



Bhutan: Birding the Kingdom in the Clouds

November 4-23, 2024

\$10,250 from Bangkok, Thailand

\$525 single supplement

This is a provisional itinerary based on our last tour to Bhutan. We've been refining and improving the itinerary each year since our first tour in 2005 and will likely need to make slight changes to this itinerary as the tour approaches. The tour route, pace, and birding targets will not change, but the exact details of this itinerary (lodging, camping locations) may change slightly prior to the trip or during the trip as necessary depending on birding, accommodations, road conditions, weather, etc.

High in the majestic eastern Himalayas and nestled between Tibet and India, sits the small Kingdom of Bhutan, increasingly renowned as one of the planet's precious, unspoiled spots. In this mountain country, an intact Buddhist culture is integrated into every aspect of daily life set amid spectacular mountain scenery, pristine forests and picturesque valleys. The breathtaking landscape is dotted with fluttering prayer flags, colorful farmhouses set amidst terraced fields, and impressive monasteries clinging to impossible cliffs.

This shining cultural gem is a birder's paradise. Over 60 percent of the country is forested, and unlike other Himalayan countries, much of Bhutan's original forest remains intact. As a result, Bhutan lies in an area designated as one of the world's ten biodiversity hotspots. Its wide altitudinal range—from sub-tropical lowlands to alpine peaks—provides an array of climatic conditions and habitats, from sub-tropical jungles to temperate forests and tundra that support now over 700 bird species. The diversity of bird life in Bhutan is further augmented by numerous migrating species that pass through Bhutan on their travels north and south. For these reasons, Bhutan's bird list includes some of the rarest and most sought after species in the eastern Himalayas. Thirty-four species of birds classed as threatened or near threatened are found in Bhutan, including the high elevation Black-necked Crane and the critically endangered White-bellied Heron. Because of Bhutan's progressive forest conservation practices many of these species still thrive in Bhutan and can be found easier here than elsewhere in their range.

In addition to having an astonishing diversity of bird life in a country no larger than Switzerland, Bhutan is home to at least 165 species of mammals, including golden langur, leopard, rhinoceros and

Asian elephant in the lowlands; red panda, Himalayan black bear and musk deer in the middle-elevation forests; and snow leopard and takin on alpine meadows. Although very rarely seen, tigers might be found anywhere from the base of the foothills to above tree line. The diversity of Bhutan's flora is no less impressive. More than 600 orchid species (including at least 50 that are endemic), 46 species of rhododendrons (four endemic), and more than 300 species of medicinal plants are found within its borders.

During our expedition we will see a wide variety of birds, wildlife, and scenic wonders. Our walks and drives will take us through virgin forests, across high open pastures, to Bhutan's most extensive high-elevation wetland, as well as to mountain villages and monasteries. Throughout the tour we'll occasionally stop to visit the impressive goempas (monasteries), dzongs (the monastery/fortresses that serve as Bhutan's administrative and religious centers), temples, and stupas that are important features of Bhutan's religion and culture, both past and present. We'll have opportunities to enjoy traditional Bhutanese arts and crafts, which represent Bhutan's living heritage, and reflect the culture's spiritual and intellectual life. Surrounding us at every turn will be examples of Bhutan's distinctive architecture with its traditional shapes, colorful patterns, outrageous "motifs," and an unmatched combination of engineering skill and aesthetic beauty.

ITINERARY

Day 1, November 4: Arrival in Bangkok and pre-trip meeting

We'll hold a pre-trip meeting in the lobby of our hotel in Bangkok, Thailand on the evening of November 4th to make sure everyone made it this far, answer last minute questions, and plan our departure for the airport the next morning.

Meeting and dinner: 6 PM in the lobby of our Bangkok hotel (TBA). The hotel is about 10 minutes by taxi from the Suvarnabhumi International Airport. We'll send details of getting to the hotel from the airport in a subsequent email.

Overnight in Bangkok at a hotel near the airport, TBA

Day 2, November 5: Arrival in Paro and drive to Thimphu.

