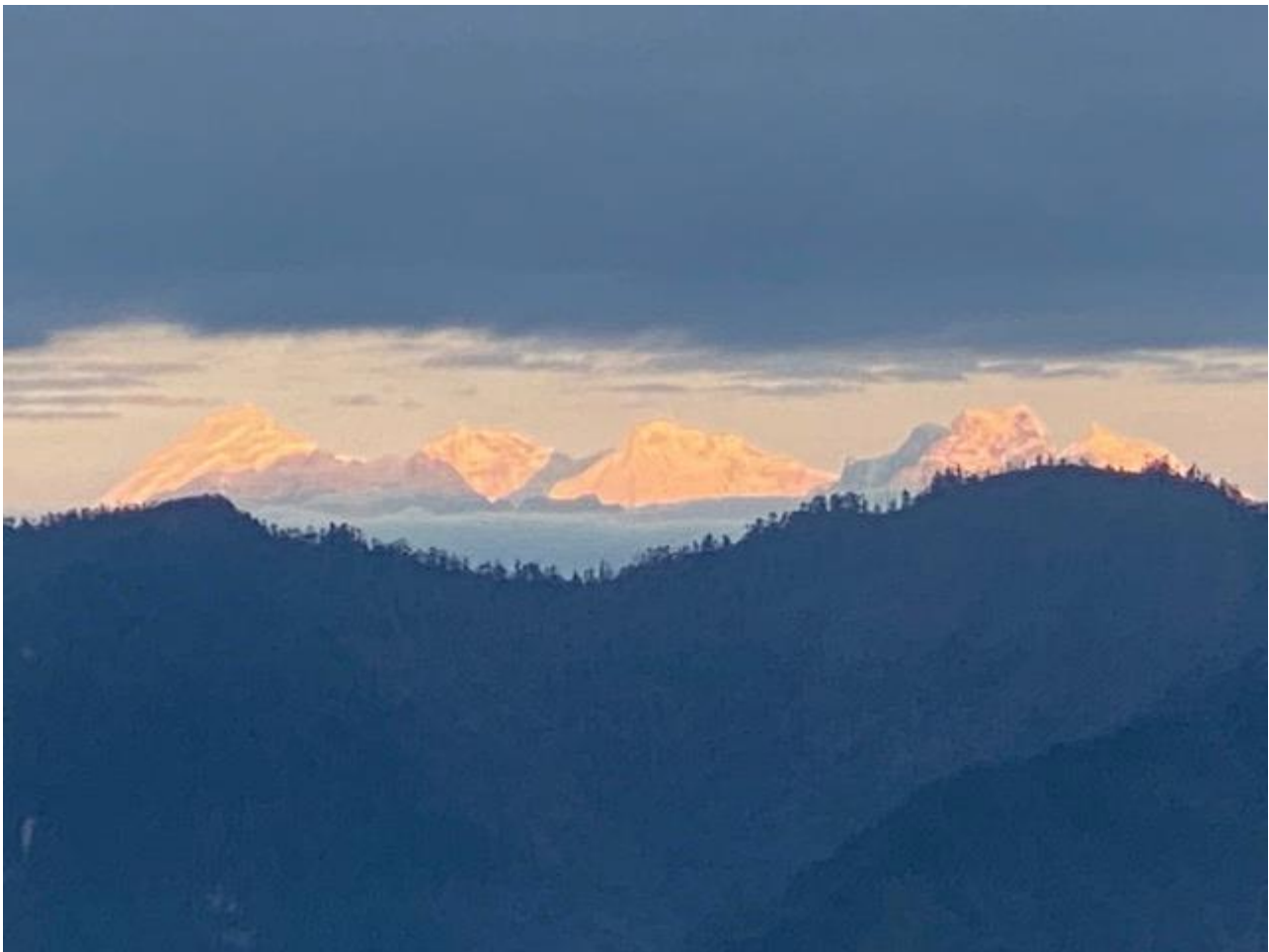
After lunch the dodgy weather continued but Roger still went out for a walk and saw three Yellow-throated Martens. Probably the same three we saw the day before as they were not far below the

camp. And apparently the camp staff saw them going through the camp at midday! He had even more luck a bit further down when a couple of young Wild Boar burst across the track at the same time putting up a Satyr Tragopan.

After the early dinner we drove off to Gangchukha. Only a few Sambar were seen so we returned to camp and took a walk. By now the weather had cleared and we had a starry sky! First up was an Alpine Musk Deer in a steep gully below the road – seemingly the preferred habitat of this species. Then we had encounters with several each of Central Asian Reed Deer and Sambar. The former started alarm calling and we don't think it was about us! We then spotted a fine Himalayan Wood Owl who came with us for a little while. Last was a Goral on a rocky outcrop.

