



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Birds of Nepal



The Himalayan Monal (or *Danfe*), the National Bird of Nepal

DAY 1 – Depart UK.

DAY 2 – Arrival in Kathmandu.

On arrival in Kathmandu you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 3 – Kathmandu.

Today has been left free. You might prefer just to relax or spend the day sightseeing, capitalising on the opportunity to visit some of the pagoda-style temples, palaces and squares of Kathmandu or its neighbouring cities of **Patan** and **Bhaktapur**. The dedicated birdwatcher may prefer to make an early start by heading for the forested slopes of **Phulchowki Mountain** (2,780m/9,000ft) where the variety of laughing thrushes, babblers, bulbuls, flowerpeckers, flycatchers, sunbirds, tits and warblers is tremendous. Some of the many highlights should include Red-flanked Bluetail, Fire-tailed Sunbird, White-collared and Grey-winged Blackbirds, Long-tailed Minivet, White-tailed Nuthatch, Orange-barred Leaf Warbler, Orange-bellied Leafbird and many more. More elusive species include Nepal Cutia, Kalij Pheasant, Red-billed Leiothrix and Black-faced Leaf Warbler. Before heading back to your hotel, a stop at the Godavari Botanical Gardens at the base of Phulchowki is worthwhile. Within this lightly wooded park you may hope to find some of the lower altitude species such as the spectacular Red-billed Blue Magpie, Pallas's Warbler, Orange-gorgetted Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Fantail and perhaps the elusive Spotted Forktail.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 - Fly to Pokhara

Depart this morning on a short flight to Pokhara. On arrival transfer by road to your lodge. There is a wealth of hill birds and some mammals to be seen in the forests and lakes of this picturesque valley. Exquisite minivets are bound to attract your attention, together with a wide selection of warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, laughing-thrushes, sunbirds, flowerpeckers and rosefinches. On the thermals that rise above the valley, a variety of resident birds of prey, particularly eagles and vultures may be seen. Migrant eagles and falcons may also appear. There are many other special birds of this region, amongst them the beautiful Green Magpie and White-crested Laughing-thrushes.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 - Pokhara

A two-night stay here will allow you the chance to walk amongst these hills and forests, through scrub and alder groves, and to enjoy the impressive sight of terraced fields, reaching thousands of feet up and down the mountainsides. The lower terraces are usually for rice, the higher ones for barley, wheat, potatoes, buckwheat and millet. As well as birds, there are many colourful butterflies to be seen on your walks and, with luck, you may glimpse an interesting animal or two; Muntjac, Hanuman Monkeys, Orange-bellied Squirrels and Yellow-throated Martens have all been seen here.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 6 – Drive to the Royal Chitwan National Park.

It is now time to leave the hills and descend to the lowlands. The drive is a scenic one, following the Narayani River for part of the way, through a deep and beautiful subtropical valley towards the Royal Chitwan National Park. This is a chance to look out for such riverside birds as Plumbeous Redstarts, White-capped River Chats, Blue Whistling Thrushes, forktails and kingfishers. Overhead you may see some of the birds of prey that use the valley: Crested Serpent Eagles, Crested Honey Buzzards, Black Kites, Steppe Eagles and many others. By lunchtime you should reach your lodge in the Royal Chitwan National Park where you will be staying for the next three nights.

The Royal Chitwan National Park is a World Heritage Site and Nepal's best known wildlife reserve. It lies in the lowland jungles - the "terai" - of Nepal, and comprises 976 square kilometres of sal and riverine forest and grassland. It is a magnificent and unspoilt "jungle" environment with a greater variety of wildlife than any other area in Nepal. Over 480 species of birds have been recorded in the park and you can expect to see nearly half of these, as well as many mammals and reptiles which may include Indian Rhinoceros, Wild Boar, Sambar, Muntjac, Chital and Hog Deer, Rhesus and Hanuman Monkeys, and the Marsh Muggler and fish-eating Gharial Crocodiles. Tiger, Leopard, Sloth Bear and Gaur also occur, but are seldom seen.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAYS 7 AND 8 – Royal Chitwan National Park.

Two full days in the Royal Chitwan National Park, where a variety of excursions are arranged with the help and enthusiasm of excellent naturalists. You will be able to explore the rivers by dugout canoe, search the grasslands for Tigers, Indian Rhinos and other mammals on elephant back, and go birdwatching on foot through the forest.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner each day.

DAYS 9 TO 12 - Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.

From Chitwan you will next transfer by car to Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, along the East-West Highway. Although this journey is likely to take much of the day, the abundant birds and village life observed along the roadside offer plenty of compensation. The reserve is situated in eastern Nepal, close to the border with India, and covers 175 square kilometres to the north of the kilometre-long barrage that spans the Koshi River. This was built between 1958 and 1964 to control and prevent flooding in the plains of northern India to the south. The vast expanse of open water created by the barrage, and the marshes, lagoons, sandbanks, mudflats and arable land that lie around it, offer an outstanding wetland habitat, and one of the finest birdwatching sites in Asia. Well in excess of 120 species should be seen each day in this wonderful area, amongst them such local specialities as Swamp Francolin, Red-necked Falcon, and Striated Marsh Warbler. The impressive Sarus Crane, nearly as tall as a man, is frequently seen. This region is also the last refuge of the Wild Water Buffalo in Nepal, and other mammals recorded include Leopard, Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Asiatic Jackal, Spotted Deer, Hog Deer, Nilgai (or "blue bull"), and the endangered Ganges River Dolphin. Your most regular and rewarding wildlife outings will be on foot, exploring the grasslands, river, lagoons and woodland close to the camp, and in the vicinity of the barrage, a short drive away. There will also be excursions by raft onto the wide waters of the Koshi River to enjoy the birdlife of the otherwise inaccessible sandbanks and islands.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner each day.

DAY 13 - Return to Kathmandu.

Today you will travel to Biratnagar, situated in the Gangetic floodplains of south-eastern Nepal, to catch your plane to Kathmandu. Heading west, the flight gives spectacular views of the Himalayas (weather permitting) including distant views of the world's highest peak, Everest. In the evening you will be taken (unless you are already staying there) to the unique **Dwarika's Kathmandu Hotel** for a special farewell Nepali dinner, accompanied by a cultural show.

Meals included: Full breakfast, dinner.

DAY 14 – Depart for home.

Private transfer to the airport for your international flight home.

Meals included: Full breakfast.