Our flight to Paro to Bangkok departs at 6:30 AM. This will require an early shuttle to the airport, however, with the time change most of our bodies will be wide awake at this hour. The flight makes a stop en route during which we'll stay on the plane. Upon arrival in Paro, Bhutan you will immediately

be struck by the transparent purity of the air. After immigration and customs formalities, we'll be welcomed by our local host and drive Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The drive time is just over one hour, but we'll make a few birding stops en route. Leaving the airport we will see our trip's first birds: Gray-backed Shrike, White Wagtail, and Hodgson's Redstart. A little further into our drive we will stop along the Paro Chhu (River). Some of the birds we may encounter here include Ibisbill, Wallcreeper, Brown Dipper, Ruddy Shelduck and River Lapwing.

Overnight at Thimph Hotel (2,320 m/7,656 ft).

Day 3, November 6: Thimphu

On our first full day in Bhutan, we'll ease into the tour by exploring the birding and sights in and around Thimphu. We'll bird local riparian areas, the famous Babesa lagoons, and the forested slopes above the city. We may also bird the forested grounds of a nearby monastery and in the afternoon will take in a few cultural sites.

Overnight in Thimphu at a hotel (2,320 m/7,656 ft).

Day 4, November 7: Thimphu to Tsirang

Today we begin our travels toward the lowlands of southern Bhutan, beginning our grand loop through the country. We'll leave the hotel early in order to reach Dochu La Pass for sunrise. We'll hope for clear skies, which are not uncommon in November, for our time at Dochu La Pass (3,050 m/10,004 ft) where on a clear day, the view of the Himalayas, including Gangkar Puensum (7,541 m/24,734 ft), the world's highest unclimbed peak, is breathtaking. Dochu La is a spectacular setting with its 108 chortens beautifully laid out across the mountaintop, prayer flags fluttering from the towering pine trees, and the high Himalayas in the distance. The lovely Fire-tailed Myzornis is a distinct possibility, as is Red-headed Bullfinch and an assortment of tit and rosetfinch possibilities.

From Dochu La we'll continue driving east and down in elevation to the town of Wangdue Phodrang (also called Wangdi) on the banks of the Punak Tsang Chhu, then from Wangdi we'll drive south, following the river, and crossing through farmlands, hydropower construction sites and sparse forests of chir pine. Along the drive, we'll be on the look out for Pallas's Fish Eagle and Great Hornbill. About mid way through today's drive we enter the Tsirang region. The Tsirang region is where north literally meets the south. The people from southern Bhutan are mostly of Nepalese origins and at Tsirang the culture is a mixture of the two ethnic groups. We'll also have our first chance to see some of the birds of southern Bhutan. We'll continue to the town of Tsirang where we'll spend the night. Today's drive is one of the longer drives of the trip, but it travels on some of the better roads in the country.

Overnight in Tsirang, Hotel Damphu Resort (elevation 1,437m/4,715ft)

Day 5, November 8: Tsirang to Gelephu

Today we'll make an early drive from our hotel to the cool broadleaf forests around a low pass at Darachu before descending to the warm tropical region of Gelephu. We'll spend time birding around Darachu, where the lush forest may hold the much sought after Beautiful Nuthatch. Other possibilities here include Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Lesser and Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, and Lesser and Greater Yellownapes. We'll leave the forests of Darachu early enough to have some time in the afternoon to bird the plains of Sarpang, and some areas around the border town of Gelephu. From Sarpang, we'll drive through the flattest region of Bhutan. The 20-mile stretch of road will provide us with an opportunity to add the birds typical of the Indian Plains to our list. The possibilities include, Black-headed and Maroon Orioles, Indian Roller, Jungle Babbler, Hill and Jungle Mynas, four species of parrot, Indian Pond-Heron, Wreathed, Pied Hornbill, and Great Hornbill, Red Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, and Greater Flameback. Gelephu is the main town in the district of Sarpang and one of the three main entry points into Bhutan from India.

