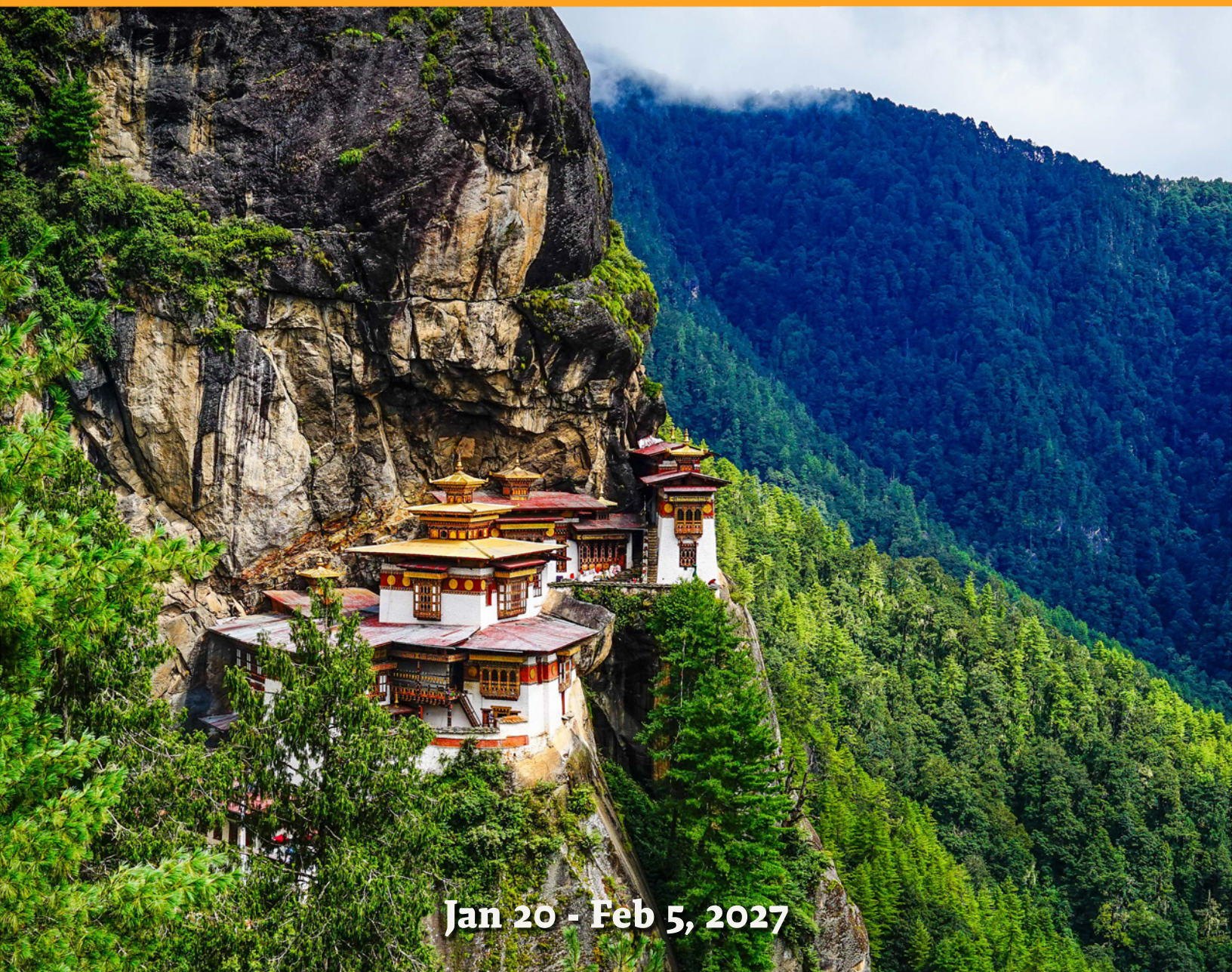


BHUTAN

Birding Across the Himalayan Kingdom

27.36° N



Jan 20 - Feb 5, 2027



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

BHUTAN

Birding Across the Himalayan Kingdom

Greetings Fellow Traveler,

Bhutan is a place that feels almost mythic: a Himalayan kingdom of deep valleys and snow-capped peaks, prayer flags snapping in the wind, and forests that still shelter an extraordinary abundance of life. Carefully protected by a national philosophy that values happiness and conservation over economic growth, Bhutan remains one of the least disturbed and most biologically rich countries in Asia. For birders, it is nothing short of spectacular!

Our 17-day journey across Bhutan is designed to showcase the full sweep of this remarkable country, combining world-class birding with some of the most dramatic scenery and significant cultural sites in the Himalayas.

From our arrival, we quickly immerse ourselves in river valleys, mountain passes, and ancient forests. This tour offers exceptional opportunities to encounter many of Bhutan's most sought-after birds, including the **Himalayan Monal**, **Satyr Tragopan**, **Ward's Trogon**, **Beautiful Nuthatch**, **Rufous-necked Hornbill**, and **Black-necked Crane**. It's possible for us to find over 300 bird species on this tour. Mammals and other wildlife add further richness to the experience, with chances to see **Red Panda**, **Golden Langur**, **Asian Elephant**, and a variety of Bhutan's Himalayan mammals along the way.