Day 8 October 16th to Yongkala

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| Pele La View Ian Green |
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Early morning I went out to collect the trap cameras and also for a night walk. All was quiet along the main track until I passed the quarry then glancing behind me I saw a Leopard Cat sitting on the road. This delicate little felid is at the altitude very furry and looked extremely cute. It however didn't stay for photos and quickly bounded off into the herbage. It did sit watching me for a minute then but was largely hidden in the vegetation.



Golden Langurs
Roger Smith

We took breakfast and broke camp with the prospect of a long day on the road. Nearing Trongsa we spotted a small troupe of Golden Langur in the trees above the road. After some persistence we managed to get good views of these lovely monkeys. Then it was up and down various passes including the mighty Thrumsingla at 3700m. Here roadside boards told us we were driving through the habitat of Red Panda but we didn't have time to stop and look. Eventually as dusk gathered we reached Yongkala and the lovely Trogon Villas. Perhaps it was the week's camping and the cool and sometimes damp conditions up on the Pelela but this seemed some kind of paradise! We enjoyed a nice dinner and spent the rest of the evening enjoying the comforts and charging batteries and powerbanks!

Day 9 October 17th to Weringla

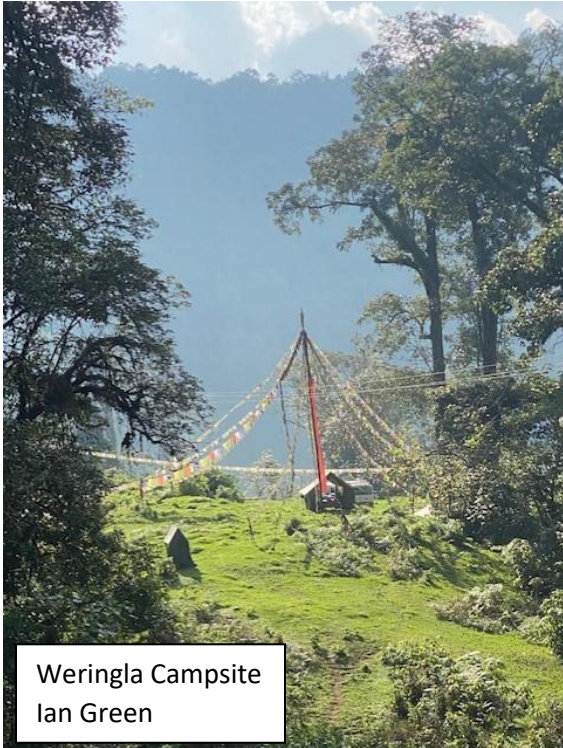
A leisurely start to the day so that all could enjoy the comforts of what is a very nice hotel and also get everything charged up properly for the next six days of camping!



Black Giant Squirrel
Roger Smith

We left after breakfast. More toast anyone? Descending along the Lingmethang Road we passed some nice habitat and sure enough a fruiting tree pulled us to a halt with several Capped Langurs in it. A fine Black Giant Squirrel was also seen. A little further along we came across more Capped Langurs this time in company with Assamese Macaques.

We'd heard from the camp party that a 'huge herd' of cows had compromised our proposed camp ground in the forest at Weringla. So we met them at an alternative campsite. Here we took lunch and pottered about a bit noting Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Black-faced Warbler and Grey-chinned



Weringla Campsite
Ian Green

Minivets. A Black Eagle gave us quite a show. After lunch we decided that we would after all move to the cow campsite. It turned out that there were 15 cows. And a dead calf. The latter we bought part of in the hope of attracting something to a trap camera.

We wandered a forest trail as the camp was set up. Early afternoon so no mammals – not quite true there was Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel and Himalayan Striped Squirrel too. But there were a lot of birds! Greater Rufous-headed parrotbill and lots more.

After a five o'clock dinner we headed out. We explored both above and below the camp on foot and in the vehicle but the forest failed to show us a great deal. There were a few Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrels. Eventually a Muntjac appeared. After we returned to camp I popped out back into the forest and saw a nice little Parti-coloured Flying Squirrel.

Day 10 October 18th Weringla

We walked the road in the morning going down the side track. A beautiful walk. The only mammals though were squirrels – quite a few of the diminutive Himalayan Striped Squirrel, a few Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, and even a Pallas's Squirrel. We found tracks of Crab-eating Mongoose along a wet section of track.

