

Sri Lanka at Night

Mammal-Watching

A Greentours Itinerary

Day 1

Depart Europe

Day 2

Negambo

We'll arrive into Sri Lanka's main international airport early in the morning and transfer to our hotel which is close by the airport. In the evening we'll visit a small patch of forest near Negambo where among the nocturnal mammals we've a good chance of seeing is the endemic Red Slender Loris. We'll also look for both the Yellow-striped Chevrotain and the Wetzone Golden Palm Civet.

Days 3 - 5

Sigiriya Sanctuary

It will take us about four hours to reach Sigiriya where we'll settle in for a three night stay. Sigiriya is famed as an archaeological site and we'll certainly take time to explore the impressive site. However it will be the many unusual mammals of Sri Lanka's dry zone that we'll be concentrating on. The Sigiriya Sanctuary protects some important habitat and is a good place to search for another endemic Loris, this the Grey Slender Loris.

Tufted Grey Langurs are common and easy to approach and here we'll have the first of many meetings with the elegant Purple-faced Leaf Monkey. The dry zone race of the Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel is easy to see in daylight, but it will have to be night to see the impressive Indian Giant Flying Squirrel. We'll should also encounter White-striped Chevrotain and Brown Palm Civet after dark.

Day 6

Kandy

In the morning we'll head uphill to Kandy arriving in time for some lunch. In the late afternoon we will take a walk in hotel garden looking for some nocturnal mammals – this is a good spot for Indian Giant Flying Squirrel. Again we've a good chance of encountering White-striped Chevrotain and Brown Palm Civet after dark. In the morning we'll likely encounter Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel, however these will look very different from those we've seen at Sigiriya as both species here are the wet zone race.

Days 7 & 8

Nuwara Eliya and the Horton Plains

After breakfast we'll leave for Nuwara Eliya in the high hills driving through tea plantations and occasional forest patches. In the late afternoon we'll visit one of these forest patches near Nuwara Eliya looking for some highland mammals and also other wildlife. While it is still light we'll likely encounter the diminutive Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel and Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and once the sun sets we'll seek the lovely Golden Palm Civet.

Early the next morning we'll visit the Horton Plains National Park. These comprise grasslands and montane forest in higher and really quite cool climatic conditions. Sambar are frequently encountered and we'll look again for the Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel and Purple-faced Leaf Monkey. The latter is the third different race of this species we'll have seen, the highland race again being quite different from those in the Kandy area and Sigiriya. Another primate is found here too, the Toque Macaque, again a highland race. We'll hope to see the beautifully marked Striped-necked Mongoose and for sure we'll encounter the highland race of the Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel again a completely different form with a grizzled coat.

Days 9 – 11

Yala National Park

In the morning we'll leave for Yala descending from the highlands right down to the sea level plains of Yala National Park which in the afternoon we'll visit looking for mammals and other wildlife. Chital are common in the park, indeed there's a wide range of easy to see mammals visible in daylight here including the local race of Asian Elephant. Tufted Grey Langurs lounge by the roadside impervious to the passing cars and sounders of Eurasian Wild Boar rotovate the ground by the many water bodies. Ruddy Mongoose are commonly seen and so to Golden Jackals. Most people visit Yala to see the elephants and also to see Sloth Bear and Leopard, and we'll do the same however we'll not join the jeep queues to do so, instead seeking quieter areas known to us.

We'll have a morning visit to Lunugamvehera National Park looking for wetland and forest wildlife where we'll encounter Wild Water Buffalo and Indian Hare as well as abundant Chital and birdlife. We'll also spend time around the wetlands outside the national park at Tissa and at night we'll make jeep rides outside the park too looking for the cats in particular. We've a decent chance of again finding Leopard but it will be the smaller cats we'll be concentrating on – Jungle Cat and the lovely little Rusty-spotted Cat which is quite common in the area. Other species we should see are Indian Gerbil, Indian Grey Mongoose and Stripe-necked Mongoose.

Day 12

Udawalawe National Park

In the morning we'll depart Yala and head for the beautiful landscapes of Udawalawe. Here we've another chance to see the many mammals and other wildlife associated with

Sri Lanka's open dry-country mammals. This is a great place to photograph Asian Elephant and again we'll see Ruddy Mongoose and Golden Jackal. We'll see a roost of Indian Flying Foxes and at night will look for Jungle Cat and Lesser Tube-nosed Bat.

Day 13

Sinharaja Forest Reserve

We'll leave the lowlands now and head back up into the hills and famous Sinharaja Rainforest. In the afternoon we'll walk into the forest along tracks where we can see the wet zone races of both Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and Toque Macaque. As well as the wet zones races of Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel and Dusky-striped Jungle Squirrel we'll see the strikingly marked Sri Lanka Flameback squirrel. At night we'll seek the Sri Lanka Yellow Spotted Chevrotain as well as Sambar. Sinharaja has a rich bat fauna and amongst others we can see Wholly Horse-shoe Bat, False Vampire Bat and the Rainbow Bat.

Days 14 & 15

Kitulgala Rainforest

After a morning around Sinharaja we'll leave near lunchtime and head for another area of rainforest not far away - Kitulgala. Kitulgala has a similar suite of mammals and birds to Sinharaja so we'll again be looking for the wet zone races of Purple-faced Leaf Monkey and Toque Macaque and the Sri Lanka Flameback Squirrel. Here there are two animals we'll be concentrating on during night-time forays, the endemic Sri Lanka Red Slender Loris and Fishing Cat – we've a reasonable chance of seeing this wonderful cat at Kitulgala

Day 16

Departure

After an early morning in Kitulgala we'll head for the airport for our early afternoon departure, arriving in Europe early evening.

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