Equally unforgettable are Bhutan's cultural treasures. We'll visit some of the country's most beautiful Buddhist monasteries, including the breathtaking **Tiger's Nest**. Along the way, we experience everyday life in Bhutan's remote villages, walk among prayer wheels and shrines, and meet people living and thriving in one of the most extraordinary cultures in the world.

● **PRE-TRIP EXTENSION: Kathmandu, Nepal**

DATES: Jan 17 - 20. Our optional Pre-Trip Extension in Kathmandu offers a chance to acclimate to the region as well as a rich introduction to Himalayan birding and culture. Based near the iconic Boudhanath Stupa—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—we combine excellent birding with immersive cultural experiences. Highlights include birding the famed slopes of Phulchowki Hill, one of Nepal's premier birding sites. We also explore the historic Gokarna Forest Reserve before turning our attention to Kathmandu's extraordinary cultural heart with visits to Pashupatinath Temple and Durbar Square.



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes
info@wildlatitudes.com 503-714-3504

TRIP DETAILS

Pre-Trip Extension Start: Jan 17, 2027

Duration of Pre-Trip Extension: 4 days

Start of Main Tour: Jan 20, 2027

Duration of Main Tour: 17 days

Number of participants: Max of 12

Fee for Main Tour: \$8,350 per person

Fee for Pre-Trip Extension: \$1,900 per person

Deposit: \$4,100 (+\$500 for Extension)

Single Supplement: \$1,200 (+\$195 for Extension)

Trip Leaders: Ivan Phillipsen & David Jaffe

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground transportation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides

BHUTAN

Birding Across the Himalayan Kingdom

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Walking and Physical Activity

Much of our walking will be easy, along gently sloping paved roads. But we will sometimes walk at high elevation (over 10,000 ft). The most challenging walk will be on our visit to the world-famous Tiger's Nest Monastery on our last full day. To manage comfortably, you have several options: (1) you can go at your own, slow pace; (2) you can choose to stop half way at a nice viewpoint (with a cafe and restrooms); or (3) you may have the option of riding a sturdy pony, being guided by a local person up the slope for part of the distance (for a fee).



Accommodation

Most of our lodges/hotels will be simple but comfortable and clean. One or two remote lodges are a bit more rough around the edges, but still safe and adequate for our needs.



Transportation

We'll travel in a 20-passenger bus with a professional driver. Most of our travel will be on good, paved roads, with occasional stretches on dirt roads. The latter can be rough for some sections. Bhutan is a mountainous country, and the roads are often winding. On many days of the tour, we'll travel up to 4 hours, with a couple days involving 7 or 8 hours of driving overall. To break up these longer journeys, we'll make stops for birding, meals, and exploration.



Meals

Breakfasts will be simple: bread, rice, toast, cheese, butter, jam, eggs, sausage, and cereal. Coffee and tea will be provided. On most days, we will get on the road before breakfast, and have this first meal after some morning birding. Lunch in the field will be typical. We will have local team members set up our meals in the field ahead of time. Evening meals will be simple but tasty Bhutanese dishes served in the hotel restaurants. The food is generally good, but may lack variety given the remoteness of where we're traveling.



Climate

Bhutan's high elevation and mountainous terrain means that the weather can be quite variable and can change rapidly. Days are typically sunny and dry, but rain is possible. We may experience some overcast days and rain (or snow, uncommonly). Please be prepared for both chilly weather on mornings at high elevation as well as warmer temperatures in the lowlands.



ITINERARY

Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

See **Page 20** for the **Pre-Trip Extension in Kathmandu, Nepal**

Day 1 - Jan 20 - Arrival to Bhutan & Birding on the Way to Thimpu

This morning, the group arrives to the airport in Paro, Bhutan. En route, you might catch some breathtaking views of the Himalayas, including some of the highest mountains in the world. Upon arrival, you'll be greeted by your Wild Latitudes guides and Bhutanese hosts. From the airport, we'll embark on a scenic drive along the Pa Chu river. As we traverse the rocky streambed, keep an eye out for the Himalayan riverine species, the unique **Ibisbill**, as it dips into the icy water in search of food. In this area, we are also likely to spot other interesting bird species, including the **Wallcreeper**, **Black-tailed Crake**, **Eurasian Cuckoo**, **Common Kestrel**, **Olive-backed Pipit**, **Hodgson's** and **Plumbeous Redstart**, **White Wagtail**, **Blue Whistling Thrush**, and **Rufous-breasted Accentor**.

Once we reach the small city of Thimphu, we'll visit the **Kuensel Phodrang Nature Park**, spanning an area of 943 acres. Here, nestled within the ruins of Kuensel Phodrang, we'll find the **Buddha Dordenma statue**. The park is surrounded by forests and offers a stunning view of the Thimphu Valley from the southern approach. It presents excellent opportunities for capturing magnificent panoramic photographs of the valley below. The statue is believed to radiate an aura of peace and happiness throughout the world. Made of bronze and gilded in gold, and standing at a height of 167 feet (51 meters), it is one of the largest Buddha statues in the world.