After breakfast we went for a walk along the ridge trail which was beautiful. The cowherd who we were sharing the campsite with came with us. He showed us where Asiatic Black Bears ate acorns the next month. Many birds were noted on the walk including Beautiful Nuthatch and a superb male Scarlet Finch at close range.



Capped Langur
Roger Smith

Returning to the clearing Tandim told us he'd just been watching monkeys by the water source so we hurried down. There was indeed a troupe of fabulous looking Capped Langurs there. We watched their antics for a while before returning for lunch. During the afternoon several of us revisited the

langurs. There was a stunning Bhutan Glory butterfly fluttering around and Yellow-throated Honeyguide too.

This evening's night trip was much more productive than the last evening's. We started with a surprise Golden Jackal by the camp. We headed all the way along to the upper village spotting Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrels as we went. We saw two Collared Scops Owls, one sitting on the road. Suddenly a Crab-eating Mongoose sauntered across the road and then down a bank.

Day11 October 19th to Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary

I went out early to collect the trap cameras. One had nothing at all, the other had plenty of pictures of us! And a Sambar.

We broke camp at 07.45 prepared for the long day ahead. In Bhutan 180km doesn't mean 90 minutes down the motorway it can mean all day. Partly the quality of the roads but mainly it's the ever-present bends. Throughout there was of course fabulous scenery and we did see some Assam Macaques. We stopped for lunch at a nice little spring in the valley bottom below Trashigang at only 700m. It was warm! Then it was up a long rice-paddy filled valley until we hit natural habitats and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, We noted Mountain Hawk Eagle and two Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrels en route. Our camp was in a beautiful spot just after the second-last village and at 2500m surrounded by a wonderful mix of habitats.



After dinner we headed out. There was no shortage of mammals! Just by our camp was a side river valley with big trees, cliffs and of course a river and here there were two Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrels and a Goral. The next 'indent' followed the same pattern and we were soon racking up the totals of both species, indeed both reached double figures for the evening. There was one particularly fine side valley and as well as Goral this had a single Serow too. Ray found is a wonderful snake. A Jerdon's Pit Viper which as well as looking beautiful regaled us with its cobra impressions.

Day12 October 20th Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary

I made a brief early morning pre-dawn trip out and saw Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel and Goral, Ater a cup of tea and biscuits we were out for our just after dawn walk. Few mammals to report except another Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel, and one that got away. Something 'medium sized' and with a long tail in the thermal imager disappeared very quickly. Birdlife became increasingly good towards breakfast time. We saw Bhutan and White-throated Laughingthrushes, White-tailed Nuthatch and Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Verditer and Pygmy Blue Flycatchers. There were Bar-throated Sivas, Golden-breasted Fulvetta and Whiskered Yuhinas. During breakfast a flock of Snow Pigeons appeared.

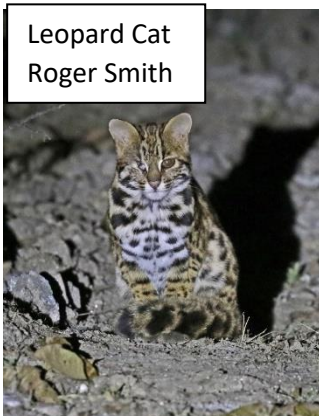
After breakfast we drove a little uphill and took a walk. The day was by now warm and very sunny and mammal and birdlife was quiet. Most turned back after ninety minutes or so but I carried on to



the heights almost reaching the pass. I came across a large group – perhaps 45 – of these Macaques at close to 3000m. These were very dark, and perhaps not surprising given the altitude, very hairy. The males were very large and

Arunachal Macaques
Ian Green

sported sideburns and an ochre-coloured topknot. Most of the troupe had faces as dark as the rest of their pelage. Arunachal Macaques I thought and it sees they are. Confirmed only once before in Bhutan – also in Sakteng. I saw Hoopoe and Eurasian Sparrowhawk and some nice butterflies such as Small Tortoiseshell and Large White!



Leopard Cat
Roger Smith

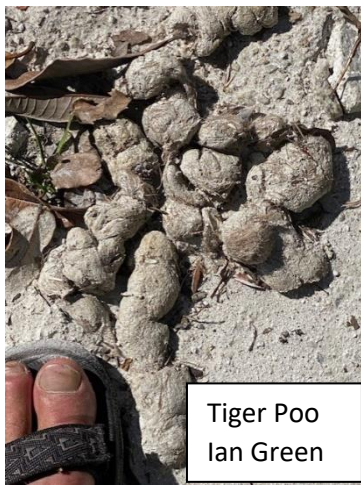
After dinner we went on a night drive/walk downhill the other side of the village. Before we'd reached our walk there was a Leopard Cat on the road. We had great view so this beautifully marked animal. Later we saw another on the road and also the driver saw a third Leopard Cat when he came to pick us up. There were also numerous Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrels –

some good photos of this handsome beast were obtained. There was also a fast dark little shrew, a white-bellied rat of some sort and another flying squirrel...a Brush-footed Flying Squirrel.

