

"I had always wanted to experience Bhutan and when I got this very special opportunity it delivered in 'space loads'. From the minute we got off the plane in Paro the magic moments just kept coming and coming – I cannot wait to return!" Julian Sykes

Dates Fri 4 - Tue 22 Apr 2025

Price £8,495

Deposit £1,695 **Single Supp** £500

Leaders Julian Sykes plus local guide

Flights British Airways or Virgin, scheduled
Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Delhi
Inbound: Morning, Delhi-Heathrow
Local airline, Delhi-Paro-Delhi

Weather Generally dry but be prepared for some rain. Can be warm during the day but cold initially in the mornings/evenings and at altitude (0-30°C)

Walking Reasonable level of fitness is required. Most of the walks are comfortable and the majority of birding is done roadside. The walk to Tiger's Nest Monastery is on an uneven forest trail with a big ascent. All walking is at a relaxed pace, as at altitude. Average altitude is 2,400m, some mountain passes at 4,000m

Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 19. Most breakfasts and all lunches are hot picnic style, taken in the field

Insects May encounter mosquitoes, bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms. All hotels are clean and comfortable, although basic compared to UK standards. Most rooms are ensuite, some with private facilities

Visa E-visa required for India, additional £60. We shall arrange your Bhutan visa

Group 11

Just some of what we hope to see:

White-bellied Heron	Golden-breasted Fulvetta
Pallas's Fish Eagle	Yellow-throated Fulvetta
Himalayan Monal	Himalayan Cutia
Satyr Tragopan	Bhutan Laughingthrush
Ibisbill	Red-faced Liocichla
Snow Pigeon	Fire-tailed Sunbird
Tawny Fish Owl	Himalayan White-browed
Ward's Trogon	Rosefinch
Rufous-necked Hornbill	Himalayan Yellow-throated
Greater Yellownape	Marten
Beautiful Nuthatch	Golden Langur

Secluded Bhutan, high in the Eastern Himalayas is teeming with wildlife. This culturally rich and friendly country will astound us with its diversity of species.

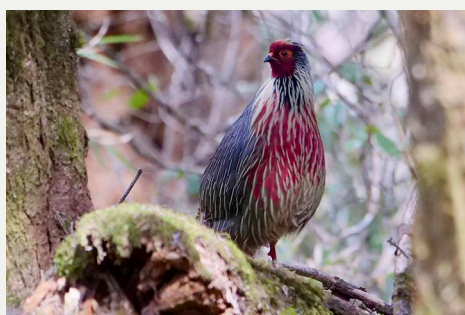
- Spectacular Himalayan mountain scenery, pristine forests and wonderful hospitality
- Dzongs of praise including a visit to the spectacular Punakha Dzong
- Montane specialities - Blood Pheasant, Satyr Tragopan and Himalayan Monal
- Chances of Golden Langur, Bhutan Giant Flying Squirrel and the Holy Grail – Red Panda
- Fabulous scenic walk to the world-famous Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Retina-burning species - Beautiful Nuthatch, Fire-tailed Myzornis and sunbirds
- The best time for seeing the gorgeous Rhododendron bloom

