TOUR REFERENCE
LK4NFXXG43

Birds and Wildlife Tour (11 Days)

11 days · 10 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This eleven-day tour is built for birders and wildlife watchers, moving from the lowland wetlands of the west coast through the rainforests of Kitulgala and Sinharaja, the dry-zone parks of Udawalawe and Yala, the hill country around Nuwara Eliya, and the forests around Sigiriya before returning to Negombo. The route is sequenced to cover Sri Lanka's main habitat types in turn, from coastal lagoon and lowland rainforest to open parkland, highland forest and dry-zone jungle, giving a realistic chance at the island's endemic birds and resident mammals.

Along the way travellers spend time in Sinharaja, a World Heritage rainforest holding most of Sri Lanka's endemic bird species, go on safari in Udawalawe and Yala national parks for elephant, leopard and sloth bear, and bird the highland forests around Nuwara Eliya for species found only at altitude. Full days are allocated to the richest sites, including two days each at Yala and Nuwara Eliya, so there is time to work the forest trails and park tracks properly rather than passing through.

You travel in a private vehicle with an English-speaking chauffeur guide, and can book the tour with hotels at the level you choose or as transport and guiding only.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Arrival – Negombo

Arrival at the airport and transfer to a hotel in Negombo on the west coast, where there is time to rest after the flight.

Negombo lagoon and wetlands

Negombo's lagoon, mangroves and surrounding wetlands make it a good base for birding near the airport. Possible sightings include Brown Hawk-Owl, Indian Scops Owl, Red-backed Flameback, Sri Lanka Swallow and Lesser Hill Myna, along with mammals such as Brown Mongoose, Ruddy Mongoose and Indian Flying Fox.

Day 2 Negombo – Kitulgala

Drive to Kitulgala, a rainforest area better known for white-water rafting but equally rewarding for naturalists.

Kitulgala rainforest

In the afternoon, cross the river by dugout canoe near the rest house and walk into the rainforest. Target birds include Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Ceylon Junglefowl, Ceylon Frogmouth, Malabar Trogon, Ceylon Blue Magpie and Ceylon Hill Myna, alongside mammals such as Red Slender Loris, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel, Yellow-spotted Chevrotain and Sambar.

Day 3 Kitulgala – Sinharaja

A short jeep ride leads into Sinharaja, a World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve that holds most of Sri Lanka's endemic birds.



Sinharaja rainforest

A full day is spent birding the forest trails until evening. Possible birds include Ceylon Spurfowl, Serendib Scops Owl, Red-faced Malkoha, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, White-faced Starling and Ceylon Blue Magpie, with mammals such as Red Slender Loris, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel and Yellow-spotted Chevrotain also present.

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Day 4 Sinharaja – Udawalawe

Drive to Udawalawe, checking in to the hotel by lunchtime, with the afternoon set aside for the national park.



Udawalawe National Park

A jeep safari covers the park's open parkland, which attracts birds of prey and migratory water birds along with endemics such as the Ceylon Spurfowl and Brown-capped Babbler. Other species recorded here include Crested Hawk-Eagle, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Lesser Adjutant, and mammals such as Asian Elephant, Golden Jackal and Jungle Cat.

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Day 5 Yala (days 5–6)

Drive to Tissamaharama and check in for two nights, with both days given over to safari in Yala National Park on the Indian Ocean coast.



Yala National Park

Yala holds one of the densest leopard populations anywhere, around 215 recorded bird species, and Important Bird Area status, explored over two days with an experienced naturalist. Birds to look for include Black-necked Stork, Spot-billed Pelican and Lesser Adjutant, while mammals include Leopard, Sloth Bear, Asian Elephant, Sambar, Chital and Rusty-spotted Cat.

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Day 7 Nuwara Eliya (days 7–8)

Drive up to Nuwara Eliya in the high hills and check in for two nights, with birding focused on the highland endemics.



Victoria Park

An evening visit to this town-centre park looks for Indian Pitta, Pied Thrush and Kashmir Flycatcher among other highland species.

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Nuwara Eliya highlands

A second full day is spent birding the surrounding hills for species such as Yellow-eared Bulbul, Ceylon Whistling Thrush, Ceylon Wood Pigeon, Dull-blue Flycatcher and Ceylon Bush Warbler, along with mammals including Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Sri Lanka Giant Squirrel (both in their highland races) and Golden Palm Civet.

Day 9 Nuwara Eliya – Sigiriya

Drive to Sigiriya with lunch at Dambulla, then spend the afternoon in the Sigiriya forest.

Sigiriya forest

The afternoon walk looks for forest birds and other wildlife, with possible sightings including Forest Eagle-Owl, Brown Fish Owl, Indian Pitta, Orange-headed Thrush and White-rumped Shama, plus mammals such as Grey Slender Loris, Brown Palm Civet and Rusty-spotted Cat.

Day 10 Sigiriya – Negombo

A last morning walk in the Sigiriya forest precedes the drive back to Negombo for the final night.

Sigiriya forest

A final walk through the forest for birds and other wildlife before departure.

Day 11 Departure

After breakfast, check out and transfer to Bandaranaike International Airport for departure, marking the end of the tour.