Day13 October 21st Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary

This morning we had a 'late' start with breakfast at 06.00! It was another beautiful sunny day. The climate at Sakteng seems rather nice. We borrowed the camping teams Bolero so that we could drive up to the pass. The 45 minute journey was inevitably interrupted by a brief encounter with Macaques. They disappeared before we could get a good look at them.

We stopped a little short of the pass and spent the rest of the morning walking downhill mainly very slowly! It was very cold out of the sun on the pass but in the sun already pleasant. Mammals were



evident only by sign. There was a large pile of Tiger dung trackside and there were other carnivore dungs here and there. We saw a plucked bamboo on the road and wondered whether a Red Panda had dropped it. No sign of the beasts though – we met a young guy who was walking from Sakteng down to the valleys and asked him what animals he saw when he did these walks. He said Red Panda.... We saw some very good birds on the way down. First up were some Black-faced Laughingthrushes on some rocks and later we were to see Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes too. A flock of Brown Parrotbills was good. Ludlow's Fulvetta was seen too. Others of note were Fire-capped Tit, a flock of Mountain Imperial Pigeons all around us, Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher, Hodgson's Redstart, Chestnut-headed Rock Thrush,

Rufous-capped Babbler, and Ray saw a Wren Babbler of some sort.

Further down by the river we spotted the troupe of presumed Arunachal Macaques playing in the river. Further along a female Satyr Tragopan dived into roadside herbage and a Mountain Hawk Eagle flew close to us.

We felt we'd earned our 'light' lunch today. Later in the afternoon we had visitors. Having availed myself of a local householder's electricity they said that it was tradition that they would do a 'welcome' for us in the camp. So at around five about ten ladies from the village turned up with babies, toddlers and children. They are the Saktenpas people whose traditional dress is both striking and beautiful. The hats made of hair and twisted into kind of outward pointing spikes were entrancing. The main part of the welcome is to be offered drinks. This is a locally brewed arak. Made from maize it is a strong liquor. And rather smooth. One or two of us were soon a little drunk as tradition has it that when your cup is filled you have to take a drink and then they immediately refill it and this has to be done three times. There were all manner of bottles places in front of us. There were poured into specially ornate containers to be poured. We also tried butter tea, milk tea and another alcohol that was very fizzy! We had little to offer in return but some chocolate sticks went down very well with the children. The youngest of the adult women was the spokesperson as she had learnt english at school. She told us all to get up and we'd dance together. There was a general

shuffling in a circle as the ladies and eventually our redoubtable camping team driver started to sing various songs. He encouraged one song whose dance got all too complicated for us and there were slappings were there shouldn't have been as Rudyard Kipling would have said. A great time was had by all including the ladies I think and we were sad to have to break off the party so that we could have dinner and go out on our night drive.



A Visit from the Saktenpas
Ian Green

Tonight we decided to night drive all the way up to the pass and back. I had purported a walk up there but with temperatures around zero we decided against that! Things started off well on the way up with several Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel sightings and also quite a number of Goral including two that stayed quite close to us on a scree slope below the road. We found another flying squirrel. This one white underneath and a kind of grizzled ochraceous-grey above. It was quite active and didn't hang around though. This was our sixth species of flying squirrel

for the trip! A White-bellied Giant Flying Squirrel. We reached the open fields where the only wildlife in evidence were three Grey Nightjars. Above we were into the sparsely forested subalpine zone which I had hoped would be productive. It turned out to be otherwise though with only two Goral to show for our hour or so at around 3000m-3150m. Things were also quiet on the way down with just a few sightings of the by now usual suspects.

Day14 October 22nd to Samdrup Jonkhar

I awoke early and decided to go out for a 4am night walk and to collect my trap cameras. There's never any flying squirrel left by this time of morning! There were three Goral though and a large Niviventer Rat and even a little dark shrew scurrying about hyperactively. Another Grey Nightjar too. As I was collecting the first camera there was a sudden squawking across the ravine – some Macaques – probably the ones seen the day before – visible just for a few moments. And by the other trap camera I flushed a little deer. Very dark indeed. It was either a Black Musk Deer or Alpine Musk Deer but views were too brief to be conclusive. Sadly it hadn't appeared in front of the trap camera. There was though a weird dog with seemed more than 50% Red Panda!