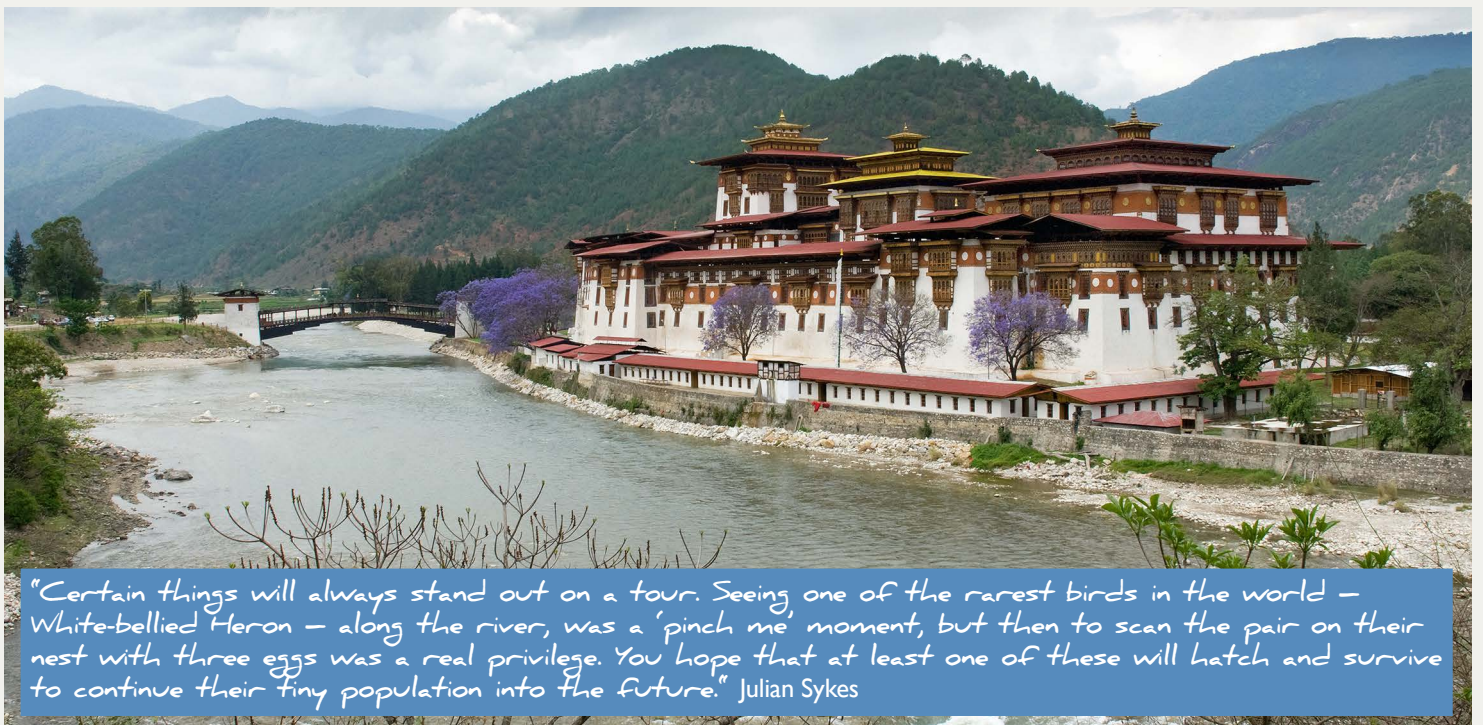
1-2 Overnight flight from Heathrow to Delhi, with a full day to recover:

3-5 Early flight to Paro, marvelling at the Himalayan mountains enroute. We look for Ibisbill along the Pa Chhu River and possibly Wallcreeper, Black-tailed Crake, Ruddy Shelduck and Plumbeous and Hodgson's Redstarts. After lunch, drive to Kuensel Phodrang NP to see the huge Buddha Dordenma statue, which is surrounded by forests and offers a stunning view of the Thimphu Valley. We start early to see dawn breaking over the Dochu La Pass, which is adorned with prayer flags and offers panoramic views of the Bhutanese Himalayas. This is our best opportunity to find the rare and elusive Red Panda, amidst the mixed evergreen and broad-leaved forest. We shall encounter a diverse range of birds such as Hill Partridge, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker; Large Hawk

Cuckoo, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Pygmy Cupwing and Rufous-bellied Niltava. We continue on to Punakha, visiting the town's majestic Dzong, which is regarded as one of the most beautiful in Bhutan. The next day we start with a scenic journey through beautiful Rhododendron forests towards Lawa La pass, where we hope to find Ward's Trogon, Himalayan Cutia and Spotted Elachura. We continue to the picturesque Phobjikha Valley, renowned for its Black-necked Cranes.

6-7 The next two days are spent heading east towards Yongkola, first making our way back over the Lawa La to another breathtaking pass - Pele La. This is where we hope to find targets such as Satyr Tragopan and Fire-tailed Myzornis. The journey continues through more breathtaking landscapes, ascending to the Yotong Pass as we end our day in Bumthang. Another travelling day





"Certain things will always stand out on a tour. Seeing one of the rarest birds in the world – White-bellied Heron – along the river, was a 'pinch me' moment, but then to scan the pair on their nest with three eggs was a real privilege. You hope that at least one of these will hatch and survive to continue their tiny population into the future." Julian Sykes

with stunning scenery takes us to the Selthang Pass. Weather permitting, this can afford views of the highest unclimbed mountain in the world – Gangkhar Puensum at 7,315m! We continue to Ura where Himalayan Monal are possible, before ascending to Thrumshing La (3,780m) for Blood Pheasant. At the Sengor Valley we look for White-browed Shortwing, before we make our way to Yongkola, with one last target stop for Gould's Shortwing.

8-9 We have two full days to explore Thrumshing La NP. The warm broad-leaved forests are home to some of Bhutan's most sought after birds such as Beautiful Nuthatch, Ward's Trogon, Blue-naped Pitta and Rufous-necked Hornbill. Ancient trees are festooned with orchids, adding a riot of colour and the list of birds here is fabulous with many beautiful woodpeckers, grosbeaks, redstarts fantails, minivets, barbets, babblers, flycatchers, yuhinas and warblers too numerous to list!