Then it's onward to check in to our hotel. In the evening, we'll gather before dinner at our hotel for an orientation and to begin filling out our bird and wildlife lists. Working on our lists will be a fun daily ritual throughout the tour.

Lodging: [Hotel Park](#) or similar, Thimphu



Punakha Dzong Monastery



Ibisbill



Fire-tailed Myzornis

Day 2 - Jan 21 - Birding at Dochu La and Lampelri Park, then Onward to Punakha

Today, we'll set out early to witness the awe-inspiring sight of the Himalayas as dawn breaks over **Dochu La Pass** (10,344 ft; 3150m). The road leading to the pass is adorned with prayer flags and 108 *chortens* (shrines). From the pass there are panoramic views of the Bhutanese Himalayas. Dochu La and Lampelri Park provide the best opportunity to spot the rare and elusive **Red Panda**.

In the high elevations of Bhutan, amidst the mixed evergreen and broad-leafed forests, we'll encounter a diverse range of birds and flowering plants. Here, we may have the chance to observe species such as the **Large Hawk-cuckoo**, **Rufous-bellied** and **Darjeeling Woodpeckers**, **White-throated Fantail**, **Chestnut-headed Tesia**, **Tickell's** and



Bhutan Countryside



Black-necked Crane



Green-tailed Sunbird



Oriental Garden Lizard



Golden Langur

Blyth's Leaf Warbler, Pygmy Cupwing, Black-eared Shrike-babbler, Red-tailed Minla, Brown Parrotbill, Grey-sided Laughingthrush, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Blue-fronted Redstart, Sapphire Flycatcher and Rufous-bellied Niltava.

Upon arriving in the charming village of Punakha, we'll visit the majestic **Punakha Dzong**, which was built in 1637. Perched on a promontory at the confluence of the Mo ("mother") and Pho ("father") Chu ("river"), Punakha Dzong is famously known as the "Palace of Great Happiness" and is regarded as one of the most beautiful Dzongs in Bhutan

After visiting the dzong, we'll bird along the Puna Tshang Chu river valley where we should find **Pallas's Fish-eagle, Common Kingfisher, Tufted Duck, Garganey, Bar-headed Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Pied Avocet, Brown Dipper, Pallas's Gull, Little Ringed Plover, River Lapwing, Richard's Pipit, Red-vented**

Bulbul, Slender-billed Oriole, White-browed Wagtail, Sand Martin, and Grey Heron.

We'll then check in to our hotel, go over our bird and wildlife lists and enjoy a hearty dinner together.

Lodging: Meri Puensum Resort or similar, Punakha

Day 3 - Jan 22 - Birding along Khelekha, Nobding, and Lawa La pass

Today, we'll embark on a scenic journey along a winding mountain road, ascending through oak and rhododendron forests adorned with lichens, leading us towards Lawa La pass at an elevation of 10,990 ft (3,350m). Throughout these diverse habitats, we'll have excellent birding

opportunities, where we can expect to spot species such as the **Ward's Trogon** (one of the top five species in Bhutan and range restricted to Eastern Himalayas), **Spotted Elachura** (this species is the only member of its family, Elachuridae, and also a top target for Bhutan), **Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush**, **Asian Emerald** and **Himalayan Cuckoos**,

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.

Spotted Forktail





Rufous-necked Hornbills



Orange-breasted Leafbird

Brown-throated Treecreeper, Black-faced Warbler, Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Dark breasted Rosefinch, Speckled Piculet, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Himalayan Cutia (a top target species for Bhutan), **Large Niltava, Rufous-gorgeted** and **Slaty-blue Flycatchers**.

Continuing from Lawa La, our journey will take us to the picturesque **Phobjikha Valley**, renowned for its population of **Black-necked Cranes**. These majestic birds migrate from the Tibetan plateau to over-winter in the valley from late October to March. Phobjikha is one of Bhutan's few glacial valleys and serves as an important wildlife preserve. we'll spend the rest of the day observing the Black-necked Cranes from advantageous viewpoints and walking in the valley, as these magnificent birds with their impressive seven-and-a-half-foot wingspans gracefully soar overhead. The arrival of these birds is considered an auspicious sign, and the people of the valley eagerly await their annual winter visit. Additionally, the valley is home to a variety of bird species, including the **Oriental Skylark, Hen Harrier, Northern Lapwing** and **Himalayan Vulture**.

Lodging: Phobjikha Resort or Hotel Gakiling, Phobjikha

Day 4 - Jan 23 - Birding at Pele La pass and continue to Bumthang

As we make our way back through the Lawa La pass at an elevation of, we pause once again to admire the breathtaking panoramic views before proceeding to our next birding destination at Pele La pass. Here, in the morning light, we'll have our first birding session of the day. Some of the target bird species in this area include the **Satyr Tragopan** (one of the top five birds of Bhutan), **Bearded Vulture**, **Fire-tailed Myzornis** (also one of the top birds to see in Bhutan), **Dark-rumped Rosefinch**, **Brown Bullfinch**, **Verditer Flycatcher**, **White-winged Grosbeak**, **Gold-naped Finch**, **Solitary Snipe**, **Hume's Bush Warbler** and **Rufous-vented Yuhina**.

