

NATUR RESOR ANNELIE UTTER AB

0303- 22 50 80

031-99 01 91

www.naturresor.com

annelie.utter@naturresor.com

BHUTAN

The land of thunder dragon

27 FEB. / 16 MARCH 2009

Day 1 - Friday, 27 Feb. : Depart Sweden

Day 2 - Saturday, 28 Feb.: Arrive Delhi via Munich by LH 762 at 0730 hrs. Check-in in a hotel.

Afternoon free to relax and recuperate

Overnight at Hotel

Day 3 - Sunday, 01 March: Delhi / Paro

After breakfast depart for airport in time for flight to Paro by KB 203 dep. 1225 hrs/arr. 1630 hrs. With luck, we should enjoy spectacular views of the Himalayas along the way, including many of the highest mountains in the world.

PARO: Paro is one of the most beautiful valleys in Bhutan. Shrines dot the landscape and graceful willow trees grow along the edge of the Paro River as it winds through fields and farmlands. The Paro Valley is the valley in which Buddhism first arrived in Bhutan, commemorated at the twin temples of Kyichu and Taksang, a hermitage-monastery clinging to a cliff high above the valley floor. The famous hermitage called Taksang, the "Tiger's Nest", is built into a sheer cliff face above the Paro Valley. Legend has it that the Tibetan Buddhist saint Padma Sambhava landed here after flying across the Himalayas from Tibet on the back of a tiger, hence the name tigers Nest.

Overnight - Dechen Cottages Resort, Paro

Day 4 - Monday, 02 March: Paro

We will spend the day exploring the dry Paro Valley, where such species as Ibis bill and perhaps the scarce Black-tailed Crane can be found, in addition to such typically Himalayan riverine species as Blue-fronted Redstart, White Wagtail, White-capped Water Redstart, Blue Whistling-thrush, the ubiquitous Plumbeous Water Redstart, and Oriental Turtle-Dove.

This historic valley lies beneath Jomolhari, one of the highest of Bhutan's Himalayan peaks and it's most sacred. Paro Valley's slopes have native Blue Pine forests, these Species as Crested Goshawk, Eurasian Estrel, Kalij Pheasant, Brown Dipper, White-collared Blackbird, and long-tailed and Gray-backed shrikes.

Overnight - Dechen Cottages Resort, Paro

Day 5 - Tuesday, 03 March: Paro / Thimpu

Thimphu located at 7,700 feet, Thimpu. One can enter Thimpu across the Lungten Zampa bridge (Bridge of Prophecy) festooned with prayer flags, and carefully wind our way through this town.

Overnight: Riverview Hotel

Day 6 - Wednesday, 04 March: Thimpu / Punakha - via Dochu La

After breakfast at the pass, amidst seemingly endless prayer flags, we'll commence our exploration of mixed evergreen and broad-leafed forests.

At lower elevations, one can encounter a number of different species, including Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Eurasian Tree creeper, Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler (an extraordinary species, not unlike some of the sickle billed wood creepers of the Neotropicks!) Golden Bush-Robin and the Fire-capped Tit.

Morning birding through open habitats adjoining the impressive Tsang Chu (Tsant River). Here we will search for Crested Kingfisher; The White-bellied Heron is also seen here.

Overnight: Zangtho Pelri Hotel

Day 7 - Thursday, 05 March: Punakha / Gangtey

In the morning proceed to the famous Gangtey Gumpa valley, situated at an altitude of 2,800 meters. The place is famous for the only Nyingmapa Monastery, located in western Bhutan. Also known for its unique wildlife population, this beautiful valley is home to the rare Black Necked Cranes, who migrate from the Tibetan Plateau. According to estimates, there are around 200-300 cranes, residing in this valley

Day 8 - Friday, 06 March: Gangtey

While in Gangtey, explore the area.

Day 9 - Saturday, 07 March: Gangtey / Trongsa

This day we will drive 1 hour roughly prime pheasant habitat. This will give us the chance of seeing such spectacular species as Satyr Tragopan, Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Mohan and Hill Partridge. Perhaps we may see even a Red Panda, uncommon Gray-headed Bullfinch; several rose finch including Dark-rumped, Common and Blanford's; also the Crimson-browed Finch; almost any accentor is possible; Golden-breasted Fulvetta; stripe-throated and Rufous-vented yuhinas; Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler; Buff-barred Warbler; Rufous-vented Tit; the distinctive Bhutanese, crested race of Coal Tit; Rusty-flanked Treecreeper; possibly white-browed or Rufous-breasted bush-robins; Gray-winged Blackbird; the Plain-backed and Long-tailed thrushes the widespread and very lovely wall creeper.