We said goodbye to our camping team who had a two day journey over many passes back to Thimpu ahead of them. We retraced our steps to near Trashigang before heading south along an extraordinary road to Bhutan's southern border. The road winds its way along convoluted ridgetops and really doesn't drop very low until right at the end of the journey when one suddenly drops to only 180m or so above sea-level. Wonderful scenery all the way. Mammal-wise we only had encounters with a troupe or two of Assam Macaques and one troupe of Capped Langurs. Right near the end of the journey we stopped to stretch our legs and spotted some Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbills.

In Samdrup Jonkhar we were disappointed to find that having gone through the police checkpoint into town that we could not go out again so the planned night walk/drive had to be cancelled. Not that we didn't enjoy the comforts of the hotel and a very nice evening meal.

Day 15 October 23rd to Guwahati

This morning we had a lie-in with breakfast at 08.30 (my phone had already made the half hour transition to Indian time so I was late!) and then left at 09.30 Our wonderful Bhutan team had left at five in the morning as they were transiting a bit of Indian before heading back up to Thimphu – a long journey to make in a day. Border formalities went very smoothly and we were soon off across the heavily populated and flat plain. The contrast with Bhutan couldn't be more marked. There were people everywhere. The roads were straight and the lands were flat! Only a little over two hours later we were in Guwahati and so with a couple of hours to spare we headed to Deepor Bheel. Water levels were high – we saw the same as we crossed the Brahmaputra – so birds were few but we did find a nice group of about thirty Greater Adjutant Storks circling above us. A fantastic Birdwing was enjoyed too. Then it was to a hotel for lunch and then Guwahati Airport.

Systematic List Number 1 Mammals

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Assamese Macaque | <i>Macaca assamensis</i> | Troupes noted in most areas |
| Arunachal Macaque | <i>Macaca munzala</i> | One troupe of 45 or so animals noted at various localities between about 2550m and 2900m at Sakteng |
| Himalayan (Nepal Sacred) Langur | <i>Semnopithecus schistaceus</i> | a large troupe seen two days on the Pele La |
| Capped Langur | <i>Trachypithecus pileatus</i> | small troupes seen in several places at and en route to and from Weringla, also between Tashitang and Samdrup Jonkhar |
| Golden Langur | <i>Trachypithecus geei</i> | Just one group of about 6 close to Trongsa |
| Leopard Cat | <i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i> | 1 on the Pele La at c3200m was exceptionally furry! 3 seen on the night trip below the camp and village at Sakteng |
| Crab-eating Mongoose | <i>Herpestes urva</i> | 1 Weringla – about the upper limit of its altitudinal range |
| Golden Jackal | <i>Canis aureus</i> | a surprise was one close to the camp at Weringla |
| Red Fox | <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> | singles seen twice (perhaps the same animal) at Pele La |
| Yellow-throated Marten | <i>Martes flavigula</i> | 3 seen on two occasions (probably the same three...) on the Pele La |
| Stone Marten | <i>Martes foina</i> | 1 seen above the quarry on the Pele La |
| Siberian Weasel | <i>Mustela sibirica</i> | I now believe the Weasel seen well close to the quarry on the Pele La was this species but of an unusually dark-coated form |
| Mountain (Pale) Weasel | <i>Mustela altaica</i> | Roger saw one scoot across the road in front of the bus in Trashitang |
| Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel | <i>Petaurista nobilis</i> | widespread and common. Often the most frequently seen animal at night. A large and very handsome flying squirrel |
| Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrel | <i>Petaurista magnificus</i> | several at Trashithang and 3 at Weringla |
| Himalayan Giant Flying Squirrel | <i>Pataurista albiventer</i> | Also known as White-bellied Giant Flying Squirrel. 1 at Sakteng at about 2750m |
| Grey-headed Giant Flying Squirrel | <i>Petaurista caniceps</i> | 1 on the Dochu La (above Lamperi) might be a new record for that protected area. 1-3 seen nightly on the Pele La Pass between 3200m and 3400m. Generally a rarely recorded species in Bhutan |
| Parti-coloured Flying Squirrel | <i>Hylopetes alboniger</i> | 1 at Trashitang and 1 at Weringla |
| Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel | <i>Belomys pearsonii</i> | 1 seen below the camp/village at Sakteng |
| Black Giant Squirrel | <i>Ratufa bicolor</i> | only two seen between Trongsa and Yongkala |
| Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel | <i>Callosciurus pygerythrus</i> | Scattered records (also known as Irrawaddy Squirrel) most frequent in Trashitang |
| Pallas's Squirrel | <i>Callosciurus erythraeus</i> | Trashitang and 1 at Weringla |
| Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel | <i>Dremomys lokriah</i> | common at Weringla in particular, scattered elsewhere |
| Himalayan Striped Squirrel | <i>Tamiops mccllellandii</i> | frequent throughout |