Continuing our drive towards Chendibji, we'll stop to capture photos of the **Nepalese-styled Chorten**. Situated alongside the river, this picturesque structure was built in the 19th century by Lama Shida and is modeled after the Sambhunath stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal. According to legend, it was constructed to cover the remains of an evil spirit that was vanquished there.



Red Panda

From Chendibji, our journey will lead us through breathtaking landscapes as we make our way to Trongsa. We'll then ascend to Yotong La pass, the highest pass of the day at 11,318 ft (3,450m), before descending into the beautiful Bumthang valley for our overnight stay. Along these routes, we may encounter various bird species, including the **Himalayan Buzzard**, **Short-billed Minivet**, **Eurasian Jay**, **Yellow-browed Tit**, **Grey-**

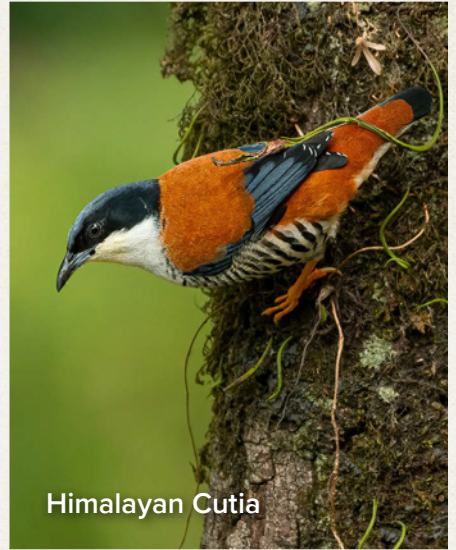
BHUTAN

Jan 20 - Feb 5, 2027

Sultan Tit



Himalayan Cutia



Blood Pheasant



Buddhist Monastery



White-crested Laughingthrush



Paris Peacock Swallowtail



sided Bush Warbler, Lemon-rumped Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, White-throated Laughingthrush, Green Shrike-babbler, Bar-throated Siva, Rufous Sibia, Fulvous Parrotbill, Red-throated Thrush, White-browed Bush-robin, Green-tailed Sunbird, Alpine Accentor, White-browed Rosefinch, and Red Crossbill. As always, we'll work on our bird and wildlife lists in the evening before dinner.

Lodging: Hotel Ugyenling or similar, Bumthang

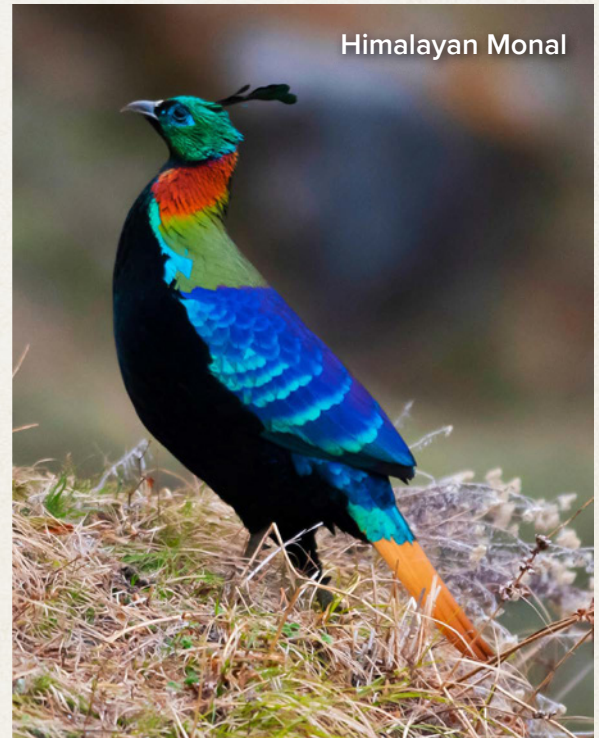
Day 5 - Jan 24 - Bumthang to Yongkola, Birding at Thrumshing La and Sengor Valley

This day offers one of the most breathtaking drives in the Himalayas. As we ascend to Selthang La pass at 11,811 ft (3,600m), weather permitting, we are treated to awe-inspiring views of the magnificent Gangkar Puensum, standing at 24,000 ft (7,315m), the highest unclimbed peak in the world. Surrounding us are the stunning landscapes of the High Himalayas, adorned with auspicious prayer flags and typical Bhutanese villages. Truly, this is a magical land! Along the way, we'll pause and explore the tranquil valley of



Ura, the highest of the four valleys in Bumthang. Nestled in the shadow of Thrumshing La pass (3,780m), Ura is a prosperous village. On this section of the journey, we have the opportunity to spot various birds including **Goldcrest, Greenish Warbler, Beautiful Rosefinch, Collared Grosbeak, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, White-browed Fulvetta, Eurasian Hobby, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Upland Buzzard, Rufous-vented Tit, Buff-barred Warbler, and Black-faced Laughingthrush.**

Leaving Ura, we continue our ascent through forests of larch, silver fir, spruce, and towering hemlocks until we reach Thrumshing La (12,401 ft; 3,780m). This is the highest elevation of our tour. Along this magnificent stretch of road, we keep our eyes open for **Blood Pheasants** feeding by the roadside while enjoying breathtaking views of the Eastern Himalayas. From Thrumshing La, we proceed to the picturesque village of Sengor at 9,850 ft (3,000m). In Sengor, we'll explore the coniferous forests in search of special bird species, including **Bar-winged Wren-babbler, White-browed Shortwing, Asian House Martin, Hoary-throated Barwing, Black-headed Shrike-babbler, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Crimson-browed Finch, Himalayan Bluetail, Red-headed Bullfinch, and Striated Laughingthrush.**



Himalayan Monal

Continuing to Yongkola we'll stop along Namling valley where we'll look for the rare migrant species the **Gould's Shortwing**. Finally, we descend to the warmer Yongkola region, where we'll settle in for the evening at our lodge. Bird/wildlife lists before dinner.

