

WESTERN GHATS ENDEMIC BIRDING TOUR

Tropical rain forests are primary centers of species richness and endemism within the Western Ghats in India. There are more than 450 known bird species from this hotspot, of which 16 are endemic, mostly found in the lowland rainforests and high altitude *montane* forests of the Kerala. This tour covers the lowland forests at Thattekkad and the hill ranges of Munnar.



(Whitebellied Treepie - Illustration: Satyan Mepayur)

Departures: Any day of the week
Best time to visit: September to April
All Tours ex-Kochi

Tour Price: US\$ 750 per person

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Day 1, 2, 3 : Thattekkad

Early morning arrival at Thattekkad, by far the best birding spot in South India. In an area of approximately 25 square kilometres over 270 species have been recorded. There will also be night birding for the Nightjars, Frogmouths & Owls. Specialties here include Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl, Ceylon Frogmouth, Red Spurfowl, Bay Owl, Rufous Babbler, Blue-faced Malkoha, Brown-breasted, White-bellied Blue-tailed & Rusty-tailed Flycatchers,

Grey-headed Bulbul and Wynad Laughing Thrush. Moreover, Thattekkad is ideal for seeing a good number of the endemics of the Western Ghats. The more difficult birds are Wynad Laughing Thrush and Grey-headed Bulbul. Proceed to Urullathany, at the other end of the reserve, for the Bulbul and Laughing Thrush. Also visit Edamalayar and the South side of the river for the owls, Streak-throated Woodpecker and Yellow-billed Babbler. Other notable species likely to be seen are Red Spurfowl, Ceylon Frogmouth, Blue-faced Malkoha, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Malabar Grey Hornbill, White-bellied and Heart-spotted Woodpeckers, Rufous Babbler, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, White-bellied Treepie and Black-throated Munia.

Day 4, 5 : Munnar.

Transfer to Munnar, a hill station situated at 1450m in the centre of a major tea-producing region. The birding areas are on either side of the plateau of the High Range (Nilgiri Hills), at Rajamalai (part of the Eravikulam National Park, 8 km from Munnar), or in the *sholas* - there are dense patches of natural evergreen forest in sheltered valleys. In these surviving forests & grasslands here one can see Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon, Grey-breasted Laughing Thrush, Nilgiri and Black-and-Rufous Flycatchers, White-bellied Shortwing, Nilgiri Pipit, Painted Bush Quail. The grassy plateau is also one of the last habitats of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr.

Price: US \$ 750.00 per person on TWIN share, based on 2 persons travelling.

Inclusions:

Price includes accommodation for 5 nights, all meals, all transfers, (tour starts and ends at Kochi), guide fees, entrance fees. This trip can also be tailor-made. Extensions to other destinations in South India also possible.

Departures: Any day of the week

