

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

30th April to 18th May 2027 (19 days)

BHUTAN

birds and wildlife of the eastern Himalayas

NEW
ITINERARY
FOR 2027

The 'Land of the Thunder Dragon' sits high in the eastern Himalayas, sandwiched between India and China.

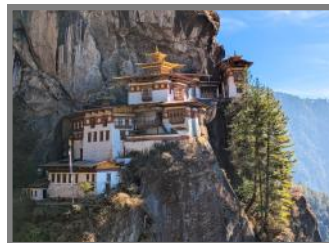
Through a combination of its isolation, and the strong Buddhist ethos of its people, Bhutan has held on to much of its traditional way of life, its traditional architecture and, unlike its neighbours, much of its forests: more than 2.5 million hectares, covering over 70% of the country.

During our time in Bhutan, we will explore these forests, from the rhododendron and Bhutan Pine forests of the high mountain passes to the lush subtropical rainforests of Royal Manas National Park, in the lowlands of the Indian border.

Our trip will introduce us to some of the iconic birds of the eastern Himalayas: the unique Ibisbill along the mountain rivers, colourful pheasants including Himalayan Monal and Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon on oak-cloaked slopes, and Beautiful Nuthatch in the pristine subtropical forests.

As well as the wonderful bird life, we will of course be paying attention to all the other flora and fauna that may cross our path. The forests will be filled with various flowering rhododendrons, primulas, hydrangeas and more, which in turn attract a variety of butterflies. For the mammal-lovers amongst us, we can expect to see various squirrels, including the Black Giant Squirrel, and four species of primate, including the beautiful Golden Langur. Our travels will also take us through the favoured habitat of the endearing Red Panda, while Dhole, Asian Black Bear and Himalayan Serow all make these forests their home.

We will enjoy stunning scenery and visit cultural sites including Punakha Dzong, Tharpaling monastery and the iconic 'Tiger's Nest' Paro Taktsang complex.



Price
£7,785

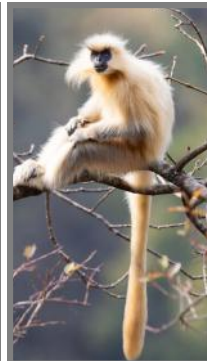
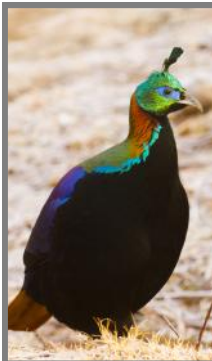
Single Room Supplement
£450

Full board

Day 1	depart UK
Day 2	Sultanpur, Delhi
Day 3	flight to Paro
Day 4	Dochu La Pass
Day 5	Phobjikha
Day 6	Pele La Pass
Day 7	Trongsa to Tingtibi
Day 8	Royal Manas NP
Day 9	Tingtibi to Trongsa
Day 10	Trongsa to Bumthang
Day 11	Sengor Valley
Day 12	Thrushing La Nat'l Park
Day 13	lower Yongkola
Day 14	Yongkola to Bumthang
Day 15	Tharpaling Monastery
Day 16	Punakha to Paro
Day 17	Tiger's Nest
Day 18	flight to Delhi
Day 19	return to UK

Leader
Laurie Jackson

Group size
min 4, max 10



ITINERARY

Please note that we may change the itinerary to suit local weather and road conditions or for other practical reasons, at the leader's discretion.

Day 1 Fri 30th April. Our overnight flight takes us from the UK to Delhi, arriving early morning **Day 2 Sat 1st May**, where we will spend the day at **Sultanpur National Park**, a wetland and dry forest reserve on the edge of the city. After lunch, we will head back to the airport and our hotel, to rest before tomorrow's onwards journey. o/n Delhi Aerocity.