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| Niviventer sp | <i>Niviventer</i> sp | A large Niviventer rat seen before dawn in the forest at Sakteng. Maybe <i>Niviventer niviventer</i> , but seemed too large? |
| Moupin Pika | <i>Ochotona thibetana</i> | Several on the Pele La. The only Pikas seen on this Trip |
| Brown Goral | <i>Nemorhaedus goral</i> | 1 on the Pele La and common in Sakteng where max nightly count exceeded 10 |
| Himalayan Serow | <i>Capricornis thar</i> | 1 at night on the Pele La Pass and 1 at Sakteng |
| Central Asian Red Deer | <i>Cervus wallichii</i> | 1 on the first night and 4 on the last night on the Pele La. All night time sightings |
| Sambar | <i>Cervus unicolor</i> | noted at Lamperi Botanic Garden, several Trashitang, and nightly on the Pele La. There were photos in my trap camera from Weringla |
| Muntjac | <i>Muntiacus muntjak</i> | scattered |
| Alpine Musk Deer | <i>Moschus chrysogaster</i> | 2 on the Pele La Pass at night |
| Black/Alpine Musk Deer | <i>Moschus fuscus/chrysogaster</i> | 1 small dark musk deer seen briefly near the # camp looked like Black Musk Deer but as far as I can tell all records of Musk Deer from Sakteng have been Alpine... |
| Wild Boar | <i>Sus scrofa</i> | Roger saw two on the Pele La and there were photos in my trap camera from Trashitang |

and here's some from the 2022 trip not seen in 2023 –

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| Rhesus Macaque | <i>Macaca mulata</i> | frequent in the Tsang Chhu Valley below Wangdue |
| Leopard | <i>Panthera pardus</i> | 1 at night on the Pele La. Sitting in the grass above the track watching us! |
| Dhole | <i>Cuon alpinus</i> | a superb encounter with a pack of 8 animals for twenty minutes or so on the Pele La Pass. Also a single one on the trap camera there which may have been part of the same group, or may not have been... |
| Smooth Indian Otter | <i>Lutra perspicillata</i> | an entertaining group of three in the Manas River by the park headquarters and another single there on the same day |
| Asian Small-clawed Otter | <i>Aonyx cinereus</i> | not seen. Nice clear prints on the track at Gongphu |
| Indomalayan Long-tailed Climbing Mouse | <i>Vandeleuria oleraceous</i> | seen twice at Gongphu trip |
| Asian Elephant | <i>Elephas maximus</i> | wild ones seen were the 2 by the 'carpark' opposite Manas NP headquarters and 3 at night along the road west of Gelephu |
| Wild Buffalo | <i>Bubalis bubalis</i> | Manas NP |
| Hog Deer | <i>Axis porcinus</i> | 1 at night on the road west of Gelephu |

Systematic List Number 2 Birds

This tour was very much focussed on the mammals so we didn't seek out birds really, however you can't be in Bhutan without noticing some really stunning species! And there's plenty of daylight when mammals are hard to spot. So below is just a list of species seen.

The nomenclature and systematic order generally follow 'Birds of South Asia, The Ripley Guide' by Rasmussen and Anderton, Lynx Edicions 2005. Some more recent taxonomic changes are taken from 'Birds of South-east Asia' by Craig Robson, Second Edition 2015. The standard field guide is now 'Birds of Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas' by Grimmett, Inskipp, Inskipp, and Sherub, Helm 2019.

Only birds seen in Bhutan included.