Overnight in Gelephu at the Hotel Kuku Grand (230 m/770 ft)

Day 6, November 9: Gelephu to Tingtibi Camp

After spending the early morning birding the borderland plains around Gelephu, we say goodbye to the southern lowlands and ascend towards the District of Zhemgang. The drive through the broadleaf forest is not only beautiful but is rich with bird life. We will be driving mostly up hill with occasional birding stops and the last two hour drive is downhill until we arrive in Tingtibi at 540 m/ 1780 ft. We'll spend two nights in Tingtibi at a riverside camp.

Overnight at a camp near Tingtibi (540 m/1,780 ft)

Day 7, November 10: Birding around Tingtibi

Today we bird the rich forests and riparian zones of the Tingtibi area. Here we have a chance to find Gray-throated and Black-throated Parrotbill, Collared Falconet, White-hooded Babbler, Red-faced Liocichla, Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Common Green Magpie, Pallas's Fish Eagle, and Himalayan Cutia. In addition to the bird life, we will be in the range of the Golden Langur, a beautiful and rare near-endemic primate of Bhutan.

Overnight at a camp near Tingtibi (540 m/1,780 ft)

Day 8, November 11: Tingtibi to Panbang

We'll spend the first hours of the morning birding the forests and bamboo along the route to Panbang. The bamboo along here holds two very special birds, White-hooded Babbler and Pale-billed Parrotbill (Lesser Rufous-headed), among many other species. Today is where our itinerary diverges from most past tours as we embark for only the second time on the newly constructed road from Tingtibi to Yongkhola, through Manas National Park. On our last tour, we were only the second birding group to explore this newly opened route and we were amazed by what we found. Since then, our local guides have made several forays to this route and made some great discoveries.

Our drive today takes us down the valley of the Mangde Chhu to Manas. Here we'll have a chance for White-bellied Heron, one of the world's rarest birds.

Overnight in Panbang. Accommodations TBA (~400 m/ 1,312 ft)

Day 9, November 12: Panbang

We'll spend the day exploring Manas National Park near the border with India. Four species of hornbill are possible today, as are Collared Falconet, and Black and Jerdon's Baza. An array of mammals that call Manas home and we'll hope to glimpse a few as we bird the forested roadsides.

Overnight in Panbang. Accommodations TBA (~400 m/ 1,312 ft)

Day 10, November 13: Panbang to Nganglam

Today we leave Panbang and head to Nganglam, looking for low elevation bird species in the intact forests along our route. The Nganglam area holds some exciting birds not found elsewhere on our itinerary, including Rufous-backed and Long-tailed Sibia, Black-backed Forktail, and the rare and localized Rufous-vented Laughingthrush and Green Cochoa!

From Panbang we'll continue to the east to the village of Nganglam on a saddle just above the plains of India.

Overnight at a camp near Nganglam (145 m/475 ft)

Day 11, November 14: Nganglam to Yongkhola

We'll spend the early morning in the forests around Nganglam before continuing our journey east and north to Yongkhola. Today's drive is along the impressive Gyelposhing-Nganglam Highway—one of the most spectacular and vertiginous drives in the country. The completion of this long-awaited road in 2018 is what has allowed our itinerary to loop through the rich forests of southern Bhutan.

Possibilities today, especially near the picturesque village of Limethang include Crested and Little Bunting, Tawny Fish Owl, and another chance for Pallas's Fish Eagle.

Yongkhola is a tiny rural community in which our host has built a beautiful hotel near some of the best birding on our route. Here we'll spend three nights.

Overnight at Trogon Villa, Yongkhola (1,700 m/5,576 ft)

Day 12-13, November 15 and 16: Yongkhola

Yongkhola is often touted as one of the richest birding sites in all of Asia. We'll spend two full days birding Yongkhola. Specialties here include: Ward's and Red-headed Trogon, Hodgson's Frogmouth, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Hill Partridge, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Sultan and Yellow-cheeked tit, and Chestnut-headed, Slaty-bellied and Gray-bellied Tesia, among many, many others.