Lodging: Trogon Villa, Yongkola

Day 6 - Jan 25 - Exploring the Bird-rich Thrumshing La National Park

Thrumshing La National Park is renowned as one of the finest birding destinations in Asia. This captivating landscape provides us with an exceptional opportunity to encounter some of Bhutan's most extraordinary bird species, many of which are rarely found elsewhere. Alongside numerous commoner species, we'll look for **Chestnut-breasted Partridge, Green Cochoa, Rufous-necked Hornbill** (one of the top five species and Bhutan holds the best place to see this species), **Rufous-throated Wren-babbler,**

Himalayan Wedge-billed Babbler, Beautiful Nuthatch (one of the top five species in Bhutan and range restricted to Eastern Himalayas), **Booted Eagle, Collared Owlet, Golden-throated Barbet, Lesser Yellownape, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Red-faced Liocichla, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Black-chinned Yuhina, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Little Forktail, Orange-bellied Leafbird**, and many more!

We'll freshen up at the lodge before doing our bird/wildlife lists and then having dinner. After dinner, we'll offer an optional walk to look for nocturnal species like **Brown Wood-owl, Hodgson's Frogmouth**, and **Mountain Scops Owl**. During the night walk we may also encounter the rare **Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel**.

Lodging: Trogon Villa, Yongkola



Beautiful Nuthatch



Bar-headed Geese

Day 7 - Jan 26 - Birding Our Way from Yongkola Back to Bumthang

We'll begin our morning by exploring the bird-rich areas of Yongkola. After enjoying a hearty breakfast, we'll proceed towards Bumthang, making several additional stops at Namling, Sengor, and Thrumshing La pass. These stops will allow us to discover more birds, appreciate botanical wonders, and take in breathtaking vistas.

During our birding excursions, we'll be on the lookout for a variety of bird species, including the **Slender-billed Scimitar-babbler** (a top target bird for Bhutan), **Shikra, Great Parrotbill, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Eurasian Woodcock, Ashy Drongo, Rufous-fronted Tit, Grey-crested Tit, Stripe-throated Yuhina, White-throated Redstart, Streak-breasted Scimitar-babbler**, and **Little Bunting**. In addition to our avian encounters, we might have the opportunity to spot a few mammal species, including the **Himalayan Five-striped Squirrel**, and with a stroke of luck, the rare **Red Panda**.

Lodging: Hotel Ugyenling or similar, Bumthang

Day 8 - Jan 27 - Birding at Tharpaling Monastery and Onward to Trongsa

We'll begin the day by waking up early and embarking on a drive to Tharpaling Monastery. Our main objective is to catch a glimpse of the exquisitely rainbow-colored **Himalayan Monal**, along with sightings of **Snow Pigeon**, and the rare **Godlewski Bunting**. The surrounding area is also home to several common species, including the endemic **Eurasian Magpie** of the Bumthang valley, **Himalayan Bulbul**, **Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch**, **Rufous-vented Yuhina**, **Black-throated Thrush**, **Blue-fronted Redstart**, **Plain Mountain Finch**, and **Red-billed Chough**.

Following a delightful picnic breakfast at Tharpaling, we'll continue our journey to Trongsa, making additional stops along Yotong La and Doshong Goenba valley to maximize our birding opportunities.

Once we arrive in Trongsa, we'll explore the strategically positioned **Trongsa Dzong**, constructed in 1648. This magnificent dzong held great significance as the seat of power over central and eastern Bhutan, and it served as the residence for both the first



Ward's Trogon

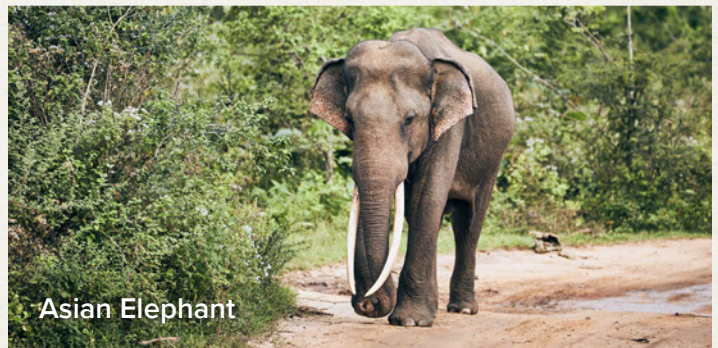
and second kings of Bhutan. The dzong is among the largest in Bhutan, showcasing exemplary Bhutanese architecture. Perched on a steep ridge high above the turbulent Mangde Chu, it appears to hover amidst the early morning mist and clouds. Its grandeur is truly awe-inspiring. As we explore the massive structure, we'll wander through a maze of lanes and ancient stone steps that lead to sunlit courtyards housing numerous temples within the dzong.