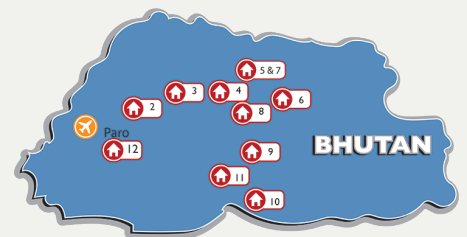
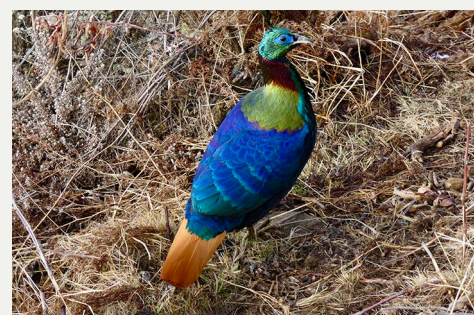
10-11 We start around Yongkola and after breakfast, we head towards Bumthang, making several stops enroute looking for Slender-billed Scimitar-babbler, Great Parrotbill and Golden-breasted Fulvetta, before reaching our accommodation in Bumthang. An early start takes us to Tharpaling Monastery for mind-blowing views of Himalayan Monal, along with Snow Pigeon and Large-eared Pika. Following a delightful picnic breakfast by the monastery, we shall continue our journey to Trongsa, making additional stops to maximise our birding opportunities.



12-14 Starting from 2,170m we descend to 600m at Tingtibi, with magnificent views of the Himalayan landscape. Whenever time permits we have stops enroute for Spotted Forktail, Asian Barred Owllet, Scaly-breasted Cupwing and Bay Woodpecker. The next day we explore the Royal Manas NP, where our target is the incredibly rare White-bellied Heron. Other specialities here are Tawny Fish Owl, White-hooded Babbler, Pale-billed Parrotbill, Pale-headed Woodpecker and the fabulous Golden Langur, one of Bhutan's rarest primates. The next day we leave Tingtibi heading towards Tama, stopping at a sheer cliff face for the rare Yellow-rumped Honeyguide. We stop in the Surey Valley for Rufous-bellied Eagle, Maroon Oriole, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler and Greater Yellow-nape, before our arrival in Gelephu.

15-16 We start along the Sarpang road where we should find Nepal Fulvetta, White-crested Laughingthrush, Whiskered Yuhina, Long-tailed Broadbill, Red-headed Trogon, Red-billed Leiothrix and possibly another rare species - Collared Treepie. The next morning we go to the Sunkosh Valley for another try for White-bellied Heron, along with Rufous Woodpecker, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Slaty-backed Forktail and Great Barbet, before continuing our journey to Paro.

17-19 On our final full day in Bhutan, we walk to one of the most spectacular monasteries in the world - Tiger's Nest. Words cannot express how incredible this place is! The next morning we say farewell to Bhutan, returning to Delhi for a night and then our flight back to London.



Delhi, India
1 & 13

Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Overnight flight Heathrow to Delhi
1 night Lemon Tree Hotel Delhi Airport
- Day 3 Fly Delhi to Paro and drive to Thimphu
1 night Hotel Park (2,300m)
- Day 4 Dochu La and Lampelri Park, to Punakha
1 night Spirit of Village Lodge (1,242m)
- Day 5 Drive along Khelekha, Nobding and Lawa La pass (3,350m), to Phobjikha
1 night Phobjikha Resort (3,000m)
- Day 6 Visit Pele La pass (3350m), to Bumthang
1 night Ugyenling Hotel (2,800m)
- Days 7-9 Bumthang to Yongkola. Visit Thrumshing La Pass and Thrumshing La NP
3 nights Trogon Villa (1,800m)
- Day 10 Yongkola to Bumthang
1 night Ugyenling Hotel (2,800m)
- Day 11 Visit Tharpaling Monastery, to Trongsa
1 night Tendrel Resort (2,170m)
- Days 12-13 Trongsa to Tingtibi, visit Royal Manas NP
2 nights Hotel Twang (600m)
- Day 14 Tingtibi to Gelephu
1 night Kuku Grand (221m)
- Day 15 Gelephu to Tsirang
1 night Damphu Resort (1,437m)
- Days 16-17 Damphu to Paro, full day hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery
2 nights Hotel Olathang (2,200m)
- Days 18-19 Fly Paro to Delhi, overnight in Delhi, then arrive in UK on Day 19
1 night Lemon Tree Hotel Delhi Airport

Chubzang Tangbi: Rufous-necked Hornbill, Punakha Dzong
Julian Sykes: Beautiful Nuthatch, Ibisbill, Blood Pheasant
Maggie Tester: Himalayan Monal