From Pele la (La Means "pass") we will descend into the heart of central Bhutan's Black Mountain region. Much of our journey will be through beautiful, pristine, mixed broad-leafed evergreen forest. At Chendibji and the site of a classic Nepalese Chorten, we'll search along a picture-perfect stream for a resident pair of crested kingfishers. In addition, Brown Dipers and White-capped

Water Redstarts are usually seen feeding midstream, while Yellow Gold-billed Blue Magpies search for insects among the many flowering rhododendrons.

Day 10 - Monday, 08 March: Trongsa / Bumthang

This morning we will gradually wind our way up Yutong La through some truly magnificent rhododendron/magnolia forests. As we cross the pass at 11,400 feet, we will descend through equally impressive silver fir and spruce forest to the upland valleys of the Bumthang. These broad glacial valleys harbor a number of exciting species including Ibis bill, Kalij Pheasant, accentors Fulvous Parrot bill!

Overnight: Aum Leki's Guest House, Bumthang

Day 11 - Tuesday, 09 March: Bumthang

On this day one can explore the Ura Valley, Enscoced in the depths of this charming valley is a startlingly exotic temple deicated to Guru Rinpoche.

Day 12 - Wednesday, 10 March: Bumthang / Thrumsing La

This park stretches over 768 km. It is the second major temperate reserve in Bhutan, and contains spectacular scenic views and beautiful forests from alpine to subtropical broadleaf and chirpine. There is an abundant wildlife trail stretching from the Ura valley down to the Bumthang valley.

Day 13 - Thursday, 11 March: Thrumsing La

Full day visit to Park.

Day 14 - Friday, 12 March: Trashigang

Today's journey which takes us through a series of switchbacks as we descend to the Gamri River through Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) forest, corn filds, and banana groves, to the village of Nagtshang and Trashigang. As we depart Trashigang, we should have a superb view o fthe Trashigang Dzong, one of Bhutan's justly famous fortified manasteries. Built in 1659, it is superbly located on a spur overhanging the Gamri Chu and is protected on three sides by rivers and ravines. The dzong commands a fine view over the surrounding countryside.

Day 15 - Saturday, 13 March: Trashigang

This day explore the area.

Day 16 - Sunday, 14 March: Samdrum Jonkhar

At this point, we have traveled deep into the eastern park of Bhutan. Thus we anticipate finding a number of rare and little known species. Very few birders have ever visited this part of Bhutan. Although many of the birds will be familiar, we also hope to encounter a number of the more elusive lower elevation species such as Chestnut-breasted Partridge, Gray Peacock-Pheasant, Silver-breasted Broadbill, Blue-napped Pitta, and Blue-winged Laughingthrush, any of which represent a very special experience. With a great deal of luck, we may even discover such gems as Rufus-bellied short wing, or the beguiling Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler. And then there is

always the extreme possibility of being the first bird-tour to find the seemingly mythical Blyth's Tragopan !

Day 17 - Monday, 15 March: Samdrum Jonkhar / Gauhati / Delhi

From somdrup Jonkhar we will enter India. This morning we will bird our way across the fertile and birdy northern plains of the Brahmaputra Valley, stopping at anywhere that looks interesting before arriving at Guwahati, the capital of Assam. Birds we have encountered on previous tours include displaying Black Francolins; Indian Peafowl; Lesser and perhaps even Fulvous whistling-ducks; the globally endangered Greater and Lesser Adjutant storks; Watercock; Small Pratincole - occasionally in large numbers; Greater Painted-Snipe; Pheasant-tailed Jacanas - possibly in breeding dress; Coppersmith Barbet; Striated Grassbird; Asian Pied Myna; and Black breasted Weaver.

Arrive Gauhati and take flight to Delhi in the later afternoon. Arrive Delhi.

Day 18 - Tuesday, 16 March: Delhi / Departure

Early morning flight for Sweden.