

## BIRDS IN NEPAL MARCH 1993

### IAN PUCKRIN

The attached list summarises birds seen by myself, Chris Gladwin and Alan McBride on a visit to Nepal from 28 February to 26 March 1993.

Areas covered were:

Kathmandu/Phulchowki	28 Feb - 1 March, 21 - 25 March
Pokhara	2 March, 19 - 20 March
Jomosom - Muktinath	3 - 6 March
Muktinath - Pokhara	6 - 18 March

A few notes may assist others in preparing for their visit:

Immigration procedures were more relaxed than we had been advised. No one in looked at our trekking permits or asked for proof of currency exchange when we left Kathmandu. The trekking permits were, however, rigorously checked on the trek, even between Biretanthe and Pokhara which we travelled by "bus". We arranged for our hotel to get our trekking permits (for a fee) and gained a day's birding in the process.

We had no difficulty getting flights to Jomosom, though flights had been cancelled for the few days prior to our visit due to low cloud. Several flights seemed to get through on most days we were on the trek. The flight is highly recommended as a means of saving time and is an awesome experience in its own right. Cost \$US50.

Accommodation is readily available on the trek, and was generally as expected - basic but clean. Best lodges we stayed at were Jomosom Guest House (Jomosom), Sulin Lodge (Tukche) and Superview Lodge (Ghorepani) (don't miss the chips or banana porridge !). In Kathmandu we stayed at the Hotel Ganesh Himal which was pretty good.

Bottled water is easily obtained throughout the trek, and in towns. We found our supply of iodine unnecessary. We had no health problems on the trek, except for Chris who had mild AMS in Muktinath - as the guidebooks say, the symptoms (headaches etc) disappeared as soon as we descended to Jomosom. We all caught bacterial dysentery on our return to Kathmandu - it seems unavoidable! We all lost a lot of weight through this and the trekking.

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The Nepalese in the hills were virtually without exception friendly and helpful. Porters aren't really necessary and most trekkers seemed to carry their own packs. The climb to Ghorepani (both ways) and from Kagbeni to Muktinath were the most strenuous sections (the latter mainly due to altitude). Maps provide some points of reference, but again aren't really necessary - just follow the locals and other trekkers. Trucks now run from Biretanthe to Pokhara.

The weather was good on the trek, with only a few evening showers on several days. Even at 4200m it is quite mild during the day. We had some persistent rain in Kathmandu, and even snow at the top of Phulcowki. I found gloves necessary to protect from sunburn rather than to keep warm. Snow glare was quite severe on the Thorong La approaches.

We used Ali and Ripley's "Pictorial Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent" and Fleming's "Birds of Nepal" (the latter is out of print and now retails for about \$US100 in Kathmandu). Neither is really adequate so notes from Inskipp's "A Guide to the Birds of Nepal" were used frequently. Seb Buckton and Pete Morris's trip report from 1990 was most useful for maps and general site information.

The forest at Ghasa was more degraded than we had expected, with many trees appearing to have been recently felled. It was also worrying to see the number of pheasant snares at the top of the "Big Wood" - about 30 seen. On an encouraging note, a few of the young people take an active interest in the pheasants and talked of their concerns for the birds and their attempts to educate the other locals. We found Abinash particularly knowledgeable and used his services as a guide on two days - contact the Eagle Nest Lodge.

Some of the high altitude birds appeared scarce. We had only four alpine choughs above Muktinath, and saw no snow pigeons.

