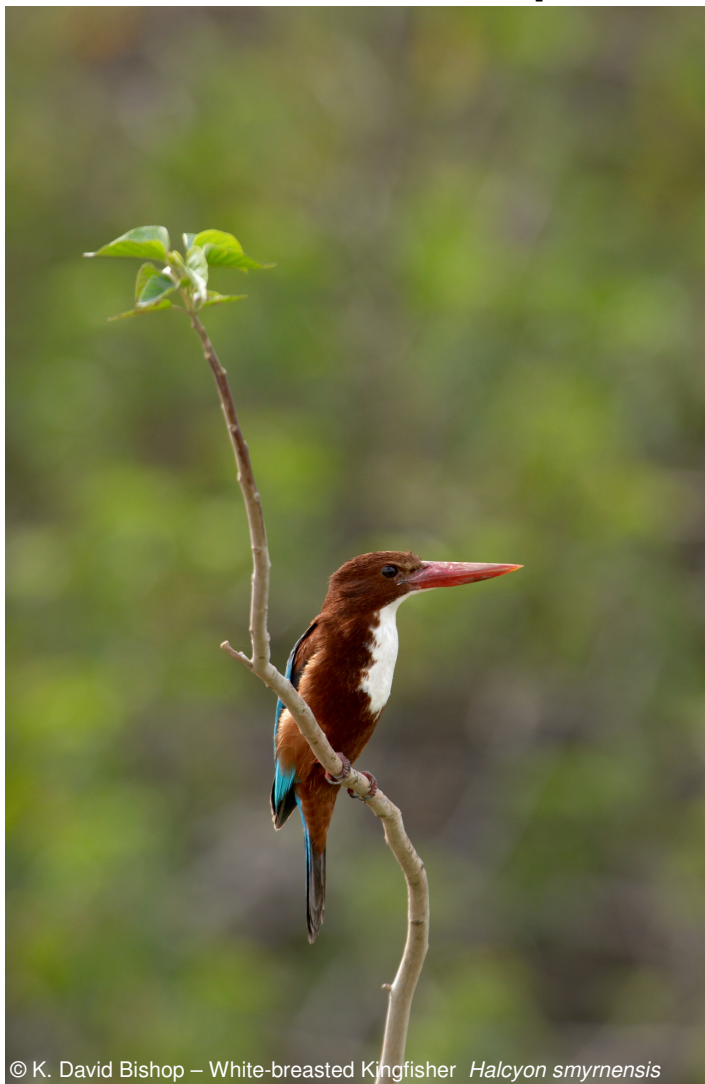


11 June 2007 - KDB

**The Birds, Mammals and Butterflies Recorded
on
The Victor Emanuel Nature Tours Assam Tour
2007**

Compiled by
K. David Bishop



© K. David Bishop – White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Leader: K. David Bishop

Assam: Kaziranga & Nameri National Parks

'Asia's Serengeti'

April 5-14, 2007

By David Bishop

Kaziranga, with its rich mélange of swamps and marshes, grasslands, and forests, supports teeming numbers of mega-charismatic birds and mammals, and, as such, the epithet, "Asia's Serengeti," is well-deserved. Nowhere else in Asia can you sit atop a superbly trained elephant and watch great one-horned rhinoceroses at barely a few meters while herds of wild Asian elephants rumble and splash nearby, globally threatened Bengal Floricans exhibit their brief display, and decidedly ugly Greater and Lesser adjutants lumber away in ungainly flight—and all this against a backdrop of towering, snow-capped Himalayas. Kaziranga is a gem of a park that provides a rare opportunity to see what the wild lands of Asia were once like.

Albeit relatively small at ca. 900 square kilometers, Kaziranga, located on the south bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, hosts the highest density of Bengal tigers anywhere in the world. A recent count garnered approximately 90 of these magnificent creatures. It is quite astonishing to enumerate just the globally threatened species that make their homes here. In addition to those species mentioned above, Swamp Francolin, Spot-billed Pelican, Pallas's Fish-Eagle, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Asian water buffalo, swamp and hog deer, and Hoolock gibbon to mention but a few, are all resident here and regularly seen on our Assam tour.