In terms of non-avian wildlife, we may have the opportunity to spot the **Assemese Macaque** and **Muntjac deer**.

Lodging: Tendrel Resort or similar, Trongsa



Satyr Tragopan



Asian Elephant



Spotted Elachura

Day 9 - Jan 28 - Trongsa to Tingtibi with Birding Stops Along Shemgang Road

Today's journey will take us through a wide range of altitudes, starting from 7,120 ft (2,170m) and descending to 1,970 ft (600m) as we reach Tingtibi. As we get underway prior to breakfast (after coffee and tea), we'll be treated to magnificent views of the Himalayan landscape. In the morning, our focus will be on spotting a wide variety of bird species, including the **Black Eagle**, **White-tailed Robin**, **Crested Kingfisher**, **Crimson-breasted** and **Bay Woodpeckers**, **Bhutan Laughingthrush**, **Spotted Forktail**, **White-bellied Erpornis**, **Scaly-breasted Cupwing**, **Tibetan Serin**, **Crested Bunting**, and **Grey-headed Bullfinch**.

Following a satisfying breakfast around Kuenga Rubten, we'll continue our journey towards Tingtibi, making additional birding stops whenever time permits. Some of the species we can expect to encounter in the area include the **Oriental Hobby**, **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker**, **Mountain Hawk-eagle**, **Green-billed Malkoha**, **Great Hornbill**, **White-throated Bulbul**, **Blue Rock-thrush**, **Common Tailorbird** and **Yellow-vented Warbler**.

Lodging: Hotel Twang or Berti Eco Lodge

Day 10 - Jan 29 - Exploring the Sub-tropical Bamboo Forests of Tingtibi

Our exploration of the rarely visited **Royal Manas National Park** in Tingtibi will introduce us to one of the most biodiverse areas in Bhutan, where we can witness an incredible variety of rare and special birds. Throughout the day, one of our big target species will be the critically endangered **White-bellied Heron**, which hunts for fish among boulders in the river running through the canyon. Other avian possibilities include **Pale-billed Parrotbill**, **White-browed Scimitar Babbler**, **White-hooded Babbler**, **Pin-tailed Green**



Buddha Dordenma statue

Pigeon, White-browed Piculet, Pale-headed Woodpecker, Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher, Sultan Tit, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-babbler, Rufous-necked and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes, Plain Flowerpecker, Silver-eared Mesia, Streaked Spiderhunter, and many more.

In addition to the high bird diversity, Tingtibi valley presents us with the best chance to observe one of Bhutan's rare primates, the beautiful **Golden Langur**, as they forage along the roadside. We'll return to our lodge in the late afternoon for some rest before gathering to work on our lists and share a nice dinner.

Lodging: Hotel Twang or Berti Eco Lodge

Day 11 - Jan 30 - Descending from Tingtibi to Gelephu, Birding Along the Way

We'll begin the day by exploring the birdlife around our hotel in Tingtibi, immersing ourselves in the delightful morning chorus. Afterward, we'll set off on our journey towards Tama La pass, situated at an elevation of 5,450 ft (1,661m). As we traverse through mixed temperate forests, we'll be enchanted by the natural beauty of the surroundings, eventually arriving at the picturesque village of Surey. Along the way, we'll make a special stop near Tama La, where we'll have the opportunity to search for the rare **Yellow-rumped Honeyguide**.

Continuing from Surey, we'll proceed to the captivating Loderay valley, where the changing altitudes and vegetation create a haven for a diverse range of bird species. We'll be descending to our lowest elevations of the tour, ending up in a tropical forest environment at approximately 820 ft (250m). Keep your eyes peeled for the following avian treasures: **Changeable Hawk, Rufous-bellied Eagles, Hodgson's Hawk-cuckoo, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Wreathed Hornbill, Greater Yellownappe, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Eurasian Wryneck, Black-throated Sunbird, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Maroon Oriole, and Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler**. These are just a few of the many fascinating bird species you may encounter during this section of our journey.

Lodging: Hotel Merigold or similar, Gelephu

Day 12 - Jan 31 - Exploring the Bird-rich Tropical Forests of Gelephu

This morning, we'll begin our birding adventure early, after coffee and tea, to explore the lowland tropical forests of Gelephu. We'll keep our eyes peeled for a variety of key bird species, including: **Alexandrine Parakeet, Jerdon's Baza, Asian Koel, Rufous Treepie, Greater Coucal, Indian Peafowl** ("peacock"), **Black Stork, Crested Treeswift, Eastern Jungle Crow, Blue-eared Barbets, Large Woodshrike, Ashy Prinia, Aberrant**

Bush Warbler, Puff-throated Babbler, Pin-striped Tit-babbler, Great Myna, Asian Pied Starling, Siberian Rubythroat, and many more possibilities. It's also possible to see **Asian Elephants** in this area!