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Oriental Honey Buzzard	One Pokhara 19 March
Red-headed Vulture	Singles Tatopani and Biretanthe.
Cinereous Vulture	Singles Ghasa.
Crested Serpent Eagle	Daily at Phulcowki and also Tatopani and Pokhara.
Northern Harrier	Singles Ghasa
Northern Goshawk	Singles daily Ghasa
Upland Buzzard	Singles Ghasa and Ghorepani
Steppe Eagle	Two Ulleri 18 March and one Ghorepani 16 March.
Golden Eagle	Singles Ghasa.
Mountain Hawk-Eagle	One Ulleri 18 March.
Himalayan Snowcock	6 above Muktinath on the Thorong La trail on 6 March. Seen well in the ravine above the last ruined house at 4200m.
Chukar	Up to eight Muktinath 5 - 6 March.
Common Hill Partridge	2 Ghasa 9 and 11 March.
Koklass Pheasant	Two males and one female at Ghasa 11 March. One male Ghorepani 15 March (at the first clearing on the Deurali Tea House ridge trail - a regular site in March 1993).
Himalayan Monal	Females in the "Black Forest" at Ghasa 9 March, and "Bamboo Forest" Ghasa 11 March.
Kalij Pheasant	Pokhara 2 and 19 (two) March, and three Ghasa 11 March.
Cheer Pheasant	Male near the top of the "Big Wood" at Ghasa 10 March.
Woodcock	One Gokarna 22 March.

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Solitary Snipe	One bird that was either this species or Wood Snipe gave several flight views by the stream between Deurali teahouse and Chitre on 15 March. The birds at Muktinath appeared to be "Common" snipe.
Green Sandpiper	Three Jomosom and one Pokhara.
Ibisbill	One on the river just south of Tukche 7 March.
Hill Pigeon	Up to 30 daily Kagbeni and Muktinath ( no snow pigeons seen).
Speckled Woodpigeon	50 in the "ravine" at Phulcowki 21 to 24 March.
Ashy Woodpigeon	Singles at Ghasa 9 and 10 March, and six Gokarna 22 March.
Slaty-headed Parakeet	20 Pokhara and 10 Biretanthe.
Asian Barred Owlet	Up to two daily around Fishtail Lodge, Pokhara, and singles Godaveri.
Alpine Swift	Two Naudande 18 March.
Common Kingfisher	Three Biretanthe 18 March.
Crested Kingfisher	Three Biretanthe 18 March.
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	Two Biretanthe, and six Gokarna.
Golden-throated Barbet	One Phulcowki 1 March.
White-browed Piculet	One Phulcowki 22 March.
Rufous Woodpecker	One Pokhara 2 March.
Greater Yellownape	Up to two daily Pokhara.
Scaly-bellied Woodpecker	Singles Ghasa and Phulcowki.
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	Singles Pokhara.
Grey-capped Woodpecker	Single Pokhara 2 March.

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Rufous-bellied Woodpecker	Single Ghorepani 15 March.
Darjeeling Woodpecker	Three Phulcowki 1 March.
Long-tailed Broadbill	Nine Pokhara 19 March.
Gold-billed Magpie	Four Ghorepani 14 March.
Blue Magpie	Up to ten Pokhara.
Green Magpie	Up to four Pokhara.
Eurasian Nutcracker	Singles Ghasa, Ghorepani, and Deurali Teahouse.
Yellow-billed Chough	Only four above Muktinath.
Common Raven	Up to two Jomosom and Ghorepani.
Large Cuckoo-shrike	Four Pokhara 2 March.
Scarlet Minivet	Ten Pokhara 2 March.
Grey-backed Shrike	One Pokhara 19 March.
Plain-backed Thrush	One Ghorepani 16 March.
Long-billed Thrush	One in the stream behind the Mustang Guest House at Ghasa 10 to 11 March.
White-collared Thrush	Maximum 30 Ghorepani. Also Pokhara and Phulcowki.
Grey-winged Blackbird	Up to three Phulcowki 1 March.
Chestnut Thrush	Male singing Ghorepani 17 March.
Chestnut-tailed Starling	Up to six Pokhara.
Slaty-backed Flycatcher	Two males Godaveri 21 March.
Snowy-browed Flycatcher	Male Fishtail Lodge, Pokhara 2 March.
Small Niltava	Singles Phulcowki 23 - 24 March.
Blue-capped Redstart	Up to four Ghasa.

