

Sri Lanka Wildlife Tour 2025 with focus on mammals and (missing) birds

A friend of mine had an excellent mammal trip to Sri Lanka and I saw some good trip reports on mammalwatching.com (thank you to the authors). My friend went with **Dulan Ranga Vidanapathirana** whom he highly recommended. Thus, I contacted him and he forwarded my email to his company. Our trip to Sri Lanka was organized by the company "**Bird and Wildlife Team (Pvt) Ltd. (BWT)**" - the trip organization was perfect! My main goal were mammals plus a few birds that I had missed during my trip in 2000 and general wildlife such as butterflies, reptiles and amphibians. In total, we stayed 12 days in Sri Lanka (before we continued to the Maldives for snorkeling and diving). I had sent my mammal and bird target lists to BWT and received very detailed and accurate feedback on possible/likely species. They suggested an itinerary for the 12 days we had which worked out very well.

We drove from the airport to Kalpitiya and walked around the lodge in the afternoon and at night without too many sightings apart from the very vocal **Indian Palm Squirrel** (seen often also at other sites). The next morning, we did a boat trip for dolphins and whales plus snorkeling. Overall, it was rather disappointing with only **Common Bottlenose Dolphins** seen plus sea turtles and a Manta Ray. Snorkeling was a total disaster with zero visibility. Not a good start but from then on everything was almost perfect.

We then drove to our lodge near the entrance to Wilpattu NP where we stayed three nights. We spent two days inside the park and did three night drives outside the park. During the day we saw **Sloth Bear, Leopard, Chital, Sambar, Asian Wild Buffalo, Malabar Red Muntjac, Asian Elephant, Schneider's Leaf-nosed Bat, Toque Macaque, Indian Hare, Indian Gray Mongoose, Ruddy Mongoose, Eurasian Wild Pig** and **Golden Jackal**. At night we spotted **Gray Slender Loris, Indian Gerbil, White-spotted Chevrotain, Jungle Cat** (the likely same individual was seen on the same harvested rice field every morning and every evening), **Indomalayan Long-tailed Climbing Mouse, Small Indian Civet** and **Northern Palm Civet**.

Our next stop was Sigiriya, again for three nights. We visited several sites during the day and drove around at night with some walking. During the day we saw **Toque Macaque, Tufted Gray Langur, Purple-faced Langur, Indian Hare, Indian Giant Squirrel, Lesser Asian False-vampire, Cantor's Leaf-nosed Bat, Indian Rufous Horseshoe Bat, Beddome's Woolly Horseshoe Bat** (on the way), **Long-winged Sheath-tailed Bat, Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat** and **Golden Jackal**. At night we found **Indian Giant Flying Squirrel** (at dusk), **Indian Flying Fox, Roof Rat, Indian Crested Porcupine, Bare-rumped Sheath-tailed Bat, Asian House Shrew, Least Pipistrelle, White-spotted Chevrotain, Chital, Eurasian Wild Pig, Fishing Cat** (at 4 o'clock in the morning) and **Small Indian Civet**.

Then we continued up into the hill country with two nights spent in Nuwara Eliya. We spent a day on Horton Plains in the mist and in the surrounding forests and Victoria Park while at night we went to the city market and into a nearby forest. During the day we found Sambar, **Stripe-necked Mongoose** and **Indian Brown Mongoose** while at night **Sri Lankan Long-tailed Climbing Mouse**, Roof Rat, **Greater Bandicoot Rat** and **Lesser Bandicoot Rat**.

Our final two nights were spent near Kitulgala directly at the river with good forest on the other side. In a nearby cave, we found **Indian Leaf-nosed Bat**, **Asian Long-fingered Bat**, **Kelaart's Pipistrelle** and Schneider's Leaf-nosed Bat. We also saw **Round-eared Tube-nosed Bat** hanging in a tree at night, **Lesser Large-footed Myotis** hunting over the river, **Red Slender Loris**, **Layard's Palm Squirrel**, **Tranvancore Flying Squirrel**, **Yellow-striped Chevrotain** and **Golden Palm Civet**.

It was an almost perfect trip. We saw much more mammal species than I had hoped for, 57 in total (based on HMW taxonomy) with 31 lifers. I can not speak highly enough about Dulan – one cannot ask for a better guide. His knowledge about various fauna groups was amazing and his energy and willingness for long days and especially nights were absolutely fantastic. It was actually mostly me that had to ask to stop... Be prepared for very long nights – if you want to – but it is well worth it. The weather was not ideal with a lot of rain (for this time of the year) during and before our trip. The water levels of ponds and lakes and even within the forests were very high and this likely negatively affected our chances to see cats. Looking at other trip reports it was much harder for us to even find one Jungle Cat and one Fishing Cat – and it was not for lack of trying. Rusty-spotted Cat was our biggest miss apart from Thick-tailed Pangolin. We saw good signs of Pangolins at three different sites: Wilpattu NP (damaged termite mounds) – it is not allowed to be in the park after sunset; Sigiriya – several fresh digging places in the soil seen; Kitulgala – several fresh digging places in the soil seen plus an apparent roost site.