After a delicious breakfast, our next stop will be the Sewage treatment plant, where we can expect to encounter a range of bird species, including: **Lesser Coucal, Little Cormorant, Pied Kingfisher, Painted Snipe, Lesser Adjutant, Asian Openbill, Red-naped Ibis, Lineated Barbet, Red-wattled Lapwing, Paddyfield Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, Lesser Whistling-duck, Indian Pond-heron, Little Cormorant,** and more.

Bird and wildlife lists back at the hotel, followed by dinner. As night descends, we'll offer and optional outing to explore the bustling town of Gelephu in search of owls. Some of the owl species we frequently encounter include the: **Brown Hawk Owl, Collared Scops Owl, Asian Barred Owlet,** and **Spotted Owlet.**

Lodging: [Hotel Merigold](#) or similar, Gelephu



Spotted Laughingthrush

Day 13 - Feb 1 - Gelephu to Tsirang, Birding the Areas of Sarpang, Dara Chu, and the Tsirang valley

We'll dedicate a significant part of the morning to birding along the Sarpang road. During this excursion, we may encounter a variety of species, including the **Steppe Eagle, Red Junglefowl, Orange-breasted** and **Thick-billed Green Pigeons, Oriental**

Pied-hornbill, Coppersmith Barbet, Scarlet Minivet, Jungle Babbler, Green Bee-eater, Smoky Warbler, Pale-footed Bush Warbler, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, and Dollarbird.

After a pleasant breakfast, we'll continue our birding adventure in the sub-tropical forests above Sarpang. We'll enjoy lunch in the scenic surroundings of Dara Chu. In this area, we hope to find birds like **White-crested Laughingthrush, Nepal Fulvetta, Long-tailed Broadbill, Red-headed Trogon, Red-billed Leiothrix, and Collared Treepie.**

Lodging: Damphu Resort, Tsirang

Day 14 - Feb 2 - Tsirang to Punakha – Birding in the Sunkosh Valley

This morning, we'll embark on a birding journey through the picturesque Sunkosh Valley. Before breakfast, we'll stop for early birding opportunities, looking for species such as **Red-headed Trogon, Long-tailed Broadbill, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Striated Yuhina, Crested Goshawk, Crested Serpent Eagle, Black-naped Monarch,** and more.

After breakfast, we'll visit the **White-bellied Heron Conservation Center** to learn about this critically endangered species. Continuing our drive along the Sunkosh River Valley, we'll keep an eye out for the elusive **White-bellied Heron**—our third opportunity on the trip to spot it. Along the way, we may also encounter other fascinating bird species such as the **Greater Goldenback, Blue-throated Barbet, Rufous Woodpecker, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Slaty-backed Forktail, Spot-winged Starling, and Long-tailed Minivet.**

Lodging: Spirit Village Lodge or similar, Punakha

Day 15 - Feb 3 - Punakha to Paro – Birding at Menchuna Farm Road & Lamperi Botanical Park

We'll start early this morning to reach the Menchuna farm road for our first birding session of the day. Here, we'll look for species such as **Great Barbet, Striated Bulbul, Grey Treepie, Large-billed Crow, Fire-capped Tit, Ashy-throated Warbler, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Grey-hooded Warbler, and Black-winged Cuckooshrike.**

After breakfast, we'll continue to **Lamperi Botanical Park** and explore its forest trails, searching for birds like the **Brown Parrotbill, Scarlet Finch, Bar-throated Siva, Hoary-throated Barwing,** and more.

From there, we'll proceed to Paro, crossing the scenic Dochula Pass on the way. At this

point we have come full-circle, to where we first set foot in Bhutan. We'll rest a bit after checking in at the hotel, then go over our lists before dinner. It's time to rest up, because tomorrow we have a big adventure!

Lodging: Hotel Olathang or similar, Paro

Day 16 - Feb 4 - Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery

Today marks our final day in Bhutan, and it promises to be a remarkable experience combining birdwatching and cultural exploration in the beautiful Paro valley. The highlight of the day is the hike up to the world-famous **Tiger's Nest**, also known as **Taktsang Monastery**. Perched 2,000 ft (600m) high on a cliff, this monastery holds great significance as it is believed to be the place where an Indian saint defeated demons on the back of a tiger to spread Buddhism in Bhutan.



Tiger's Nest Monastery

The hike to the monastery takes about 1.5-2 hours through wooded areas, involving an ascent of 1,120 ft (340m). Along the way, we'll have opportunities for birdwatching, seeking out species such as **Hume's Leaf Warbler**, **Green-backed**, **Coal Tit**, **White-tailed Nuthatch**, **Yellow-billed Blue Magpie**, **Spotted Nutcracker** and **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush**.

As we reach the tea house, a welcome spot for refreshments and one of the best viewpoints of the monastery, those who want to continue will make the ascent for another half-hour to reach a viewpoint directly across from the monastery. The final, short stretch involves a steep descent into the narrow gorge separating us from the monastery, followed by a climb back up to reach the edifice.

We may still find some new bird species here! Upon exploring the rocky ledges near the monastery, we'll keep our eyes open for flocks of and **Altai Accentors**. The nearby waterfall often presents opportunities to observe **Little Forktail** and **White-capped Redstart**.