I doubt that any of the participants on our 2007 tour will ever forget our afternoon at lovely Baguri Bheel (freshwater marsh in this neck of the woods). As we headed out to a watch-tower overlooking Baguri Bheel, a huge—simply huge—Great Hornbill flew right over our heads and perched in a nearby tree, illuminated by the sun glowing on an increasingly thunderous background. Barely had we time to exclaim than our attention was drawn to a small group of very attractive, migrant Gray-headed Lapwings competing for space with ten or so immense rhinos. The thin strand of woodland through which we could discern vast numbers of waterbirds and large mammals was tantalizing, but as much as we tried to push on to the tower to get a better view, bird after bird interrupted us! A pair of somber Brown Fish-Owls were unavoidable, as were hordes of lusciously-hued Red-breasted Parakeets. Super! But oh that watch tower; spread out before us in a 250-degree arc were birds and mammals everywhere. Skeins of delightfully dapper Bar-headed Geese shifted and squabbled while the dramatic, thunderously black afternoon sky lit by an orange sun from behind us turned Ruddy Shelducks dappling in the shallows into the richest imaginable colors. And all the while there was the soft susurrations of busily feeding animals. We easily counted 20 rhinos, many with young calves. Leviathan Black-

necked Storks scuttled out of reach of a pack of playful smooth-coated otters while a wintering Peregrine caused immediate panic amidst the ranks. We knew—we just knew there had to be a big cat sitting there out of sight, and later we heard the unmistakable call of a large and territorial male tiger. Tantalizing. Every minute seemed to add another species to an already impressive tally, but it was the sheer spectacle of the scene, the lighting, and the appreciation by our clients of what we were seeing that made it all so special. Kaziranga is truly a wonderful place and my year never feels complete unless I spend some time there.

I need hardly tell you how much I love Assam, so it is hard to enumerate the highlights, as I'm sure everyone had their favorites. Nevertheless, here goes:

- There was that crazy day in the rain and mud out to Sohola Bheel and Debansari when our jeeps became so deeply bogged that it seemed they would never get out—happily our drivers prevailed. Amazing!
- Great views of the very localized, difficult to find, and striking Black-breasted Parrotbill.
- At least 70 or so Great Hornbills going to roost at Nameri and joined at dusk by a flock of 25+ Wreathed Hornbills. Our guard told us that he had counted as many as 300 or more back in February.
- Fabulous scope views of a very vocal and obliging Ruddy Kingfisher in the forest at Nameri.
- The male Hoolock gibbon ululating in the midst of Panbari Forest, Kaziranga.

Assam is truly a great birding and wildlife destination. There is no doubt that it offers one of the most amazing wildlife spectacles in Asia or, for that matter, anywhere in the world, and the addition of Nameri really enhances and rounds-out our experience here. India is always an incredible experience, and this memorable trip was made even more enjoyable by the wonderful hospitality we found everywhere we went. Our local guides, Jintu and Palash, were an absolute joy to work with, and my thanks go to them in particular, as well as to our cheerful drivers who also worked very hard to help us find our birds! Thank you for your support and for sharing in the fun—I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Of course, it goes without saying that I look forward to VENT's return to this wonderful part of Asia.

Diary

Daily Itinerary

- 7 April A relatively leisurely mid-morning flight, with very impressive Jet Airways from Delhi to Gauhati, the capital city of Assam. Birding is so good in India and especially Assam that it is difficult to travel very far without stopping for some wonderful bird or another. However, we had a five hour drive to make and so we eventually dragged ourselves and our train of vehicles eastwards along the south side of the Brahmaputra valley towards Kaziranga National Park. Though not before stopping to witness the incredible spectacle of 200+ Greater Adjutants – a globally endangered species no less, congregating at the less than salubrious city dump! Thanks to our skillful driver we arrived at our attractive accommodations at Wild Grass Lodge in time for dinner and with time to contemplate what we might see on the morrow.
- 8 April After a night of spectacular rain we woke to find it still drizzling. Nevertheless, this group was not to be deterred and ventured out into the surrounding tea-estate for some pre-breakfast birding. The rest of the morning was spent exploring the Central Range of Kaziranga National Park with its marvellous mosaic of swamps, marshes, grasslands and woodlands. We encountered our first Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros and a wonderful array of big birds including the spectacular Pallas's Fish-Eagle. After lunch we spent a lovely afternoon at Baguri Bheel. Here the combination of tall and short grasslands, woodland, scrub and swampy bheels makes for spectacular and easy birding and mammal watching. From one watchtower alone, we saw 20+ rhinos in addition to Asian Elephant, Swamp Deer and large numbers of waterbirds.
- Kaziranga really is the Serengeti of Asia!**
- 9 April Following an early breakfast, we headed off to nearby Panbari Forest, which forms an important extension to Kaziranga National Park. At first birding was slow due to intermittent rain, poor light, and recalcitrant birds. Nevertheless, a very vocal and amazingly confiding male Hoolock Gibbon put on a good show and he even seemed to wake the birds up, including fine views of a recently arrived Whistling Hawk-Cuckoo. During the afternoon, we returned to the Central Range for more encounters with rhinos as well as herds of Asian Elephants, wild Water Buffalo and a Bengal Tiger uttering his indelible "haloo" in the distance.
- 10 April Arguably one of the most exciting and productive days of the trip. Despite the continuing rain storms overnight, we somehow managed to 'persuade' our drivers and jeeps to get through the mud to Sohola Bheel and the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra River. Surely Sohola is one of the most enchanting places in Asia, with its teeming birds and large mammals. However, the grasslands at Debansari were also impressive with their coterie of specialty birds such as Black-breasted Parrotbill, dapper male Pied Harrier and displaying Bengal Floricans; all as we ate lunch on the stoop of the local ranger's home.
- 11 April Again the rain tipped down and this time the park authorities decided enough was enough and closed the place for the day, thus negating our chance for an elephant ride. And so our final morning was spent among the woodlands and bamboo thickets of the tea gardens where Rufous-necked Laughingthrush put on a great show.