Day 3 Sun 2nd May. An early flight takes us across the Himalayas, passing Mount Everest along the way, to Bhutan, the **Land of the Thunder Dragon**. On arrival, we head straight out for our first experience of Bhutanese birdwatching, in search of the iconic **Ibisbill** on the fast-flowing mountain river between the airport and Thimpu, the country's capital city, where we will spend a relaxed afternoon. o/n Thimpu

Day 4 Mon 3rd May. From Thimpu, we cross the **Dochu La pass** (3,150m asl), stopping in the area of Lampelri Park for our first introduction to the birds of the mountains, perhaps including our first laughingthrushes, rosefinches, minlas and yuhinas, before continuing down to Punakha, where we will visit the 'dzong', a traditional, fortified monastery building, characteristic of so many Bhutanese towns. o/n Punakha

Day 5 Tue 4th May. From Punakha we travel south to the **Phobjikha Valley**, where we will be keeping our fingers crossed that one or two Black-necked Cranes may have hung on in the valley, before returning to their breeding grounds in Tibet. o/n Phobjikha

Day 6 Wed 5th May. An early start will see us at **Pele La pass** (3,350m asl), where we will look for some of the **colourful pheasants** of the eastern Himalayas: Blood Pheasant and Satyr Tragopan are present in the rhododendron undergrowth, along with hyperactive Fire-tailed Myzornis. These forests are home to Clouded Leopard, Tiger, Dhole and Asian Black Bear, although we would have to be very lucky to catch a glimpse. o/n Trongsa

Day 7 Thu 6th May. We continue south, spending time in the lush Wanguegang Valley on our way to Tingtibi, nestled amongst the subtropical forests of the lowlands, where we will find a whole new suite of species, including the near-endemic **Golden Langur**, restricted to this corner of Bhutan and a sliver of neighbouring Assam. o/n Tingtibi

Day 8 Fri 7th May. A day spent in **Royal Manas National Park**. Chief amongst today's targets will be White-bellied Heron, a Critically Endangered resident of pristine forest rivers, with fewer than 100 individuals left in the world. o/n Tingtibi

Day 9 Sat 8th May. Today we return to the high mountains, birding the areas of Reotala and Kosha La as we wend our way back up to Trongsa. o/n Trongsa

Day 10 Sun 9th May. We travel across the Yotong La pass (3,450m asl), from Trongsa to Bumthang, with plenty of roadside birding stops along the way. o/n Bumthang

Days 11-13 Mon 10th to Wed 12th May. We head into the pristine mid-altitude forests of Thrushing La and the Sengor Valley, home to some of the eastern Himalayas most characterful and sought-after species: **Beautiful Nuthatch**, Ward's Trogon, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Himalayan Cutia and Spotted Elachura will all be searched for, as well as Capped Langur and some spectacular butterflies. o/n Yongkola.

Day 14 Thu 13th May. We retrace our steps, with a last Great Hornbill or roadside gang of White-crested Laughingthrush as we head back up to the mountains. o/n Bumthang

Day 15 Fri 14th May. We plan on visiting the imposing monastic complex of Tharpaling, perched high above the valley, where the stunning **Himalayan Monal**, perhaps the world's most beautiful pheasant, pays a morning visit: an early start will be needed, but the rewards are well worth it. As the day warms up, we head back the way we came, travelling westwards to Punakha. o/n Punakha

Day 16 Sat 15th May. We travel back to Paro, with a last chance of looking for Ward's Trogon in the roadside oak forests. o/n Paro

Day 17 Sun 16th May. This morning we will hike up to the iconic **Tiger's Nest Monastery**, perched above Paro, before spending some time relaxing in town. o/n Paro

Day 18 Mon 17th May. After one last look at the Ibisbills on the river, we bid farewell to Bhutan and fly back to Delhi, where we will spend the night in an airport hotel before our flight back to London next morning, **Day 19 Tue 18th May.**

Accommodation and transport

All of the hotels are of a good standard, some with very attractive settings. All the rooms have private bathrooms. All meals are included.