As the day comes to an end, we'll come together for a delightful farewell dinner. This enchanting evening will provide us with an opportunity to reflect on our journey, share our stories and laughter, and celebrate the remarkable experiences we have had in Bhutan. It will be a heartfelt and memorable occasion as we bid farewell to this enchanting land and the beautiful memories we have created.

Lodging: Hotel Olathang or similar, Paro

Day 17 - Feb 5 - Departures

After breakfast, we'll take a short 15-minute drive to Paro Airport and catch our flights to our onward connections. Farewell!



Boudhanath Stupa

Day 1 - Jan 17 - Arrive in Kathmandu

Welcome to the renowned city of **Kathmandu**, Nepal! The *Pre-Trip Extension* begins with our arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, where you'll be met by your Wild Latitudes and local guides. We'll drive a short distance north to our lodging, Hotel Padma. Literally out the door of the hotel is **Boudhanath Stupa**, one of the largest stupas in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Every day, hundreds of tourists and pilgrims walk in a clockwise direction around this stupa, a circumambulating act known as a *kora*. Buddhists do Kora as a form of pilgrimage and meditation and is an integral part of Tibetan Buddhist devotional practice. Bold, vibrant, and colorful, Boudhanath is truly a special place to visit. After settling into our hotel, we'll head to the hotel's rooftop restaurant, Nina's, where we'll introduce ourselves, have a brief orientation and enjoy our first dinner together in view of Boudhanath Stupa.

Lodging: Hotel Dolmaling

Day 2 - Jan 18 - Birding Phulchowki Hill

Following breakfast at the Hotel, we will make our way out to **Phulchowki Hill**. Phulchowki means "hill full of flowers," in Nepali. It is the highest point in the Kathmandu Valley standing at just over 9,000 ft (2,740m) and well-known for beautiful vistas that are truly enchanting. And it is also a major birding hotspot! In the dense forests that covers

the hill's lower flanks, we'll be seeking the **Red-headed Trogon**, **Blue-naped Pitta**, **Common Green-Magpie**, **Barred Cuckoo-Dove**, and many other interesting species. In the cloud forest that covers the upper half of Phulchowki, we'll keep our eye out for birds such species as the **Red-tailed Minla**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Hoary-throated Barwing**, and the **Darjeeling Woodpecker**.

After lunch, we'll continue birding before returning to the hotel for a little relaxing and free time, after which we'll gather to go over our bird list before dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Dolmaling](#)

Day 3 - Jan 19 - Gokarna Forest, Pashupatinath Temple, and Durbar Square

This morning we'll head to the **Gokarna Forest Reserve**. A wall was built around the forest in 1862, as it was the royal hunting reserve for the kings of the day. This is the last natural forest of Kathmandu Valley representing the wilderness that existed here over 500 years ago. This morning we'll have the opportunity to spot many bird species, including the **Lesser Yellownape**, **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, **Orange-bellied Leafbird**, **Long-tailed Minivet**, **Yellow-bellied Fantail**, and **Brown Wood Owl**.



Common Green-Magpie



Nepalese Paper Plant



Durbar Square

After a delicious lunch, we shift towards culture as we visit **Pashupatinath Temple** and Kathmandu's **Durbar Square**. Pashupatinath is the largest and oldest Shiva temple in the world, and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage site. Durbar Square is where the city's kings were once crowned, and from where they ruled. The vibrant square remains the traditional heart of the old town, and Kathmandu's most spectacular legacy of traditional architecture. We return in the late afternoon to our hotel, meeting up again for our reviewing our bird list and dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Dolmaling](#)

Day 4 - Jan 20 - Onward to Bhutan!

We check out of our lovely hotel this morning, and head in our bus to the airport. Next stop: Bhutan! See *Page 1* for the *full Bhutan Tour Itinerary*.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

YOUR GUIDES

IVAN PHILLIPSEN

Ivan is a dedicated naturalist with a background in scientific research. He holds a M.S. in Biology from Cal State San Bernardino and a Ph.D. in Zoology from Oregon State University. As Co-owner of Wild Latitudes, Ivan has been able to apply his knowledge in crafting and leading ecotours around the world.

Natural history is Ivan's true passion and what he is most excited to share with tour participants. Although he is fascinated by just about every aspect of nature, Ivan is particularly fond of birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, plants, and geology. Everything is interconnected in nature and he does his best to take a holistic approach when teaching about the natural world.



DAVID JAFFE

David Jaffe has been guiding and teaching since 1991. His childhood interest in nature eventually led him to Evergreen State College, WA where he earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Geology. After 13 years of 'life-experience' he returned to graduate school, earning a M.S. in Applied Ecology with The Field Naturalist Program from the University of Vermont.

David has trekked through the Himalaya in Nepal, looked into the eyes of masked boobies in the Galápagos, sought nudibranchs on the Great Barrier Reef, and walked the Ghats along the Ganges River in India. He has led backcountry trips in Denali National Park, learned from students in Kentucky, and gained great insights while hitchhiking home from work in Yosemite National Park. He has experience as a naturalist in many of the lower 48 states and Baja California. David worked as a divemaster in Australia, Costa Rica, and India. He assisted with the establishment of a marine protected area off the coast of Madagascar and researched and formally studied birds in Canada and South America. His understanding, love and enthusiasm about the natural world continues to grow.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.