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| Himalayan Monal | <i>Lophophorus impejanus</i> |
| Satyr Tragopan | <i>Tragopan satyra</i> |
| Kalij Pheasant | <i>Lophura leucomelanos</i> |
| Crested Serpent Eagle | <i>Spilornis cheela</i> |
| Mountain Hawk Eagle | <i>Nisaetus nipalensis</i> |
| Black Eagle | <i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i> |
| Himalayan Buzzard | <i>Buteo refectus</i> |
| Besra | <i>Accipiter virgatus</i> |
| Northern Goshawk | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> |
| Common Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> |
| River Lapwing | <i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i> |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> |
| Rock Dove | <i>Columba livia</i> |
| Snow Pigeon | <i>Columba leuconota</i> |
| Mountain Imperial Pigeon | <i>Ducula badia</i> |
| Oriental Turtle Dove | <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i> |
| Spotted Dove | <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i> |
| Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon | <i>Treron sphenurus</i> |
| Barred Cuckoo Dove | <i>Macropygia unchall</i> |
| Collared Scops Owl | <i>Otus bakkamoena</i> |
| Himalayan Wood Owl | <i>Strix nivicolium</i> |
| Grey Nightjar | <i>Caprimulgus indicus</i> |
| Himalayan Swiftlet | <i>Aerodramus brevirostris</i> |
| White-throated Needletail | <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i> |
| Fork-tailed Swift | <i>Apus pacificus</i> |
| Hoopoe | <i>Upupa epops</i> |
| Yellow-rumped Honeyguide | <i>Indicator xanthonotus</i> |
| Common Kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> |
| Blue-bearded Bee-eater | <i>Nyctyornis athertoni</i> |
| Great Barbet | <i>Megalaima virens</i> |
| Golden-throated Barbet | <i>Megalaima franklinii</i> |
| Greater Yellownappe | <i>Chrysophlegma flavinucha</i> |
| Bay Woodpecker | <i>Blythipicus pyrrhotis</i> |
| Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos macei</i> |
| Rufous-bellied Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos hyperythrus</i> |
| Nepal House Martin | <i>Delichon nipalense</i> |

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| Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> |
| White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> |
| Rosy Pipit | <i>Anthus roseatus</i> |
| Olive-backed Pipit | <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> |
| Grey-chinned Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus solaria</i> |
| Minivet spp | we didn't differentiate the other species! |
| Black-winged Cuckooshrike | <i>Coracina melaschistos</i> |
| Maroon Oriole | <i>Oriolus traillii</i> |
| Black Bulbul | <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i> |
| Red-vented Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> |
| Long-tailed Shrike | <i>Lanius schach</i> |
| White-throated Fantail | <i>Rhipidura albicollis</i> |
| Yellow-bellied Fantail | <i>Chelidorhynch hypoxantha</i> |
| Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush | <i>Monticola rufiventris</i> |
| Grey-winged Blackbird | <i>Turdus boulboul</i> |
| Eyebrowed Thrush | <i>Turdus obscurus</i> |
| White-collared Blackbird | <i>Turdus albocinctus</i> |
| Blue Whistling Thrush | <i>Myophonus caeruleus</i> |
| Blue-fronted Redstart | <i>Adelura frontalis</i> |
| Hodgson's Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i> |
| Oriental Magpie Robin | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> |
| Slaty-backed Forktail | <i>Enicurus schistaceus</i> |
| Spotted Forktail | <i>Enicurus maculatus</i> |
| Plumbeous Water Redstart | <i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa</i> |
| White-capped Water Redstart | <i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i> |
| Grey Bushchat | <i>Saxicola ferreus</i> |
| Dark-sided Flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa sibirica</i> |
| Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula strophciata</i> |
| Ultramarine Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula superciliaris</i> |
| Little Pied Flycatcher | <i>Ficedula westermanni</i> |
| Rufous-bellied Niltava | <i>Niltava sundara</i> |
| Small Niltava | <i>Niltava macgrigoriae</i> |
| Verditer Flycatcher | <i>Eumyias thalassinus</i> |
| Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush | <i>Trochalopteron imbricatum</i> |
| Black-faced Laughingthrush | <i>Trochalopteron affine</i> |
| Blue-winged Laughingthrush | <i>Trochalopteran squamatum</i> |
| Bhutan Laughingthrush | <i>Trochalopteran imbricatum</i> |
| Rufous-necked Laughingthrush | <i>Dryonastes ruficollis</i> |
| Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax rufogularis</i> |
| Striated Laughingthrush | <i>Grammatoptila striata</i> |
| White-throated Laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax albogularis</i> |
| Blyth's Shrike-Babbler | <i>Pteruthias aeralatus</i> |
| Black-headed Shrike-Babbler | <i>Pteruthias rufiventer</i> |
| Green Shrike-Babbler | <i>Pteruthias xanthochloris</i> |
| Black-eared Shrike-Babbler | <i>Pteruthias melanotis</i> |
| Erpornis | <i>Erpornis zantholeuca</i> |
| (Greater) Rufous-headed Parrotbill | <i>Paradoxornis ruficeps</i> |
| (Lesser Rufous-headed) Pale-billed Parrotbill | <i>Paradoxornis atrosuperciliaris</i> |