Overnight at Trogon Villa, Yongkhola (1,700 m/5,576 ft)

Day 14, November 17: Yongkhola to Bumthang

Today's drive is often hailed as one of the most spectacular in the world. It will take us through magnificent forests, prayer flags waving in the breeze, countless waterfalls, and villages that seem to be frozen in time. Within a matter of hours after leaving Yongkhola we will have ascended over 5,000 feet of elevation. Eastern Bhutan is more remote than the western regions and many of the villages we pass through appear as if they've remained unchanged for centuries. Near Thrumsing La pass (3,700 m/12,435 ft), the possibilities of birds in this area include the gorgeous Fire-tailed Sunbird, Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, Satyr Tragopan, Red-headed Bullfinch, Collared and White-winged Grosbeak, and Rusty-flanked and Eurasian Treecreeper.

Overnight at Chummey Nature Resort, Chummey Valley, Bumthang (2,575 m/8,448 ft)

Day 15, November 18: Bumthang to Phobjikha Valley

We'll leave our hotel before dawn to drive to a monastery at about 12,000 feet with the hope of seeing the majestic Himalayan Monal. Other high elevation species possible this morning are Dark-rumped, Himalayan White-browed, and Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, White-collared Grosbeak, Snow Pigeon, and both Red-throated and Black-throated Thrush.

After our morning foray, we'll begin the long drive to Pele la pass. After about half an hour on this road we come to a viewpoint offering excellent views of the Trongsa valley with its massive Dzong across the depths of the Mangde Chhu gorge. After another hour we will be driving parallel to the eastern slope of the Black Mountains, with wonderful views of the trackless old-growth forests.

Our drive ends shortly after turning south on a side road we enter the Phobjikha valley. Passing yaks grazing on dwarf bamboo, we descend into this beautiful wide, glacial valley which is the winter home of the Black-necked Cranes. Phobjikha is a designated conservation area which lies adjacent to Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park. Because of the presence of the large flock of Black-necked Cranes that winters in the valley—about 260 of them—Phobjikha is one of the most important wildlife preserves in Bhutan. The first cranes arrive from Tibet in late October, and by early November their numbers will have increased to between 100 and 150.

While today's drive is long, we'll make a few stops to stretch our legs and hopefully add a few species to our trip. The mountain and forest scenery along the way is simply stunning.

Overnight in Phobjikha at the ABC Ecolodge Lodge (2909 m/9,600 ft)

Day 16, November 19: Phobjikha Valley and Pele La Pass

Today we will rise early to bird at Pele La pass (11,286 ft), departing in the dark for the short drive to the pass. Pele La's old backroad, contouring along the steep slopes through towering fir trees with panoramic views of the Himalaya, is a great place to look for Himalayan Monal and other high elevation species. We'll spend much of the morning birding around the Pele La and enjoying the incredible scenery and great birding. Be on the lookout for the Great and Brown Parrotbill, Himalayan Monal, Collared Grosbeak, and Darjeeling Woodpeckers. It is also home to the world's highest elevation population of Bengal tigers.

We'll return to Phobjikha for a mid-day rest and a late afternoon walk into the valley of the wintering Black-necked Cranes. This is a picturesque walk through farms and undisturbed forest to a site overlooking the glacial valley where cranes return each evening to roost. Near dusk, we'll sit quietly

along the forest edge watching these majestic cranes spiral down into the valley's wetland to roost for the night, a thrill of a lifetime.

Overnight in Phobjikha at local hotel (2909 m/9,600 ft)

Day 17, November 20: Phobjikha to Punakha

Our drive today is relatively short. From Phobjikha we return to Pele La pass and head west, descending until the bridge below the Wangdue Dzong to arrive at the point where we turned south on Day 4. We'll spend some time birding the river edge for waterfowl, gulls, and shorebirds before making the short drive to Punakha.