After lunch we made the short drive to Nameri on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. Despite it being a short drive, the birds and mammals along the way conspired to have us arriving some five hours later!

12 April From our very attractive camp at Nameri, we took a boat across the very lovely and bird-rich Bhoirelli River to Nameri Wildlife Sanctuary. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to locate the desired White-winged Wood Duck – probably too much water around; however, we were treated to a host of marvellous birds including a rare Jerdon's Baza, an exotic pair of Silver-breasted Broadbills and fine looks at a group of Great Thick-knees.

13 April The entire morning birding was spent in a lovely area of tall lowland sub-tropical forest, garnering a fine collection of birds and mammals. Highlights which immediately come to mind include Giant (Gigantic!) Pied Squirrels and a very responsive Ruddy Kingfisher. At a muddy freshwater pool, we immersed ourselves in butterflies, garnering some twenty species in as many minutes.

The early afternoon was spent visiting the recently established Pygmy Hog breeding centre before heading out to bird the rather degraded woodland between the camp and the river. Nevertheless the birding was very good and produced excellent views of the widespread but always scarce Oriental Hobby.

14 April Very reluctantly we departed from this very hospitable and attractive camp. However, the roads have improved so much that we had enough time to make an unscheduled stop at little known Orang National Park, where a pair of superb Black Bazas put on a great show. Then it was back to Gauhati in time to connect with our flight to Delhi and the conclusion of a wonderful trip.

I can't wait to go back.

Annotated List of BIRDS

Endemic species in **bold**

T = Globally threatened or Near Threatened

I = Introduced

NON-PASSERINES

1. Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*
2-6 seen daily, Kz (Vulnerable).
2. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Small nos. Kz, N.
3. Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*
Common and seen daily in small nos.
4. Asian Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
Common along the watercourses in Kaziranga.
5. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Common and seen daily.
6. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Singles seen on just two days, Kaziranga.
7. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
2-3 seen on just two days, Kaziranga.
8. Great Egret *Ardea alba*
Quite common and seen almost daily, Kz.
9. Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia*
Quite a few seen, Kaziranga.
10. Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*
Very common, Kz.
11. Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii*
Very common throughout including a few individuals in breeding plumage.
12. Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*
Common in open grassland and rural areas. A maxima of 30 counted at Baguri Bheel.
13. Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*
We saw 5 at Sohola Beel and another two were seen along the way to Nameri.
14. Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
Totals of 6, 4, 7 were seen on three days in Kaziranga.
15. Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*
Relatively common around Gauhati and in Kaziranga. Kaziranga is very important for this declining species. (Vulnerable).
16. Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*
Surely one of the highlights of the entire tour with at least 200 counted at the Gauhati city dump. It is very encouraging to see this Endangered species in such numbers despite the unpleasant locality. In Kaziranga we recorded a total of 8 at Sohola Bheel. The dramatic decline of this spectacularly ugly species now sees it confined to Assam and Cambodia. (Endangered).

17. Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*
Four at Sohola Beel.
18. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
Seven at Sohola Bheel.
19. Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*
70 counted at Baguri Bheel and 30 at Sohola Bheel, Kaziranga.
20. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
It was good to hear Dick become so excited about seeing this beautiful duck – and what a bird! The 100 or so along with teeming other waterbirds and giant mammals lit by afternoon sun against a backdrop of a thunderous sky left us all with an indelible memory. Six also at Sohola Bheel.
21. Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
Two at Baguri Bheel, Kz.
22. Falcated Duck *Anas falcata*
One female with all those other waterbirds at Baguri Bheel.
23. Eurasian Wigeon *Anas Penelope*
20 at Baguri Bheel and 10 at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
24. Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*
Small nos. throughout Kaziranga.
25. Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
Small nos. at Baguri and Sohola bheels, Kz.
26. Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*
Ten at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
27. Garganey *Anas querquedula*
Ten at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
28. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Two at Sohola Bheel, Kaziranga.
29. Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni*
Superb views of a pair in flight, Nameri.
30. Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*
Great views of a courting pair displaying at Orang National Park.
31. Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
One or two most days at Kaziranga and Nameri.
32. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
Two over grassland in the Debanswari area, Kz.
33. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
Twenty around Gauhati.
34. Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*
One immature over Sohola Bheel.
35. Pallas' Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
A total four including a pair at a nest near Baguri Bheel, Kz and 3-4 nesting pairs at the edge of Sohola Bheel, Kz. Yet another globally declining species that was wonderfully visible with almost daily sightings in Kaziranga (Vulnerable).
36. Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*
Great views of a pair nest building in the Central Range and as many as six counted in the Sohola Bheel area, Kz.

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37. Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela*
Singles in the central range, Baguri and Sohola Bheels, Kaziranga; one adult and one immature, Nameri.
 38. Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
One female at Sohola Bheel, Kaziranga.
 39. Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*
a superb male seen over grassland in the Central Range, one male at Sohola Bheel and one in the tea estate, Kaziranga.
 40. Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*
One pair attending a nest within Panbari Forest, Kz.
 41. Shikra *Accipiter badius*
Singles in the Central Range and the Sohola Bheel area, Kaziranga.
 42. Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastate*
One adult at Baguri Bheel and an immature at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
 43. Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
One adult over Baguri Bheel and 1-2 at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
 44. Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hiraeetus kinerii*
One adult and one immature over Nameri.
 45. Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*
One or two seen daily at Nameri.
 46. Pied Falconet *Microhierax melanoleucos*
Super views of one adult hunting at dusk on the edge of forest and grassland at Nameri.
 47. Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
One female at Nameri.
 48. Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*
A pair were watched at length on a couple of occasions over our tented camp at Nameri. One bird was closely observed feeding on a Barn Swallow
 49. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
One individual of the pale *calidus* race hunting during the afternoon at Baguri Bheel; singles of the same race were also at Sohola Bheel and over the tea plantation, Kaziranga.
 50. Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*
Yet another trip highlight, 2-10 birds were seen daily and sometimes superbly well throughout Kaziranga. (Vulnerable).
 51. Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*
Commonly seen and heard in Kaziranga and to a lesser degree in Nameri.
 52. Kalij Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos lathamii*
Wonderful sightings of two males and three females from our jeeps in the Sohola area of Kaziranga.
 53. Grey Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*
One heard in Panbari Forest, Kaziranga.
 54. Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
A total of six seen on our drive to Delhi airport.
 55. White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*
Several most days in Kaziranga and Nameri.
 56. Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*
Six in the Central Range, Kz.
 57. Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Small nos. in both Kaziranga and Nameri.

58. Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*
Fabulous views of a male displaying in the Central Range and a total of four counted in the Debansari area (Endangered).
59. Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*
Small nos. daily, Kaziranga.
60. Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
Much less frequently seen than the preceding species, we saw 15+ at Sohola Beel of Kaziranga.
61. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
One near Gauhati airport and two seen by Nancy at Sohola Bheel.
62. Indian Thick-knee *Burhinus indicus*
One seen at dusk along the Bhorelli River, Nameri and heard every night behind our camp.
63. Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris*
Three along the Bhorelli River, Nameri.
64. Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*
One hundred or more together with the large congregation of waterbirds at Baguri Bheel, Kz; 100-200 daily along the Bhorelli River, Nameri.
65. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
Four in Kaziranga.
66. Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Two at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
67. River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii*
Seen most days in low numbers at Nameri.
68. Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*
Three at Baguri Bheel and then good views of three at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
69. Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*
Recorded almost daily.
70. Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
The first time this species has been recorded in Assam on a VENT tour; a total of five at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
71. Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
Heard at Baguri Bheel, Kz.
72. Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Three in breeding plumage at Baguri Beel, Kz.
73. Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
One at Baguri Bheel, Kz and one along the Bhorelli River, Nameri.
74. Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
Six at Baguri Bheel and one at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
75. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
One at Baguri Bheel, Kz and one along the Bhorelli River, Nameri.
76. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Six at Baguri Bheel.
77. Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
Ten in the Central Range, Kz.
78. Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Two in the Central Range, Kz.

79. Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
A total of 83 counted flying down the Brahmaputra River, Kz.
80. River Tern *Sterna aurantia*
One of the most attractive of the terns and delightfully common in this part of the world, we saw many on most days including ca. 50 at Baguri Bheel, Kz and ca. 100 moving northwards at dusk up the Bhorelli River, Nameri.
81. Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*
One in breeding plumage in the Central Range and ca. 20 at Sohola Bheel, Kz.
82. Rock Dove *Columba livia*
Widespread and ubiquitous.
83. Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
Widespread and ubiquitous.
84. Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
Widespread and ubiquitous.
85. Red-collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
Widespread and seen in good numbers daily.
86. Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decocto*
Small numbers most days.
87. Emerald Ground-Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
One in Panbari Forest, Kz and 2-6 on each field excursion at Nameri.
88. Barred Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia unchall*
Two at a fruiting tree with many other doves, Nameri.
89. Orange-breasted Pigeon *Treron bicincta*
Superb 'scope views of this infrequently seen species at Nameri.
90. Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra*
One at Panbari Forest, Kz; and five at Nameri.
91. Yellow-footed Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*
We had a number of superb views of this attractive pigeon in Kaziranga where it was quite common.
92. Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron apicauda*
Wonderful 'scope views of a total of six at Nameri one morning.
93. Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenura*
Great 'scope views of a male and female at a fruiting tree, Nameri.
94. Green Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula aenea*
Notably common this year with 5-20 seen daily at Kaziranga and Nameri.
95. Vernal Hanging-Parrot *Loriculus vernalis*
Mostly seen flying over at Nameri but a couple of excellent views of the bird perched.
96. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
quite common and conspicuous in Kaziranga.
97. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
10-30 seen daily at Kaziranga and Nameri.
98. Blossom-headed Parakeet *Psittacula roseate*
Much scarcer than the other parakeets but we nevertheless enjoyed some great views of four of these exquisite birds.
99. Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*
30-50+ seen daily in Kaziranga and Nameri.

100. Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator cormandus*
Two heard in Nameri.
101. Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius*
One immature put on a great show permitting prolonged 'scope views of this handsome species in secondary woodland near Nameri.
102. Whistling Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx nisicolor*
Fabulous views of a very responsive individual at the interface of Panbari Forest and a tea estate, Kz.
103. Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*
Heard at Nameri.
104. Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*
Thanks to some great spotting by Stephanie we all got to enjoy good views of this elusive species, Kz.
105. Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*
heard at throughout Kaziranga and seen once briefly near Sohola Bheel.
106. Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus dicruroides*
Heard in Kaziranga and one seen at Nameri.
107. Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*
Heard daily and one male seen, Kz; heard daily at Nameri.
108. Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
One heard at Nameri.
109. Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*
Seen and heard many times in Kaziranga and Nameri.
110. Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*
Although this bird is generally uncommon throughout its range, we did find it to be quite confiding in Assam and we enjoyed several good sightings; it is a grassland specialist and this is yet another indication of the quality of the habitat in Kaziranga and Nameri.
111. Oriental Scops-Owl *Otus sunia*
Heard every evening from our tented camp at Nameri.
112. Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*
Great looks at two near Baguri Bheel and one near Sohola Bheel, Kz.
113. Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*
Very common and heard or seen daily.
114. Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*
One in the Central Range and three in the Sohola Bheel area, Kaziranga.
115. Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata*
One at dusk at Baguri Bheel, Kz and superb views of another near our tented camp at Nameri
116. Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*
Singles heard and briefly seen in Kaziranga and Nameri.
117. Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*
A flock of four flying low over Panbari Forest, Kz and a group of three apparently courting over grassland and forest at dusk in Nameri were more likely this species than Brown-backed Needletail *H. giganteus*.
118. Asian Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*
Small nos. most days.
119. Little Swift *Apus affinis*
Four at Baguri Bheel, Kz.
120. Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Two in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, one at Nameri.