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Hodgson's Redstart	Up to two Ghasa and Phulcowki.
White-throated Redstart	Up to 10 daily between Marpha and Muktinath.
White-winged (Guldenstadt's) Redstart	Up to 20 daily between Marpha and Muktinath.
Little Forktail	Up to four daily Ghasa, two Chitre, and six Biretanthe.
Slaty-backed Forktail	One Biretanthe 18 March.
Spotted Forktail	Two daily Ghasa, one Chitre, and up to three Phulcowki.
Bar-tailed Treecreeper	Singles at Marpha.
Rusty-flanked Treecreeper	Singles Ghasa and Ghorepani.
Eurasian Crag Martin	Two near Tukche and two Ghorepani.
Red-rumped Swallow	Four Naudande 18 March.
Goldcrest	Singles Jomosom.
Ashy Bulbul	Three Pokhara 19 March.
Striated Bulbul	One Phulcowki 21 March.
Mountain Bulbul	Two Ulleri and up to six Phulcowki.
Striated Prinia	Singles Ghasa, Biretanthe and Phulcowki.
Chestnut-headed Tesia	Up to two in the "ravine" at Phulcowki.
Grey-bellied Tesia	Two Pokhara, up to nine Phulcowki ("ravine") and two Gokarna.
Grey-sided Bush-Warbler	Singles Ghorepani and Phulcowki.
White-browed (Stoliczka's) Tit-Warbler	Up to 10 Muktinath, and four near Tukche.
Golden-spectacled Warbler	Four Pokhara 2 March.
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	Four Ulleri and up to 10 Phulcowki.

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White-throated L.-Thrush	Up to 40 Phulcowki and four Chitre.
White-crested L - Thrush	One Phulcowki 1 March and five Pokhara 19 March.
Striated Laughing-Thrush	Up to 20 Phulcowki.
Rufous-chinned L-Thrush	Up to three Phulcowki.
Black-faced L- Thrush	Up to six Ghorepani.
White-browed Sc-Babbler	One Pokhara 2 March
Streak-breasted Sc- Babbler	Up to four Ulleri.
Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler	Singles Ghasa.
Pygmy Wren-Babbler	Up to four daily Phulcowki.
Black-chinned Babbler	Eight Phulcowki 24 March.
Grey-throated Babbler	Up to eight daily Phulcowki.
Spiny Babbler	Two 22 March and one 23 March behind the "red brick buildings" at Godaveri / Phulcowki.
Red-billed Leiothrix	Up to 20 daily Phulcowki.
Cutia	Three about halfway up Phulcowki 1 March.
Green Shrike-Babbler	Up to four Ghasa.
Black-eared Shrike-Babbler	Four Ghorepani - Ulleri 17 March.
White-browed Shrike-Babbler	One Pokhara 2 March.
Hoary-throated Barwing	Two Phulcowki 1 March.
Rufous-winged Fulvetta	Two Phulcowki, and up to 10 Ghorepani.
Nepal Fulvetta	Up to 40 daily Phulcowki.
Whiskered Yuhina	Four Ulleri and ten Phulcowki.
Stripe-throated Yuhina	Four Phulcowki and four Ghorepani.

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White-bellied Yuhina	Up to four daily Pokhara.
Black-throated Parrotbill	Flock of 30 in bamboo on the lower slopes of Phulcowki 1 March.
Yellow-browed Tit	Up to ten daily around Chitre-Ghorepani-Ulleri.
White-browed Wagtail	One Pokhara 2 March.
Oriental (Paddyfield) Pipit	Two Pokhara 19 March.
Himalayan (Altai) Accentor	Singles Ghasa and Ghorepani.
Robin Accentor	Up to three daily Kagbeni- Muktinath.
Rufous-breasted Accentor	Flock 25 Ulleri 18 March.
Brown Accentor	Up to 20 daily between Marpha and Muktinath.
Maroon-backed Accentor	Five at Ghasa 11 March.
Mrs Gould's Sunbird	One Chitre 15 March.
Fire-tailed Sunbird	Six Phulcowki and four Ghorepani.
Fire-fronted Serin	Up to 15 daily Kagbeni - Muktinath.
Tibetan Serin	16 Godaveri 21 March.
Plain Mountain- Finch	Six Muktinath and 50 Ghasa.
Common Rosefinch	One Pokhara 19 March.
Spot-winged Rosefinch	Up to three Ghasa and male Ghorepani.
White-browed Rosefinch	Pair Ghorepani 14 March.
Streaked Rosefinch	16 Khinja 5 March.
Red-fronted Rosefinch	Female at the top of the "Black Forest" at Ghasa (3200m) 9 March.
Spectacled Finch	Male below Chitre 13 March.
Scarlet Finch	Female in the "ravine" Phulcowki 22 March.