In the afternoon, we'll make a visit to the beautiful Punakha Dzong. Originally known as Pungthang Dechhen Phodrang, (The Palace of Great Bliss) Punakha Dzong was built in 1637 by the Great Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the Unifier of Bhutan. The Dzong has been destroyed several times by floods, fire and earthquake, but it has always been rebuilt to its original grandeur, and the latest renovation was completed in 2004. The wood and metallic works are superb, not to mention the fantastic sculptures. From the dzong we'll walk along the Po Chhu to Bhutan's longest suspension footbridge (the world's second longest) and walk across the bridge. Bar-headed Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, and Crested Kingfisher are possible along the river.

If we haven't yet found White-bellied Heron, after crossing the bridge, we'll drive along the Po Chhu up to Tsekha village for another look. Another spectacular and globally threatened species that is occasionally sighted along this river is Pallas's Fish Eagle.

Overnight in Punakha. Accommodations TBD (1,235m/4,052 ft).

Day 18, November 21: Punakha to Paro, with an afternoon excursion to Chele La

After breakfast at our camp, we'll drive on to Paro. This afternoon, we'll take a drive up to Chele La pass (3,810 m/12,573 ft), the highest road point in Bhutan. We should have more incredible views of the Himalayas including Mount Jomolhari. On the western side of the pass as we gaze into the valley of Haa we'll also see Mt. Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, in the distance. The birds in the pass area include White-throated Redstart, White-winged and Collared Grosbeaks, Altai and Alpine Accentors and perhaps even the majestic Lammergeier, if we are very lucky.

Overnight in Paro at local hotel (2,300 m/7,544ft)

Day 19, November 22: Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery and our Farewell Party

After breakfast at our hotel, we'll make the short drive to the trail head for our hike up to the Taktsang, the famous Tiger's Nest Monastery. Tiger's Nest is Bhutan's most famous monument, and one of the most venerated pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas. It is perched on the side of a cliff 900 m/2,950 ft above the floor of the Paro valley. The steep hike climbs to a tea house just across a cleft in the cliff from the Tiger's Nest. We will continue on from the teahouse, down and up about 4,000 steps past a waterfall and into the monastery. Taktsang, which means "Tiger's Lair", is so called because Guru Rinpoche, who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan, is said to have arrived at the site in a miraculous manner—flying on the back of a tigress. In 1998, a fire destroyed the main structure of Taktsang, but it has since been rebuilt, with traditional materials and techniques, to its previous splendor. Birding along the trail is often slower than at other sites, but we should encounter species such as Black-faced Laughingthrush, Chestnut-tailed Minla, and Yellow-billed Blue Magpie.

After this morning's outing, we'll return to our hotel with a little time to rest before our farewell dinner this evening.

Overnight in Paro at local hotel (2,300 m/7,544ft)

Day 20, November 23, Departure

Today we must get up early, say goodbye to our wonderful hosts, and board our flight back to Bangkok. Typically the flight is an early morning departure from Paro. Exact flight time TBA. The tour ends upon arrival in Bangkok.

TOUR DETAILS

LEADERS: Aaron Lang and Sonam Dorji

GROUP SIZE: limited to 11 participants

THE TOUR INCLUDES: Guides, flights between Bhutan and Bangkok, all in-Bhutan expenses (ground transportation, meals, lodging, entrance fees to museums, daily tariff, visa fee, departure tax and tourism tax.) Lodging and dinner in Bangkok on November 4 are also included in the tour price.

The tour price includes the flight between Bangkok, Thailand and Paro, Bhutan. If the flight schedule allows and you wish to arrive from India or Bangladesh, let us know and we will adjust the price accordingly.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE: Airfare to and from your home and Bangkok, personal expenditures in Bhutan (e.g., shopping, laundry, internet use, alcoholic beverages, gratuities to our Bhutanese guides), transit from the Bangkok airport to the hotel, and personal Bangkok apart from those specifically listed above. No discounts offered by WBA can be applied to this trip.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 is required upon registration. The remaining balance is due 90 days prior to the tour, August 4, 2024

CANCELLATION POLICY: If you need to cancel before July 4, 2024 (120 days prior to the tour) your deposit and any payments will be refunded minus a \$100 cancellation fee. If you cancel between July 4 and August 4, 2024 all but your deposit will be refunded. For cancellations on or after August 4, 2024 no refund is available.