We will be travelling by small minibus/minivan for this trip. We will do our best to ensure that our travelling is as comfortable as possible, taking plenty of stops for comfort breaks and to enjoy interesting areas.

Travel Health

Vaccines against Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Typhoid are recommended for most travellers, and you might also want to consider Cholera, Hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, Rabies and Tuberculosis vaccines. Travellers should arrange an appointment with their health professional at least six weeks before travel to assess health risks. Up-to-date information on travel health can be found at travelhealthpro.org.uk

Health and Fitness

You will need to have a **reasonable level of general fitness** to get the most from the holiday. Although most of the walks are not long, we will sometimes be walking on **uneven, rocky terrain or wet ground**. There are a few occasions when we walk uphill but this is not excessive.

We will be spending time at altitudes of up to 4,000m asl, with the average elevation on this itinerary around 2,400m. There is some risk of altitude sickness although rest and drinking plenty of water usually relieve any mild effects (headaches and tiredness). If you have suffered from altitude problems before or are suffering from any medical condition, you should take your doctor's advice. We will be taking it easy at these higher altitudes and none of the walking will be strenuous. The (optional) walk to Tiger's Nest monastery is on uneven forest trails, climbing 740m: all walking will be at a very relaxed pace.

We will have some early starts to get the best chances for wildlife watching, with time to rest in the middle of the day.



Flights

We will fly between London Heathrow and Delhi with Virgin Atlantic, and then on to Paro with Drukair, as follows:

30th April	VS300	depart London Heathrow 20.00 , arrive Delhi 09.10 (1st May)
2nd May	KB203	depart Delhi 04.45, arrive Paro 07.15
17th May	KB202	depart Paro 11.55, arrive Delhi 13.45
18th May	VS301	depart Delhi 11.00, arrive London Heathrow 16.10

Bhutan is six hours ahead of GMT: Delhi is five and a half hours ahead of GMT.

Entry Requirements: Passports and Visas

Your passport must have an expiry date at least 6 months after the date you plan to leave Bhutan, and have at least 2 blank pages available for your second entry into India.

Bhutan tourist visas and the \$100 US daily tourist tax will be arranged through our local guides: costs are included in the holiday price.

You will need to apply for an e-Transit Visa for entry into India, valid for two entries within 30 days from the date of grant of visa: check indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa

Leader and guides

Laurie Jackson is an excellent all-round naturalist and Director of Wildlife Travel. She will be familiar to our travellers as an experienced Wildlife Travel leader, having led almost 50 of our holidays since 2013. We will be accompanied throughout by an expert Bhutanese wildlife guide.

Weather and seasons

It is generally dry and cool in the mountains, with typical daytime temperatures between 10° and 26°C. It will be considerably cooler in the early mornings and at altitude, with the chance of rain and even snow at the high mountain passes.

TO BOOK: Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Then complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT PER PERSON £2,000, SECOND INSTALMENT ON
CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £1,500 (to cover committed costs)
BALANCE DUE BY 29/01/2027**

INCLUDED: Return flights as described, London to Paro via Dehi. Local transport as specified in itinerary. 17 nights' accommodation (1 night extra on overnight flight), full board basis (all meals from lunch day 2 to breakfast day 19). Bhutan Visitor Tax (\$100 US per day). Bhutan Visa Fee and National Monument/National Park entry fees. Services of leader and local guides. Tipping for Bhutanese guide/drivers/kitchen crew. **NOT INCLUDED:** Drinks with evening meals, refreshments. Gratuities. Travel insurance. Indian e-Visas and associated costs.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos: front (clockwise from top): 'Tiger's Nest' monastery, Golden Langur, Ibisbill, Red Panda, Himalayan Monal. **Inside (from top):** Red Lacewing, Beautiful Nuthatch, view from Chele La, Satyr Tragopan, Fire-tailed Myzornis.