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Brown Bullfinch	38 in the "ravine" Phulcowki 22 March.
Red-headed Bullfinch	Seven Ghorepani 16 March, and two near Ulleri 17 March.
Spot-winged Grosbeak	Five in the "ravine" Phulcowki 22 March and two there 24 March.
Crested Bunting	One Ghasa and two Pokhara.
Yellow-breasted Bunting	Ten Pokhara 20 March.

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The following species were recorded regularly during our visit in Kathmandu (K), Pokhara (P), Jomsom trek (J), or all sites.

Great Cormorant (P)	Rufous-bellied Niltava (P,J)
Indian Pond Heron (K,P)	Orange-flanked Bush-Robin (K,J)
Cattle Egret (K,P)	Magpie-Robin (K,P)
Little Egret (P)	Blue-fronted Redstart (J)
Black Kite (K,P)	White-capped Redstart (J)
Egyptian Vulture (P)	Plumbeous Redstart
Lammergeier (J)	Common Stonechat (J)
White-backed Vulture (K,P)	Pied Bushchat (K,P)
Himalayan Griffon (J)	Grey Bushchat
Eurasian Kestrel	White-tailed Nuthatch
Eurasian Coot (P)	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch
Common Sandpiper	Wallcreeper (J)
Feral Rock Dove	Eurasian Treecreeper (J)
Rufous Turtle Dove	Winter Wren (J)
Spotted Dove (K,P)	Black-throated Tit
Forktailed Swift (J)	Barn Swallow
House Swift (K)	Nepal Martin (P,J)
White-throated Kingfisher (K,P)	Himalayan Bulbul
Great Barbet (K,P)	Red-vented Bulbul (K,P)
Blue-throated Barbet (K,P)	Black Bulbul
Grey-headed Flycatcher	Oriental White-eye
Yellow-bellied Fantail	Chiffchaff
White-throated Fantail	Dusky Warbler (K,P)
Black Drongo (K,P)	Buff-barred Warbler (K,J)
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo (K)	Ashy-throated Warbler (K,J)
Eurasian Jay (K)	Lemon-rumped (Pallas') Warbler
Grey Treepie (K,P)	Yellow-browed Warbler
Red-billed Chough (J)	Greenish Warbler
House Crow (K,P)	Grey-hooded Warbler
Large-billed Crow	Black-faced Warbler (K,J)
Maroon Oriole	Streaked Laughing-Thrush (K,J)
Long-tailed Minivet	Variiegated Laughing-Thrush (J)
Orange-bellied Leafbird (K,P)	Chestnut-crowned L-Thrush (K,J)
Long-tailed Shrike	Chestnut-tailed Minla (K,J)
Brown Dipper (J)	White-browed Fulvetta (K,J)
Blue Whistling-Thrush	Rufous Sibia
Scaly Thrush (K,P)	Rufous-vented Yuhina
Dark-throated Thrush (J)	Coal Tit (K,J)
Common Myna (K,P)	Rufous-vented (Black) Tit (J)
Jungle Myna (K,P)	Grey-crested Tit (J)
Rufous-gorgetted Flycatcher	Green-backed Tit
Slaty-blue Flycatcher (K)	Black-lored Tit
Verditer Flycatcher	House Sparrow
	Russet Sparrow (J)

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Tree Sparrow  
White Wagtail (K,J)  
Grey Wagtail  
Upland Pipit (J)  
Olive-backed Pipit  
Alpine Accentor (J)  
Fire-breasted Flower-pecker  
Green-tailed Sunbird (K,J)  
Black-throated Sunbird (J)  
Yellow-breasted Greenfinch (K,J)  
Dark-breasted Rosefinch (J)  
Beautiful Rosefinch (J)  
Rock Bunting (J)