TRIP CANCELLATION/TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend trip insurance. Trip cancellation insurance covers you if you have to cancel. Travel insurance provides coverages for medical, theft, etc. during your travels. To shop for either, check out www.insuremytrip.com.

TOUR PACE AND STYLE: While this trip is certainly a birding tour, it would be a shame to visit such a fascinating country without taking in some of its rich culture and heritage. During the tour we may visit dzongs (secular and religious regional headquarters), the Tiger's Nest monastery, museums, Thimphu city cultural sites, markets, and spend an evening with our guide's family in their traditional farmhouse in Paro. Much of the rest of our activity will have a strong birding focus, which often results in delightful impromptu encounters with the local residents. We recommend that you have an interest in birding, but it's not necessary to be a serious birder to enjoy the trip.

Most mornings we'll begin before dawn, with an early coffee/tea in our hotel or camp, pre-dawn departure, and breakfast in the field. It is not uncommon to be in the field at 5 AM or earlier. Most lunches are served in the field by our road crew and dinner is served at our accommodations (either hotel or camp). We will occasionally go out after dinner if there are decent owling opportunities nearby. When we spend more than one night at a location, it is often possible to take a mid-day rest before heading out for afternoon birding. This may not be possible on travel days. This is a road-based tour. While we attempt to balance the time on the road with time out in the field birding, several of our days require very long drives. The road system is the only way to travel through Bhutan, other than trekking (which greatly restricts the amount of country, habitats and species that we could see).

The roads are narrow and curvy as they traverse the steep countryside. Because the forests of Bhutan are intact, many of them in pristine condition, the roadsides offer fantastic birding and in many areas are the only paths through the dense forest.

ACCOMMODATIONS: We will mainly stay in comfortable hotels and resorts. There will also be several nights camping and/or staying at simple guesthouses in the more remote and rural areas along our route. In November in the Himalayas, the skies are clear most of the time and temperatures may drop below freezing at night at higher elevations. Camping may be a bit chilly. For that matter, the hotels can be quite chilly too, lacking central heat.

REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure date is required for United States citizens to enter Bhutan. For your Bhutan visa you'll need to send to WBA a full-color scan of the pages of your passport containing the passport details, photo and signature. Our Bhutan visas are arranged by our Bhutanese guides and your WBA guide will have them. A visa is not necessary for Thailand for stays of less than 30 days.

VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH: Vaccination against Covid-19 is required for travel to Bhutan. Please make sure you bring your CDC issued vaccination card with you. It's also a good idea to keep a digital copy with your phone. No other vaccinations are required for travel in Bhutan; however, cholera and yellow fever inoculations are required if you arrive within five days of departing from an infected area. The southern portions of our route (primarily the border zone between Gelephu and Nganglam) is considered an endemic zone for malaria and you might consider consulting your physician regarding anti-malarial prophylactics. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B. We recommend participants contact their doctor for advice prior to departure. All participants should bring a good quantity of all their prescription and over the counter drugs and medical supplies, as these will be very difficult to obtain in Bhutan.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636). You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel.

FOOD: Breakfasts may include eggs, toast, oatmeal or muesli, juice, and fruit. Lunches and dinners are similar to each other: several cooked dishes typically including rice, potatoes in a sauce, chiles and cheese (the national dish), stewed meats with sauces, and/or cooked greens. Even when we are picnicking out in the country, we usually have hot, cooked lunches. Desserts are occasional. When we get up early to bird before breakfast, we usually will have coffee/tea and crackers before heading out,

and full breakfast after our early morning birding. If you have dietary restrictions, please let us know on the guest information form and our guides will try to accommodate you. This form can be filled out on-line at www.wildernessbirding.com/guest

SPENDING MONEY: You will need cash for gifts/souvenirs, alcoholic beverages, hotel laundry, internet use, and an optional tip for our Bhutanese guides. If you go out on the town on your own, you're responsible for meals, etc. Souvenirs in Bhutan, including jewelry, beautiful textiles, carvings, handmade paper products, etc. and tend to be on the expensive side.