On the Maldives we saw Indian Flying Fox and **Spinner Dolphins**.

Roland Holz from Otterstadt, Germany.

Feel free to contact me for more details under buddi-houtjeatweb.de

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Sri Lanka		2025	
Asian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	a group of 5 at night and a single during the day near/at Wilpattu NP	
Gray Slender Loris	<i>Loris lydekkerianus</i>	several seen at various night drives near Wilpattu and Sigiriya	

Red Slender Loris	<i>Loris tardigradus</i>	several seen at night in Kitulgala	
Toque Macaque	<i>Macaca sinica</i>	seen at various places	
Tufted Gray Langur	<i>Semnopithecus priam</i>	seen at various places	
Purple-faced Langur	<i>Semnopithecus vetulus</i>	3 subspecies seen	
Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>	seen at various places	
Indian Gerbil	<i>Tatera indica</i>	several seen near Wilpattu during night drive	
Greater Bandicoot Rat	<i>Bandicota indica</i>	at night near market in Nuwara Eliya	
Lesser Bandicoot Rat	<i>Bandicota bengalensis</i>	at night near market in Nuwara Eliya	
Roof Rat	<i>Rattus rattus</i>	seen in forest and in towns	
Indomalayan Long-tailed Climbing Mouse	<i>Vandeleuria oleraceus</i>	several at night near Wilpattu feeding on grass seed	
Sri Lankan Long-tailed Climbing Mouse	<i>Vandeleuria nolthenii</i>	one at night in forest near Nuwara Eliya	
Indian Crested Porcupine	<i>Hystrix indica</i>	several seen at night near Sigiriya	
Sri Lankan Giant Squirrel	<i>Ratufa macroura</i>	only seen a few times	
Sri Lankan Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus obscurus</i>	a few seen	
Layard's Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus layardi</i>	Kitulgala	
Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>	very common	
Tranvancore Flying Squirrel	<i>Petinomys fuscocapillus</i>	one seen at night in Kitulgala near houses in a palm tree	
Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista philippensis</i>	one seen near Sigiriya	
Asian House Shrew	<i>Suncus murinus</i>	one at night near Sigiriya	
Greater Short-nosed Fruit Bat	<i>Cynopterus sphinx</i>	Sigiriya day roost	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus medius</i>	seen at various places incl. Maldives P. m. ariel	
Lesser Asian False-vampire	<i>Megaderma spasma</i>	Sigiriya day roost	
Indian Leaf-nosed Bat	<i>Hipposideros lankadiva</i>	Cave near Kitulgala	
Schneider's Leaf-nosed Bat	<i>Hipposideros speoris</i>	seen at three day roosts	
Cantor's Leaf-nosed Bat	<i>Hipposideros galeritus</i>	day roost	recently split into H. srilankensis
Indian Rufous Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus rouxi</i>	Sigiriya day roost	
Beddome's Woolly Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus beddomei</i>	day roost	split
Long-winged Sheath-tailed Bat	<i>Taphozous longimanus</i>	day roost between rocks near Sigiriya	
Bare-rumped Sheath-tailed Bat	<i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus</i>	night roost in forest near Sigiriya	

Asian Long-fingered Bat	<i>Miniopterus fuliginosus</i>	Cave near Kitulgala	
Kelaart's Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus ceylonicus</i>	Cave near Kitulgala	
Least Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus tenuis</i>	forest near Sigiriya	
Round-eared Tube-nosed Bat	<i>Murina cyclotis</i>	Seen hanging in tree at night in Kitulgala	
Lesser Large-footed Myotis	<i>Myotis hasseltii</i>	Hunting over river in Kitulgala	
Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	boat trip from Kalpitiya	
Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>	seen several times in the Maldives	
White-spotted Chevrotain	<i>Moschiola meminna</i>	several seen at night near Wilpattu and Sigiriya	
Yellow-striped Chevrotain	<i>Moschiola kathygre</i>	seen three times at Kitulgala	
Malabar Red Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus malabaricus</i>	seen in Wilpattu NP and heard at Kitulgala	
Chital	<i>Axis axis</i>	very common	
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	singles at Wilpattu NP and common Horton Plains	
Asian Wild Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee</i>	Wilpattu NP	
Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Sigiriya	
Thick-tailed Pangolin	<i>Manis crassicaudata</i>	digging signs seen at Wilpattu NP, Sigiriya and Kitulgala	
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus kotiya</i>	one seen in Wilpattu NP	
Fishing Cat	<i>Felis viverrinus</i>	one seen near Sigiriya	
Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>	most likely the same individual was seen several times near Wilpattu	
Small Indian Civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>	seen many times	
Northern Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i>	seen a few times	
Golden Palm Civet	<i>Paradoxurus zeylonensis</i>	seen in Kitulgala	
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>	many times Wilpattu	
Stripe-necked Mongoose	<i>Urva vitticollis</i>	1 Horton Plains	
Indian Brown Mongoose	<i>Urva fusca</i>	1 Horton Plains	
Indian Gray Mongoose	<i>Urva edwardsii</i>	several seen while driving during the day	
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	several seen, both day and night	
Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>	seen twice in Wilpattu NP - one distant view and one very close	