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| Brown Parrotbill | <i>Cholornis unicolor</i> |
| Red-billed Leiothrix | <i>Leiothrix lutea</i> |
| Rufous-capped Babbler | <i>Cyanoderma ruficeps</i> |
| Oriental White-eye | <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i> |
| Stripe-throated Yuhina | <i>Yuhina gularis</i> |
| Whiskered Yuhina | <i>Yuhina flavicollis</i> |
| Rufous-vented Yuhina | <i>Yuhina occipitalis</i> |
| Golden-breasted Fulvetta | <i>Lioparus chrysotis</i> |
| White-browed Fulvetta | <i>Fulvetta vinipectus</i> |
| Ludlow's Fulvetta | <i>Fulvetta ludlowii</i> |
| Rusty-capped Fulvetta | <i>Schoeniparus dubius</i> |
| Rufous-winged Fulvetta | <i>Schoeniparus castaneiceps</i> |
| Rufous Sibia | <i>Heterophasia capistrata</i> |
| Red-tailed Minla | <i>Minla ignotincta</i> |
| Bar-throated Minla | <i>Chrysominla strigula</i> |
| Rusty-fronted Barwing | <i>Actinodura egertoni</i> |
| Thick-billed Warbler | <i>Arundinax aedon</i> |
| Chestnut-headed Tesia | <i>Cettia castaneocoronata</i> |
| Grey-sided Bush Warbler | <i>Cettia brunifrons</i> |
| Russet Bush Warbler | <i>Locustella mandelli</i> |
| Brown-flanked Bush Warbler | <i>Horornis fortipes</i> |
| Black-faced Warbler | <i>Abroscopus schisticeps</i> |
| Tickell's Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus affinis</i> |
| Yellow-browed Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i> |
| Hume's Leaf Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus humei</i> |
| Lemon-rumped Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus chloronotus</i> |
| Buff-barred Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i> |
| Ashy-throated Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus maculipennis</i> |
| Golden-spectacled Leaf Warbler | <i>Seicercus burkii</i> |
| White-spectacled Leaf Warbler | <i>Seicercus affinis</i> |
| Chestnut-crowned Leaf Warbler | <i>Seicercus castaniceps</i> |
| Fire-capped Tit | <i>Cephalopyrus flammiceps</i> |
| Yellow-browed Tit | <i>Sylviiparus modestus</i> |
| Sultan Tit | <i>Melanochlora sultanea</i> |
| Grey Crested Tit | <i>Lophophanes dichrous</i> |
| Rufous-vented Tit | <i>Periparus rubidiventris</i> |
| Coal Tit | <i>Periparus ater</i> |
| Green-backed Tit | <i>Parus monticolus</i> |
| Yellow-cheeked Tit | <i>Machlolophus spilonotus</i> |
| Rufous-fronted Tit | <i>Aegithalos louschistos</i> |
| Rusty-flanked Treecreeper | <i>Certhia nipalensis</i> |
| Hodgson's Treecreeper | <i>Certhia hodgsoni</i> |
| Beautiful Nuthatch | <i>Sitta formosus</i> |
| White-tailed Nuthatch | <i>Sitta himalayensis</i> |
| Green-tailed Sunbird | <i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i> |
| White-winged Grosbeak | <i>Mycerobas carnipes</i> |
| Scarlet Finch | <i>Haematospiza sipahi</i> |
| Dark-rumped Rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus edwardsii</i> |

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| Dark-breasted Rosefinch | <i>Procarduelis nipalensis</i> |
| Yellow-breasted Greenfinch | <i>Chloris spinoides</i> |
| Eurasian Tree Sparrow | <i>Passer montanus</i> |
| Brown Bullfinch | <i>Pyrrhula nipalensis</i> |
| Red-headed Bullfinch | <i>Pyrrhula erythrocephala</i> |
| Ashy Drongo | <i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i> |
| Crow-billed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus annectens</i> |
| Hair-crested Drongo | <i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i> |
| Bronzed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus aeneus</i> |
| Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo | <i>Dicrurus remifer</i> |
| Common Myna | <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> |
| Spot-winged Starling | <i>Saroglossa spilopterus</i> |
| Grey Treepie | <i>Dendrocitta formosae</i> |
| Common Green Magpie | <i>Cissa chinensis</i> |
| Yellow-billed Blue Magpie | <i>Urocissa flavirostris</i> |
| Eurasian Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> |
| Spotted Nutcracker | <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i> |
| Red-billed Chough | <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> |
| Large-billed Crow | <i>Corvus japonensis</i> |
| Common Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i> |
| House Crow | <i>Corvus splendens</i> |