CURRENCY: Upon arrival in Bhutan you can exchange currency at the airport in Paro. We can also exchange at the bank in Thimphu. ATMs are very hard to come by in Bhutan so make sure to have enough cash on hand. If necessary we may be able to make a stop at a bank later in the trip as well. Very few of the shops we'll visit accept credit cards.

TIPPING: Although tipping is officially discouraged in Bhutan, it is unofficially expected. Near the end of our tours we commonly pool funds for a modest tip to our local guides, driver and road crew. We can pay this in US cash or Bhutanese currency or a combination. If you are interested in contributing to a tip at the end of our trip, we suggest having \$150-\$250 for this purpose in either US dollars or Bhutanese currency. You are also welcome to tip independently rather than as part of the group, or not at all, as you wish.

SMOKING: Smoking is banned in public places and tobacco sales are illegal throughout the country.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Bird Books

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C. and T. Inskipp. Birds of the India: Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Second Edition. Princeton University Press. Now that Birds of Bhutan is out of print and difficult to find, this is the best book for the trip.

Inskipp, C., T. Inskipp and R. Grimmett. Birds of Bhutan. A&C Black, 2004. This book was condensed from the larger Birds of India book. While the text lacks some detail, its small size makes it a great book to carry in the field if you can find it.

Rasmussen, P. C. & J. C. Anderton. 2012. Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Vols. 1 and 2. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. Washington D.C. and Barcelona. A more detailed, up-to-date and comprehensive work on the birds of the region. It's also bulky to travel with, but we'll have a copy along with us.

General Travel Guides

Mayhew, B., Brown, L. and Mahapatra, A. 2014. Bhutan. Lonely Planet Publications. Singapore.

Pommaret, F. 2009. Bhutan: Himalayan Mountain Kingdom. Airphoto International Ltd. London.

Both of these are good overall guides with quite a bit of travel and cultural information.

Additional Reading

Zeppa, J. 2000. Beyond the Sky and the Earth: Journey into Bhutan. Riverhead Trail Publishers.

A memoir of a 25 year old Canadian woman's experience as a teacher in eastern Bhutan.

Crossett, B. 1996. So Close to Heaven: The Vanishing Buddhist Kingdoms of the Himalayas. Vintage Publishers. A considerably more journalistic perspective on Bhutan's culture, politics and economy.

Film:

Travellers and Magicians: Bhutan's first feature film.

The Other Final: One of the best small films we've ever seen, but it has not been distributed in the US. Here's a choppy clip from it: <http://www.ceebanff.ca/portfoliodetail/tv/115>

EQUIPMENT: Because of the wide elevation range, the weather and temperatures on the trip can vary considerably. To help prepare, once you've registered we'll send you a detailed clothing and equipment list.

IN BANGKOK: After making your travel arrangements to Bangkok, let us know when you'll arrive in Bangkok so we can book your room hotel room for the night of November 4th. If you're arriving earlier than the 4th we can also help book your accommodations prior to the 4th.

THAILAND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: You do not need a visa to visit Thailand if you are staying for less than 30 days.

THAI CURRENCY: You can exchange major world currencies for Thai bhat at the Airport in Bangkok.

REGISTERING FOR THIS TOUR: You may register for this tour and make your deposit at www.wildernessbirding.com/guest

You may also pay your deposit with a check. Checks can be mailed to:

Wilderness Birding Adventures
40208 Alpenglow Circle
Homer, AK 99603

We hope you'll be able to join us for this remarkable birding adventure!

Photos and past bird lists can be found at our website: www.wildernessbirding.com
For more information or clarification of any details please drop us a line at:
info@wildernessbirding.com