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121. Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*
Excellent views of as many as three birds in the Sohola area, Kz.
 122. Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda*
Yet again we enjoyed spectacular views of this gorgeous but rarely recorded species in the forest at Nameri.
 123. White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Very common, recorded daily in many different habitats.
 124. Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
Also common but only found around bheels and healthy watercourses.
 125. Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni*
An attractive and unusual bird; one near near Sohola Bheel, Kaziranga and two at Nameri.
 126. Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*
Surprisingly uncommon this trip with just two on our first morning in the central range Kaziranga.
 127. Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*
2-20 recorded daily in Kaziranga.
 128. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaultia*
The most common of the bee-eaters in both Kaziranga and Nameri, recorded daily.
 129. Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*
Common and seen almost daily in open habitats, especially along roadsides.
 130. Common Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*
Singles seen on two days at Nameri.
 131. Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*
Yet another great trip highlight; our first view of this impressive bird was of a single bird that flew right in front of our jeep near Baguri Bheel. We then saw three more in the Sohola area, Kz a single bird on our first morning at Nameri and then an amazing experience of 67 counted (likely many more) as they flew in groups of 6-10 across the lightly wooded grassland clearings to a large block of forest behind the forest guard's camp. Truly an amazing seeing so many of this huge bird at one time.
 132. Wreathed Hornbill *Aceros undulates*
All hornbills are spectacular and this one is no exception – we saw a flock of 24 fly towards the same roost at Nameri as the Great Hornbills.
 133. Oriental Pied-Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris*
Not at all common, just one in Kaziranga.
 134. Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Seen daily in in low numbers in Kaziranga.
 135. Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineate*
Just singles seen in Kaziranga but as many as ten seen in one day in Nameri.
 136. Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica*
Seen and heard commonly, daily at both Kaziranga and Nameri.
 137. Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*
One seen well in Panbari Forest, Kz and heard at Nameri.
 138. Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*
Heard regularly near Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga.
 139. Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*
Good looks at one and another heard in a dense thicket at Nameri.
 140. Grey-capped Pygmy-Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*
Two in Kaziranga and two singles in the forests of Nameri.

141. Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei*
Two at Kaziranga and two at Nameri.
142. Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*
Good looks at one in the Sohola area, Kz.
143. Lesser Yellownape *Picus chlorolophus*
Heard in Nameri.
144. Greater Yellownape *Picus flavinucha*
Good looks at one in Kaziranga and one at Nameri.
145. Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus*
Single females seen on two days in Kaziranga; this species appears to like the lower trunk of trees in lightly wooded areas of tall elephant grass.
146. Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*
Good diagnostic views of a female in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kz.
147. Himalayan Flameback *Dinopium shorii*
One male and two females in the Sohola area, Kz.
148. Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*
One or two most days in Kaziranga.
149. Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*
A total of four seen one day and then a wonderful close study of an adult male digging a nest hole in a tree behind the forest guard's camp at Nameri – a real treat.

PASSERINES

150. Silver-breasted Broadbill *Serilophus lunatus*
One or two seen well but all too briefly at Nameri.
151. Bengal Bushlark *Mirafra assamica*
Two on our first morning in Kaziranga.
152. Sand Lark *Calandrella raytal*
Two seen well on the sandy banks of the Bhorelli River at Nameri.
153. Grey-throated Sand Martin *Riparia (paludicola) chinensis*
Common in Kaziranga and abundant over the Bhorelli River at Nameri.
154. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Common and recorded daily in Kaziranga and Nameri.
155. Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*
Only seen on one day in the Baguri Bheel area, Kaziranga.
156. Pied (White) Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Singles on just two days in Kaziranga.
157. Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
Wonderful studies of at least four birds in full breeding plumage in the muddy, wet fields at Kohora, Kaziranga.
158. Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Several in the muddy, wet fields at Kohora and a flock of ca. 50 over the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kz.
159. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Singles on two days in Kaziranga.

160. Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*
One along the Bhoirelli River, Nameri.
161. Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*
One in fields near Gauhati.
162. Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
This species was abundant at the time of our visit and was seen constantly flying up from the ground into the trees in all wooded areas.
163. Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
Two in the muddy, wet fields at Kohora, Kz.
164. Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*
Two in the woodlands of Nameri.
165. Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*
Seen almost daily in low numbers.
166. Slender-billed Oriole *Oriolus XXXX*
Excellent scope views of one bird in secondary woodland near our tented camp at Nameri.
167. Large Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina macei*
Seen almost daily in low numbers.
168. Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*
Several at our unscheduled stop in Orang National Park.
169. Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*
A flock of ca. 50 in the Sohola area, Kz.
170. Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*
Small numbers seen on a few days at both Kaziranga and Nameri.
171. Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis gularis*
Two on both days at Nameri.
172. Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*
One in Kaziranga.
173. Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus*
Quite common in Nameri; six in of the central area of Kaziranga.
174. Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*
recorded daily throughout.
175. Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*
Recorded daily throughout.
176. White-throated Bulbul *Alophoixus flaveolus*
Common in Panbari Forest, Kz and several in Nameri.
177. Himalayan Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
Common in the forests of Nameri.
178. Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*
One seen in the Panbari Forest, Kz and heard in Nameri.
179. Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*
Great views in Panabari and the Sohola area, Kz .
180. Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*
Just two in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge and several daily in Nameri.
181. Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
One at Nameri.

182. Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*
One sitting out at dawn in the exposed canopy of the forest at Nameri.
183. Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*
Common throughout.
184. White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*
At least one seen in Panbari Forest and one seen in Nameri but frustratingly unresponsive.
185. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
A few, all females, seen in lightly wooded grassland areas of Kaziranga and the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge.
186. Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maura*
Recorded daily in low numbers in Kaziranga and one female seen at Nameri.
187. Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon*
Heard regularly and seen all too briefly at Nameri.
188. Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*
Several in the gardens of Wild Grass lodge and around the tented camp at Nameri.
189. Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
Three in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge and two at Nameri.
190. Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris*
Low numbers daily in Kaziranga.
191. Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
Several seen in the Sohola area, Kz.
192. Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*
One in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kz.
193. Taiga (Red-throated) Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*
Super close studies of two males in the tea estate behind Wild Grass lodge, Kz. And as many as 20 males and females in Nameri.
194. Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*
One near the Wild Grass lodge, Kz..
195. Pale-chinned Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis poliogenys*
This devilishly sneaky albeit responsive bird really gave us the runaround in Panbari Forest, Kz but we eventually got to see it well. Several heard in Nameri.
196. Pale Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*
One female in Nameri.
197. Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradise*
One female seen in Panbari Forest, Kz.
198. Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*
One male seen well in Panbari Forest, Kz and several heard in Nameri.
199. Abbott's Babbler *Trichastoma abbotti*
good views of one in the Sohola area, Kz and one or two birds heard and seen daily in Nameri.
200. Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*
One or two heard and seen in the bamboo in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kz also heard at Nameri.
201. White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*
Heard a number of times in Kaziranga.
202. Rufous-fronted Babbler *Stachyris rufifrons*
Heard in Kaziranga.

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203. Striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis*
Eventually good looks at this species in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga; heard daily at Nameri.
204. Chestnut-capped Babbler *Timalia pileata*
Heard in Kaziranga but seeing them was a different story!
205. Striated Babbler *Turdoides earlei*
Great looks at just one in grasslands of Debanswari, Kaziranga.
206. Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris*
Undoubtedly one of the birds of the trip! Despite that much of the grassland in the Debansari area had either been cut or burnt we were all rewarded with superb views of two birds as they peered inquisitively from their dense grassland home. (Vulnerable)
207. Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*
Good views of two birds in thick scrub in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kz.
208. Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *Garrulax ruficollis*
Great looks at several birds (ca 20 counted on one morning) in tea plantation behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga.
209. Great Tit *Parus major*
Low numbers most days.
210. Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*
A total of six birds in the lightly wooded grasslands of the Central Range, Kz and just one male at Nameri.
211. Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*
Fabulous looks at a group of five in woodland in the Central Range, Kz; heard at Nameri.
212. Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*
Heard in Kaziranga.
213. Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*
Three gorgeous males at Nameri put on quite a show.
214. Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longisrostris*
One heard in Kaziranga.
215. Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*
Heard in Kaziranga.
216. Yellow-vented Flowerpecker *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*
Two seen very nicely feeding at flowering mistletoe in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga.
217. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum*
One male in the tea estate behind Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga and two at Nameri.
218. Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*
Common at both sites.
219. Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*
The most common shrike in the areas we visited, where seen almost daily in low numbers.
220. Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Seen commonly and daily throughout.
221. Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*
Two in Panbari Forest, Kaziranga and one at Nameri.
222. Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*
Fairly common in Panbari Forest and the Sohola area, Kz.

223. Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
Common with 6-10 seen daily in Kaziranga but just four on one morning in Nameri..
224. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*
Three seen well in Panbari Forest, Kz and two seen at Nameri.
225. Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*
Many along the roadside leading to Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga.
226. Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*
Seen in low numbers at both Kaziranga and Nameri.
227. Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*
Five in Panbari Forest, Kaziranga and and just one at Nameri.
228. House Crow *Corvus splendens*
Common in the towns and cities of Assam.
229. Eastern Jungle Crow Large-billed Crow *Corvus leuillanti*
Abundant throughout.
230. Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabaricus*
Very common and seen almost daily.
231. Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra*
Very common and seen daily.
232. Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*
Very common and seen daily.
233. Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*
Seen *en route* to the airport in Delhi.
234. Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*
Very common and seen daily.
235. White-vented Myna *Acridotheres grandis*
Common in the grasslands of Kaziranga, seen in farmland *en route* to and from Nameri.
236. Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*
Two in Panbari Forest, two in secondary woodland near our tented camp at Nameri and 10-15 daily at Nameri including a pair nesting in the tall trees surrounding our camp..
237. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Very common and seen daily.
238. Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Fairly common and seen most days in Kaziranga.
239. Black-breasted Weaver *Ploceus benghalensis*
20+ in the Central Range, Kz.
240. Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*
At least 20 in breeding plumage and some nesting in the Central Range, Kz.
241. Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*
A total of seven in the Central Range, Kz.
242. Black-headed Munia *Lonchura atricapilla*
A flock of eight in the Central Range, Kz.
243. Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
A flock of 20+ at Nameri.

MAMMALS

1. Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta*
Common throughout.
2. Capped Langur *Trachypithecus pileatus*
Four in Panbari Forest, Kz and six at Nameri.
3. Hooloch Gobbon *Bunopithecus hoolock*
Fabulous sights and sounds of at least one adult male in Panbari Forest, Kz.
4. Giant Pied Squirrel *Ratufa bicolor*
Fantastic looks at this spectacular animal at Nameri.
5. Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennanti*
In the hotel grounds at Delhi.
6. Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops macclellandii*
Several in Panbari Forest, Kaziranga.
7. Hoary-bellied Himalayan Squirrel *Callosciurus pygerythrus*
One or two seen almost daily in all areas.
8. Orange-bellied Squirrel
Several in the Sohola area, Kaziranga.
9. Smooth-coated Otter *Lutrogale perspicillata*
A group of seven put on a tremendous show and Baguri Bheel and another group of six at Sohola Bheel, Kaziranga.
10. Bengal Tiger *Panthera tigris*
At least one heard at dusk in the Central Range and fresh pug-marks noted, Kaziranga. The population in this reserve is ca. 90 and the highest density for this cat anywhere in its entire global distribution.
11. Asian Elephant *Elaphus maximus*
Many seen daily in Kaziranga with a maxima of 40 on one afternoon.
12. Indian Great One-horned Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*
Truly amazing to see these magnificent beasts in such amazingly good numbers just roaming about the grasslands, sometimes even in sight of the main road.
13. Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*
Quite common throughout Kaziranga.
14. Swamp Deer *Cervus duvaucelli*
Very common in the grasslands of Kaziranga.
15. Common Barking Deer *Muntiacus muntjak*
At least one seen in the Sohola area, Kz.
16. Hog Deer *Axis porcinus*
Notably common this year with 150 counted on just the first day in Kaziranga.
17. Asiatic Wild Buffalo *Bubalus arnee*
Fabulous to see these truly wild animals, which have almost disappeared throughout their entire range
18. Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus*
Six *en route* to Kaziranga.

BUTTERFLIES

The following is a list of some of the butterflies we observed in Kaziranga National Park and Nameri Wildlife Sanctuary. Most of these species were part of the remarkable aggregation at that drying but muddy stream-side pool in Nameri:

Great Mormon
Flufft Tit
Tailed Jay
Commander
Spotted Blue Crow
Tawny Raja
Common Tiger
Club-tailed Butterfly
Magpie Crow
Chocolate Albatross
Orange Oakleaf
Glassy Tiger
Large Yeoman
Common Yeoman
Bush Brown sp
Assam Pirrot
Grey Panzie
Common Jay
Grass Yellow
Common Hedge Blue
Sunbeam
Common Gull
Solar sp
Golden Sapphire
Hair-streak sp

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